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History of the United Netherlands, 1592-94 by John Lothrop Motley

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Release Date: January, 2004 [EBook #4865] [Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule] [This file was first posted on April 9, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 65

History of the United Netherlands, 1592-1594

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Influence of the rule and character of Philip II.—Heroism of the sixteenth century—-Contest for the French throne—Character and policy of the Duke of Mayenne—Escape of the Duke of Guise from Castle Tours—Propositions for the marriage of the Infanta—-Plotting of the Catholic party—Grounds of Philip's pretensions to the crown of France—-Motives of the Duke of Parma maligned by Commander Moreo —He justifies himself to the king—View of the private relations between Philip and the Duke of Mayenne and their sentiments towards each other—Disposition of the French politicians and soldiers towards Philip—Peculiar commercial pursuits of Philip—Confused state of affairs in France—Treachery of Philip towards the Duke of Parma—Recall of the duke to Spain —His sufferings and death.

The People—which has been generally regarded as something naturally below its rulers, and as born to be protected and governed, paternally or otherwise, by an accidental selection from its own species, which by some mysterious process has shot up much nearer to heaven than itself—is often described as brutal, depraved, self-seeking, ignorant, passionate, licentious, and greedy.

It is fitting, therefore, that its protectors should be distinguished, at great epochs of the world's history, by an absence of such objectionable qualities.

It must be confessed, however, that if the world had waited for heroes— during the dreary period which followed the expulsion of something that was called Henry III. of France from the gates of his capital, and especially during the time that followed hard upon the decease of that embodiment of royalty—its axis must have ceased to turn for a long succession of years. The Bearnese was at least alive, and a man. He played his part with consummate audacity and skill; but alas for an epoch or a country in which such a shape—notwithstanding all its engaging and even commanding qualities—-looked upon as an incarnation of human greatness!

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But the chief mover of all things—so far as one man can be prime mover— was still the diligent scribe who lived in the Escorial. It was he whose high mission it was to blow the bellows of civil war, and to scatter curses over what had once been the smiling abodes of human creatures, throughout the leading countries of Christendom. The throne of France was vacant, nominally as well as actually, since—the year 1589. During two-and-twenty years preceding that epoch he had scourged the provinces, once constituting the richest and most enlightened portions of his hereditary domains, upon the theory that without the Spanish Inquisition no material prosperity was possible on earth, nor any entrance permitted to the realms of bliss beyond the grave. Had every Netherlander consented to burn his Bible, and to be burned himself should he be found listening to its holy precepts if read to him in shop, cottage, farm-house, or castle; and had he furthermore consented to renounce all the liberal institutions which his ancestors had earned, in the struggle of centuries, by the sweat of their brows and the blood of, their hearts; his benignant proprietor and master, who lived at the ends of the earth, would have consented at almost any moment to peace. His arms were ever open. Let it not be supposed that this is the language of sarcasm or epigram. Stripped of the decorous sophistication by which human beings are so fond of concealing their naked thoughts from each other, this was the one simple dogma always propounded by Philip. Grimace had done its worst, however, and it was long since it had exercised any power in the Netherlands. The king and the Dutchmen understood each other; and the plain truths with which those republicans answered the imperial proffers of mediation, so frequently renewed, were something new, and perhaps not entirely unwholesome in diplomacy.

It is not an inviting task to abandon the comparatively healthy atmosphere of the battle-field, the blood-stained swamp, the murderous trench—where human beings, even if communing only by bullets and push of pike, were at least dealing truthfully with each other—and to descend into those subterranean regions where the effluvia of falsehood becomes almost too foul for ordinary human organisation.

Heroes in those days, in any country, there were few. William the Silent was dead. De la Noue was dead. Duplessis-Mornay was living, but his influence over his royal master was rapidly diminishing. Cecil, Hatton, Essex, Howard, Raleigh, James Croft, Valentine Dale, John Norris, Roger Williams, the “Virgin Queen” herself—does one of these chief agents in public affairs, or do all of them together, furnish a thousandth part of that heroic whole which the England of the sixteenth century presents to every imagination? Maurice of Nassau-excellent soldier and engineer as he had already proved himself—-had certainly not developed much of the heroic element,

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although thus far he was walking straightforward like a man, in the path of duty, with the pithy and substantial Lewis William ever at his side. Olden-Barneveld—tough burgher-statesman, hard-headed, indomitable man of granite—was doing more work, and doing it more thoroughly, than any living politician, but he was certainly not of the mythological brotherhood who inhabit the serene regions of space beyond the moon. He was not the son of god or goddess, destined, after removal from this sphere, to shine with planetary lustre, among other constellations, upon the scenes of mortal action. Those of us who are willing to rise-or to descend if the phrase seems wiser—to the idea of a self-governing people must content ourselves, for this epoch, with the fancy of a hero-people and a people-king.

A plain little republic, thrusting itself uninvited into the great political family-party of heaven-anointed sovereigns and long-descended nobles, seemed a somewhat repulsive phenomenon. It became odious and dangerous when by the blows it could deal in battle, the logic it could chop in council, it indicated a remote future for the world, in which right divine and regal paraphernalia might cease to be as effective stage-properties as they had always been considered.

Yet it will be difficult for us to find the heroic individualised very perceptibly at this period, look where we may. Already there seemed ground for questioning the comfortable fiction that the accidentally dominant families and castes were by nature wiser, better, braver than that much-contemned entity, the People. What if the fearful heresy should gain ground that the People was at least as wise, honest, and brave as its masters? What if it should become a recognised fact that the great individuals and castes, whose wealth and station furnished them with ample time and means for perfecting themselves in the science of government, were rather devoting their leisure to the systematic filling of their own pockets than to the hiving up of knowledge for the good of their fellow creatures? What if the whole theory of hereditary superiority should suddenly exhale? What if it were found out that we were all fellow-worms together, and that those which had crawled highest were not necessarily the least slimy?

Meantime it will be well for us, in order to understand what is called the Past, to scrutinise somewhat closely that which was never meant to be revealed. To know the springs which once controlled the world’s movements, one must ponder the secret thoughts, purposes, aspirations, and baffled attempts of the few dozen individuals who once claimed that world in fee-simple. Such researches are not in a cheerful field; for the sources of history are rarely fountains of crystal, bubbling through meadows of asphodel. Vast and noisome are the many sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom.

Some of the leading military events in France and Flanders, patent to all the world, which grouped themselves about the contest for the French throne, as the central point in the history of Philip's proposed world-empire, have already been indicated.

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It was a species of triangular contest—so far as the chief actors were concerned—for that vacant throne. Philip, Mayenne, Henry of Navarre, with all the adroitness which each possessed, were playing for the splendid prize.

Of Philip it is not necessary to speak. The preceding volumes of this work have been written in vain, if the reader has not obtained from irrefragable testimony—the monarch's own especially—a sufficient knowledge of that human fetish before which so much of contemporary humanity grovelled.

The figure of Navarre is also one of the most familiar shapes in history.

As for the Duke of Mayenne, he had been, since the death of his brother the Balafre, ostensible leader of the League, and was playing, not without skill, a triple game.

Firstly, he hoped for the throne for himself.

Secondly, he was assisting the King of Spain to obtain that dignity.

Thirdly, he was manoeuvring in dull, dumb, but not ineffective manner, in favour of Navarre.

So comprehensive and self-contradictory a scheme would seem to indicate an elasticity of principle and a fertility of resource not often vouchsafed to man.

Certainly one of the most pregnant lessons of history is furnished in the development of these cabals, nor is it, in this regard, of great importance whether the issue was to prove them futile or judicious. It is sufficient for us now, that when those vanished days constituted the Present—the vital atmosphere of Christendom—the world's affairs were controlled by those plotters and their subordinates, and it is therefore desirable for us to know what manner of men they were, and how they played their parts.

Nor should it ever be forgotten that the leading motive with all was supposed to be religion. It was to maintain the supremacy of the Roman Church, or to vindicate, to a certain extent, liberty of conscience, through the establishment of a heterodox organisation, that all these human beings of various lineage and language throughout Christendom had been cutting each other's throats for a quarter of a century.

Mayenne was not without courage in the field when he found himself there, but it was observed of him that he spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep, and that he was so fat as to require the assistance of twelve men to put him in the saddle again whenever he fell from his horse. Yet slow fighter as he was, he was a most nimble intriguer. As for his private character, it was notoriously stained with every vice, nor was there enough of natural intelligence or superior acquirement to atone for his, crapulous; licentious, shameless life. His military efficiency at important emergencies was impaired and his life endangered by vile diseases. He was covetous and greedy beyond what

was considered decent even in that cynical age. He received subsidies and alms with both hands from those who distrusted and despised him, but who could not eject him from his advantageous position.

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He wished to arrive at the throne of France. As son of Francis of Guise, as brother of the great Balafre, he considered himself entitled to the homage of the fishwomen and the butchers' halls. The constitution of the country in that age making a People impossible, the subtle connection between a high-born intriguer and the dregs of a populace, which can only exist in societies of deep chasms and precipitous contrasts, was easily established.

The duke's summary dealing with the sixteen tyrants of Paris in the matter of the president's murder had, however, loosened his hold on what was considered the democracy; but this was at the time when his schemes were silently swinging towards the Protestant aristocracy; at the moment when Politica was taking the place of Madam League in his secret affections. Nevertheless, so long as there seemed a chance, he was disposed to work the mines for his own benefit. His position as lieutenant-general gave him an immense advantage for intriguing with both sides, and—in case his aspirations for royalty were baffled—for obtaining the highest possible price for himself in that auction in which Philip and the Bearnese were likely to strain all their resources in outbidding each other.

On one thing his heart was fixed. His brother's son should at least not secure the golden prize if he could prevent it. The young Duke of Guise, who had been immured in Castle Tours since the famous murder of his father and uncle, had made his escape by a rather neat stratagem. Having been allowed some liberty for amusing himself in the corridors in the neighbourhood of his apartment, he had invented a game of hop, skip, and jump up stairs and down, which he was wont to play with the soldiers of the guard, as a solace to the tediousness of confinement. One day he hopped and skipped up the staircase with a rapidity which excited the admiration of the companions of his sport, slipped into his room, slammed and bolted the doors, and when the guard, after in vain waiting a considerable tine for him to return and resume the game, at last forced an entrance, they found the bird flown out of window. Rope-ladders, confederates, fast-galloping post-horses did the rest, and at last the young duke joined his affectionate uncle in camp, much to that eminent relative's discomfiture. Philip gave alternately conflicting instructions to Farnese—sometimes that he should encourage the natural jealousy between the pair; sometimes that he should cause them to work harmoniously together for the common good—that common good being the attainment by the King of Spain of the sovereignty of France.

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But it was impossible, as already intimated, for Mayenne to work harmoniously with his nephew. The Duke of Guise might marry with the infanta and thus become King of France by the grace of God and Philip. To such a consummation in the case of his uncle there stood, as we know, an insuperable obstacle in the shape of the Duchess of Mayenne. Should it come to this at last, it was certain that the Duke would make any and every combination to frustrate such a scheme. Meantime he kept his own counsel, worked amiably with Philip, Parma, and the young duke, and received money in overflowing measure, and poured into his bosom from that Spanish monarch whose veterans in the Netherlands were maddened by starvation into mutiny.

Philip's plans were a series of alternatives. France he regarded as the property of his family. Of that there could be no doubt at all. He meant to put the crown upon his own head, unless the difficulties in the way should prove absolutely insuperable. In that case he claimed France and all its inhabitants as the property of his daughter. The Salic law was simply a pleasantry, a bit of foolish pedantry, an absurdity. If Clara Isabella, as daughter of Isabella of France, as grandchild of Henry II., were not manifestly the owner of France—queen-proprietary, as the Spanish doctors called it—-then there was no such thing, so he thought, as inheritance of castle, farm-house, or hovel—no such thing as property anywhere in the world. If the heiress of the Valois could not take that kingdom as her private estate, what security could there ever be for any possessions public or private?

This was logical reasoning enough for kings and their counsellors. There was much that might be said, however, in regard to special laws. There was no doubt that great countries, with all their livestock—human or otherwise—belonged to an individual, but it was not always so clear who that individual was. This doubt gave much work and comfortable fees to the lawyers. There was much learned lore concerning statutes of descent, cutting off of entails, actions for ejectment, difficulties of enforcing processes, and the like, to occupy the attention of diplomatists, politicians and other sages. It would have caused general hilarity, however, could it have been suggested that the live-stock had art or part in the matter; that sheep, swine, or men could claim a choice of their shepherds and butchers.

Philip—humbly satisfied, as he always expressed himself, so long as the purity of the Roman dogmas and the supremacy of the Romish Church over the whole earth were maintained—affected a comparative indifference as to whether he should put the crown of St. Louis and of Hugh Capet upon his own grey head or whether he should govern France through his daughter and her husband. Happy the man who might exchange the symbols of mutual affection with Philip's daughter.

