

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 18: 1572 eBook

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 18: 1572 by John Lothrop Motley

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Title: The Rise of the Dutch Republic, 1572

Author: John Lothrop Motley

Release Date: January, 2004 [EBook #4819] [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 19.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

1572 [Chapter VII.]

Municipal revolution throughout Holland and Zealand—Characteristics of the movement in various places—Sonoy commissioned by Orange as governor of North Holland—Theory of the provisional government—Instructions of the Prince to his officers—Oath prescribed—Clause of toleration—Surprise of Mons by Count Louis—Exertions of Antony Oliver—Details of the capture—Assembly of the citizens—Speeches of Genlis and of Count Louis—Effect of the various movements upon Alva—Don Frederic ordered to invest Mons—The Duke's impatience to retire—Arrival of Medina Coeli—His narrow escape—Capture of the Lisbon fleet—Affectation of cordiality between Alva and Medina—Concessions by King and Viceroy on the subject of the tenth penny—Estates of Holland assembled, by summons of Orange, at Dort—Appeals from the Prince to this congress for funds to pay his newly levied army—Theory of the provisional States' assembly—Source and nature of its authority—Speech of St. Aldegonde—Liberality of



the estates and the provinces—Pledges exchanged between the Prince's representative and the Congress—Commission to De la Marck ratified —Virtual dictatorship of Orange—Limitation of his power by his own act—Count Louis at Mons—Reinforcements led from France by Genlis— Rashness of that officer—His total defeat —Orange again in the field—Rocrmond taken—Excesses of the patriot army—Proclamation of Orange, commanding respect to all personal and religious rights—His reply to the Emperor's summons—His progress in the Netherlands— Hopes entertained from France—Reinforcements under Coligny promised to Orange by Charles IX.—The Massacre of St. Bartholomew—The event characterized—Effect in England, in Rome, and in other parts of Europe—Excessive hilarity of Philip—Extravagant encomium bestowed by him upon Charles IX.—Order sent by Philip to put all French prisoners in the Netherlands to Death—Secret correspondence

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of Charles IX. with his envoy in the Netherlands—Exultation of the Spaniards before Mons—Alva urged by the French envoy, according to his master's commands, to put all the Frenchmen in Mons, and those already captured, to death—Effect of the massacre upon the Prince of Orange—Alva and Medina in the camp before Mons—Hopelessness of the Prince's scheme to obtain battle from Alva—Romero's encamisada —Narrow escape of the prince—Mutiny and dissolution of his army— His return to Holland—His steadfastness—Desperate position of Count Louis in Mons—Sentiments of Alva—Capitulation of Mons— Courteous reception of Count Louis by the Spanish generals—Hypocrisy of these demonstrations—Nature of the Mons capitulation— Horrible violation of its terms—Noircarmes at Mons—Establishment of a Blood Council in the city—Wholesale executions—Cruelty and cupidity of Noircarmes—Late discovery of the archives of these crimes—Return of the revolted cities of Brabant and Flanders to obedience—Sack of Mechlin by the Spaniards—Details of that event.

The example thus set by Brill and Flushing was rapidly followed. The first half of the year 1572 was distinguished by a series of triumphs rendered still more remarkable by the reverses which followed at its close. Of a sudden, almost as it were by accident, a small but important sea-port, the object for which the Prince had so long been hoping, was secured. Instantly afterward, half the island of Walcheren renounced the yoke of Alva, Next, Enkhuizen, the key to the Zuyder Zee, the principal arsenal, and one of the first commercial cities in the Netherlands, rose against the Spanish Admiral, and hung out the banner of Orange on its ramparts. The revolution effected here was purely the work of the people—of the mariners and burghers of the city. Moreover, the magistracy was set aside and the government of Alva repudiated without shedding one drop of blood, without a single wrong to person or property. By the same spontaneous movement, nearly all the important cities of Holland and Zeeland raised the standard of him in whom they recognized their deliverer. The revolution was accomplished under nearly similar circumstances everywhere. With one fierce bound of enthusiasm the nation shook off its chain. Oudewater, Dort, Harlem, Leyden, Gorcum, Loewenstein, Gouda, Medenblik, Horn, Alkmaar, Edam, Monnikendam, Purmerende, as well as Flushing, Veer, and Enkhuizen, all ranged themselves under the government of Orange, as lawful stadholder for the King.

