

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 11: 1566, part II eBook

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 11: 1566, part II by John Lothrop Motley

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Title: The Rise of the Dutch Republic, 1566

Author: John Lothrop Motley

Release Date: January, 2004 [EBook #4812] [Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule] [This file was first posted on March 19, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 12.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

VOLUME 2, Book 1., 1566

1566 [Chapter VIII.]

Secret policy of the government—Berghen and Montigny in Spain— Debates at Segovia—Correspondence of the Duchess with Philip— Procrastination and dissimulation of the King—Secret communication to the Pope—Effect in the provinces of the King's letters to the government—Secret instructions to the Duchess— Desponding statements of Margaret—Her misrepresentations concerning Orange, Egmont, and others—Wrath and duplicity of Philip—Egmont's exertions in Flanders— Orange returns to Antwerp—His tolerant spirit—Agreement of 2d September—Horn at Tournay—Excavations in the Cathedral—Almost universal attendance at the preaching — Building of temples commenced—Difficult position of Horn—Preaching in the



Clothiers' Hall—Horn recalled—Noircarmes at Tournay— Friendly correspondence of Margaret with Orange, Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten—Her secret defamation of these persons.

Egmont in Flanders, Orange at Antwerp, Horn at Tournay; Hoogstraaten at Mechlin, were exerting themselves to suppress insurrection and to avert ruin. What, meanwhile, was the policy of the government? The secret course pursued both at Brussels and at Madrid may be condensed into the usual formula—dissimulation, procrastination, and again dissimulation.

It is at this point necessary to take a rapid survey of the open and the secret proceedings of the King and his representatives from the moment at which Berghen and Montigny arrived in Madrid. Those ill-fated gentlemen had been received with apparent cordiality, and admitted to frequent, but unmeaning, interviews with his Majesty. The current upon which they were embarked was deep and treacherous, but it was smooth and very slow. They assured the King that his letters, ordering the rigorous execution of the inquisition and edicts, had engendered all the



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evils under which the provinces were laboring. They told him that Spaniards and tools of Spaniards had attempted to govern the country, to the exclusion of native citizens and nobles, but that it would soon be found that Netherlanders were not to be trodden upon like the abject inhabitants of Milan, Naples, and Sicily. Such words as these struck with an unaccustomed sound upon the royal ear, but the envoys, who were both Catholic and loyal, had no idea, in thus expressing their opinions, according to their sense of duty, and in obedience to the King's desire, upon the causes of the discontent, that they were committing an act of high treason.

When the news of the public preaching reached Spain, there were almost daily consultations at the grove of Segovia. The eminent personages who composed the royal council were the Duke of Alva, the Count de Feria, Don Antonio de Toledo, Don Juan Manrique de Lara, Ruy Gomez, Quixada, Councillor Tisnacq, recently appointed President of the State Council, and Councillor Hopper. Six Spaniards and two Netherlanders, one of whom, too, a man of dull intellect and thoroughly subservient character, to deal with the local affairs of the Netherlands in a time of intense excitement! The instructions of the envoys had been to represent the necessity of according three great points—abolition of the inquisition, moderation of the edicts, according to the draft prepared in Brussels, and an ample pardon for past transactions. There was much debate upon all these propositions. Philip said little, but he listened attentively to the long discourses in council, and he took an incredible quantity of notes. It was the general opinion that this last demand on the part of the Netherlanders was the fourth link in the chain of treason. The first had been the cabal by which Granvelle had been expelled; the second, the mission of Egmont, the main object of which had been to procure a modification of the state council, in order to bring that body under the control of a few haughty and rebellious nobles; the third had been the presentation of the insolent and seditious Request; and now, to crown the whole, came a proposition embodying the three points—abolition of the inquisition, revocation of the edicts, and a pardon to criminals, for whom death was the only sufficient punishment.

With regard to these three points, it was, after much wrangling, decided to grant them under certain restrictions. To abolish the inquisition would be to remove the only instrument by which the Church had been accustomed to regulate the consciences and the doctrines of its subjects. It would be equivalent to a concession of religious freedom, at least to individuals within their own domiciles, than which no concession could be more pernicious. Nevertheless, it might be advisable to permit the temporary cessation of the papal inquisition, now that the episcopal inquisition had been so much enlarged and strengthened in the



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Netherlands, on the condition that this branch of the institution should be maintained in energetic condition. With regard to the Moderation, it was thought better to defer that matter till, the proposed visit of his Majesty to the provinces. If, however, the Regent should think it absolutely necessary to make a change, she must cause a new draft to be made, as that which had been sent was not found admissible. Touching the pardon general, it would be necessary to make many conditions and restrictions before it could be granted. Provided these were sufficiently minute to exclude all persons whom it might be found desirable to chastise, the amnesty was possible. Otherwise it was quite out of the question.

Meantime, Margaret of Parma had been urging her brother to come to a decision, painting the distracted condition of the country in the liveliest colors, and insisting, although perfectly aware of Philip's private sentiments, upon a favorable decision as to the three points demanded by the envoys. Especially she urged her incapacity to resist any rebellion, and demanded succor of men and money in case the "Moderation" were not accepted by his Majesty.

It was the last day of July before the King wrote at all, to communicate his decisions upon the crisis which had occurred in the first week of April. The disorder for which he had finally prepared a prescription had, before his letter arrived, already passed through its subsequent stages of the field-preaching and the image-breaking. Of course these fresh symptoms would require much consultation, pondering, and note-taking before they could be dealt with. In the mean time they would be considered as not yet having happened. This was the masterly procrastination of the sovereign, when his provinces were in a blaze.

His masterly dissimulation was employed in the direction suggested by his councillors. Philip never originated a thought, nor laid down a plan, but he was ever true to the falsehood of his nature, and was indefatigable in following out the suggestions of others. No greater mistake can be made than to ascribe talent to this plodding and pedantic monarch. The man's intellect was contemptible, but malignity and duplicity, almost superhuman; have effectually lifted his character out of the regions of the common-place. He wrote accordingly to say that the pardon, under certain conditions, might be granted, and that the papal inquisition might cease—the bishops now being present in such numbers, "to take care of their flocks," and the episcopal inquisition being, therefore established upon so secure a basis. He added, that if a moderation of the edicts were still desired, a new project might be sent to Madrid, as the one brought by Berghen and Montigny was not satisfactory. In arranging this wonderful scheme for composing the tumults of the country, which had grown out of a determined rebellion to the inquisition in any form, he followed not only the advice, but adopted the exact language of his councillors.

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Certainly, here was not much encouragement for patriotic hearts in the Netherlands. A pardon, so restricted that none were likely to be forgiven save those who had done no wrong; an episcopal inquisition stimulated to renewed exertions, on the ground that the papal functionaries were to be discharged; and a promise that, although the proposed Moderation of the edicts seemed too mild for the monarch's acceptance, yet at some future period another project would be matured for settling the matter to universal satisfaction—such were the propositions of the Crown. Nevertheless, Philip thought he had gone too far, even in administering this meagre amount of mercy, and that he had been too frank in employing so slender a deception, as in the scheme thus sketched. He therefore summoned a notary, before whom, in presence of the Duke of Alva, the Licentiate Menchaca and Dr. Velasco, he declared that, although he had just authorized Margaret of Parma, by force of circumstances, to grant pardon to all those who had been compromised in the late disturbances of the Netherlands, yet as he had not done this spontaneously nor freely, he did not consider himself bound by the authorization, but that, on the contrary, he reserved his right to punish all the guilty, and particularly those who had been the authors and encouragers of the sedition.

So much for the pardon promised in his official correspondence.

With regard to the concessions, which he supposed himself to have made in the matter of the inquisition and the edicts, he saved his conscience by another process. Revoking with his right hand all which his left had been doing, he had no sooner despatched his letters to the Duchess Regent than he sent off another to his envoy at Rome. In this despatch he instructed Requesens to inform the Pope as to the recent royal decisions upon the three points, and to state that there had not been time to consult his Holiness beforehand. Nevertheless, continued Philip "the prudent," it was perhaps better thus, since the abolition could have no force, unless the Pope, by whom the institution had been established, consented to its suspension. This matter, however, was to be kept a profound secret. So much for the inquisition matter. The papal institution, notwithstanding the official letters, was to exist, unless the Pope chose to destroy it; and his Holiness, as we have seen, had sent the Archbishop of Sorrento, a few weeks before, to Brussels, for the purpose of concerting secret measures for strengthening the "Holy Office" in the provinces.