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The king had various plans in regard to the bestowal of the hand thus richly endowed. First and foremost it was suggested—and the idea was not held too monstrous to be even believed in by some conspicuous individuals—that he proposed espousing his daughter himself. The pope was to be relied on, in this case, to give a special dispensation. Such a marriage, between parties too closely related to be usually united in wedlock, might otherwise shock the prejudices of the orthodox. His late niece and wife was dead, so that there was no inconvenience on that score, should the interests of his dynasty, his family, and, above all, of the Church, impel him, on mature reflection, to take for his fourth marriage one step farther within the forbidden degrees than he had done in his third. Here is the statement, which, if it have no other value, serves to show the hideous designs of which the enemies of Philip sincerely believed that monarch capable.

"But God is a just God," wrote Sir Edward Stafford, "and if with all things past, that be true that the king ('videlicet' Henry IV.) yesterday assured me to be true, and that both his ambassador from Venice writ to him and Monsieur de Luxembourg from Rome, that the Count Olivarez had made a great instance to the pope (Sixtus V.) a little afore his death, to permit his master to marry his daughter, no doubt God will not leave it long unpunished."

Such was the horrible tale which was circulated and believed in by Henry the Great of France and by eminent nobles and ambassadors, and at least thought possible by the English envoy. By such a family arrangement it was obvious that the conflicting claims of father and daughter to the proprietorship of France would be ingeniously adjusted, and the children of so well assorted a marriage might reign in undisputed legitimacy over France and Spain, and the rest of the world-monarchy. Should the king decide on the whole against this matrimonial project, should Innocent or Clement prove as intractable as Sixtus, then it would be necessary to decide among various candidates for the Infanta's hand.

In Mayenne's Opinion the Duke of Guise was likely to be the man; but there is little doubt that Philip, in case these more cherished schemes should fail, had made up his mind—so far as he ever did make up his mind upon anything—to select his nephew the Archduke Ernest, brother of the Emperor Rudolph, for his son-in-law. But it was not necessary to make an immediate choice. His quiver was full of archdukes, any one of whom would be an eligible candidate, while not one of them would be likely to reject the Infanta with France on her wedding-finger. Meantime there was a lion in the path in the shape of Henry of Navarre.

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Those who disbelieve in the influence of the individual on the fate of mankind may ponder the possible results to history and humanity, had the dagger of Jacques Clement entered the stomach of Henry IV. rather than of Henry III. in the summer of 1589, or the perturbations in the world's movements that might have puzzled philosophers had there been an unsuspected mass of religious conviction revolving unseen in the mental depths of the Bearnese. Conscience, as it has from time to time exhibited itself on this planet of ours, is a powerful agent in controlling political combinations; but the instances are unfortunately not rare, so far as sublunary progress is concerned, in which the absence of this dominant influence permits a prosperous rapidity to individual careers. Eternal honour to the noble beings, true chieftains among men, who have forfeited worldly power or sacrificed life itself at the dictate of religious or moral conviction—even should the basis of such conviction appear to some of us unsafe or unreal. Shame on the tongue which would malign or ridicule the martyr or the honest convert to any form of Christian faith! But who can discover aught that is inspiring to the sons of men in conversions—whether of princes or of peasants— wrought, not at risk of life and pelf, but for the sake of securing and increasing the one and the other?

Certainly the Bearnese was the most candid of men. It was this very candour, this freedom from bigotry, this want of conviction, and this openness to conviction, that made him so dangerous and caused so much anxiety to Philip. The Roman Church might or might not be strengthened by the re-conversion of the legitimate heir of France, but it was certain that the claims of Philip and the Infanta to the proprietorship of that kingdom would be weakened by the process. While the Spanish king knew himself to be inspired in all his actions by a single motive, the maintenance of the supremacy of the Roman Church, he was perfectly aware that the Prince of Bearne was not so single-hearted nor so conscientious as himself.

The Prince of Bearne—heretic, son of heretics, great chieftain of heretics—was supposed capable of becoming orthodox whenever the Pope would accept his conversion. Against this possibility Philip struggled with all his strength.

Since Pope Sixtus V., who had a weakness for Henry, there had been several popes. Urban VII., his immediate successor, had reigned but thirteen days. Gregory XIV. (Sfondrato) had died 15th October, 1591, ten months after his election. Fachinetti, with the title of Innocent IX., had reigned two months, from 29th October to 29th December, 1591. He died of "Spanish poison," said Envoy Umton, as coolly as if speaking of gout, or typhus, or any other recognised disorder. Clement VIII. (Aldobrandini) was elected 30th January, 1592. He was no lover of Henry, and lived in mortal fear of Philip, while it must be conceded that the Spanish

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ambassador at Rome was much given to brow-beating his Holiness. Should he dare to grant that absolution which was the secret object of the Bearnese, there was no vengeance, hinted the envoy, that Philip would not wreak on the holy father. He would cut off his supplies from Naples and Sicily, and starve him and all-his subjects; he would frustrate all his family schemes, he would renounce him, he would unpope him, he would do anything that man and despot could do, should the great shepherd dare to re-admit this lost sheep, and this very black sheep, into the fold of the faithful.

As for Henry himself, his game—for in his eyes it was nothing but a game—lay every day plainer and plainer before him. He was indispensable to the heretics. Neither England, nor Holland, nor Protestant Germany, could renounce him, even should he renounce “the religion.” Nor could the French Huguenots exist without that protection which, even although Catholic, he could still extend to them when he should be accepted as king by the Catholics.

Hereditary monarch by French law and history, released from his heresy by the authority that could bind and loose, purged as with hyssop and washed whiter than snow, it should go hard with him if Philip, and Farnese, and Mayenne, and all the pikemen and reiters they might muster, could keep him very long from the throne of his ancestors.

Nothing could match the ingenuousness with which he demanded the instruction whenever the fitting time for it should arrive; as if, instead of having been a professor both of the Calvinist and Catholic persuasion, and having relapsed from both, he had been some innocent Peruvian or Hindoo, who was invited to listen to preachings and to examine dogmas for the very first time in his life.

Yet Philip had good grounds for hoping a favourable result from his political and military manoeuvre. He entertained little doubt that France belonged to him or to his daughter; that the most powerful party in the country was in favour of his claims, provided he would pay the voters liberally enough for their support, and that if the worst came to the worst it would always be in his power to dismember the kingdom, and to reserve the lion’s share for himself, while distributing some of the provinces to the most prominent of his confederates.

The sixteen tyrants of Paris had already, as we have seen, urged the crown upon him, provided he would establish in France the Inquisition, the council of Trent, and other acceptable institutions, besides distributing judiciously a good many lucrative offices among various classes of his adherents.

The Duke of Mayenne, in his own name and that of all the Catholics of France, formally demanded of him to maintain two armies, forty thousand men in all, to be respectively

under command of the duke himself and of Alexander Farnese, and regularly to pay for them. These propositions, as has been seen, were carried into effect as nearly as possible, at enormous expense to Philip's exchequer, and he naturally expected as good faith on the part of Mayenne.

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In the same paper in which the demand was made Philip was urged to declare himself king of France. He was assured that the measure could be accomplished “by freely bestowing marquisates, baronies, and peerages, in order to content the avarice and ambition of many persons, without at the same time dissipating the greatness from which all these members depended. Pepin and Charlemagne,” said the memorialists, “who were foreigners and Saxons by nation, did as much in order to get possession of a kingdom to which they had no other right except that which they acquired there by their prudence and force, and after them Hugh Capet, much inferior to them in force and authority, following their example, had the same good fortune for himself and his posterity, and one which still endures.

“If the authority of the holy see could support the scheme at the same time,” continued Mayenne and friends, “it would be a great help. But it being perilous to ask for that assistance before striking the blow, it would be better to obtain it after the execution.”

That these wholesome opinions were not entirely original on the part of Mayenne, nor produced spontaneously, was plain from the secret instructions given by Philip to his envoys, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, John Baptist de Tassis, and the commander Moreo, whom he had sent soon after the death of Henry III. to confer with Cardinal Gaetano in Paris.

They were told, of course, to do everything in their power to prevent the election of the Prince of Bearne, “being as he was a heretic, obstinate and confirmed, who had sucked heresy with his mother’s milk.” The legate was warned that “if the Bearnese should make a show of converting himself, it would be frigid and fabricated.”

If they were asked whom Philip desired for king—a question which certainly seemed probable under the circumstances—they were to reply that his foremost wish was to establish the Catholic religion in the kingdom, and that whatever was most conducive to that end would be most agreeable to him. “As it is however desirable, in order to arrange matters, that you should be informed of everything,” said his Majesty, “it is proper that you should know that I have two kinds of right to all that there is over there. Firstly, because the crown of France has been usurped from me, my ancestors having been unjustly excluded by foreign occupation of it; and secondly, because I claim the same crown as first male of the house of Valois.”

Here certainly were comprehensive pretensions, and it was obvious that the king’s desire for the establishment of the Catholic religion must have been very lively to enable him to invent or accept such astonishing fictions.

But his own claims were but a portion of the case. His daughter and possible spouse had rights of her own, hard, in his opinion, to be gainsaid. “Over and above all this,” said Philip, “my eldest daughter, the Infanta, has two other rights; one to all the states which as dower-property are joined by matrimony and through females to this crown,

which now come to her in direct line, and the other to the crown itself, which belongs directly to the said Infanta, the matter of the Salic law being a mere invention."

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Thus it would appear that Philip was the legitimate representative, not only of the ancient races of French monarchs—whether Merovingians, Carlovingians, or otherwise was not stated but also of the usurping houses themselves, by whose intrusion those earlier dynasties had been ejected, being the eldest male heir of the extinct line of Valois, while his daughter was, if possible, even more legitimately the sovereign and proprietor of France than he was himself.

Nevertheless in his magnanimous desire for the peace of the world and the advancement of the interests of the Church, he was, if reduced to extremities, willing to forego his own individual rights—when it should appear that they could by no possibility be enforced—in favour of his daughter and of the husband whom he should select for her.

“Thus it may be seen,” said the self-denying man, “that I know how, for the sake of the public repose, to strip myself of my private property.”

Afterwards, when secretly instructing the Duke of Feria, about to proceed to Paris for the sake of settling the sovereignty of the kingdom, he reviewed the whole subject, setting forth substantially the same intentions. That the Prince of Bearne could ever possibly succeed to the throne of his ancestors was an idea to be treated only with sublime scorn by all right-minded and sensible men. “The members of the House of Bourbon,” said he, “pretend that by right of blood the crown belongs to them, and hence is derived the pretension made by the Prince of Bearne; but if there were wanting other very sufficient causes to prevent this claim—which however are not wanting—it is quite enough that he is a relapsed heretic, declared to be such by the Apostolic See, and pronounced incompetent, as well as the other members of his house, all of them, to say the least, encouragers of heresy; so that not one of them can ever be king of France, where there have been such religious princes in time past, who have justly merited the name of Most Christian; and so there is no possibility of permitting him or any of his house to aspire to the throne, or to have the subject even treated of in the estates. It should on the contrary be entirely excluded as prejudicial to the realm and unworthy to be even mentioned among persons so Catholic as those about to meet in that assembly.”

The claims of the man whom his supporters already called Henry the Fourth of France being thus disposed of, Philip then again alluded with his usual minuteness to the various combinations which he had formed for the tranquillity and good government of that kingdom and of the other provinces of his world-empire.

It must moreover be never forgotten that what he said passed with his contemporaries almost for oracular dispensations. What he did or ordered to be done was like the achievements or behests of a superhuman being. Time, as it rolls by, leaves the wrecks of many a stranded reputation to bleach in the sunshine of after-ages. It is sometimes as profitable to learn what was not done by the great ones of the earth, in spite of all

their efforts, as to ponder those actual deeds which are patent to mankind. The Past was once the Present, and once the Future, bright with rainbows or black with impending storm; for history is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments.

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He who at the epoch with which we are now occupied was deemed greatest and wisest among the sons of earth, at whose threats men quailed, at whose vast and intricate schemes men gasped in palefaced awe, has left behind him the record of his interior being. Let us consider whether he was so potent as his fellow mortals believed, or whether his greatness was merely their littleness; whether it was carved out, of the inexhaustible but artificial quarry of human degradation. Let us see whether the execution was consonant with the inordinate plotting; whether the price in money and blood—and certainly few human beings have squandered so much of either as did Philip the Prudent in his long career—was high or low for the work achieved.

Were after generations to learn, only after curious research, of a pretender who once called himself, to the amusement of his contemporaries, Henry the Fourth of France; or was the world-empire for which so many armies were marshalled, so many ducats expended, so many falsehoods told, to prove a bubble after all? Time was to show. Meantime wise men of the day who, like the sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll, were pitying the delusion and rebuking the wickedness of Henry the Bearnese; persisting as he did in his cruel, sanguinary, hopeless attempt to establish a vanished and impossible authority over a land distracted by civil war.