Nor was it in Holland and Zeeland alone that the beacon fires of freedom were lighted. City after city in Gelderland, Overijssel, and the See of Utrecht; all the important towns of Friesland, some sooner, some later, some without a struggle, some after a short siege, some with resistance by the functionaries of government, some by amicable compromise, accepted the garrisons of the Prince, and formally recognized his authority. Out of the chaos which a long

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and preternatural tyranny had produced, the first struggling elements of a new and a better world began to appear. It were superfluous to narrate the details which marked the sudden restoration of liberty in these various groups of cities. Traits of generosity marked the change of government in some, circumstances of ferocity, disfigured the revolution in others. The island of Walcheren, equally divided as it was between the two parties, was the scene of much truculent and diabolical warfare. It is difficult to say whether the mutual hatred of race or the animosity of religious difference proved the deadlier venom. The combats were perpetual and sanguinary, the prisoners on both sides instantly executed. On more than one occasion; men were seen assisting to hang with their own hands and in cold blood their own brothers, who had been taken prisoners in the enemy's ranks. When the captives were too many to be hanged, they were tied back to back, two and two, and thus hurled into the sea. The islanders found a fierce pleasure in these acts of cruelty. A Spaniard had ceased to be human in their eyes. On one occasion, a surgeon at Veer cut the heart from a Spanish prisoner, nailed it on a vessel's prow; and invited the townsmen to come and fasten their teeth in it, which many did with savage satisfaction.

In other parts of the country the revolution was, on the whole, accomplished with comparative calmness. Even traits of generosity were not uncommon. The burgomaster of Gonda, long the supple slave of Alva and the Blood Council, fled for his life as the revolt broke forth in that city. He took refuge in the house of a certain widow, and begged for a place of concealment. The widow led him to a secret closet which served as a pantry. "Shall I be secure there?" asked the fugitive functionary. "O yes, sir Burgomaster," replied the widow, "'t was in that very place that my husband lay concealed when you, accompanied by the officers of justice, were searching the house, that you might bring him to the scaffold for his religion. Enter the pantry, your worship; I will be responsible for your safety." Thus faithfully did the humble widow of a hunted and murdered Calvinist protect the life of the magistrate who had brought desolation to her hearth.

Not all the conquests thus rapidly achieved in the cause of liberty were destined to endure, nor were any to be, retained without a struggle. The little northern cluster of republics which had now restored its honor to the ancient Batavian name was destined, however, for a long and vigorous life. From that bleak isthmus the light of freedom was to stream through many years upon struggling humanity in Europe; a guiding pharos across a stormy sea; and Harlem, Leyden, Alkmaar—names hallowed by deeds of heroism such as have not often illustrated human annals, still breathe as trumpet-tongued and perpetual a defiance to despotism as Marathon, Thermopylae, or Salamis.

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A new board of magistrates had been chosen in all the redeemed cities, by popular election. They were required to take an oath of fidelity to the King of Spain, and to the Prince of Orange as his stadholder; to promise resistance to the Duke of Alva, the tenth penny, and the inquisition; to support every man's freedom and the welfare of the country; to protect widows, orphans, and miserable persons, and to maintain justice and truth.

Diedrich Sonoy arrived on the 2nd June at Enkhuizen. He was provided by the Prince with a commission, appointing him Lieutenant-Governor of North Holland or Waterland. Thus, to combat the authority of Alva was set up the authority of the King. The stadholderate over Holland and Zeeland, to which the Prince had been appointed in 1559, he now reassumed. Upon this fiction reposed the whole provisional polity of the revolted Netherlands. The government, as it gradually unfolded itself, from this epoch forward until the declaration of independence and the absolute renunciation of the Spanish sovereign power, will be sketched in a future chapter. The people at first claimed not an iota more of freedom than was secured by Philip's coronation oath. There was no pretence that Philip was not sovereign, but there was a pretence and a determination to worship God according to conscience, and to reclaim the ancient political "liberties" of the land. So long as Alva reigned, the Blood Council, the inquisition, and martial law, were the only codes or courts, and every charter slept. To recover this practical liberty and these historical rights, and to shake from their shoulders a most sanguinary government, was the purpose of William and of the people. No revolutionary standard was displayed.