With regard to the proposed moderation of the edicts, Philip informed Pius the Fifth, through Requesens, that the project sent by the Duchess not having been approved, orders had been transmitted for a new draft, in which all the articles providing for the severe punishment of heretics were to be retained, while alterations, to be agreed upon by the state and privy councils, and the knights of the Fleece, were to be

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adopted— certainly in no sense of clemency. On the contrary, the King assured his Holiness, that if the severity of chastisement should be mitigated the least in the world by the new articles, they would in no case receive the royal approbation. Philip further implored the Pope “not to be scandalized” with regard to the proposed pardon, as it would be by no means extended to offenders against religion. All this was to be kept entirely secret. The King added, that rather than permit the least prejudice to the ancient religion, he would sacrifice all his states, and lose a hundred lives if he had so many; for he would never consent to be the sovereign of heretics. He said he would arrange the troubles of the Netherlands, without violence, if possible, because forcible measures would cause the entire destruction of the country. Nevertheless they should be employed, if his purpose could be accomplished in no other way. In that case the King would himself be the executor of his own design, without allowing the peril which he should incur, nor the ruin of the provinces, nor that of his other realms, to prevent him from doing all which a Christian prince was bound to do, to maintain the Catholic religion and the authority of the Holy See, as well as to testify his personal regard for the reigning pontiff, whom he so much loved and esteemed.

Here was plain speaking. Here were all the coming horrors distinctly foreshadowed. Here was the truth told to the only being with whom Philip ever was sincere. Yet even on this occasion, he permitted himself a falsehood by which his Holiness was not deceived. Philip had no intention of going to the Netherlands in person, and the Pope knew that he had none. “I feel it in my bones,” said Granvelle, mournfully, “that nobody in Rome believes in his Majesty’s journey to the provinces.” From that time forward, however, the King began to promise this visit, which was held out as a panacea for every ill, and made to serve as an excuse for constant delay.

It may well be supposed that if Philip’s secret policy had been thoroughly understood in the Netherlands, the outbreak would have come sooner. On the receipt, however, of the public despatches from Madrid, the administration in Brussels made great efforts to represent their tenor as highly satisfactory. The papal inquisition was to be abolished, a pardon was to be granted, a new moderation was to be arranged at some indefinite period; what more would men have? Yet without seeing the face of the cards, the people suspected the real truth, and Orange was convinced of it. Viglius wrote that if the King did not make his intended visit soon, he would come too late, and that every week more harm was done by procrastination than could be repaired by months of labor and perhaps by torrents of blood. What the precise process was, through which Philip was to cure all disorders by his simple presence, the President did not explain.

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As for the measures propounded by the King after so long a delay, they were of course worse than useless; for events had been marching while he had been musing. The course suggested was, according to Viglius, but “a plaster for a wound, but a drag-chain for the wheel.” He urged that the convocation of the states-general was the only remedy for the perils in which the country was involved; unless the King should come in person. He however expressed the hope that by general consultation some means would be devised by which, if not a good, at least a less desperate aspect would be given to public affairs, “so that the commonwealth, if fall it must, might at least fall upon its feet like a cat, and break its legs rather than its neck.”

Notwithstanding this highly figurative view of the subject; and notwithstanding the urgent representations of Duchess Margaret to her brother, that nobles and people were all clamoring about the necessity of convening the states general, Philip was true to his instincts on this as on the other questions. He knew very well that the states-general of the Netherlands and Spanish despotism were incompatible ideas, and he recoiled from the idea of the assembly with infinite aversion. At the same time a little wholesome deception could do no harm. He wrote to the Duchess, therefore, that he was determined never to allow the states-general to be convened. He forbade her to consent to the step under any circumstances, but ordered her to keep his prohibition a profound secret. He wished, he said, the people to think that it was only for the moment that the convocation was forbidden, and that the Duchess was expecting to receive the necessary permission at another time. It was his desire, he distinctly stated, that the people should not despair of obtaining the assembly, but he was resolved never to consent to the step, for he knew very well what was meant by a meeting of the States-general. Certainly after so ingenuous but secret a declaration from the disciple of Macchiavelli, Margaret might well consider the arguments to be used afterward by herself and others, in favor of the ardently desired measure, as quite superfluous.

Such then was the policy secretly resolved upon by Philip; even before he heard of the startling events which were afterwards to break upon him. He would maintain the inquisition and the edicts; he would exterminate the heretics, even if he lost all his realms and his own life in the cause; he would never hear of the national representatives coming together. What then were likely to be his emotions when he should be told of twenty thousand armed heretics assembling at one spot, and fifteen thousand at another, in almost every town in every province, to practice their blasphemous rites; when he should be told of the whirlwind which had swept all the ecclesiastical accumulations of ages out of existence; when he should read Margaret's despairing letters, in which she acknowledged that she had at last committed an act unworthy of God, of her King, and of herself, in permitting liberty of worship to the renegades from the ancient church!



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The account given by the Duchess was in truth very dismal. She said that grief consumed her soul and crimson suffused her cheeks while she related the recent transactions. She took God to witness that she had resisted long, that she had past many sleepless nights, that she had been wasted with fever and grief. After this penitential preface she confessed that, being a prisoner and almost besieged in her palace, sick in body and soul, she had promised pardon and security to the confederates, with liberty of holding assemblies to heretics in places where the practice had already obtained. These concessions had been made valid until the King by and with the consent of the states-general, should definitely arrange the matter. She stated, however, that she had given her consent to these two demands, not in the royal name, but in her own. The King was not bound by her promise, and she expressed the hope that he would have no regard to any such obligation. She further implored her brother to come forth as soon as possible to avenge the injuries inflicted upon the ancient church, adding, that if deprived of that consolation, she should incontinently depart this life. That hope alone would prevent her death.

This was certainly strong language. She was also very explicit in her representations of the influence which had been used by certain personages to prevent the exercise of any authority upon her own part. "Wherefore," said Margaret, "I eat my heart; and shall never have peace till the arrival of your Majesty."

There was no doubt who those personages were who, as it was pretended, had thus held the Duchess in bondage, and compelled her to grant these infamous concessions. In her secret Italian letters, she furnished the King with a tissue of most extravagant and improbable falsehoods, supplied to her mainly by Noircarmes and Mansfeld, as to the course pursued at this momentous crisis by Orange, Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten. They had all, she said, declared against God and against religion.—Horn, at least, was for killing all the priests and monks in the country, if full satisfaction were not given to the demands of the heretics. Egmont had declared openly for the beggars, and was levying troops in Germany. Orange had the firm intention of making himself master of the whole country, and of dividing it among the other seigniors and himself. The Prince had said that if she took refuge in Mons, as she had proposed, they would instantly convoke the states-general, and take all necessary measures. Egmont had held the same language, saying that he would march at the head of forty thousand men to besiege her in that city. All these seigniors, however, had avowed their determination to prevent her flight, to assemble the estates, and to drag her by force before the assembly, in order to compel her consent to every measure which might be deemed expedient. Under all these circumstances, she had been obliged to defer her retreat, and to make the concessions which had overwhelmed her with disgrace.



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With such infamous calumnies, utterly disproved by every fact in the case, and unsupported by a tittle of evidence, save the hearsay reports of a man like Noircarmes, did this “woman, nourished at Rome, in whom no one could put confidence,” dig the graves of men who were doing their best to serve her.

Philip's rage at first hearing of the image-breaking has been indicated. He was ill of an intermittent fever at the wood of Segovia when the news arrived, and it may well be supposed that his wrath at these proceedings was not likely to assuage his malady. Nevertheless, after the first burst of indignation, he found relief in his usual deception. While slowly maturing the most tremendous vengeance which anointed monarch ever deliberately wreaked upon his people, he wrote to say, that it was “his intention to treat his vassals and subjects in the provinces like a good and clement prince, not to ruin them nor to put them into servitude, but to exercise all humanity, sweetness, and grace, avoiding all harshness.” Such were the avowed intentions of the sovereign towards his people at the moment when the terrible Alva, who was to be the exponent of all this “humanity, sweetness, and grace,” was already beginning the preparations for his famous invasion of the Netherlands.

The essence of the compact agreed to upon the 23d August between the confederates and the Regent, was that the preaching of the reformed religion should be tolerated in places where it had previously to that date been established. Upon this basis Egmont, Horn, Orange, Hoogstraaten, and others, were directed once more to attempt the pacification of the different provinces.