Nothing could be calmer or more reasonable than the language of the great champion of the Inquisition.

“And as President Jeannin informs me,” he said, “that the Catholics have the intention of electing me king, that appearing to them the gentlest and safest method to smooth all rivalries likely to arise among the princes aspiring to the crown, I reply, as you will see by the copy herewith sent. You will observe that after not refusing myself to that which may be the will of our Lord, should there be no other mode of serving Him, above all I desire that which concerns my daughter, since to her belongs the kingdom. I desire nothing else nor anything for myself, nor for anybody else, except as a means for her to arrive at her right.”

He had taken particular pains to secure his daughter’s right in Brittany, while the Duchess of Mercoeur, by the secret orders of her husband, had sent a certain ecclesiastic to Spain to make over the sovereignty of this province to the Infanta. Philip directed that the utmost secrecy should be observed in regard to this transaction with the duke and duchess, and promised the duke, as his reward for these proposed services in dismembering his country, the government of the province for himself and his heirs.

For the king was quite determined—in case his efforts to obtain the crown for himself or for his daughter were unsuccessful—to dismember France, with the assistance of those eminent Frenchmen who were now so industriously aiding him in his projects.

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“And in the third place,” said he, in his secret instructions to Feria, “if for the sins of all, we don’t manage to make any election, and if therefore the kingdom (of France) has to come to separation and to be divided into many hands; in this case we must propose to the Duke of Mayenne to assist him in getting possession of Normandy for himself, and as to the rest of the kingdom, I shall take for myself that which seems good to me—all of us assisting each other.”

But unfortunately it was difficult for any of these fellow-labourers to assist each other very thoroughly, while they detested each other so cordially and suspected each other with such good reason.

Moreo, Ybarra, Feria, Parma, all assured their master that Mayenne was taking Spanish money as fast as he could get it, but with the sole purpose of making himself king. As to any of the House of Lorraine obtaining the hand of the Infanta and the throne with it, Feria assured Philip that Mayenne “would sooner give the crown to the Grand Turk.”

Nevertheless Philip thought it necessary to continue making use of the duke. Both were indefatigable therefore in expressing feelings of boundless confidence each in the other.

It has been seen too how entirely the king relied on the genius and devotion of Alexander Farnese to carry out his great schemes; and certainly never had monarch a more faithful, unscrupulous, and dexterous servant. Remonstrating, advising, but still obeying—entirely without conscience, unless it were conscience to carry out his master’s commands, even when most puerile or most diabolical—he was nevertheless the object of Philip’s constant suspicion, and felt himself placed under perpetual though secret supervision.

Commander Moreo was unwearied in blackening the duke’s character, and in maligning his every motive and action, and greedily did the king incline his ear to the calumnies steadily instilled by the chivalrous spy.

“He has caused all the evil we are suffering,” said Moreo. “When he sent Egmont to France ’twas without infantry, although Egmont begged hard for it, as did likewise the Legate, Don Bernardino, and Tassis. Had he done this there is no doubt at all that the Catholic cause in France would have been safe, and your Majesty would now have the control over that kingdom which you desire. This is the opinion of friends and foes. I went to the Duke of Parma and made free to tell him that the whole world would blame him for the damage done to Christianity, since your Majesty had exonerated yourself by ordering him to go to the assistance of the French Catholics with all the zeal possible. Upon this he was so disgusted that he has never shown me a civil face since. I doubt whether he will send or go to France at all, and although the Duke of Mayenne despatches couriers every day with protestations and words that would soften rocks, I see no indications of a movement.”

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Thus, while the duke was making great military preparations far invading France without means; pawning his own property to get bread for his starving veterans, and hanging those veterans whom starving had made. mutinous, he was depicted, to the most suspicious and unforgiving mortal that ever wore a crown, as a traitor and a rebel, and this while he was renouncing his own judicious and well-considered policy in obedience to the wild schemes of his master.

“I must make bold to remind your Majesty,” again whispered the spy, “that there never was an Italian prince who failed to pursue his own ends, and that there are few in the world that are not wishing to become greater than they are. This man here could strike a greater blow than all the rest of them put together. Remember that there is not a villain anywhere that does not desire the death of your Majesty. Believe me, and send to cut off my head if it shall be found that I am speaking from passion, or from other motive than pure zeal for your royal service.”

The reader will remember into what a paroxysm of rage Alexander was thrown on, a former occasion, when secretly invited to listen to propositions by which the sovereignty over the Netherlands was to be secured to himself, and how near he was to inflicting mortal punishment with his own hand on the man who had ventured to broach that treasonable matter.

Such projects and propositions were ever floating, as it were, in the atmosphere, and it was impossible for the most just men to escape suspicion in the mind of a king who fed upon suspicion as his daily bread. Yet nothing could be fouler or falser than the calumny which described Alexander as unfaithful to Philip. Had he served his God as he served his master perhaps his record before the highest tribunal would have been a clearer one.

And in the same vein in which he wrote to the monarch in person did the crafty Moreo write to the principal secretary of state, Idiaquez, whose mind, as well as his master’s, it was useful to poison, and who was in daily communication with Philip.

“Let us make sure of Flanders,” said he, “otherwise we shall all of us be well cheated. I will tell you something of that which I have already told his Majesty, only not all, referring you to Tassis, who, as a personal witness to many things, will have it in his power to undeceive his Majesty, I have seen very clearly that the duke is disgusted with his Majesty, and one day he told me that he cared not if the whole world went to destruction, only not Flanders.”

“Another day he told me that there was a report abroad that his Majesty was sending to arrest him, by means of the Duke of Pastrana, and looking at me he said: ’See here, seignior commander, no threats, as if it were in the power of mortal man to arrest me, much less of such fellows as these.’”

“But this is but a small part of what I could say,” continued the detective knight-commander, “for I don’t like to trust these ciphers. But be certain that nobody in Flanders wishes well to these estates or to the Catholic cause, and the associates of the Duke of Parma go about saying that it does not suit the Italian potentates to have his Majesty as great a monarch as he is trying to be.”

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This is but a sample of the dangerous stuff with which the royal mind was steadily drugged, day after day, by those to whom Farnese was especially enjoined to give his confidence.

Later on it will be seen how-much effect was thus produced both upon the king and upon the duke. Moreo, Mendoza, and Tasais were placed about the governor-general, nominally as his counsellors, in reality as police-officers.

“You are to confer regularly with Mendoza, Tassis, and Moreo,” said Philip to Farnese.

“You are to assist, correspond, and harmonize in every way with the Duke of Parma,” wrote Philip to Mendoza, Tassis, and Moreo. And thus cordially and harmoniously were the trio assisting and corresponding with the duke.

But Moreo was right in not wishing to trust the ciphers, and indeed he had trusted them too much, for Farnese was very well aware of his intrigues, and complained bitterly of them to the king and to Idiaquez.

Most eloquently and indignantly did he complain of the calumnies, ever renewing themselves, of which he was the subject. “’Tis this good Moreo who is the author of the last falsehoods,” said he to the secretary; “and this is but poor payment for my having neglected my family, my parents and children for so many years in the king’s service, and put my life ever on the hazard, that these fellows should be allowed to revile me and make game of me now, instead of assisting me.”

He was at that time, after almost superhuman exertions, engaged in the famous relief of Paris. He had gone there, he said, against his judgment and remonstrating with his Majesty on the insufficiency of men and money for such an enterprise. His army was half-mutinous and unprovided with food, artillery, or munitions; and then he found himself slandered, ridiculed, his life’s life lied away. ’Twas poor payment for his services, he exclaimed, if his Majesty should give ear to these calumniators, and should give him no chance of confronting his accusers and clearing his reputation. Moreo detested him, as he knew, and Prince Doria said that the commander once spoke so ill of Farnese in Genoa that he was on the point of beating him; while Moreo afterwards told the story as if he had been maltreated because of defending Farnese against Doria’s slanders.

And still more vehemently did he inveigh against Moreo in his direct appeals to Philip. He had intended to pass over his calumnies, of which he was well aware, because he did not care to trouble the dead—for Moreo meantime had suddenly died, and the gossips, of course, said it was of Farnese poison—but he had just discovered by documents that the commander had been steadily and constantly pouring these his calumnies into the monarch’s ears. He denounced every charge as lies, and demanded proof. Moreo had further been endeavouring to prejudice the Duke of Mayenne against

the King of Spain and himself, saying that he, Farnese, had been commissioned to take Mayenne into custody, with plenty of similar lies.

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“But what I most feel,” said Alexander, with honest wrath, “is to see that your Majesty gives ear to them without making the demonstration which my services merit, and has not sent to inform me of them, seeing that they may involve my reputation and honour. People have made more account of these calumnies than of my actions performed upon the theatre of the world. I complain, after all my toils and dangers in your Majesty’s service, just when I stood with my soul in my mouth and death in my teeth, forgetting children, house, and friends, to be treated thus, instead of receiving rewards and honour, and being enabled to leave to my children, what was better than all the riches the royal hand could bestow, an unsullied and honourable name.”

He protested that his reputation had so much suffered that he would prefer to retire to some remote corner as a humble servant of the king, and leave a post which had made him so odious to all. Above all, he entreated his Majesty to look upon this whole affair “not only like a king but like a gentleman.”

Philip answered these complaints and reproaches benignantly, expressed unbounded confidence in the duke, assured him that the calumnies of his supposed enemies could produce no effect upon the royal mind, and coolly professed to have entirely forgotten having received any such letter as that of which his nephew complained. “At any rate I have mislaid it,” he said, “so that you see how much account it was with me.”

As the king was in the habit of receiving such letters every week, not only from the commander, since deceased, but from Ybarra and others, his memory, to say the least, seemed to have grown remarkably feeble. But the sequel will very soon show that he had kept the letters by him and pondered them to much purpose. To expect frankness and sincerity from him, however, even in his most intimate communications to his most trusted servants, would have been to “swim with fins of lead.”

Such being the private relations between the conspirators, it is instructive to observe how they dealt with each other in the great game they were playing for the first throne in Christendom. The military events have been sufficiently sketched in the preceding pages, but the meaning and motives of public affairs can be best understood by occasional glances behind the scenes. It is well for those who would maintain their faith in popular Governments to study the workings of the secret, irresponsible, arbitrary system; for every Government, as every individual, must be judged at last by those moral laws which no man born of woman can evade.

During the first French expedition-in the course of which Farnese had saved Paris from falling into, the hands of Henry, and had been doing his best to convert it prospectively into the capital of his master’s empire--it was his duty, of course, to represent as accurately as possible the true state of France. He submitted his actions to his master’s will, but he never withheld from him the advantage that he might have derived, had he so chosen, from his nephew’s luminous intelligence and patient observation.

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With the chief personage he had to deal with he professed himself, at first, well satisfied. "The Duke of Mayenne," said he to Philip, "persists in desiring your Majesty only as King of France, and will hear of no other candidate, which gives me satisfaction such as can't be exaggerated." Although there were difficulties in the way, Farnese thought that the two together with God's help might conquer them. "Certainly it is not impossible that your Majesty may succeed," he said, "although very problematical; and in case your Majesty does succeed in that which we all desire and are struggling for, Mayenne not only demands the second place in the kingdom for himself, but the fief of some great province for his family."

Should it not be possible for Philip to obtain the crown, Farnese was, on the whole, of opinion that Mayenne had better be elected. In that event he would make over Brittany and Burgundy to Philip, together with the cities opposite the English coast. If they were obliged to make the duke king, as was to be feared, they should at any rate exclude the Prince of Bearne, and secure, what was the chief point, the Catholic religion. "This," said Alexander, "is about what I can gather of Mayenne's views, and perhaps he will put them down in a despatch to your Majesty."

After all, the duke was explicit enough. He was for taking all he could get—the whole kingdom if possible—but if foiled, then as large a slice of it as Philip would give him as the price of his services. And Philip's ideas were not materially different from those of the other conspirator.

Both were agreed on one thing. The true heir must be kept out of his rights, and the Catholic religion be maintained in its purity. As to the inclination of the majority of the inhabitants, they could hardly be in the dark. They knew that the Bearnese was instinctively demanded by the nation; for his accession to the throne would furnish the only possible solution to the entanglements which had so long existed.

As to the true sentiments of the other politicians and soldiers of the League with whom Bearnese came in contact in France, he did not disguise from his master that they were anything but favourable.