The written instructions given by the Prince to his Lieutenant Sonoy were to "see that the Word of God was preached, without, however, suffering any hindrance to the Roman Church in the exercise of its religion; to restore fugitives and the banished for conscience sake, and to require of all magistrates and officers of guilds and brotherhoods an oath of fidelity." The Prince likewise prescribed the form of that oath, repeating therein, to his eternal honor, the same strict prohibition of intolerance. "Likewise," said the formula, "shall those of 'the religion' offer no let or hindrance to the Roman churches."

The Prince was still in Germany, engaged in raising troops and providing funds. He directed; however, the affairs of the insurgent provinces in their minutest details, by virtue of the dictatorship inevitably forced upon him both by circumstances and by the people. In the meantime; Louis of Nassau, the Bayard of the Netherlands, performed a most unexpected and brilliant exploit. He had been long in France, negotiating with the leaders of the Huguenots, and, more secretly, with the court. He was supposed by all the world to be still in that kingdom, when the startling intelligence

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arrived that he had surprised and captured the important city of *Mons*. This town, the capital of Hainault, situate in a fertile, undulating, and beautiful country, protected by lofty walls, a triple moat, and a strong citadel, was one of the most flourishing and elegant places in the Netherlands. It was, moreover, from its vicinity to the frontiers of France; a most important acquisition to the insurgent party. The capture was thus accomplished. A native of Mons, one Antony Oliver, a geographical painter, had insinuated himself into the confidence of Alva, for whom he had prepared at different times some remarkably well-executed maps of the country. Having occasion to visit France, he was employed by the Duke to keep a watch upon the movements of Louis of Nassau, and to make a report as to the progress of his intrigues with the court of France. The painter, however, was only a spy in disguise, being in reality devoted to the cause of freedom, and a correspondent of Orange and his family. His communications with Louis, in Paris, had therefore a far different result from the one anticipated by Alva. A large number of adherents within the city of Mons had already been secured, and a plan was now arranged between Count Louis, Genlis, De la Noue, and other distinguished Huguenot chiefs, to be carried out with the assistance of the brave and energetic artist.

On the 23rd of May, Oliver appeared at the gates of Mons, accompanied by three wagons, ostensibly containing merchandise, but in reality laden with arquebusses. These were secretly distributed among his confederates in the city. In the course of the day Count Louis arrived in the neighbourhood, accompanied by five hundred horsemen and a thousand foot soldiers. This force he stationed in close concealment within the thick forests between Maubeuge and *Mons*. Towards evening he sent twelve of the most trusty and daring of his followers, disguised as wine merchants, into the city. These individuals proceeded boldly to a public house, ordered their supper, and while conversing with the landlord, carelessly inquired at what hour next morning the city gates would be opened. They were informed that the usual hour was four in the morning, but that a trifling present to the porter would ensure admission, if they desired it, at an earlier hour. They explained their inquiries by a statement that they had some casks of wine which they wished to introduce into the city before sunrise. Having obtained all the information which they needed, they soon afterwards left the tavern. The next day they presented themselves very early at the gate, which the porter, on promise of a handsome "drink-penny," agreed to unlock. No sooner were the bolts withdrawn, however, than he was struck dead, while about fifty dragoons rode through the gate. The Count and his followers now galloped over the city in the morning twilight, shouting "France! liberty! the town is ours!" "The Prince is coming!" "Down with the tenth penny; down with the murderous Alva!" So soon as a burgher showed his wondering face at the window, they shot at him with their carbines. They made as much noise, and conducted themselves as boldly as if they had been at least a thousand strong.