Egmont departed for his government of Flanders, and from that moment vanished all his pretensions, which at best had been, slender enough, to the character of a national chieftain. During the whole of the year his course had been changeful. He had felt the influence of Orange; he had generous instincts; he had much vanity; he had the pride of high rank; which did not easily brook the domination of strangers, in a land which he considered himself and his compeers entitled by their birth to rule. At this juncture, however, particularly when in the company of Noircarmes, Berlaymont, and Viglius, he expressed, notwithstanding their calumnious misstatements, the deepest detestation of the heretics. He was a fervent Catholic, and he regarded the image-breaking as an unpardonable crime. “We must take up arms,” said he, “sooner or later, to bring these Reformers to reason, or they will end by laying down the law for us.” On the other hand, his anger would be often appeased by the grave but gracious remonstrances of Orange. During a part of the summer, the Reformers had been so strong in Flanders that upon a single day sixty thousand armed men had been assembled at the different field-preachings within that province. “All they needed was a Jacquemart, or a Philip van Artevelde,” says a Catholic,



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contemporary, “but they would have scorned to march under the banner of a brewer; having dared to raise their eyes for a chief, to the most illustrious warrior of his ages.” No doubt, had Egmont ever listened to these aspirations, he might have taken the field against the government with an invincible force, seized the capital, imprisoned the Regent, and mastered the whole country, which was entirely defenceless, before Philip would have had time to write more than ten despatches upon the subject.

These hopes of the Reformers, if hopes they could be called, were now destined to be most bitterly disappointed. Egmont entered Flanders, not as a chief of rebels—not as a wise pacificator, but as an unscrupulous partisan of government, disposed to take summary vengeance on all suspected persons who should fall in his way. He ordered numerous executions of image-breakers and of other heretics. The whole province was in a state of alarm; for, although he had not been furnished by the Regent with a strong body of troops, yet the name of the conqueror at Saint Quentin and Gravelines was worth many regiments. His severity was excessive. His sanguinary exertions were ably seconded also by his secretary Bakkerzeel, a man who exercised the greatest influence over his chief, and who was now fiercely atoning for having signed the Compromise by persecuting those whom that league had been formed to protect. “Amid all the perplexities of the Duchess Regent,” says a Walloon historian, “this virtuous princess was consoled by the exploits of Bakkerzeel, gentleman in Count Egmont’s service. On one occasion he hanged twenty heretics, including a minister, at a single heat.”

Such achievements as these by the hands or the orders of the distinguished general who had been most absurdly held up as a possible protector of the civil and religious liberties of the country, created profound sensation. Flanders and Artois were filled with the wives and children of suspected thousands who had fled the country to escape the wrath of Egmont. The cries and piteous lamentations of these unfortunate creatures were heard on every side. Count Louis was earnestly implored to intercede for the persecuted Reformers. “You who have been so nobly gifted by Heaven, you who have good will and singular bounty written upon your face,” said Utenhove to Louis, “have the power to save these poor victims from the throats of the ravenous wolves.” The Count responded to the appeal, and strove to soften the severity of Egmont, without, however, producing any very signal effect. Flanders was soon pacified, nor was that important province permitted to enjoy the benefits of the agreement which had been extorted, from the Duchess. The preachings were forbidden, and the ministers and congregations arrested and chastised, even in places where the custom had been established previously to the 23d August. Certainly such vigorous exertions upon the part both of master and man did not savor of treason to Philip, and hardly seemed to indicate the final doom of Egmont and Bakkerzeel.



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The course of Orange at Antwerp was consistent with his whole career. He honestly came to arrange a pacification, but he knew that this end could be gained only by loyally maintaining the Accord which had been signed between the confederates and the Regent. He came back to the city on the 26th August, and found order partially re-established. The burghers having at last become thoroughly alarmed, and the fury of the image-breakers entirely appeased, it had been comparatively easy to restore tranquillity. The tranquillity, however, rather restored itself, and when the calm had succeeded to the tempest, the placid heads of the burgomasters once, more emerged from the waves.

Three image-breakers, who had been taken in the act, were hanged by order of the magistrates upon the 28th of August. The presence of Orange gave them courage to achieve these executions which he could not prevent, as the fifth article of the Accord enjoined the chastisement of the rioters. The magistrates chose that the "chastisement" on this occasion should be exemplary, and it was not in the power of Orange to interfere with the regular government of the city when acting according to its laws. The deed was not his, however, and he hastened, in order to obviate the necessity of further violence, to prepare articles of agreement, upon the basis of Margaret's concessions. Public preaching, according to the Reformed religion, had already taken place within the city. Upon the 22d, possession had been taken of at least three churches. The senate had deputed pensionary Wesenbeck to expostulate with the ministers, for the magistrates were at that moment not able to command. Taffin, the Walloon preacher, had been tractable, and had agreed to postpone his exercises. He furthermore had accompanied the pensionary to the cathedral, in order to persuade Herman Modet that it would be better for him likewise to defer his intended ministrations. They had found that eloquent enthusiast already in the great church, burning with impatience to ascend upon the ruins, and quite unable to resist the temptation of setting a Flemish psalm and preaching a Flemish sermon within the walls which had for so many centuries been vocal only to the Roman tongue and the Roman ritual. All that he would concede to the entreaties of his colleague and of the magistrate, was that his sermon should be short. In this, however, he had overrated his powers of retention, for the sermon not only became a long one, but he had preached another upon the afternoon of the same day. The city of Antwerp, therefore, was clearly within the seventh clause of the treaty of the 24th August, for preaching had taken place in the cathedral, previously to the signing of that Accord.

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Upon the 2d September, therefore, after many protracted interview with the heads of the Reformed religion, the Prince drew up sixteen articles of agreement between them, the magistrates and the government, which were duly signed and exchanged. They were conceived in the true spirit of statesmanship, and could the rulers of the land have elevated themselves to the mental height of William de Nassau, had Philip been able of comprehending such a mind, the Prince, who alone possessed the power in those distracted times of governing the wills of all men, would have enabled the monarch to transmit that beautiful cluster of provinces, without the lose of a single jewel, to the inheritors of his crown.

If the Prince were playing a game, he played it honorably. To have conceived the thought of religious toleration in an age of universal dogmatism; to have labored to produce mutual respect among conflicting opinions, at a period when many Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox, and when most Reformers fiercely proclaimed not liberty for every Christian doctrine, but only a new creed in place of all the rest, —to have admitted the possibility of several roads, to heaven, when zealots of all creeds would shut up all pathways but their own; if such sentiments and purposes were sins, they would have been ill-exchanged for the best virtues of the age. Yet, no doubt, this was his crying offence in the opinion of many contemporaries. He was now becoming apostate from the ancient Church, but he had long thought that Emperors, Kings, and Popes had taken altogether too much care of men's souls in times past, and had sent too many of them prematurely to their great account. He was equally indisposed to grant full-powers for the same purpose to Calvinists, Lutherans, or Anabaptists. "He censured the severity of our theologians," said a Catholic contemporary, accumulating all the religious offences of the Prince in a single paragraph, "because they keep strictly the constitutions of the Church without conceding a single point to their adversaries; he blamed the Calvinists as seditious and unruly people, yet nevertheless had a horror for the imperial edicts which condemned them to death; he said it was a cruel thing to take a man's life for sustaining an erroneous opinion; in short, he fantasied in his imagination a kind of religion, half Catholic, half Reformed, in order to content all persons; a system which would have been adopted could he have had his way." This picture, drawn by one of his most brilliant and bitter enemies, excites our admiration while intended to inspire aversion.

The articles of agreement at Antwerp thus promulgated assigned three churches to the different sects of reformers, stipulated that no attempt should be made by Catholics or Protestants to disturb the religious worship of each other, and provided that neither by mutual taunts in their sermons, nor by singing street ballads, together with improper allusions and overt acts of hostility, should the good-fellowship which ought to reign between brethren and fellow-citizens, even although entertaining different opinions as to religious rites and doctrines, be for the future interrupted.



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This was the basis upon which the very brief religious peace, broken almost as soon as established, was concluded by William of Orange, not only at Antwerp, but at Utrecht, Amsterdam, and other principal cities within his government. The Prince, however, notwithstanding his unwearied exertions, had slender hopes of a peaceful result. He felt that the last step taken by the Reformation had been off a precipice. He liked not such rapid progress. He knew that the King would never forgive the image-breaking. He felt that he would never recognize the Accord of the 24th August. Sir Thomas Gresham, who, as the representative of the Protestant Queen of England in the great commercial metropolis of Europe, was fully conversant with the turn things were taking, was already advising some other place for the sale of English commodities. He gave notice to his government that commerce would have no security at Antwerp "in those brabbling times." He was on confidential terms with the Prince, who invited him to dine upon the 4th September, and caused pensionary Wesenbeck, who was also present, to read aloud the agreement which was that day to be proclaimed at the town-house. Orange expressed himself, however, very doubtfully as to the future prospects of the provinces, and as to the probable temper of the King. "In all his talke," says Gresham, "the Prince aside unto me, 'I know this will nothing contente the King!'"