"That you may know, the, humour of this kingdom," said he, "and the difficulties in which I am placed, I must tell you that I am by large experience much confirmed in that which I have always suspected. Men don't love nor esteem the royal name of your Majesty, and whatever the benefits and assistance they get from you they have no idea of anything redounding to your benefit and royal service, except so far as implied in maintaining the Catholic religion and keeping out the Bearne. These two things, however, they hold to be so entirely to your Majesty's profit, that all you are doing appears the fulfilment of a simple obligation. They are filled with fear, jealousy, and suspicion of your Majesty. They

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dread your acquiring power here. Whatever negotiations they pretend in regard to putting the kingdom or any of their cities under your protection, they have never had any real intention of doing it, but their only object is to keep up our vain hopes while they are carrying out their own ends. If to-day they seem to have agreed upon any measure, tomorrow they are sure to get out of it again. This has always been the case, and all your Majesty's ministers that have had dealings here would say so, if they chose to tell the truth. Men are disgusted with the entrance of the army, and if they were not expecting a more advantageous peace in the kingdom with my assistance than without it, I don't know what they would do; for I have heard what I have heard and seen what I have seen. They are afraid of our army, but they want its assistance and our money."

Certainly if Philip desired enlightenment as to the real condition of the country he had determined to, appropriate; and the true sentiments of its most influential inhabitants, here, was the man most competent of all the world to advise him; describing the situation for him, day by day, in the most faithful manner. And at every, step the absolutely puerile inadequacy of the means, employed by the king to accomplish his gigantic purposes became apparent. If the crime of subjugating or at least dismembering the great kingdom of France were to, be attempted with any hope of success, at least it might have been expected that the man employed to consummate the deed would be furnished with more troops and money than would be required to appropriate a savage island off the Caribbean, or a German. principality. But Philip expected miracles to be accomplished by the mere private assertion of his will. It was so easy to conquer realms the writing table.

"I don't say," continued Farnese, "if I could have entered France with a competent army, well paid and disciplined, with plenty of artillery, and munitions, and with funds enough to enable Mayenne to buy up the nobles of his party, and to conciliate the leaders generally with presents and promises, that perhaps they might not have softened. Perhaps interest and fear would have made that name agreeable which pleases them so little, now that the very reverse of all this has occurred. My want of means is causing a thousand disgusts among the natives of the country, and it is this penury that will be the chief cause of the disasters which may occur."

Here was sufficiently plain speaking. To conquer a war-like nation without an army; to purchase a rapacious nobility with an empty purse, were tasks which might break the stoutest heart. They were breaking Alexander's.

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Yet Philip had funds enough, if he had possessed financial ability himself, or any talent for selecting good financiers. The richest countries of the old world and the new were under his sceptre; the mines of Peru and Mexico; the wealth of farthest Ind, were at his disposition; and moreover he drove a lucrative traffic in the sale of papal bulls and massbooks, which were furnished to him at a very low figure, and which he compelled the wild Indians of America and the savages of the Pacific to purchase of him at an enormous advance. That very year, a Spanish carrack had been captured by the English off the Barbary coast, with an assorted cargo, the miscellaneous nature of which gives an idea of royal commercial pursuits at that period. Besides wine in large quantities there were fourteen hundred chests of quicksilver, an article indispensable to the working of the silver mines, and which no one but the king could, upon pain of death, send to America. He received, according to contract; for every pound of quicksilver thus delivered a pound of pure silver, weight for weight. The ship likewise contained ten cases of gilded mass-books and papal bulls. The bulls, two million and seventy thousand in number, for the dead and the living, were intended for the provinces of New Spain, Yucatan, Guatemala, Honduras, and the Philippines. The quicksilver and the bulls cost the king three hundred thousand florins, but he sold them for five million. The .price at, which the bulls were to be sold varied-according to the letters of advice found in the ships—from two to four reals a piece, and the inhabitants of those conquered regions were obliged to buy them. "From all this," says a contemporary chronicler; "is to be seen what a thrifty trader was the king."

The affairs of France were in such confusion that it was impossible for them, according to Farnese, to remain in such condition much longer without bringing about entire decomposition. Every man was doing as he chose—whether governor of a city, commander of a district, or gentleman in his castle. Many important nobles and prelates followed the Bearnese party, and Mayenne was entitled to credit for doing as well as he did. There was no pretence, however, that his creditable conduct was due to anything but the hope of being well paid. "If your Majesty should decide to keep Mayenne," said Alexander, "you can only do it with large: sums of money. He is a good Catholic and very firm in his purpose, but is so much opposed by his own party, that if I had not so stimulated him by hopes of his own grandeur, he would have grown desperate—such small means has he of maintaining his party—and, it is to be feared, he would have made arrangements with Bearne, who offers him carte-blanche."

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The disinterested man had expressed his assent to the views of Philip in regard to the assembly of the estates and the election of king, but had claimed the sum of six hundred thousand dollars as absolutely necessary to the support of himself and followers until those events should occur. Alexander not having that sum at his disposal was inclined to defer matters, but was more and more confirmed in his opinion that the Duke was a “man of truth, faith, and his word.” He had distinctly agreed that no king should be elected, not satisfactory to Philip, and had “stipulated in return that he should have in this case, not only the second place in the kingdom, but some very great and special reward in full property.”

Thus the man of truth, faith, and his word had no idea of selling himself cheap, but manifested as much commercial genius as the Fuggers themselves could have displayed, had they been employed as brokers in these mercantile transactions.

Above all things, Alexander implored the king to be expeditious, resolute, and liberal; for, after all, the Bearnese might prove a more formidable competitor than he was deemed. “These matters must be arranged while the iron is hot,” he said, “in order that the name and memory of the Bearne and of all his family may be excluded at once and forever; for your Majesty must not doubt that the whole kingdom inclines to him, both because he is natural successor, to the crowns and because in this way the civil war would cease. The only thing that gives trouble is the religions defect, so that if this should be remedied in appearance, even if falsely, men would spare no pains nor expense in his cause.”

No human being at that moment, assuredly, could look into the immediate future accurately enough to see whether the name and memory of the man, whom his adherents called Henry the Fourth of France, and whom Spaniards, legitimists and enthusiastic papists, called the Prince of Bearne, were to be for ever excluded from the archives of France; whether Henry, after spending the whole of his life as a pretender, was destined to bequeath the same empty part to his descendants, should they think it worth their while to play it. Meantime the sages smiled superior at his delusion; while Alexander Farnese, on the contrary, better understanding the chances of the great game which they were all playing, made bold to tell his master that all hearts in France were inclining to their natural lord. “Differing from your Majesty,” said he, “I am of opinion that there is no better means of excluding him than to make choice of the Duke of Mayenne, as a person agreeable to the people, and who could only reign by your permission and support.”

Thus, after much hesitation and circumlocution, the nephew made up his mind to chill his uncle’s hopes of the crown, and to speak a decided opinion in behalf of the man of his word, faith and truth.

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And thus through the whole of the two memorable campaigns made by Alexander in France, he never failed to give his master the most accurate pictures of the country, and an interior view of its politics; urging above all the absolute necessity of providing much more liberal supplies for the colossal adventure in which he was engaged. "Money and again money is what is required," he said. "The principal matter is to be accomplished with money, and the particular individuals must be bought with money. The good will of every French city must be bought with money. Mayenne must be humoured. He is getting dissatisfied. Very probably he is intriguing with Bearne. Everybody is pursuing his private ends. Mayenne has never abandoned his own wish to be king, although he sees the difficulties in the way; and while he has not the power to do us as much good as is thought, it is certainly in his hands to do us a great deal of injury."

When his army was rapidly diminishing by disease, desertion, mutiny, and death, he vehemently and perpetually denounced the utter inadequacy of the king's means to his vast projects. He protested that he was not to blame for the ruin likely to come upon the whole enterprise. He had besought, remonstrated, reasoned with Philip—in vain. He assured his master that in the condition of weakness in which they found themselves, not very triumphant negotiations could be expected, but that he would do his best. "The Frenchmen," he said, "are getting tired of our disorders, and scandalized by our weakness, misery, and poverty. They disbelieve the possibility of being liberated through us."

He was also most diligent in setting before the king's eyes the dangerous condition of the obedient Netherlands, the poverty of the finances, the mutinous degeneration of the once magnificent Spanish army, the misery of the country, the ruin of the people, the discontent of the nobles, the rapid strides made by the republic, the vast improvement in its military organization, the rising fame of its young stadholder, the thrift of its exchequer, the rapid development of its commerce, the menacing aspect which it assumed towards all that was left of Spanish power in those regions.

Moreover, in the midst of the toils and anxieties of war-making and negotiation, he had found time to discover and to send to his master the left leg of the glorious apostle St. Philip, and the head of the glorious martyr St. Lawrence, to enrich his collection of relics; and it may be doubted whether these treasures were not as welcome to the king as would have been the news of a decisive victory.

During the absence of Farnese in his expeditions against the Bearnese, the government of his provinces was temporarily in the hands of Peter Ernest Mansfeld.

This grizzled old fighter—testy, choleric, superannuated—was utterly incompetent for his post. He was a mere tool in the hands of his son. Count Charles hated Parma very cordially, and old Count Peter was made to believe himself in danger of being poisoned or poniarded by the duke. He was perpetually wrangling with, importuning and insulting him in consequence, and writing malicious letters to the king in regard to him. The great

nobles, Arschot, Chimay, Berlaymont, Champagny, Arenberg, and the rest, were all bickering among themselves, and agreeing in nothing save in hatred to Farnese.

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A tight rein, a full exchequer, a well-ordered and well-paid army, and his own constant patience, were necessary, as Alexander too well knew, to make head against the republic, and to hold what was left of the Netherlands. But with a monthly allowance, and a military force not equal to his own estimates for the Netherland work, he was ordered to go forth from the Netherlands to conquer France—and with it the dominion of the world—for the recluse of the Escorial.

Very soon it was his duty to lay bare to his master, still more unequivocally than ever, the real heart of Mayenne. No one could surpass Alexander in this skilful vivisection of political characters; and he soon sent the information that the Duke was in reality very near closing his bargain with the Bearnese, while amusing Philip and drawing largely from his funds.

Thus, while faithfully doing his master's work with sword and pen, with an adroitness such as no other man could have matched, it was a necessary consequence that Philip should suspect, should detest, should resolve to sacrifice him. While assuring his nephew, as we have seen, that elaborate, slanderous reports and protocols concerning him, sent with such regularity by the chivalrous Moreo and the other spies, had been totally disregarded, even if they had ever met his eye, he was quietly preparing—in the midst of all these most strenuous efforts of Alexander, in the field at peril of his life, in the cabinet at the risk of his soul—to deprive him of his office, and to bring him, by stratagem if possible, but otherwise by main force, from the Netherlands to Spain.

This project, once-resolved upon, the king proceeded to execute with that elaborate attention to detail, with that feline stealth which distinguished him above all kings or chiefs of police that have ever existed. Had there been a murder at the end of the plot, as perhaps there was to be—Philip could not have enjoyed himself more. Nothing surpassed the industry for mischief of this royal invalid.

The first thing to be done was of course the inditing of a most affectionate epistle to his nephew.

"Nephew," said he, "you know the confidence which I have always placed in you and all that I have put in your hands, and I know how much you are to me, and how earnestly you work in my service, and so, if I could have you at the same time in several places, it would be a great relief to me. Since this cannot be however, I wish to make use of your assistance, according to the times and occasions, in order that I may have some certainty as to the manner in which all this business is to be managed, may see why the settlement of affairs in France is thus delayed, and what the state of things in Christendom generally is, and may consult with, you about an army which I am getting levied here, and about certain schemes now on foot in regard to the remedy for all this; all which makes me desire your presence here

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for some time, even if a short time, in order to resolve upon and arrange with the aid of your advice and opinion, many affairs concerning the public good and facilitate their execution by means of your encouragement and presence, and to obtain the repose which I hope for in putting them into your hands. And so I charge and command you that, if you desire to content me, you use all possible diligence to let me see you here as soon as possible, and that you start at once for Genoa."

He was further directed to leave Count Mansfeld at the head of affairs during this temporary absence, as had been the case so often before, instructing him to make use of the Marquis of Cerralbo, who was already there, to lighten labours that might prove too much for a man of Mansfeld's advanced age.

"I am writing to the marquis," continued the king, "telling him that he is to obey all your orders. As to the reasons of your going away, you will give out that it is a decision of your own, founded on good cause, or that it is a summons of mine, but full of confidence and good will towards you, as you see that it is."

The date of this letter was 20th February, 1592.

The secret instructions to the man who was thus to obey all the duke's orders were explicit enough upon that point, although they were wrapped in the usual closely-twisted phraseology which distinguished Philip's style when his purpose was most direct.

Cerralbo was entrusted with general directions as to the French matter, and as to peace negotiations with "the Islands;" but the main purport of his mission was to remove Alexander Farnese. This was to be done by fair means, if possible; if not, he was to be deposed and sent home by force.

This was to be the reward of all the toil and danger through which he had grown grey and broken in the king's service.