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Meantime, however, the streets remained empty; not one of their secret confederates showing himself. Fifty men could surprise, but were too few to keep possession of the city. The Count began to suspect a trap. As daylight approached the alarm spread; the position of the little band was critical. In his impetuosity, Louis had far outstripped his army, but they had been directed to follow hard upon his footsteps, and he was astonished that their arrival was so long delayed. The suspense becoming intolerable, he rode out of the city in quest of his adherents, and found them wandering in the woods, where they had completely lost their way. Ordering each horseman to take a foot soldier on the crupper behind him, he led them rapidly back to *Mons*. On the way they were encountered by La Noue, “with the iron arm,” and Genlis, who, meantime, had made an unsuccessful attack to recover Valenciennes, which within a few hours had been won and lost again. As they reached the gates of *Mons*, they found themselves within a hair’s breadth of being too late; their adherents had not come forth; the citizens had been aroused; the gates were all fast but one—and there the porter was quarrelling with a French soldier about an arquebuss. The drawbridge across the moat was at the moment rising; the last entrance was closing, when Guitoy de Chaumont, a French officer, mounted on a light Spanish barb, sprang upon the bridge as it rose. His weight caused it to sink again, the gate was forced, and Louis with all his men rode triumphantly into the town.

The citizens were forthwith assembled by sound of bell in the market-place. The clergy, the magistracy, and the general council were all present. Genlis made the first speech, in which he disclaimed all intention of making conquests in the interest of France. This pledge having been given, Louis of Nassau next addressed the assembly: “The magistrates,” said he, “have not understood my intentions. I protest that I am no rebel to the King; I prove it by asking no new oaths from any man. Remain bound by your old oaths of allegiance; let the magistrates continue to exercise their functions—to administer justice. I imagine that no person will suspect a brother of the Prince of Orange capable of any design against the liberties of the country. As to the Catholic religion, I take it under my very particular protection. You will ask why I am in *Mons* at the head of an armed force: are any of you ignorant of Alva’s cruelties? The overthrow of this tyrant is as much the interest of the King as of the people, therefore there is nothing in my present conduct inconsistent with fidelity to his Majesty. Against Alva alone I have taken up arms; ’tis to protect you against his fury that I am here. It is to prevent the continuance of a general rebellion that I make war upon him. The only proposition which I have to make to you is this—I demand that you declare Alva de Toledo a traitor to the King, the executioner of the people, an enemy to the country, unworthy of the government, and hereby deprived of his authority.”

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The magistracy did not dare to accept so bold a proposition; the general council, composing the more popular branch of the municipal government, were comparatively inclined to favor Nassau, and many of its members voted for the downfall of the tyrant. Nevertheless the demands of Count Louis were rejected. His position thus became critical. The civic authorities refused to, pay for his troops, who were, moreover, too few, in number to resist the inevitable siege. The patriotism of the citizens was not to be repressed, however, by the authority, of the magistrates; many rich proprietors of the great cloth and silk manufactories, for which Mons was famous, raised, and armed companies at their own expense; many volunteer troops were also speedily organized and drilled, and the fortifications were put in order. No attempt was made to force the reformed religion upon the inhabitants, and even Catholics who were discovered in secret correspondence with the enemy were treated with such extreme gentleness by Nassau as to bring upon him severe reproaches from many of his own party.

A large collection of ecclesiastical plate, jewellery, money, and other valuables, which had been sent to the city for safe keeping from the churches and convents of the provinces, was seized, and thus, with little bloodshed and no violence; was the important city secured for the insurgents. Three days afterwards, two thousand infantry, chiefly French, arrived in the place. In the early part of the following month Louis was still further strengthened by the arrival of thirteen hundred foot and twelve hundred horsemen, under command of Count Montgomery, the celebrated officer, whose spear at the tournament had proved fatal to Henry the Second. Thus the Duke of Alva suddenly found himself exposed to a tempest of revolution. One thunderbolt after another seemed descending around him in breathless succession. Brill and Flushing had been already lost; Middelburg was so closely invested that its fall seemed imminent, and with it would go the whole island of Walcheren, the key to all the Netherlands. In one morning he had heard of the revolt of Enkhuizen and of the whole Waterland; two hours later came the news of the Valenciennes rebellion, and next day the astonishing capture of *Mons*. One disaster followed hard upon another. He could have sworn that the detested Louis of Nassau, who had dealt this last and most fatal stroke, was at that moment in Paris, safely watched by government emissaries; and now he had, as it were, suddenly started out of the earth, to deprive him of this important city, and to lay bare the whole frontier to the treacherous attacks of faithless France. He refused to believe the intelligence when it was first announced to him, and swore that he had certain information that Count Louis had been seen playing in the tennis-court at Paris, within so short a period as to make his presence in Hainault at that moment impossible. Forced, at last, to admit the truth of the disastrous news, he dashed his hat upon the ground in a fury, uttering imprecations upon the Queen Dowager of France, to whose perfidious intrigues he ascribed the success of the enterprise, and pledging himself to send her Spanish thistles, enough in return for the Florentine lilies which she had thus bestowed upon him.