While Egmont had been, thus busied in Flanders, and Orange at Antwerp, Count Horn had been doing his best in the important city of Tournay. The Admiral was not especially gifted with intellect, nor with the power of managing men, but he went there with an honest purpose of seeing the Accord executed, intending, if it should prove practicable, rather to favor the Government than the Reformers. At the same time, for the purpose of giving satisfaction to the members of "the religion," and of manifesting his sincere desire for a pacification, he accepted lodgings which had been prepared for him at the house of a Calvinist merchant in the city, rather, than, take up his quarters with fierce old governor Moulbais, in the citadel. This gave much offence to the Catholics; and inspired the Reformers, with the hope of having their preaching inside the town. To this privilege they were entitled, for the practice had already been established there, previously to the 24th October. Nevertheless, at first he was disposed to limit them, in accordance with the wishes of the Duchess, to extra-mural exercises.

Upon his arrival, by a somewhat ominous conjuncture, he had supped with some of the leading citizens in the hall of the "gehenna" or torture room, certainly not a locality calculated to inspire a healthy appetite. On the following Sunday he had been entertained with a great banquet, at which all the principal burghers were present, held in a house on the market-place. The festivities had been interrupted

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by a quarrel, which had been taking place in the cathedral. Beneath the vaults of that edifice, tradition said that a vast treasure was hidden, and the canons had been known to boast that this buried wealth would be sufficient to rebuild their temple more magnificently than ever, in case of its total destruction. The Admiral had accordingly placed a strong guard in the church as soon as he arrived, and commenced very extensive excavations in search of this imaginary mine. The Regent informed her brother that the Count was prosecuting this work with the view of appropriating whatever might be found to his own benefit. As she knew that he was a ruined man, there seemed no more satisfactory mode of accounting for these proceedings. Horn had, however, expressly stated to her that every penny which should come into his possession from that or any other source would carefully be restored to the rightful owners. Nothing of consequence was ever found to justify the golden legends of the monks, but in the mean time the money-diggers gave great offence. The canons, naturally alarmed for the safety of their fabulous treasure, had forced the guard, by surreptitiously obtaining the countersign from a certain official of the town. A quarrel ensued which ended in the appearance of this personage, together with the commander of the military force on guard in the cathedral, before the banqueting company. The Count, in the rough way habitual with him, gave the culprit a sound rebuke for his intermeddling, and threatened, in case the offence were repeated, to have him instantly bound, gagged, and forwarded to Brussels for further punishment. The matter thus satisfactorily adjusted, the banquet proceeded, the merchants present being all delighted at seeing the said official, who was exceedingly, unpopular, "so well huffed by the Count." The excavations were continued for along time, until there seemed danger of destroying the foundation of the church, but only a few bits of money were discovered, with some other articles of small value.

Horn had taken his apartments in the city in order to be at hand to suppress any tumults, and to inspire confidence in the people. He had come to a city where five sixths of the inhabitants—were of the reformed religion, and he did not, therefore, think it judicious to attempt violently the suppression of their worship. Upon his arrival he had issued a proclamation, ordering that all property which might have been pillaged from the religious houses should be instantly restored to the magistracy, under penalty that all who disobeyed the command should "be forthwith strangled at the gibbet." Nothing was brought back, however, for the simple reason that nothing had been stolen. There was, therefore, no one to be strangled.

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The next step was to publish the Accord of 24th August, and to signify the intention of the Admiral to enforce its observance. The preachings were as enthusiastically attended as ever, while the storm which had been raging among the images had in the mean time been entirely allayed. Congregations of fifteen thousand were still going to hear Ambrose Wille in the suburbs, but they were very tranquil in their demeanor. It was arranged between the Admiral and the leaders of the reformed consistories, that three places, to be selected by Horn, should be assigned for their places of worship. At these spots, which were outside the walls, permission was given the Reformers to build meeting-houses. To this arrangement the Duchess formally gave her consent.

Nicholas Taffin; councillor, in the name of the Reformers, made “a brave and elegant harangue” before the magistrates, representing that, as on the most moderate computation, three quarters of the population were dissenters, as the Regent had ordered the construction of the new temples, and as the Catholics retained possession of all the churches in the city, it was no more than fair that the community should bear the expense of the new buildings. It was indignantly replied, however, that Catholics could not be expected to pay for the maintenance of heresy, particularly when they had just been so much exasperated by the image-breaking Councillor Taffin took nothing, therefore by his “brave and elegant harangue,” saving a small vote of forty livres.

The building was, however, immediately commenced. Many nobles and rich citizens contributed to the work; some making donations in money; others giving quantities of oaks, poplars, elms, and other timber trees, to be used in the construction. The foundation of the first temple outside the Ports de Cocquerel was immediately laid. Vast heaps of broken images and other ornaments of the desecrated churches were most unwisely used for this purpose, and the Catholics were exceedingly enraged at beholding those male and female saints, who had for centuries been placed in such “reverend and elevated positions,” fallen so low as to be the foundation-stones of temples whose builders denounced all those holy things as idols.

As the autumn began to wane, the people were clamorous for permission to have their preaching inside the city. The new buildings could not be finished before the winter; but in the mean time the camp-meetings were becoming, in the stormy seasons fast approaching, a very inconvenient mode of worship. On the other hand, the Duchess was furious at the proposition, and commanded Horn on no account to consent that the interior of Tournay should be profaned by these heretical rites. It was in vain that the Admiral represented the justice of the claim, as these exercises had taken place in several of the city churches previously to the Accord of the 24th of August.

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That agreement had been made by the Duchess only to be broken. She had already received money and the permission to make levies, and was fast assuming a tone very different from the abject demeanor which had characterized her in August. Count Horn had been used even as Egmont, Orange and Hoogstraaten had been employed, in order that their personal influence with the Reformers might be turned to account. The tools and the work accomplished by them were to be thrown away at the most convenient opportunity.

The Admiral was placed in a most intolerable position. An honest, common-place, sullen kind of man, he had come to a city full of heretics, to enforce concessions just made by the government to heresy. He soon found himself watched, paltered with, suspected by the administration at Brussels. Governor Moulbais in the citadel, who was nominally under his authority, refused obedience to his orders, was evidently receiving secret instructions from the Regent, and was determined to cannonade the city into submission at a very early day. Horn required him to pledge himself that no fresh troops should enter the castle. Moulbais swore he would make no such promise to a living soul. The Admiral stormed with his usual violence, expressed his regret that his brother Montigny had so bad a lieutenant in the citadel, but could make no impression upon the determined veteran, who knew, better than Horn, the game which was preparing. Small reinforcements were daily arriving at the castle; the soldiers of the garrison had been heard to boast "that they would soon carve and eat the townsmen's flesh on their dressers," and all the good effect from the Admiral's proclamation on arriving, had completely vanished.

Horn complained bitterly of the situation in which he was placed. He knew himself the mark of incessant and calumnious misrepresentation both at Brussels and Madrid. He had been doing his best, at a momentous crisis, to serve the government without violating its engagements, but he declared himself to be neither theologian nor jurist, and incapable, while suspected and unassisted, of performing a task which the most learned doctors of the council would find impracticable. He would rather, he bitterly exclaimed, endure a siege in any fortress by the Turks, than be placed in such a position. He was doing all that he was capable of doing, yet whatever he did was wrong. There was a great difference, he said, between being in a place and talking about it at a distance.

In the middle of October he was recalled by the Duchess, whose letters had been uniformly so ambiguous that he confessed he was quite unable to divine their meaning. Before he left the city, he committed his most unpardonable crime. Urged by the leaders of the reformed congregations to permit their exercises in the Clothiers' Hall until their temples should be finished, the Count accorded his consent provisionally, and subject to revocation by the Regent, to whom the arrangement was immediately to be communicated.

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Horn departed, and the Reformers took instant possession of the hall. It was found in a very dirty and disorderly condition, encumbered with benches, scaffoldings, stakes, gibbets, and all the machinery used for public executions upon the market-place. A vast body of men went to work with a will; scrubbing, cleaning, whitewashing, and removing all the foul lumber of the hall; singing in chorus, as they did so, the hymns of Clement Marot. By dinner-time the place was ready. The pulpit and benches for the congregation had taken the place of the gibbet timber. It is difficult to comprehend that such work as this was a deadly crime. Nevertheless, Horn, who was himself a sincere Catholic, had committed the most mortal of all his offences against Philip and against God, by having countenanced so flagitious a transaction.