"When you get to the Netherlands" (for the instructions were older than the letter to Alexander just cited), "you are," said the king, "to treat of the other two matters until the exact time arrives for the third, taking good care not to, cut the thread of good progress in the affairs of France if by chance they are going on well there.

"When the time arrives to treat of commission number three," continued his Majesty, "you will take occasion of the arrival of the courier of 20th February, and will give with much secrecy the letter of that date to the duke; showing him at the same time the first of the two which you will have received."

If the duke showed the letter addressed to him by his uncle—which the reader has already seen—then the marquis was to discuss with him the details of the journey, and

comment upon the benefits and increased reputation which would be the result of his return to Spain.

“But if the duke should not show you the letter,” proceeded Philip, “and you suspect that he means to conceal and equivocate about the particulars of it, you can show him your letter number two, in which it is stated that you have received a copy of the letter to the duke. This will make the step easier.”

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Should the duke declare himself ready to proceed to Spain on the ground indicated—-that the king had need of his services—the marquis was then to hasten his departure as earnestly as possible. Every pains were to be taken to overcome any objections that might be made by the duke on the score of ill health, while the great credit which attached to this summons to consult with the king in such arduous affairs was to be duly enlarged upon. Should Count Mansfeld meantime die of old age, and should Farnese insist the more vehemently, on that account, upon leaving his son the Prince Ranuccio in his post as governor, the marquis was authorised to accept the proposition for the moment—although secretly instructed that such an appointment was really quite out of the question—if by so doing the father could be torn from the place immediately.

But if all would not do, and if it should become certain that the duke would definitively refuse to take his departure, it would then become necessary to tell him clearly, but secretly, that no excuse would be accepted, but that go he must; and that if he did not depart voluntarily within a fixed time, he would be publicly deprived of office and conducted to Spain by force.

But all these things were to be managed with the secrecy and mystery so dear to the heart of Philip. The marquis was instructed to go first to the castle of Antwerp, as if upon financial business, and there begin his operations. Should he find at last all his private negotiations and coaxings of no avail, he was then to make use of his secret letters from the king to the army commanders, the leading nobles of the country, and of the neighbouring princes, all of whom were to be undeceived in regard to the duke, and to be informed of the will of his majesty.

The real successor of Farnese was to be the Archduke Albert, Cardinal of Austria, son of Archduke Ferdinand, and the letters on this subject were to be sent by a “decent and confidential person” so soon as it should become obvious that force would be necessary in order to compel the departure of Alexander. For if it came to open rupture, it would be necessary to have the cardinal ready to take the place. If the affair were arranged amicably, then the new governor might proceed more at leisure. The marquis was especially enjoined, in case the duke should be in France, and even if it should be necessary for him to follow him there on account of commissions number one and two, not to say a word to him then of his recall, for fear of damaging matters in that kingdom. He was to do his best to induce him to return to Flanders, and when they were both there, he was to begin his operations.

Thus, with minute and artistic treachery, did Philip provide for the disgrace and ruin of the man who was his near blood relation, and who had served him most faithfully from earliest youth. It was not possible to carry out the project immediately, for, as it has already been narrated, Farnese, after achieving, in spite of great obstacles due to the dulness of the king alone, an extraordinary triumph, had been dangerously wounded, and was unable for a brief interval to attend to public affairs.

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On the conclusion of his Rouen campaign he had returned to the Netherlands, almost immediately betaking himself to the waters of Spa. The Marquis de Cerralbo meanwhile had been superseded in his important secret mission by the Count of Fuentes, who received the same instructions as had been provided for the marquis.

But ere long it seemed to become unnecessary to push matters to extremities. Farnese, although nominally the governor, felt himself unequal to take the field against the vigorous young commander who was carrying everything before him in the north and east. Upon the Mansfelds was the responsibility for saving Steenwyk and Coeworden, and to the Mansfelds did Verdugo send piteously, but in vain, for efficient help. For the Mansfelds and other leading personages in the obedient Netherlands were mainly occupied at that time in annoying Farnese, calumniating his actions, laying obstacles in the way of his administration, military and civil, and bringing him into contempt with the populace. When the weary soldier—broken in health, wounded and harassed with obtaining triumphs for his master such as no other living man could have gained with the means placed at his disposal—returned to drink the waters, previously to setting forth anew upon the task of achieving the impossible, he was made the mark of petty insults on the part of both the Mansfelds. Neither of them paid their respects to him; ill as he was, until four days after his arrival. When the duke subsequently called a council; Count Peter refused to attend it on account of having slept ill the night before. Champagny; who was one of, the chief mischief-makers, had been banished by Parma to his house in Burgundy. He became very much alarmed, and was afraid of losing his head. He tried to conciliate the duke, but finding it difficult he resolved to turn monk, and so went to the convent of Capuchins, and begged hard to be admitted a member. They refused him on account of his age and infirmities. He tried a Franciscan monastery with not much better success, and then obeyed orders and went to his Burgundy mansion; having been assured by Farnese that he was not to lose his head. Alexander was satisfied with that arrangement, feeling sure, he said, that so soon as his back was turned Champagny would come out of his convent before the term of probation had expired, and begin to make mischief again. A once valiant soldier, like Champagny, whose conduct in the famous “fury of Antwerp” was so memorable; and whose services both in field and-cabinet had, been so distinguished, fallen so low as to, be used as a tool by the Mansfelds against a man like Farnese; and to be rejected as unfit company by Flemish friars, is not a cheerful spectacle to contemplate.

The walls of the Mansfeld house and gardens, too, were decorated by Count Charles with caricatures, intending to illustrate the indignities put upon his father: and himself.

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Among others, one picture represented Count Peter lying tied hand and foot, while people were throwing filth upon him; Count Charles being pourtrayed as meantime being kicked away from the command of a battery of cannon by, De la Motte. It seemed strange that the Mansfelds should, make themselves thus elaborately ridiculous, in order to irritate Farnese; but thus it was. There was so much stir, about these works of art that Alexander transmitted copies of them to the king, whereupon Charles Mansfeld, being somewhat alarmed, endeavoured to prove that they had been entirely misunderstood. The venerable personage lying on the ground, he explained, was not his father, but Socrates. He found it difficult however to account for the appearance of La Motte, with his one arm wanting and with artillery by his side, because, as Farnese justly remarked, artillery had not been invented in the time of Socrates, nor was it recorded that the sage had lost an arm.

Thus passed the autumn of 1592, and Alexander, having as he supposed somewhat recruited his failing strength, prepared, according to his master's orders for a new campaign in France. For with almost preterhuman malice Philip was employing the man whom he had doomed to disgrace, perhaps to death, and whom he kept under constant secret supervision, in those laborious efforts to conquer without an army and to purchase a kingdom with an empty purse, in which, as it was destined, the very last sands of Parma's life were to run away.

Suffering from a badly healed wound, from water on the chest, degeneration of the heart, and gout in the limbs, dropsical, enfeebled, broken down into an old man before his time, Alexander still confronted disease and death with as heroic a front as he had ever manifested in the field to embattled Hollanders and Englishmen, or to the still more formidable array of learned pedants and diplomatists in the hall of negotiation. This wreck of a man was still fitter to lead armies and guide councils than any soldier or statesman that Philip could call into his service, yet the king's cruel hand was ready to stab the dying man in the dark.

Nothing could surpass the spirit with which the soldier was ready to do battle with his best friend, coming in the guise of an enemy. To the last moment, lifted into the saddle, he attended personally as usual to the details of his new campaign, and was dead before he would confess himself mortal. On the 3rd of December, 1592, in the city of Arran, he fainted after retiring at his usual hour to bed, and thus breathed his last.

According to the instructions in his last will, he was laid out barefoot in the robe and cowl of a Capuchin monk. Subsequently his remains were taken to Parma, and buried under the pavement of the little Franciscan church. A pompous funeral, in which the Italians and Spaniards quarrelled and came to blows for precedence, was celebrated in Brussels, and a statue of the hero was erected in the capitol at Rome.

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The first soldier and most unscrupulous diplomatist of his age, he died when scarcely past his prime, a wearied; broken-hearted old man. His triumphs, military and civil, have been recorded in these pages, and his character has been elaborately pourtrayed. Were it possible to conceive of an Italian or Spaniard of illustrious birth in the sixteenth century, educated in the school of Machiavelli, at the feet of Philip, as anything but the supple slave of a master and the blind instrument of a Church, one might for a moment regret that so many gifts of genius and valour had been thrown away or at least lost to mankind. Could the light of truth ever pierce the atmosphere in which such men have their being; could the sad music of humanity ever penetrate to their ears; could visions of a world—on this earth or beyond it—not exclusively the property of kings and high-priests be revealed to them, one might lament that one so eminent among the sons of women had not been a great man. But it is a weakness to hanker for any possible connection between truth and Italian or Spanish statecraft of that day. The truth was not in it nor in him, and high above his heroic achievements, his fortitude, his sagacity, his chivalrous self-sacrifice, shines forth the baleful light of his perpetual falsehood.

[I pass over, as beneath the level of history, a great variety of censorious and probably calumnious reports as to the private character of Farnese, with which the secret archives of the times are filled. Especially Champagny, the man by whom the duke was most hated and feared, made himself busy in compiling the slanderous chronicle in which the enemies of Farnese, both in Spain and the Netherlands, took so much delight. According to the secret history thus prepared for the enlightenment of the king and his ministers, the whole administration of the Netherlands—especially the financial department, with the distribution of offices—was in the hands of two favourites, a beardless secretary named Cosmo e Massi, and a lady of easy virtue called Franceline, who seems to have had a numerous host of relatives and friends to provide for at the public expense. Towards the latter end of the duke's life, it was even said that the seal of the finance department was in the hands of his valet-de-chambre, who, in his master's frequent absences, was in the habit of issuing drafts upon the receiver-general. As the valet- dechambre was described as an idiot who did not know how to read, it may be believed that the finances fell into confusion. Certainly, if such statements were to be accepted, it would be natural enough that for every million dollars expended by the king in the provinces, not more than one hundred thousand were laid out for the public service; and this is the estimate made by Champagny, who, as a distinguished financier and once chief of the treasury in the provinces, might certainly be thought to know something of the subject. But Champagny was beside himself with rage, hatred.]

CHAPTER XXIX.

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Effect of the death of Farnese upon Philip's schemes—Priestly flattery and counsel—-Assembly of the States-General of France— Meeting of the Leaguers at the Louvre—-Conference at Surene between the chiefs of the League and the "political" leaders—-Henry convokes an assembly of bishops, theologians, and others—Strong feeling on all sides on the subject of the succession—Philip commands that the Infanta and the Duke of Guise be elected King and Queen of France— Manifesto of the Duke of Mayenne—-Formal re-admission of Henry to the Roman faith—The pope refuses to consent to his reconciliation with the Church—His consecration with the sacred oil—Entry of the king into Paris—Departure of the Spanish garrison from the capital —Dissimulation of the Duke of Mayenne—He makes terms with Henry— Grief of Queen Elizabeth on receipt of the communications from France.

During the past quarter of a century there had been tragic scenes enough in France, but now the only man who could have conducted Philip's schemes to a tragic if not a successful issue was gone. Friendly death had been swifter than Philip, and had removed Alexander from the scene before his master had found fitting opportunity to inflict the disgrace on which he was resolved. Meantime, Charles Mansfeld made a feeble attempt to lead an army from the Netherlands into France, to support the sinking fortunes of the League; but it was not for that general-of-artillery to attempt the well-graced part of the all-accomplished Farnese with much hope of success. A considerable force of Spanish infantry, too, had been sent to Paris, where they had been received with much enthusiasm; a very violent and determined churchman, Sega, archbishop of Piacenza, and cardinal-legate, having arrived to check on the part of the holy father any attempt by the great wavering heretic to get himself readmitted into the fold of the faithful.

The King of Spain considered it his duty, as well as his unquestionable right, to interfere in the affairs of France, and to save the cause of religion, civilization and humanity, in the manner so dear to the civilization-savers, by reducing that distracted country—-utterly unable to govern itself—under his sceptre. To achieve this noble end no bribery was too wholesale, no violence too brutal, no intrigue too paltry. It was his sacred and special mission to save France from herself. If he should fail, he could at least carve her in pieces, and distribute her among himself and friends. Frenchmen might assist him in either of these arrangements, but it was absurd to doubt that on him devolved the work and the responsibility. Yet among his advisers were some who doubted whether the purchase of the grandees of France was really the most judicious course to pursue. There was a general and uneasy feeling that the grandees were making sport of the Spanish monarch, and that they would be inclined to remain his stipendiaries for

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an indefinite period, without doing their share of the work. A keen Jesuit, who had been much in France, often whispered to Philip that he was going astray. “Those who best understand the fit remedy for this unfortunate kingdom, and know the tastes and temper of the nation,” said he, “doubt giving these vast presents and rewards in order that the nobles of France may affect your cause and further your schemes. It is the greatest delusion, because they love nothing but their own interest, and for this reason wish for no king at all, but prefer that the kingdom should remain topsy-turvy in order that they may enjoy the Spanish doubloons, as they say themselves almost publicly, dancing and feasting; that they may take a castle to-day, and to-morrow a city, and the day, after a province, and so on indefinitely. What matters it to them that blood flows, and that the miserable people are destroyed, who alone are good for anything?”