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In the midst of the perplexities thus thickening around him, the Duke preserved his courage, if not his temper. Blinded, for a brief season, by the rapid attacks made upon him, he had been uncertain whither to direct his vengeance. This last blow in so vital a quarter determined him at once. He forthwith despatched Don Frederic to undertake the siege of Mons, and earnestly set about raising large reinforcements to his army. Don Frederic took possession, without much opposition, of the Bethlehem cloister in the immediate vicinity of the city, and with four thousand troops began the investment in due form.

Alva had, for a long time, been most impatient to retire from the provinces. Even he was capable of human emotions. Through the sevenfold panoply of his pride he had been pierced by the sharpness of a nation's curse. He was wearied with the unceasing execrations which assailed his ears. "The hatred which the people bear me," said he, in a letter to Philip, "because of the chastisement which it has been necessary for me to inflict, although with all the moderation in the world, make all my efforts vain. A successor will meet more sympathy and prove more useful." On the 10th June, the Duke of Medina Coeli; with a fleet of more than forty sail, arrived off Blankenburg, intending to enter the Scheld. Julian Romero, with two thousand Spaniards, was also on board the fleet. Nothing, of course, was known to the new comers of the altered condition of affairs in the Netherlands, nor of the unwelcome reception which they were like to meet in Flushing. A few of the lighter craft having been taken by the patriot cruisers, the alarm was spread through all the fleet. Medina Coeli, with a few transports, was enabled to effect his escape to Sluys, whence he hastened to Brussels in a much less ceremonious manner than he had originally contemplated. Twelve Biscayan ships stood out to sea, descried a large Lisbon fleet, by a singular coincidence, suddenly heaving in sight, changed their course again, and with a favoring breeze bore boldly up the Hond; passed Flushing in spite of a severe cannonade from the forts, and eventually made good their entrance into Rammekens, whence the soldiery, about one-half of whom had thus been saved, were transferred at a very critical moment to Middelburg.

The great Lisbon fleet followed in the wake of the Biscayans, with much inferior success. Totally ignorant of the revolution which had occurred in the Isle of Walclieren, it obeyed the summons of the rebel fort to come to anchor, and, with the exception of three or four, the vessels were all taken. It was the richest booty which the insurgents had yet acquired by sea or land. The fleet was laden with spices, money, jewellery, and the richest merchandize. Five hundred thousand crowns of gold were taken, and it was calculated that the plunder altogether would suffice to maintain the war for two years at least. One thousand Spanish soldiers, and a good amount

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of ammunition, were also captured. The unexpected condition of affairs made a pause natural and almost necessary, before the government could be decorously transferred. Medina Coeli with Spanish grandiloquence, avowed his willingness to serve as a soldier, under a general whom he so much venerated, while Alva ordered that, in all respects, the same outward marks of respect should be paid to his appointed successor as to himself. Beneath all this external ceremony, however, much mutual malice was concealed.

Meantime, the Duke, who was literally “without a single real,” was forced at last to smother his pride in the matter of the tenth penny. On the 24th June, he summoned the estates of Holland to assemble on the 15th of the ensuing month. In the missive issued for this purpose, he formally agreed to abolish the whole tax, on condition that the estates-general of the Netherlands would furnish him with a yearly supply of two millions of florins. Almost at the same moment the King had dismissed the deputies of the estates from Madrid, with the public assurance that the tax was to be suspended, and a private intimation that it was not abolished in terms, only in order to save the dignity of the Duke.

These healing measures came entirely too late. The estates of Holland met, indeed, on the appointed day of July; but they assembled not in obedience to Alva, but in consequence of a summons from William of Orange. They met, too, not at the Hague, but at Dort, to take formal measures for renouncing the authority of the Duke. The first congress of the Netherland commonwealth still professed loyalty to the Crown, but was determined to accept the policy of Orange without a question.

