

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 01: Introduction I eBook

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 01: Introduction I by John Lothrop Motley

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Page 1

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

A History

John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

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1855

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

PREFACE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

Historical introduction.

Part 1.

I.

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

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

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

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

The Rhine, leaving at last the regions where its storied lapse, through so many ages, has been consecrated alike by nature and art-by poetry and eventful truth—flows reluctantly through the basalt portal of the Seven Mountains into the open fields which



extend to the German sea. After entering this vast meadow, the stream divides itself into two branches, becoming thus the two-horned Rhine of Virgil, and holds in these two arms the island of Batavia.

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



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

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

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

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



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II.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

The German, in his simplicity, had raised himself to a purer belief than that of the sensuous Roman or the superstitious Gaul. He believed in a single, supreme, almighty God, All-Vater or All-father. This Divinity was too sublime to be incarnated or imaged, too infinite to be enclosed in temples built with hands. Such is the Roman's testimony to the lofty conception of the German. Certain forests were consecrated to the unseen God whom the eye of reverent faith could alone behold. Thither, at stated times, the people repaired to worship. They entered the sacred grove with feet bound together, in token of submission. Those who fell were forbidden to rise, but dragged themselves backwards on the ground. Their rules were few and simple.

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They had no caste of priests, nor were they, when first known to the Romans, accustomed to offer sacrifice. It must be confessed that in a later age, a single victim, a criminal or a prisoner, was occasionally immolated. The purity of their religion was soon stained by their Celtic neighborhood. In the course of the Roman dominion it became contaminated, and at last profoundly depraved. The fantastic intermixture of Roman mythology with the gloomy but modified superstition of Romanized Celts was not favorable to the simple character of German theology. The entire extirpation, thus brought about, of any conceivable system of religion, prepared the way for a true revelation. Within that little river territory, amid those obscure morasses of the Rhine and Scheld, three great forms of religion—the sanguinary superstition of the Druid, the sensuous polytheism of the Roman, the elevated but dimly groping creed of the German, stood for centuries, face to face, until, having mutually debased and destroyed each other, they all faded away in the pure light of Christianity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

III.

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

Nearly all are soon defeated, and sue for mercy. The Nervii, true to the German blood in their veins, swear to die rather than surrender. They, at least, are worthy of their cause. Caesar advances against them at the head of eight legions. Drawn up on the banks of the Sambre, they await the Roman's approach. In three days' march Caesar comes up with them, pitches his camp upon a steep hill sloping down to the river, and sends some cavalry across. Hardly have the Roman horsemen crossed the stream, than the Nervii rush from the wooded hill-top, overthrow horse and rider, plunge in one great mass into the current, and, directly afterwards, are seen charging up the hill into the midst of the enemy's force. "At the same moment," says the conqueror, "they seemed in the wood, in the river, and within our lines." There is a panic among the Romans, but it is brief. Eight veteran Roman legions, with the world's victor at their head, are too much for the brave but undisciplined Nervii. Snatching a shield from a soldier, and otherwise unarmed, Caesar throws himself into the hottest of the fight. The battle rages foot to foot and hand to hand but the hero's skill, with the cool valor of his troops, proves invincible as ever.



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

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

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

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



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IV.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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V.

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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