“The immediate cause of the ruin of France,” continued the Jesuit, “comes from two roots which must be torn up; the one is the extreme ignorance and scandalous life of the ecclesiastics, the other is the tyranny and the abominable life of the nobility, who with sacrilege and insatiable avarice have entered upon the property of the Church. This nobility is divided into three factions. The first, and not the least, is heretic; the second and the most pernicious is politic or atheist; the third and last is catholic. All these, although they differ in opinion, are the same thing in corruption of life and manners, so that there is no choice among them.” He then proceeded to set forth how entirely, the salvation of France depended on the King of Spain. “Morally speaking,” he said, “it is impossible for any Frenchman to apply the remedy. For this two things are wanting; intense zeal for the honour of God, and power. I ask now what Frenchman: has both these, or either of them. No one certainly that we know. It is the King of Spain who alone in the world has the zeal and the power. No man who knows the insolence and arrogance of the French nature will believe that even if a king should be elected out of France he would be obeyed by the others. The first to oppose him would be Mayenne; even if a king were chosen from his family, unless everything should be given him that he asked; which would be impossible.”

Thus did the wily Priest instil into the ready ears of Philip additional reasons for believing himself the incarnate providence of God. When were priestly flatterers ever wanting to pour this poison into the souls of tyrants? It is in vain for us to ask why it is permitted that so much power for evil should be within the grasp of one wretched human creature, but it is at least always instructive to ponder the career of these crowned conspirators, and sometimes consoling to find its conclusion different from the goal intended. So the Jesuit advised the king not to be throwing away his money upon particular

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individuals, but with the funds which they were so unprofitably consuming to form a jolly army (’gallardo egercito’) of fifteen thousand foot, and five thousand-horse, all Spaniards, under a Spanish general—not a Frenchman being admitted into it—and then to march forward, occupy all the chief towns, putting Spanish garrisons into them, but sparing the people, who now considered the war eternal, and who were eaten up by both armies. In a short time the king might accomplish all he wished, for it was not in the power of the Bearnese to make considerable resistance for any length of time.

This was the plan of Father Odo for putting Philip on the throne of France, and at the same time lifting up the downtrodden Church, whose priests, according to his statement, were so profligate, and whose tenets were rejected by all but a small minority of the governing classes of the country. Certainly it did not lack precision, but it remained to be seen whether the Bearnese was to prove so very insignificant an antagonist as the sanguine priest supposed.

For the third party—the moderate Catholics—had been making immense progress in France, while the diplomacy of Philip had thus far steadily counteracted their efforts at Rome. In vain had the Marquis Pisani, envoy of the politicians’ party, endeavoured to soften the heart of Clement towards Henry. The pope lived in mortal fear of Spain, and the Duke of Sessa, Philip’s ambassador to the holy see, denouncing all these attempts on the part of the heretic, and his friends, and urging that it was much better for Rome that the pernicious kingdom of France should be dismembered and subdivided, assured his holiness that Rome should be starved, occupied, annihilated, if such abominable schemes should be for an instant favoured.

Clement took to his bed with sickness brought on by all this violence, but had nothing for it but to meet Pisani and other agents of the same cause with a peremptory denial, and send most, stringent messages to his legate in Paris, who needed no prompting.

There had already been much issuing of bulls by the pope, and much burning of bulls by the hangman, according to decrees of the parliament of Chalons and other friendly tribunals, and burning of Chalons decrees by Paris hangmen, and edicts in favour of Protestants at Nantz and other places—measures the enactment, repeal, and reenactment of which were to mark the ebb and flow of the great tide of human opinion on the most important of subjects, and the traces of which were to be for a long time visible on the shores of time.

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Early in 1593 Mayenne, yielding to the pressure of the Spanish party, reluctantly consented to assemble the States-General of France, in order that a king might be chosen. The duke, who came to be thoroughly known to Alexander Farnese before the death of that subtle Italian, relied on his capacity to outwit all the other champions of the League and agents of Philip now that the master-spirit had been removed. As firmly opposed as ever to the election of any other candidate but himself, or possibly his son, according to a secret proposition which he had lately made to the pope, he felt himself obliged to confront the army of Spanish diplomatists, Roman prelates, and learned doctors, by whom it was proposed to exclude the Prince of Bearne from his pretended rights. But he did not, after all, deceive them as thoroughly as he imagined. The Spaniards shrewdly suspected the French tactics, and the whole business was but a round game of deception, in which no one was much deceived, who ever might be destined ultimately, to pocket the stakes: "I know from a very good source," said Fuentes, "that Mayenne, Guise, and the rest of them are struggling hard in order not to submit to Bearne, and will suffer everything your Majesty may do to them, even if you kick them in the mouth, but still there is no conclusion on the road we are travelling, at least not the one which your Majesty desires. They will go on procrastinating and gaining time, making authority for themselves out of your Majesty's grandeur, until the condition of things comes which they are desiring. Feria tells me that they are still taking your Majesty's money, but I warn your Majesty that it is only to fight off Bearne, and that they are only pursuing their own ends at your Majesty's expense."

Perhaps Mayenne had already a sufficiently clear insight into the not far-distant future, but he still presented himself in Spanish cloak and most ultramontane physiognomy. His pockets were indeed full of Spanish coin at that moment, for he had just claimed and received eighty-eight thousand-nine hundred dollars for back debts, together with one hundred and eighty, thousand dollars more to distribute among the deputies of the estates. "All I can say about France," said Fuentes, "is that it is one great thirst for money. The Duke of Feria believes in a good result, but I think that Mayenne is only trying to pocket as much money as he can."

Thus fortified, the Duke of Mayenne issued the address to the States-General of the kingdom, to meet at an early day in order to make arrangements to secure religion and peace, and to throw off the possible yoke of the heretic pretender. The great seal affixed to the document represented an empty throne, instead of the usual effigy of a king.

The cardinal-legate issued a thundering manifesto at the same time sustaining Mayenne and virulently denouncing the Bearnese.

The politicians' party now seized the opportunity to impress upon Henry that the decisive moment was come.

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The Spaniard, the priest; and the League, had heated the furnace. The iron was at a white heat. Now was the time to strike. Secretary of State Revol Gaspar de Schomberg, Jacques Auguste de Thou, the eminent historian, and other influential personages urged the king to give to the great question the only possible solution.

Said the king with much meekness, “If I am in error, let those who attack me with so much fury instruct me, and show me the way of salvation. I hate those who act against their conscience. I pardon all those who are inspired by truly religious motives, and I am ready to receive all into favour whom the love of peace, not the chagrin of ill-will, has disgusted with the war.”

There was a great meeting of Leaguers at the Louvre, to listen to Mayenne, the cardinal-legate, Cardinal Pelleve, the Duke of Guise, and other chieftains. The Duke of Feria made a long speech in Latin, setting forth the Spanish policy, veiled as usual, but already sufficiently well known, and assuring the assembly that the King of Spain desired nothing so much as the peace of France and of all the world, together with the supremacy of the Roman Church. Whether these objects could best be attained by the election of Philip or of his daughter, as sovereign, with the Archduke Ernest as king-consort, or with perhaps the Duke of Guise or some other eligible husband, were fair subjects for discussion. No selfish motive influenced the king, and he placed all his wealth and all his armies at the disposal of the League to carry out these great projects.

Then there was a conference at Surene between the chiefs the League and the “political” leaders; the Archbishop of Lyons, the cardinal-legate, Villars, Admiral of France and defender of Rouen, Belin, Governor of Paris, President Jeannin, and others upon one side; upon the other, the Archbishop of Bourges, Bellievre, Schomberg, Revol, and De Thou.

The Archbishop of Lyons said that their party would do nothing either to frustrate or to support the mission of Pisani, and that the pope would, as ever, do all that could be done to maintain the interests of the true religion.

The Archbishop of Bourges, knowing well the meaning of such fine phrases, replied that he had much respect for the holy father, but that popes had now, become the slaves and tools of the King of Spain, who, because he was powerful, held them subject to his caprice.

At an adjourned meeting at the same place, the Archbishop of Lyons said that all questions had been asked and answered. All now depended on the pope, whom the League would always obey. If the pope would accept the reconciliation of the Prince of Bearne it was well. He, hoped that his conversion would be sincere.

The political archbishop (of Bourges) replied to the League’s archbishop, that there was no time for delays, and for journeys by land and sea to Rome. The least obstruction

might prove fatal to both parties. Let the Leaguers now show that the serenity of their faces was but the mirror of their minds.

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But the Leaguers' archbishop said that he could make no further advances. So ended the conference.'

The chiefs of the politicians now went to the king and informed him that the decisive moment had arrived.

Henry had preserved: his coolness throughout. Amid all the hubbub of learned doctors of law, archbishops-Leaguer and political-Sorbonne pedants, solemn grandees from Spain with Latin orations in their pockets, intriguing Guises, huckstering Mayennes, wrathful Huguenots, sanguinary cardinal-legates, threatening world-monarchs—-heralded by Spanish musketeers, Italian lancers, and German reiters—shrill screams of warning from the English queen, grim denunciations from Dutch Calvinists, scornful repulses from the holy father; he kept his temper and his eye-sight, as perfectly as he had ever done through the smoke and din of the wildest battle-field. None knew better than he how to detect the weakness of the adversary, and to sound the charge upon his wavering line.

He blew the blast—sure that loyal Catholics and Protestants alike would now follow him pell-mell.

On the 16th, May, 1593, he gave notice that he consented to get himself instructed, and that he summoned an assembly at Mantes on the 15th July, of bishops, theologians, princes, lords, and courts of parliament to hold council, and to advise him what was best to do for religion and the State.

Meantime he returned to the siege of Dreux, made an assault on the place, was repulsed, and then hung nine prisoners of war in full sight of the garrison as a punishment for their temerity in resisting him. The place soon after capitulated (8th July, 1593).

The interval between the summons and the assembling of the clerical and lay notables at Mantes was employed by the Leaguers in frantic and contradictory efforts to retrieve a game which the most sagacious knew to be lost. But the politicians were equal to the occasion, and baffled them at every point.

The Leaguers' archbishop inveighed bitterly against the abominable edicts recently issued in favour of the Protestants.

The political archbishop (of Bourges) replied not by defending; but by warmly disapproving, those decrees of toleration, by excusing the king for having granted them for a temporary purpose, and by asserting positively that, so soon as the king should be converted, he would no longer countenance such measures.

It is superfluous to observe that very different language was held on the part of Henry to the English and Dutch Protestants, and to the Huguenots of his own kingdom.

And there were many meetings of the Leaguers in Paris, many belligerent speeches by the cardinal legate, proclaiming war to the knife rather than that the name of Henry the heretic should ever be heard of again as candidate for the throne, various propositions spasmodically made in full assembly by Feria, Ybarra, Tassis, the jurisconsult Mendoza, and other Spanish agents in favour of the Infanta as queen of France, with Archduke Ernest or the Duke of Guise, or any other eligible prince, for her husband.

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The League issued a formal and furious invective in answer to Henry's announcement; proving by copious citations from Jeremiah, St. Epiphany; St. Jerome, St. Cyprian, and St. Bernard, that it was easier for a leopard to change his spots or for a blackamoor to be washed white; than for a heretic to be converted, and that the king was thinking rather of the crown of France than of a heavenly crown, in his approaching conversion —an opinion which there were few to gainsay.

And the Duke of Nemours wrote to his half-brother, the Duke of Mayenne; offering to use all his influence to bring about Mayenne's election as king on condition that if these efforts failed, Mayenne should do his best to procure the election of Nemours.

And the Parliament of Paris formally and prospectively proclaimed any election of a foreigner null and void, and sent deputies to Mayenne urging him never to consent to the election of the Infanta.

What help, said they, can the League expect from the old and broken Philip; from a king who in thirty years has not been able, with all the resources of his kingdoms, to subdue the revolted provinces of the Netherlands? How can he hope to conquer France? Pay no further heed to the legate, they said, who is laughing in his sleeve at the miseries and distractions of our country. So spake the deputies of the League-Parliament to the great captain of the League, the Duke of Mayenne. It was obvious that the "great and holy confederacy" was becoming less confident of its invincibility. Madame League was suddenly grown decrepit in the eyes of her adorers.

Mayenne was angry at the action of the Parliament, and vehemently swore that he would annul their decree. Parliament met his threats with dignity, and resolved to stand by the decree, even if they all died in their places.