The Admiral went to Brussels. Secretary de la Torre, a very second-rate personage, was despatched to Tournay to convey the orders of the Regent. Governor Moulbais, now in charge of affairs both civil and military, was to prepare all things for the garrison, which was soon to be despatched under Noircarmes. The Duchess had now arms in her hands, and her language was bold. La Torre advised the Reformers to be wise “while the rod was yet green and growing, lest it should be gathered for their backs; for it was unbecoming in subjects to make bargains with their King.” There was hardly any decent pretext used in violating the Accord of the 24th August, so soon as the government was strong enough to break it. It was always said that the preachings suppressed, had not been established previously to that arrangement; but the preachings had in reality obtained almost every where, and were now universally abolished. The ridiculous quibble was also used that, in the preachings other religious exercises were not included, whereas it was notorious that they had never been separated. It is, however, a gratuitous task, to unravel the deceptions of tyranny when it hardly deigns to disguise itself. The dissimulations which have resisted the influence of centuries are more worthy of serious investigation, and of these the epoch offers us a sufficient supply.

At the close of the year, the city of Tournay was completely subjugated and the reformed religion suppressed. Upon the 2nd day of January, 1567, the Seigneur de Noircarmes arrived before the gates at the head of eleven companies, with orders from Duchess Margaret to strengthen the garrison and disarm the citizens. He gave the magistrates exactly one hour and a half to decide whether they would submit without a murmur. He expressed an intention of maintaining the Accord of 24th August; a ridiculous affectation under the circumstances, as the event proved. The notables were summoned, submission agreed upon, and within the prescribed time the magistrates came before Noircarmes, with an unconditional acceptance of his terms. That truculent personage told them, in reply, that they had done wisely, for if they had delayed receiving the garrison a minute longer, he would have instantly burned the city to ashes and put every one of the inhabitants to the sword. He had been fully authorized to do so, and subsequent events were to show, upon more than one dreadful occasion, how capable Noircarmes would have been of fulfilling this menace.



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The soldiers, who had made a forced march all night, and who had been firmly persuaded that the city would refuse the terms demanded, were excessively disappointed at being obliged to forego the sack and pillage upon which they had reckoned. Eight or nine hundred rascally peasants, too, who had followed in the skirts of the regiments, each provided with a great empty bag, which they expected to fill with booty which they might purchase of the soldiers, or steal in the midst of the expected carnage and rapine, shared the discontent of the soldiery, by whom they were now driven ignominiously out of the town.

The citizens were immediately disarmed. All the fine weapons which they had been obliged to purchase at their own expense, when they had been arranged by the magistrates under eight banners, for defence of the city against tumult and invasion, were taken from them; the most beautiful cutlasses, carbines, poniards, and pistols, being divided by Noircarmes among his officers. Thus Tournay was tranquillized.

During the whole of these proceedings in Flanders, and at Antwerp, Tournay, and Mechlin, the conduct of the Duchess had been marked with more than her usual treachery. She had been disavowing acts which the men upon whom she relied in her utmost need had been doing by her authority; she had been affecting to praise their conduct, while she was secretly misrepresenting their actions and maligning their motives, and she had been straining every nerve to make foreign levies, while attempting to amuse the confederates and sectaries with an affectation of clemency.

When Orange complained that she had been censuring his proceedings at Antwerp, and holding language unfavorable to his character, she protested that she thoroughly approved his arrangements—excepting only the two points of the intramural preachings and the permission to heretics of other exercises than sermons—and that if she were displeased with him he might be sure that she would rather tell him so than speak ill of him behind his back. The Prince, who had been compelled by necessity, and fully authorized by the terms of the “Accord”, to grant those two points which were the vital matter in his arrangements, answered very calmly, that he was not so frivolous as to believe in her having used language to his discredit had he not been quite certain of the fact, as he would soon prove by evidence. Orange was not the man to be deceived as to the position in which he stood, nor as to the character of those with whom he dealt. Margaret wrote, however, in the same vein concerning him to Hoogstmaten, affirming that nothing could be further from her intention than to characterize the proceedings of “her cousin, the Prince of Orange, as contrary to the service of his Majesty; knowing, as she did, how constant had been his affection, and how diligent his actions, in the cause of God and the King.”

She also sent councillor d’Assonleville on a special mission to the Prince, instructing that smooth personage to inform her said cousin of Orange that he was and always had been “loved and cherished by his Majesty, and that for herself she had ever loved him like a brother or a child.”



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She wrote to Horn, approving of his conduct in the main, although in obscure terms, and expressing great confidence in his zeal, loyalty, and good intentions. She accorded the same praise to Hoogstraaten, while as to Egmont she was perpetually reproaching him for the suspicions which he seemed obstinately to entertain as to her disposition and that of Philip, in regard to his conduct and character.

It has already been partly seen what were her private sentiments and secret representations as to the career of the distinguished personages thus encouraged and commended. Her pictures were painted in daily darkening colors. She told her brother that Orange, Egmont, and Horn were about to place themselves at the head of the confederates, who were to take up arms and had been levying troops; that the Lutheran religion was to be forcibly established, that the whole power of the government was to be placed in the triumvirate thus created by those seigniors, and that Philip was in reality to be excluded entirely from those provinces which were his ancient patrimony. All this information she had obtained from Mansfeld, at whom the nobles were constantly sneering as at a faithful valet who would never receive his wages.

She also informed the King that the scheme for dividing the country was already arranged: that Augustus of Saxony was to have Friesland and Overysse; Count Brederode, Holland; the Dukes of Cleves and Lorraine, Gueldres; the King of France, Flanders, Artois, and Hainault, of which territories Egmont was to be perpetual stadholder; the Prince of Orange, Brabant; and so on indefinitely. A general massacre of all the Catholics had been arranged by Orange, Horn, and Egmont, to commence as soon as the King should put his foot on shipboard to come to the country. This last remarkable fact Margaret reported to Philip, upon the respectable authority of Noircarmes.

She apologized for having employed the service of these nobles, on the ground of necessity. Their proceedings in Flanders, at Antwerp, Tournay, Mechlin, had been highly reprehensible, and she had been obliged to disavow them in the most important particulars. As for Egmont, she had most unwillingly entrusted forces to his hands for the purpose of putting down the Flemish sectaries. She had been afraid to show a want of confidence in his character, but at the same time she believed that all soldiers under Egmont's orders would be so many enemies to the king. Notwithstanding his protestations of fidelity to the ancient religion and to his Majesty, she feared that he was busied with some great plot against God and the King. When we remember the ruthless manner in which the unfortunate Count had actually been raging against the sectaries, and the sanguinary proofs which he had been giving of his fidelity to "God and the King," it seems almost incredible that Margaret could have written down all these monstrous assertions.



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The Duchess gave, moreover, repeated warnings to her brother, that the nobles were in the habit of obtaining possession of all the correspondence between Madrid and Brussels; and that they spent a vast deal of money in order to read her own and Philip's most private letters. She warned him therefore, to be upon his guard, for she believed that almost all their despatches were read. Such being the cases and the tenor of those documents being what we have seen it to be, her complaints as to the incredulity of those seigniors to her affectionate protestations, seem quite wonderful.

CHAPTER IX., Part 1., 1566

Position of Orange—The interview at Dendermonde—The supposititious letters of Alava—Views of Egmont—Isolation of Orange—Conduct of Egmont and of Horn—Confederacy, of the nobles dissolved—Weak behavior of prominent personages—Watchfulness of Orange—Convocation of States General demanded—Pamphlet of Orange—City of Valenciennes refuses a garrison—Influence of La Grange and De Bray—City, declared in a state of siege—Invested by Noircarmes—Movements to relieve the place—Calvinists defeated at Lannoy and at Waterlots—Elation of the government—The siege pressed more closely—Cruelties practised upon the country people—Courage of the inhabitants—Remonstrance to the Knights of the Fleece—Conduct of Brederode—Orange at Amsterdam—New Oath demanded by Government—Orange refuses—He offers his resignation of all offices—Meeting at Breda—New “Request” of Brederode—He creates disturbances and levies troops in Antwerp—Conduct of Hoogstraaten—Plans of Brederode—Supposed connivance of Orange—Alarm at Brussels—Tholouse at Ostrawell—Brederode in Holland—De Beauvoir defeats Tholouse—Excitement at Antwerp—Determined conduct of Orange—Three days' tumult at Antwerp suppressed by the wisdom and courage of Orange.

It is necessary to allude to certain important events contemporaneous with those recorded in the last chapter, that the reader may thoroughly understand the position of the leading personages in this great drama at the close of the year 1566.