At the same time the Duke of Feria suddenly produced in full assembly of Leaguers a written order from Philip that the Duke of Guise and the Infanta should at once be elected king and queen. Taken by surprise, Mayenne dissembled his rage in masterly-fashion, promised Feria to support the election, and at once began to higgle for conditions. He stipulated that he should have for himself the governments of Champagne, Burgundy, and La Brie, and that they should be hereditary in his family: He furthermore demanded that Guise should cede to him the principality of Joinville, and that they should pay him on the spot in hard money two hundred thousand crowns in gold, six hundred thousand more in different payments, together with an annual payment of fifty thousand crowns.

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It was obvious that the duke did not undervalue himself; but he had after all no intention of falling into the trap set for him. "He has made these promises (as above given) in writing," said the Duke of Savoy's envoy to his master, but he will never keep them. The Duchess of Mayenne could not help telling me that her husband will never consent that the Duke of Guise should have the throne." From this resolve he had never wavered, and was not likely to do so now. Accordingly the man "of his word, of faith, and truth," whom even the astute Farnese had at times half believed in, and who had received millions of Philip's money, now thought it time to break with Philip. He issued a manifesto, in which he observed that the States-General of France had desired that Philip should be elected King of France, and carry out his design of a universal monarchy, as the only-means of ensuring the safety of the Catholic religion and the pacification of the world. It was feared, however, said Mayenne; that the king might come to the same misfortunes which befell his father, who, when it was supposed that he was inspired only by private ambition; and by the hope of placing a hereditary universal crown in his family, had excited the animosity of the princes of the empire. "If a mere suspicion had caused so great a misfortune in the empire," continued the man of his word, "what will the princes of all Europe do when they find his Majesty elected king of France, and grown by increase of power so formidable to the world? Can it be doubted that they will fly to arms at once, and give all their support to the King of Navarre, heretic though he be? What motive had so many princes to traverse Philip's designs in the Netherlands, but desire to destroy the enormous power which they feared? Therefore had the Queen, of England, although refusing the sovereignty, defended the independence of the Netherlands these fifteen years.

"However desirable," continued Mayenne, "that this universal monarchy, for which the house of Austria has so long been working, should be established, yet the king is too prudent not to see the difficulties in his way. Although he has conquered Portugal, he is prevented by the fleets of Holland and England from taking possession of the richest of the Portuguese possessions, the islands and the Indies. He will find in France insuperable objections to his election as king, for he could in this case well reproach the Leaguers with having been changed from Frenchmen into Spaniards. He must see that his case is hopeless in France, he who for thirty years has been in vain endeavouring to re-establish his authority in the Netherlands. It would be impossible in the present position of affairs to become either the king or the protector of France. The dignity of France allows it not."

Mayenne then insisted on the necessity of a truce with the royalists or politicians, and, assembling the estates at the Louvre on the 4th July, he read a written paper declining for the moment to hold an election for king.

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John Baptist Tassis, next day, replied by declaring that in this case Philip would send no more succours of men or money; for that the only effectual counter-poison to the pretended conversion of the Prince of Bearne was the immediate election of a king.

Thus did Mayenne escape from the snare in which the Spaniards thought to catch the man who, as they now knew, was changing every day, and was true to nothing save his own interests.

And now the great day had come. The conversion of Henry to the Roman faith, fixed long before for—the 23rd July,—1593, formally took place at the time appointed.

From six in the morning till the stroke of noon did Henry listen to the exhortations and expoundings of the learned prelates and doctors whom he had convoked, the politic Archbishop of Bourges taking the lead in this long-expected instruction. After six mortal hours had come to an end, the king rose from his knees, somewhat wearied, but entirely instructed and convinced. He thanked the bishops for having taught him that of which he was before quite ignorant, and assured them that; after having invoked the light, of the Holy Ghost upon his musings, he should think seriously over what they had just taught him, in order to come to a resolution salutary to himself and to the State.

Nothing could be more candid. Next day, at eight in the morning, there was a great show in the cathedral of Saint Denis, and the population of Paris, notwithstanding the prohibition of the League authorities, rushed thither in immense crowds to witness the ceremony of the reconciliation of the king. Henry went to the church, clothed as became a freshly purified heretic, in white satin doublet and hose, white silk stockings, and white silk shoes with white roses in them; but with a black hat and a black mantle. There was a great procession with blare of trumpet and beat of drum. The streets were strewn with flowers.

As Henry entered the great portal of the church, he found the Archbishop of Bourges, seated in state, effulgent in mitre and chasuble, and surrounded by other magnificent prelates in gorgeous attire.

“Who are you, and what do you want?” said the arch-bishop.

“I am the king,” meekly replied Henry, “and I demand to be received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church.”

“Do you wish it sincerely?” asked the prelate.

“I wish it with all my heart,” said the king.

Then throwing himself on his knees, the Bearne—great champion of the Huguenots—-protested before God that he would live and die in the Catholic faith, and that he renounced all heresy. A passage was with difficulty opened through the crowd, and he

was then led to the high altar, amid the acclamations of the people. Here he knelt devoutly and repeated his protestations. His unction and contrition were most impressive, and the people, of course, wept piteously. The king, during the progress of the ceremony, with hands clasped together and adoring the Eucharist with his eyes, or, as the Host was elevated, smiting himself thrice upon the breast, was a model of passionate devotion.

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Afterwards he retired to a pavilion behind the altar, where the archbishop confessed and absolved him. Then the Te Deum sounded, and high mass was celebrated by the Bishop of Nantes. Then, amid acclamations and blessings, and with largess to the crowd, the king returned to the monastery of Saint Denis, where he dined amid a multitude of spectators, who thronged so thickly around him that his dinner-table was nearly overset. These were the very Parisians, who, but three years before, had been feeding on rats and dogs and dead men's bones, and the bodies of their own children, rather than open their gates to this same Prince of Bearne.

Now, although Mayenne had set strong guards at those gates, and had most strictly prohibited all egress, the city was emptied of its populace, which pressed in transports of adoration around the man so lately the object of their hate. Yet few could seriously believe that much change had been effected in the inner soul of him, whom the legate, and the Spaniard, and the holy father at Rome still continued to denounce as the vilest of heretics and the most infamous of impostors.

The comedy was admirably played out and was entirely successful. It may be supposed that the chief actor was, however, somewhat wearied. In private, he mocked at all this ecclesiastical mummery, and described himself as heartily sick of the business. "I arrived here last evening," he wrote to the beautiful Gabrielle, "and was importuned with 'God save you' till bed-time. In regard to the Leaguers I am of the order of St. Thomas. I am beginning to-morrow morning to talk to the bishops, besides those I told you about yesterday. At this moment of writing I have a hundred of these importunates on my shoulders, who will make me hate Saint Denis as much as you hate Mantes. 'Tis to-morrow that I take the perilous leap. I kiss a million times the beautiful hands of my angel and the mouth of my dear mistress."

A truce—renewed at intervals—with the Leaguers lasted till the end of the year. The Duke of Nevers was sent on special mission to Rome to procure the holy father's consent to the great heretic's reconciliation to the Church, and he was instructed to make the king's submission in terms so wholesale and so abject that even some of the life-long papists of France were disgusted, while every honest Protestant in Europe shrank into himself for shame. But Clement, overawed by Philip and his ambassador, was deaf to all the representations of the French envoy. He protested that he would not believe in the sincerity of the Bearne's conversion unless an angel from Heaven should reveal it to him. So Nevers left Rome, highly exasperated, and professing that he would rather have lost a leg, that he would rather have been sewn in a sack and tossed into the Tiber, than bear back such a message. The pope ordered the prelates who had accompanied Nevers to remain in Rome and be tried by the Inquisition for misprision of heresy, but the duke placed them by his side and marched out of the Porta del Popolo with them, threatening to kill any man who should attempt to enforce the command.

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Meantime it became necessary to follow up the St. Denis comedy with a still more exhilarating popular spectacle. The heretic had been purified, confessed, absolved. It was time for a consecration. But there was a difficulty. Although the fever of loyalty to the ancient house of Bourbon, now redeemed from its worship of the false gods, was spreading contagiously through the provinces; although all the white silk in Lyons had been cut into scarves and banners to celebrate the reconciliation of the candid king with mother Church; although that ancient city was ablaze with bonfires and illuminations, while its streets ran red, with blood no longer, but with wine; and although Madam League, so lately the object of fondest adoration, was now publicly burned in the effigy of a grizzly hag; yet Paris still held for that decrepit beldame, and closed its gates to the Bearnese.

The city of Rheims, too, had not acknowledged the former Huguenot, and it was at Rheims, in the church of St. Remy, that the Holy Bottle was preserved. With what chrism, by what prelate, should the consecration of Henry be performed? Five years before, the League had proposed in the estates of Blois to place among the fundamental laws of the kingdom that no king should be considered a legitimate sovereign whose head had not been anointed by the bishop at Rheims with oil from that holy bottle. But it was now decided that to ascribe a monopoly of sanctity to that prelate and to that bottle would be to make a schism in the Church.

Moreover it was discovered that there was a chrism in existence still more efficacious than the famous oil of St. Remy. One hundred and twelve years before the baptism of Clovis, St. Martin had accidentally tumbled down stairs, and lay desperately bruised and at the point of death. But, according to Sulpicius Severus, an angel had straightway descended from heaven, and with a miraculous balsam had anointed the contusions of the saint, who next day felt no farther inconveniences from his fall. The balsam had ever since been preserved in the church of Marmoutier near Tours. Here, then, was the most potent of unguents brought directly from heaven. To mix a portion thereof with the chrism of consecration was clearly more judicious than to make use of the holy bottle, especially as the holy bottle was not within reach. The monks of Marmoutier consented to lend the sacred phial containing the famous oil of St. Martin for the grand occasion of the royal consecration.

Accompanied by a strong military escort provided by Giles de Souvri, governor of Touraine, a deputation of friars brought the phial to Chartres, where the consecration was to take place. Prayers were offered up, without ceasing, in the monastery during their absence that no mishap should befal the sacred treasure. When the monks arrived at Chartres, four young barons of the first nobility were assigned to them as hostages for the safe restoration of the phial, which was then borne in triumph to the cathedral, the streets through which it was carried being covered with tapestry. There was a great ceremony, a splendid consecration; six bishops, with mitres on their heads and in gala robes, officiating; after which the king knelt before the altar and took the customary oath.

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Thus the champion of the fierce Huguenots, the well-beloved of the dead La Noue and the living Duplessis Mornay, the devoted knight of the heretic Queen Elizabeth, the sworn ally of the stout Dutch Calvinists, was pompously reconciled to that Rome which was the object of their hatred and their fear.

The admirably arranged spectacles of the instruction at St. Denis and the consecration at Chartres were followed on the day of the vernal equinox by a third and most conclusive ceremony:

A secret arrangement had been made with De Cosse-Brissac, governor of Paris, by the king, according to which the gates of Paris were at last to be opened to him. The governor obtained a high price for his services— three hundred thousand livres in hard cash, thirty thousand a year for his life, and the truncheon of marshal of France. Thus purchased, Brissac made his preparations with remarkable secrecy and skill. Envoy Ybarra, who had scented something suspicious in the air, had gone straight to the governor for information, but the keen Spaniard was thrown out by the governor's ingenuous protestations of ignorance. The next morning, March 22nd, was stormy and rainy, and long before daylight Ybarra, still uneasy despite the statements of Brissac, was wandering about the streets of Paris when he became the involuntary witness of an extraordinary spectacle.

Through the wind and the rain came trampling along the dark streets of the capital a body of four thousand troopers and lansquenettes. Many torch-bearers attended on the procession, whose flambeaux threw a lurid light upon the scene.

There, surrounded by the swart and grizzly bearded visages of these strange men-at-arms, who were discharging their arquebuses, as they advanced upon any bystanders likely to oppose their progress; in the very midst of this sea of helmed heads, the envoy was enabled to recognise the martial figure of the Prince of Bearne. Armed to the teeth, with sword in hand and dagger at side, the hero of Ivry rode at last through the barriers which had so long kept him from his capital. "'Twas like enchantment," said Ybarra. The first Bourbon entered the city through the same gate out of which the last Valois had, five years before, so ignominiously fled. It was a midnight surprise, although not fully accomplished until near the dawn of day. It was not a triumphal entrance; nor did Henry come as the victorious standard-bearer of a great principle. He had defeated the League in many battle-fields, but the League still hissed defiance at him from the very hearthstone of his ancestral palace. He had now crept, in order to conquer, even lower than the League itself; and casting off his Huguenot skin at last, he had soared over the heads of all men, the presiding genius of the holy Catholic Church.

Twenty-one years before, he had entered the same city on the conclusion of one of the truces which had varied the long monotony of the religious wars of France. The youthful son of Antony Bourbon and Joan of Albret had then appeared as the champion and the idol of the Huguenots. In the same year had come the fatal nuptials with the

bride of St. Bartholomew, the first Catholic conversion of Henry and the massacre at which the world still shudders.