The Prince of Orange had, as we have seen, been exerting all his energies faithfully to accomplish the pacification of the commercial metropolis, upon the basis assented to beforehand by the Duchess. He had established a temporary religious peace, by which alone at that crisis the gathering tempest could be averted; but he had permitted the law to take its course upon certain rioters, who had been regularly condemned by courts of justice. He had worked day and night—notwithstanding immense obstacles, calumnious misstatements, and conflicting opinions—to restore order out of chaos; he had freely imperilled his own life—dashing into a tumultuous mob on one occasion, wounding several with the halberd which he snatched from one of his guard, and dispersing almost with his single arm a



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dangerous and threatening insurrection—and he had remained in Antwerp, at the pressing solicitations of the magistracy, who represented that the lives of not a single ecclesiastic would be safe as soon as his back was turned, and that all the merchants would forthwith depart from the city. It was nevertheless necessary that he should make a personal visit to his government of Holland, where similar disorders had been prevailing, and where men of all ranks and parties were clamoring for their stadholder.

Notwithstanding all his exertions however, he was thoroughly aware of the position in which he stood towards the government. The sugared phrases of Margaret, the deliberate commendation of the “benign and debonair” Philip, produced no effect upon this statesman, who was accustomed to look through and through men’s actions to the core of their hearts. In the hearts of Philip and Margaret he already saw treachery and revenge indelibly imprinted. He had been especially indignant at the insult which the Duchess Regent had put upon him, by sending Duke Eric of Brunswick with an armed force into Holland in order to protect Gouda, Woerden, and other places within the Prince’s own government. He was thoroughly conversant with the general tone in which the other seigniors and himself were described to their sovereign. He, was already convinced that the country was to be conquered by foreign mercenaries, and that his own life, with these of many other nobles, was to be sacrificed. The moment had arrived in which he was justified in looking about him for means of defence, both for himself and his country, if the King should be so insane as to carry out the purposes which the Prince suspected. The time was fast approaching in which a statesman placed upon such an elevation before the world as that which he occupied, would be obliged to choose his part for life. To be the unscrupulous tool of tyranny, a rebel, or an exile, was his necessary fate. To a man so prone to read the future, the moment for his choice seemed already arrived. Moreover, he thought it doubtful, and events were most signally to justify his doubts, whether he could be accepted as the instrument of despotism, even were he inclined to prostitute himself to such service. At this point, therefore, undoubtedly began the treasonable thoughts of William the Silent, if it be treason to attempt the protection of ancient and chartered liberties against a foreign oppressor. He despatched a private envoy to Egmont, representing the grave suspicions manifested by the Duchess in sending Duke Eric into Holland, and proposing that means should be taken into consideration for obviating the dangers with which the country was menaced. Catholics as well as Protestants, he intimated, were to be crushed in one universal conquest as soon as Philip had completed the formidable preparations which he was making for invading the provinces. For himself, he said, he would not remain in the land to witness the utter

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desolation of the people, nor to fall an unresisting victim to the vengeance which he foresaw. If, however, he might rely upon the co-operation of Egmont and Horn, he was willing, with the advice of the states-general, to risk preparations against the armed invasion of Spaniards by which the country was to be reduced to slavery. It was incumbent, however, upon men placed as they were, "not to let the grass grow under their feet;" and the moment for action was fast approaching.

This was the scheme which Orange was willing to attempt. To make use of his own influence and that of his friends, to interpose between a sovereign insane with bigotry, and a people in a state of religious frenzy, to resist brutal violence if need should be by force, and to compel the sovereign to respect the charters which he had sworn to maintain, and which were far more ancient than his sovereignty; so much of treason did William of Orange already contemplate, for in no other way could he be loyal to his country and his own honor.

Nothing came of this secret embassy, for Egmont's heart and fate were already fixed. Before Orange departed, however; for the north, where his presence in the Dutch provinces was now imperatively required, a memorable interview took place at Dendermonde between Orange, Horn, Egmont, Hoogstraaten, and Count Louis. The nature of this conference was probably similar to that of the secret mission from Orange to Egmont just recorded. It was not a long consultation. The gentlemen met at eleven o'clock, and conversed until dinner was ready, which was between twelve and one in the afternoon. They discussed the contents of a letter recently received by Horn from his brother Montigny at Segovia, giving a lively picture of Philip's fury at the recent events in the Netherlands, and expressing the Baron's own astonishment and indignation that it had been impossible for the seigniors to prevent such outrages as the public preaching, the image-breaking and the Accord. They had also some conversation concerning the dissatisfaction manifested by the Duchess at the proceedings of Count Horn at Tournay, and they read a very remarkable letter which had been furnished them, as having been written by the Spanish envoy in Paris, Don Francis of Alava, to Margaret of Parma. This letter was forged. At least the Regent, in her Italian correspondence, asserted it to be fictitious, and in those secret letters to Philip she usually told the truth. The astuteness of William of Orange had in this instance been deceived. The striking fidelity, however, with which the present and future policy of the government was sketched, the accuracy with which many unborn events were foreshadowed, together with the minute touches which gave an air of genuineness to the fictitious despatch, might well deceive even so sagacious an observer as the Prince.

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The letters alluded to the deep and long-settled hostility of Philip to Orange, Horn, and Egmont, as to a fact entirely within the writer's knowledge, and that of his correspondent, but urged upon the Duchess the assumption of an extraordinary degree of apparent cordiality in her intercourse with them. It was the King's intention to use them and to destroy them, said the writer, and it was the Regent's duty to second the design. "The tumults and troubles have not been without their secret concurrence," said the supposititious Alava, "and your Highness may rest assured that they will be the first upon whom his Majesty will seize, not to confer benefits, but to chastise them as they deserve. Your Highness, however, should show no symptom of displeasure, but should constantly maintain in their minds the idea that his Majesty considers them as the most faithful of his servants. While they are persuaded of this, they can be more easily used, but when the time comes, they will be treated in another manner. Your Highness may rest assured that his Majesty is not less inclined than your Highness that they should receive the punishment which they merit." The Duchess was furthermore recommended "to deal with the three seigniors according to the example of the Spanish Governments in its intercourse with the envoys, Bergen and Montigny, who are met with a smiling face, but who are closely watched, and who will never be permitted to leave Spain alive." The remainder of the letter alludes to supposed engagements between France and Spain for the extirpation of heresy, from which allusion to the generally accepted but mistaken notion as to the Bayonne conference, a decided proof seems to be furnished that the letter was not genuine. Great complaints, however, are made, as to the conduct of the Queen Regent, who is described as "a certain lady well known to her Highness, and as a person without faith, friendship, or truth; the most consummate hypocrite in the world." After giving instances of the duplicity manifested by Catherine de Medici, the writer continues: "She sends her little black dwarf to me upon frequent errands, in order that by means of this spy she may worm out my secrets. I am, however, upon my guard, and flatter myself that I learn more from him than she from me. She shall never be able to boast of having deceived a Spaniard."

An extract or two from this very celebrated document seemed indispensable, because of the great importance attached to it, both at the Dendermonde Conference, and at the trials of Egmont and Horn. The contemporary writers of Holland had no doubt of its genuineness, and what is more remarkable, Strada, the historiographer of the Farnese family, after quoting Margaret's denial of the authenticity of the letter, coolly observes: "Whether this were only an invention of the conspirators, or actually a despatch from Alava, I shall not decide. It is certain, however, that the Duchess declared it to be false."



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Certainly, as we read the epistles, and observe how profoundly the writer seems to have sounded the deep guile of the Spanish Cabinet, and how distinctly events, then far in the future, are indicated, we are tempted to exclaim: "aut Alava, aut Diabolus;" either the envoy wrote the despatch, or Orange. Who else could look into the future, and into Philip's heart so unerringly?

As the charge has never been made, so far as we are aware, against the Prince, it is superfluous to discuss the amount of immorality which should belong to such a deception. A tendency to employ stratagem in his warfare against Spain was, no doubt, a blemish upon his—high character. Before he is condemned, however, in the Court of Conscience, the ineffable wiles of the policy with which he had to combat must be thoroughly scanned, as well as the pure and lofty purpose for which his life's long battle was fought.

There was, doubtless, some conversation at Dendermonde on the propriety or possibility of forcible resistance to a Spanish army, with which it seemed probable that Philip was about to invade the provinces, and take the lives of the leading nobles. Count Louis was in favor of making provision in Germany for the accomplishment of this purpose. It is also highly probable that the Prince may have encouraged the proposition. In the sense of his former communication to Egmont, he may have reasoned on the necessity of making levies to sustain the decisions of the states-general against violence. There is, however, no proof of any such fact. Egmont, at any rate, opposed the scheme, on the ground that "it was wrong to entertain any such ill opinion of so good a king as Philip, that he had never done any thing unjust towards his subjects, and that if any one was in fear, he had better leave the country."

Egmont, moreover; doubted the authenticity of the letters from Alava, but agreed to carry them to Brussels, and to lay them before the Regent. That lady, when she saw them, warmly assured the Count that they were inventions.

The Conference broke up after it had lasted an hour and a half. The nobles then went to dinner, at which other persons appear to have been present, and the celebrated Dendermonde meeting was brought to a close. After the repast was finished, each of the five nobles mounted his horse, and departed on his separate way.

From this time forth the position of, these leading seigniors became more sharply defined. Orange was left in almost complete isolation. Without the assistance of Egmont, any effective resistance to the impending invasion from Spain seemed out of the question. The Count, however, had taken his irrevocable and fatal resolution. After various oscillations during the stormy period which had elapsed, his mind, notwithstanding all the disturbing causes by which it had hitherto been partially influenced, now pointed steadily to the point of loyalty. The guidance of that pole star was to lead him to



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utter shipwreck. The unfortunate noble, entrenched against all fear of Philip by the brazen wall of an easy conscience; saw no fault in his past at which he should grow pale with apprehension. Moreover, he was sanguine by nature, a Catholic in religion, a royalist from habit and conviction. Henceforth he was determined that his services to the crown should more than counterbalance any idle speeches or insolent demonstrations of which he might have been previously guilty.

Horn pursued a different course, but one which separated him also from the Prince, while it led to the same fate which Egmont was blindly pursuing.—The Admiral had committed no act of treason. On the contrary, he had been doing his best, under most difficult circumstances, to avert rebellion and save the interests of a most ungrateful sovereign. He was now disposed to wrap himself in his virtue, to retreat from a court life, for which he had never felt a vocation, and to resign all connection with a government by which he felt himself very badly, treated. Moody, wrathful, disappointed, ruined, and calumniated, he would no longer keep terms with King or Duchess. He had griefs of long standing against the whole of the royal family. He had never forgiven the Emperor for refusing him, when young, the appointment of chamberlain. He had served Philip long and faithfully, but he had never received a stiver of salary or “merced,” notwithstanding all his work as state councillor, as admiral, as superintendent in Spain; while his younger brother had long been in receipt of nine or ten thousand florins yearly. He had spent four hundred thousand florins in the King’s service; his estates were mortgaged to their full value; he had been obliged to sell, his family plate. He had done his best in Tournay to serve the Duchess, and he had averted the “Sicilian vespers,” which had been imminent at his arrival. He had saved the Catholics from a general massacre, yet he heard nevertheless from Montigny, that all his actions were distorted in Spain, and his motives blackened. His heart no longer inclined him to continue in Philip’s service, even were he furnished with the means of doing so. He had instructed his secretary, Alonzo de la Loo, whom he had despatched many months previously to Madrid, that he was no longer to press his master’s claims for a “merced,” but to signify that he abandoned all demands and resigned all posts. He could turn hermit for the rest of his days, as well as the Emperor Charles. If he had little, he could live upon little. It was in this sense that he spoke to Margaret of Parma, to Assonleville, to all around him. It was precisely in this strain and temper that he wrote to Philip, indignantly defending his course at Tournay, protesting against the tortuous conduct of the Duchess, and bluntly declaring that he would treat no longer with ladies upon matters which concerned a man’s honor.



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Thus, smarting under a sense of gross injustice, the Admiral expressed himself in terms which Philip was not likely to forgive. He had undertaken the pacification of Tournay, because it was Montigny's government, and he had promised his services whenever they should be requisite. Horn was a loyal and affectionate brother, and it is pathetic to find him congratulating Montigny on being, after all, better off in Spain than in the Netherlands. Neither loyalty nor the sincere Catholicism for which Montigny at this period commended Horn in his private letters, could save the two brothers from the doom which was now fast approaching.

Thus Horn, blind as Egmont—not being aware that a single step beyond implicit obedience had created an impassable gulf between Philip and himself—resolved to meet his destiny in sullen retirement. Not an entirely disinterested man, perhaps, but an honest one, as the world went, mediocre in mind, but brave, generous, and direct of purpose, goaded by the shafts of calumny, hunted down by the whole pack which fawned upon power as it grew more powerful, he now retreated to his “desert,” as he called his ruined home at Weert, where he stood at bay, growling defiance at the Regent, at Philip, at all the world.

Thus were the two prominent personages upon whose co-operation Orange had hitherto endeavored to rely, entirely separated from him. The confederacy of nobles, too, was dissolved, having accomplished little, notwithstanding all its noisy demonstrations, and having lost all credit with the people by the formal cessation of the Compromise in consequence of the Accord of August. As a body, they had justified the sarcasm of Hubert Languet, that “the confederated nobles had ruined their country by their folly and incapacity.” They had profaned a holy cause by indecent orgies, compromised it by seditious demonstrations, abandoned it when most in need of assistance. Bakkerzeel had distinguished himself by hanging sectaries in Flanders. “Golden Fleece” de Hammes, after creating great scandal in and about Antwerp, since the Accord, had ended by accepting an artillery commission in the Emperor's army, together with three hundred crowns for convoy from Duchess Margaret. Culemburg was serving the cause of religious freedom by defacing the churches within his ancestral domains, pulling down statues, dining in chapels and giving the holy wafer to his parrot. Nothing could be more stupid than these acts of irreverence, by which Catholics were offended and honest patriots disgusted. Nothing could be more opposed to the sentiments of Orange, whose first principle was abstinence by all denominations of Christians from mutual insults. At the same time, it is somewhat revolting to observe the indignation with which such offences were regarded by men of the most abandoned character. Thus, Armenteros, whose name was synonymous with government swindling, who had been rolling up money year after year, by peculations, auctioneering of high posts in church and state, bribes, and all kinds of picking and stealing, could not contain his horror as he referred to wafers eaten by parrots, or “toasted on forks” by renegade priests; and poured out his emotions on the subject into the faithful bosom of Antonio Perez, the man with whose debaucheries, political villanies, and deliberate murders all Europe was to ring.



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No doubt there were many individuals in the confederacy for whom it was reserved to render honorable service in the national cause. The names of Louis Nassau, Mamix of St. Aldegonde, Bernard de Merode, were to be written in golden letters in their country's rolls; but at this moment they were impatient, inconsiderate, out of the control of Orange. Louis was anxious for the King to come from Spain with his army, and for "the bear dance to begin." Brederode, noisy, bawling, and absurd as ever, was bringing ridicule upon the national cause by his buffoonery, and endangering the whole people by his inadequate yet rebellious exertions.

What course was the Prince of Orange to adopt? He could find no one to comprehend his views. He felt certain at the close of the year that the purpose of the government was fixed. He made no secret of his determination never to lend himself as an instrument for the contemplated subjugation of the people. He had repeatedly resigned all his offices. He was now determined that the resignation once for all should be accepted. If he used dissimulation, it was because Philip's deception permitted no man to be frank. If the sovereign constantly disavowed all hostile purposes against his people, and manifested extreme affection for the men whom he had already doomed to the scaffold, how could the Prince openly denounce him? It was his duty to save his country and his friends from impending ruin. He preserved, therefore, an attitude of watchfulness. Philip, in the depth of his cabinet, was under a constant inspection by the sleepless Prince. The sovereign assured his sister that her apprehensions about their correspondence was groundless. He always locked up his papers, and took the key with him. Nevertheless, the key was taken out of his pocket and the papers read. Orange was accustomed to observe, that men of leisure might occupy themselves with philosophical pursuits and with the secrets of nature, but that it was his business to study the hearts of kings. He knew the man and the woman with whom he had to deal. We have seen enough of the policy secretly pursued by Philip and Margaret to appreciate the accuracy with which the Prince, groping as it were in the dark, had judged the whole situation. Had his friends taken his warnings, they might have lived to render services against tyranny. Had he imitated their example of false loyalty, there would have been one additional victim, more illustrious than all the rest, and a whole country hopelessly enslaved.

It is by keeping these considerations in view, that we can explain his connection with such a man as Brederode. The enterprises of that noble, of Tholouse, and others, and the resistance of Valenciennes, could hardly have been prevented even by the opposition of the Prince. But why should he take the field against men who, however rashly or ineffectually, were endeavoring to oppose tyranny, when he knew himself already proscribed and doomed by the tyrant? Such loyalty he left to Egmont. Till late in the autumn, he had still believed in the possibility of convoking the states-general, and of making preparations in Germany to enforce their decrees.