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Now he was chief of the “Politicians,” and sworn supporter of the Council of Trent. Earnest Huguenots were hanging their heads in despair.

He represented the principle of national unity against national dismemberment by domestiv, treason and foreign violence. Had that principle been his real inspiration, as it was in truth his sole support, history might judge him more leniently. Had he relied upon it entirely it might have been strong enough to restore him to the throne of his ancestors, without the famous religious apostacy with which his name is for ever associated. It is by no means certain that permanent religious toleration might not have been the result of his mounting the throne, only when he could do so without renouncing the faith of his fathers. A day of civilization may come perhaps, sooner or later, when it will be of no earthly cousequence to their fellow creatures to what creed, what Christian church, what religious dogma kings or humbler individuals may be partial; when the relations between man and his Maker shall be undefiled by political or social intrusion. But the day will never come when it will be otherwise than damaging to public morality and humiliating to human dignity to forswear principle for a price, and to make the most awful of mysteries the subject of political legerdemain and theatrical buffoonery.

The so-called conversion of the king marks an epoch in human history. It strengthened the Roman Church and gave it an indefinite renewal of life; but it sapped the foundations of religious faith. The appearance of Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent was of itself too biting an epigram not to be extensively destructive. Whether for good or ill, religion was fast ceasing to be the mainspring of political combinations, the motive of great wars and national convulsions. The age of religion was to be succeeded by the age of commerce.

But the king was now on his throne. All Paris was in rapture. There was Te Deum with high mass in Notre Dame, and the populace was howling itself hoarse with rapture in honour of him so lately the object of the general curse. Even the Sorbonne declared in favour of the reclaimed heretic, and the decision of those sages had vast influence with less enlightened mortals. There was nothing left for the Duke of Feria but to take himself off and make Latin orations in favour of the Infanta elsewhere, if fit audience elsewhere could be found. A week after the entrance of Henry, the Spanish garrison accordingly was allowed to leave Paris with the honours of war.

“We marched out at 2 P.M.,” wrote the duke to his master, “with closed ranks, colours displayed, and drums beating. First came the Italians and then the Spaniards, in the midst of whom was myself on horseback, with the Walloons marching near me. The Prince of Bearne”—it was a solace to the duke’s heart, of which he never could be deprived, to call the king by that title—“was at a window over the gate of St. Denis through which we took our departure. He was dressed in light grey, with a black hat surmounted by a great white feather. Our displayed standards rendered him no courteous salute as we passed.”

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Here was another solace!

Thus had the game been lost and won, but Philip as usual did not acknowledge himself beaten. Mayenne, too, continued to make the most fervent promises to all that was left of the confederates. He betook himself to Brussels, and by the king's orders was courteously received by the Spanish authorities in the Netherlands. In the midst of the tempest now rapidly destroying all rational hopes, Philip still clung to Mayenne as to a spar in the shipwreck. For the king ever possessed the virtue, if it be one, of continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible, when he had been defeated in every quarter, and when his calculations had all proved ridiculous mistakes.

When his famous Armada had been shattered and sunk, have we not seen him peevishly requiring Alexander Farnese to construct a new one immediately and to proceed therewith to conquer England out of hand? Was it to be expected that he would renounce his conquest of France, although the legitimate king had entered his capital, had reconciled himself to the Church, and was on the point of obtaining forgiveness of the pope? If the Prince of Bearne had already destroyed the Holy League, why should not the Duke of Mayenne and Archduke Ernest make another for him, and so conquer France without further delay?

But although it was still possible to deceive the king, who in the universality of his deceptive powers was so prone to delude himself, it was difficult even for so accomplished an intriguer as Mayenne to hoodwink much longer the shrewd Spaniards who were playing so losing a game against him.

"Our affairs in France," said Ybarra, "are in such condition that we are losing money and character there, and are likely to lose all the provinces here, if things are not soon taken up in a large and energetic manner. Money and troops are what is wanted on a great scale for France. The king's agents are mightily discontented with Mayenne, and with reason; but they are obliged to dissimulate and to hold their tongues. We can send them no assistance from these regions, unless from down yonder you send us the cloth and the scissors to cut it with."

And the Archduke Ernest, although he invited Mayenne to confer with him at Brussels, under the impression that he could still keep him and the Duke of Guise from coming to an arrangement with Bearne, hardly felt more confidence in the man than did Feria or Ybarra. "Since the loss of Paris," said Ernest, "I have had a letter from Mayenne, in which, deeply affected by that event, he makes me great offers, even to the last drop of his blood, vowing never to abandon the cause of the League. But of the intentions and inner mind of this man I find such vague information, that I don't dare to expect more stability from him than may be founded upon his own interest."

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And so Mayenne came to Brussels and passed three days with the archduke. "He avows himself ready to die in our cause," said Ernest. "If your Majesty will give men and money enough, he will undertake so to deal with Bearne that he shall not think himself safe in his own house." The archduke expressed his dissatisfaction to Mayenne that with the money he had already received, so little had been accomplished, but he still affected a confidence which he was far from feeling, "because," said he, "it is known that Mayenne is already treating with Bearne. If he has not concluded those arrangements, it is because Bearne now offers him less money than before." The amount of dissimulation, politely so-called, practised by the grandees of that age, to say nothing of their infinite capacity for pecuniary absorption, makes the brain reel and enlarges one's ideas of the human faculties as exerted in certain directions. It is doubtful whether plain Hans Miller or Hans Baker could have risen to such level.

Feria wrote a despatch to the king, denouncing Mayenne as false, pernicious to the cause of Spain and of catholicism, thoroughly self-seeking and vile, and as now most traitorous to the cause of the confederacy, engaged in surrendering its strong places to the enemy, and preparing to go over to the Prince of Bearne.

"If," said he, "I were to recount all his base tricks, I should go on till midnight, and perhaps till to-morrow morning."

This letter, being intercepted, was sent with great glee by Henry IV., not to the royal hands for which it was destined, but to the Duke of Mayenne. Great was the wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths. He forthwith fulminated a scathing reply, addressed to Philip II., in which he denounced the Duke of Feria as "a dirty ignoramus, an impudent coward, an impostor, and a blind thief;" adding, after many other unsavoury epithets, "but I will do him an honour which he has not merited, proving him a liar with my sword; and I humbly pray your Majesty to grant me this favour and to pardon my just grief, which causes me to depart from the respect due to your Majesty, when I speak of this impostor who has thus wickedly torn my reputation."

His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments in defence of that tattered reputation. The defiance to mortal combat went for nothing; and, in the course of the next year, the injured Mayenne turned his back on Philip and his Spaniards, and concluded his bargain with the Prince of Bearne. He obtained good terms: the government of Burgundy, payment of his debts, and a hundred and twenty thousand crowns in hard cash. It is not on record that the man of his word, of credit, and of truth, ever restored a penny of the vast sums which he had received from Philip to carry on the business of the League.

Subsequently the duke came one very hot summer's-day to Monceaux to thank the king, as he expressed it, for "delivering him from Spanish arrogance and Italian wiles;" and having got with much difficulty upon his knees, was allowed to kiss the royal hand. Henry then insisted upon walking about with him through the park at a prodigious rate,

to show him all the improvements, while the duke panted, groaned, and perspired in his vain efforts to keep pace with his new sovereign.

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“If I keep this fat fellow walking about in the sun much longer,” whispered the king to De Bethune, who was third in the party, “I shall be sufficiently avenged for all the mischief he has done us.”

At last, when the duke was forced to admit himself to be on the point of expiring with fatigue, he was dismissed to the palace with orders to solace himself with a couple of bottles of excellent wine of Arbois, expressly provided for him by the king’s direction. And this was all the punishment ever inflicted by the good-humoured monarch on the corpulent conspirator.

The Duke of Guise made his arrangements with the ex-Huguenot on even better terms and at a still earlier day; while Joyeuse and Mercoeur stood out a good while and higgled hard for conditions. “These people put such a high price on themselves,” said one of Henry’s diplomatists, “that one loses almost more than one gains in buying them. They strip and plunder us even in our nakedness, and we are obliged, in order to conciliate such harpies, to employ all that we can scrape out of our substance and our blood. I think, however, that we ought to gain them by whatever means and at whatever price.”

Thus Henry IV., the man whom so many contemporary sages had for years been rebuking or ridiculing for his persistency in a hopeless attempt to save his country from dismemberment, to restore legitimate authority, and to resist the “holy confederacy” of domestic traitors, aided by foreign despots and sympathizers, was at last successful, and the fratricidal war in France was approaching its only possible conclusion.

But, alas! the hopes of those who loved the reformed Church as well as they loved their country were sadly blasted by the apostasy of their leader. From the most eminent leaders of the Huguenots there came a wail, which must have penetrated even to the well-steeled heart of the cheerful Gascon. “It will be difficult,” they said, “to efface very soon from your memory the names of the men whom the sentiment of a common religion, association in the same perils and persecutions, a common joy in the same deliverance, and the long experience of so many faithful services, have engraved there with a pencil of diamond. The remembrance of these things pursues you and accompanies you everywhere; it interrupts your most important affairs, your most ardent pleasures, your most profound slumber, to represent to you, as in a picture, yourself to yourself: yourself not as you are to-day, but such as you were when, pursued to the death by the greatest princes of Europe, you went on conducting to the harbour of safety the little vessel against which so many tempests were beating.”

The States of the Dutch republic, where the affair of Henry’s conversion was as much a matter of domestic personal interest as it could be in France—for religion up to that epoch was the true frontier between nation and nation—debated the question most earnestly while it was yet doubtful. It was proposed to send a formal deputation to the king, in order to divert him, if possible, from the fatal step which he was about to take.

After ripe deliberation however, it was decided to leave the matter “in the hands of God Almighty, and to pray Him earnestly to guide the issue to His glory and the welfare of the Churches.”

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The Queen of England was, as might be supposed, beside herself with indignation, and, in consequence of the great apostasy, and of her chronic dissatisfaction with the manner in which her contingent of troops had been handled in France, she determined to withdraw every English soldier from the support of Henry's cause. The unfortunate French ambassador in London was at his wits' ends. He vowed that he could not sleep of nights, and that the gout and the cholic, to which he was always a martyr, were nothing to the anguish which had now come upon his soul and brain, such as he had never suffered since the bloody day of St. Bartholomew.

"Ah, my God!" said he to Burghley, "is it possible that her just choler has so suddenly passed over the great glory which she has acquired by so many benefits and liberalities?" But he persuaded himself that her majesty would after all not persist in her fell resolution. To do so, he vowed, would only be boiling milk for the French papists, who would be sure to make the most of the occasion in order to precipitate the king into the, abyss, to the border of which they had already brought him. He so dreaded the ire of the queen that he protested he was trembling all over merely to see the pen of his secretary wagging as he dictated his despatches. Nevertheless it was his terrible duty to face her in her wrath, and he implored the lord treasurer to accompany him and to shield him at the approaching interview. "Protect me," he cried, "by your wisdom from the ire of this great princess; for by the living God, when I see her enraged against any person whatever I wish myself in Calcutta, fearing her anger like death itself."

When all was over, Henry sent De Morlans as special envoy to communicate the issue to the Governments of England and of Holland. But the queen, although no longer so violent, was less phlegmatic than the States-General, and refused to be comforted. She subsequently receded, however, from her determination to withdraw her troops from France.

"Ah! what grief; ah! what regrets; ah! what groans, have I felt in my soul," she wrote, "at the sound of the news brought to me by Morlans! My God! Is it possible that any wordly respect can efface the terror of Divine wrath? Can we by reason even expect a good sequel to such iniquitous acts? He who has maintained and preserved you by His mercy, can you imagine that he permits you to walk alone in your utmost need? 'Tis bad to do evil that good may come of it. Meantime I shall not cease to put you in the first rank of my devotions, in order that the hands of Esau may not spoil the blessings of Jacob. As to your promises to me of friendship and fidelity, I confess to have dearly deserved them, nor do I repent, provided you do not change your Father—otherwise I shall be your bastard sister by the father's side—for I shall ever love a natural better than an adopted one. I desire that God may guide you in a straight road and a better path. Your most sincere sister in the old fashion. As to the new, I have nothing to do with it. *Elizabeth* R."

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ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

All fellow-worms together
Continuing to believe himself invincible and infallible
He spent more time at table than the Bearnese in sleep
Henry the Huguenot as the champion of the Council of Trent
Highest were not necessarily the least slimy
His invectives were, however, much stronger than his arguments
History is a continuous whole of which we see only fragments
Infinite capacity for pecuniary absorption
Leading motive with all was supposed to be religion
Past was once the Present, and once the Future
Sages of every generation, read the future like a printed scroll
Sewers which have ever run beneath decorous Christendom
Wrath of that injured personage as he read such libellous truths

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