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The confederates and sectaries had boasted that they could easily raise an army of sixty thousand men within the provinces,—that twelve hundred thousand florins monthly would be furnished by the rich merchants of Antwerp, and that it was ridiculous to suppose that the German mercenaries enrolled by the Duchess in Saxony, Hesse, and other Protestant countries, would ever render serious assistance against the adherents of the reformed religion. Without placing much confidence in such exaggerated statements, the Prince might well be justified in believing himself strong enough, if backed by the confederacy, by Egmont, and by his own boundless influence, both at Antwerp and in his own government, to sustain the constituted authorities of the nation even against a Spanish army, and to interpose with legitimate and irresistible strength between the insane tyrant and the country which he was preparing to crush. It was the opinion of the best informed Catholics that, if Egmont should declare for the confederacy, he could take the field with sixty thousand men, and make himself master of the whole country at a blow. In conjunction with Orange, the moral and physical force would have been invincible.

It was therefore not Orange alone, but the Catholics and Protestants alike, the whole population of the country, and the Duchess Regent herself, who desired the convocation of the estates. Notwithstanding Philip's deliberate but secret determination never to assemble that body, although the hope was ever to be held out that they should be convened, Margaret had been most importunate that her brother should permit the measure. "There was less danger," she felt herself compelled to say, "in assembling than in not assembling the States; it was better to preserve the Catholic religion for a part of the country, than to lose it altogether." "The more it was delayed," she said, "the more ruinous and desperate became the public affairs. If the measure were postponed much longer, all Flanders, half Brabant, the whole of Holland, Zeland, Gueldrea, Tournay, Lille, Mechlin, would be lost forever, without a chance of ever restoring the ancient religion." The country, in short, was "without faith, King, or law," and nothing worse could be apprehended from any deliberation of the states-general. These being the opinions of the Duchess, and according to her statement those of nearly all the good Catholics in the country, it could hardly seem astonishing or treasonable that the Prince should also be in favor of the measure.

As the Duchess grew stronger, however, and as the people, aghast at the fate of Tournay and Valenciennes, began to lose courage, she saw less reason for assembling the states. Orange, on the other hand, completely deserted by Egmont and Horn, and having little confidence in the characters of the ex-confederates, remained comparatively quiescent but watchful.

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At the close of the year, an important pamphlet from his hand was circulated, in which his views as to the necessity of allowing some degree of religious freedom were urged upon the royal government with his usual sagacity of thought, moderation of language, and modesty in tone. The man who had held the most important civil and military offices in the country almost from boyhood, and who was looked up to by friend and foe as the most important personage in the three millions of its inhabitants, apologized for his "presumption" in coming forward publicly with his advice. "I would not," he said, "in matters of such importance, affect to be wiser or to make greater pretensions than my age or experience warrants, yet seeing affairs in such perplexity, I will rather incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect that which I consider my duty."

This, then, was the attitude of the principal personages in the Netherlands, and the situation of affairs at the end of the eventful year 1566, the last year of peace which the men then living or their children were to know. The government, weak at the commencement, was strong at the close. The confederacy was broken and scattered. The Request, the beggar banquets, the public preaching, the image-breaking, the Accord of August, had been followed by reaction. Tournay had accepted its garrison. Egmont, completely obedient to the crown, was compelling all the cities of Flanders and Artois to receive soldiers sufficient to maintain implicit obedience, and to extinguish all heretical demonstrations, so that the Regent was at comparative leisure to effect the reduction of Valenciennes.

This ancient city, in the province of Hainault, and on the frontier of France, had been founded by the Emperor Valentinian, from whom it had derived its name. Originally established by him as a city of refuge, it had received the privilege of affording an asylum to debtors, to outlaws, and even to murderers. This ancient right had been continued, under certain modifications, even till the period with which we are now occupied. Never, however, according to the government, had the right of asylum, even in the wildest times, been so abused by the city before. What were debtors, robbers, murderers, compared to heretics? yet these worst enemies of their race swarmed in the rebellious city, practising even now the foulest rites of Calvin, and obeying those most pestilential of all preachers, Guido de Bray, and Peregrine de la Grange. The place was the hot-bed of heresy and sedition, and it seemed to be agreed, as by common accord, that the last struggle for what was called the new religion, should take place beneath its walls.



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Pleasantly situated in a fertile valley, provided with very strong fortifications and very deep moats, Valenciennes, with the Scheld flowing through its centre, and furnishing the means of laying the circumjacent meadows under water, was considered in those days almost impregnable. The city was summoned, almost at the same time as Tournay, to accept a garrison. This demand of government was met by a peremptory refusal. Noircarmes, towards the middle of December, ordered the magistrates to send a deputation to confer with him at Conde. Pensionary Outreman accordingly repaired to that neighboring city, accompanied by some of his colleagues. This committee was not unfavorable to the demands of government. The magistracies of the cities, generally, were far from rebellious; but in the case of Valenciennes the real power at that moment was with the Calvinist consistory, and the ministers. The deputies, after their return from Conde, summoned the leading members of the reformed religion, together with the preachers. It was urged that it was their duty forthwith to use their influence in favor of the demand made by the government upon the city.

“May I grow mute as a fish!” answered de la Grange, stoutly, “may the tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, before I persuade my people to accept a garrison of cruel mercenaries, by whom their rights of conscience are to be trampled upon!”

Councillor Outreman reasoned with the fiery minister, that if he and his colleague were afraid of their own lives, ample provision should be made with government for their departure under safe conduct. La Grange replied that he had no fears for himself, that the Lord would protect those who preached and those who believed in his holy word, but that He would not forgive them should they now bend their necks to His enemies.

It was soon very obvious that no arrangement could be made. The magistrates could exert no authority, the preachers were all-powerful; and the citizens, said a Catholic inhabitant of Valenciennes, “allowed themselves to be led by their ministers like oxen.” Upon the 17th December, 1566, a proclamation was accordingly issued by the Duchess Regent, declaring the city in a state of siege, and all its inhabitants rebels. The crimes for which this penalty was denounced, were elaborately set forth in the edict. Preaching according to the reformed religion had been permitted in two or three churches, the sacrament according to the Calvinistic manner had been publicly administered, together with a renunciation by the communicants of their adhesion to the Catholic Church, and now a rebellious refusal to receive the garrison sent to them by the Duchess had been added to the list of their iniquities. For offences like these the Regent deemed it her duty to forbid all inhabitants of any city, village, or province of the Netherlands holding communication with Valenciennes, buying or selling with its inhabitants, or furnishing them with provisions; on pain of being considered accomplices in their rebellion, and as such of being executed with the halter.



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The city was now invested by Noircarmes with all the troops which could be spared. The confederates gave promises of assistance to the beleaguered citizens, Orange privately encouraged them to holdout in their legitimate refusal. Brederode and others busied themselves with hostile demonstrations which were destined to remain barren; but in the mean time the inhabitants had nothing to rely upon save their own stout hearts and arms.

At first, the siege was sustained with a light heart. Frequent sallies were made, smart skirmishes were ventured, in which the Huguenots, on the testimony of a most bitter Catholic contemporary, conducted themselves with the bravery of veteran troops, and as if they had done nothing all their lives but fight; forays were made upon the monasteries of the neighborhood for the purpose of procuring supplies, and the broken statues of the dismantled churches were used to build a bridge across an arm of the river, which was called in derision the Bridge of Idols. Noircarmes and the six officers under him, who were thought to be conducting their operations with languor, were christened the Seven Sleepers. Gigantic spectacles, three feet in circumference, were planted derisively upon the ramparts, in order that the artillery, which it was said that the papists of Arras were sending, might be seen, as soon as it should arrive. Councillor Outreman, who had left the city before the siege, came into it again, on commission from Noircarmes. He was received with contempt, his proposals on behalf of the government were answered with outcries of fury; he was pelted with stones, and was very glad to make his escape alive. The pulpits thundered with the valiant deeds of Joshua, Judas Maccabeus, and other bible heroes. The miracles wrought in their behalf served to encourage the enthusiasm of the people, while the movements making at various points in the neighborhood encouraged a hope of a general rising throughout the country.

Those hopes were destined to disappointment. There were large assemblages made, to be sure, at two points. Nearly three thousand sectaries had been collected at Lannoy under Pierre Comaille, who, having been a locksmith and afterwards a Calvinist preacher, was now disposed to try his fortune as a general. His band was, however, disorderly. Rustics armed with pitchforks, young students and old soldiers out of employment, furnished with rusty matchlocks, pikes and halberds, composed his force. A company similar in character, and already amounting to some twelve hundred in number, was collecting at Waterlots. It was hoped that an imposing array would soon be assembled, and that the two bands, making a junction, would then march to the relief of Valenciennes. It was boasted that in a very short time, thirty thousand men would be in the field. There was even a fear of some such result felt by the Catholics.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:



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1566, the last year of peace
Dissenters were as bigoted as the orthodox
If he had little, he could live upon little
Incur the risk of being charged with forwardness than neglect
Not to let the grass grow under their feet

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