The Prince had again assembled an army in Germany, consisting of fifteen thousand foot and seven thousand horse, besides a number of Netherlanders, mostly Walloons, amounting to nearly three thousand more. Before taking the field, however, it was necessary that he should guarantee at least three months' pay to his troops. This he could no longer do, except by giving bonds endorsed by certain cities of Holland as his securities. He had accordingly addressed letters in his own name to all the principal cities, fervently adjuring them to remember, at last, what was due to him, to the fatherland, and to their own character. “Let not a sum of gold,” said he in one of these letters, “be so dear to you, that for its sake you will sacrifice your lives, your wives, your children, and all your descendants, to the latest generations; that you will bring sin and shame upon yourselves, and destruction upon us who have so heartily striven to assist you. Think what scorn you will incur from foreign nations, what a crime you will commit against the Lord God, what a bloody yoke ye will impose forever upon yourselves and your children, if you now seek for subterfuges; if you now prevent us from taking the field with the troops which we have enlisted. On the other hand, what inexpressible benefits you will confer on your country, if you now help us to rescue that fatherland from the power of Spanish vultures and wolves.”

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This and similar missives, circulated throughout the province of Holland, produced a deep impression. In accordance with his suggestions, the deputies from the nobility and from twelve cities of that province assembled on the 15th July, at Dort. Strictly speaking, the estates or government of Holland, the body which represented the whole people, consisted of the nobles and six great cities. On this occasion, however, Amsterdam being still in the power of the King, could send no deputies, while, on the other hand, all the small towns were invited to send up their representatives to the Congress. Eight accepted the proposal; the rest declined to appoint delegates, partly from motives of economy, partly from timidity.'

These estates were the legitimate representatives of the people, but they had no legislative powers. The people had never pretended to sovereignty, nor did they claim it now. The source from which the government of the Netherlands was supposed to proceed was still the divine mandate. Even now the estates silently conceded, as they had ever done, the supreme legislative and executive functions to the land's master. Upon Philip of Spain, as representative of Count Dirk the First of Holland, had descended, through many tortuous channels, the divine effluence originally supplied by Charles the Simple of France. That supernatural power was not contested, but it was now ingeniously turned against the sovereign. The King's authority was invoked against himself in the person of the Prince of Orange, to whom, thirteen years before, a portion of that divine right had been delegated. The estates of Holland met at Dort on the 15th July, as representatives of the people; but they were summoned by Orange, royally commissioned in 1559 as stadholder, and therefore the supreme legislative and executive officer of certain provinces. This was the theory of the provisional government. The Prince represented the royal authority, the nobles represented both themselves and the people of the open country, while the twelve cities represented the whole body of burghers. Together, they were supposed to embody all authority, both divine and human, which a congress could exercise. Thus the whole movement was directed against Alva and against Count Bossu, appointed stadholder by Alva in the place of Orange. Philip's name was destined to figure for a long time, at the head of documents by which monies were raised, troops levied, and taxes collected, all to be used in deadly war against himself.

The estates were convened on the 15th July, when Paul Buys, pensionary of Leyden, the tried and confidential friend of Orange, was elected Advocate of Holland. The convention was then adjourned till the 18th, when Saint Aldegonde made his appearance, with full powers to act provisionally in behalf of his Highness.

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The distinguished plenipotentiary delivered before the congress a long and very effective harangue. He recalled the sacrifices and efforts of the Prince during previous years. He adverted to the disastrous campaign of 1568, in which the Prince had appeared full of high hope, at the head of a gallant army, but had been obliged, after a short period, to retire, because not a city had opened its gates nor a Netherlander lifted his finger in the cause. Nevertheless, he had not lost courage nor closed his heart; and now that, through the blessing of God, the eyes of men had been opened, and so many cities had declared against the tyrant, the Prince had found himself exposed to a bitter struggle. Although his own fortunes had been ruined in the cause, he had been unable to resist the daily flood of petitions which called upon him to come forward once more. He had again importuned his relations and powerful friends; he had at last set on foot a new and well-appointed army. The day of payment had arrived. Over his own head impended perpetual shame, over the fatherland perpetual woe, if the congress should now refuse the necessary supplies. "Arouse ye, then," cried the orator, with fervor, "awaken your own zeal and that of your sister cities. Seize Opportunity by the locks, who never appeared fairer than she does to-day."

The impassioned eloquence of St. Aldegonde produced a profound impression. The men who had obstinately refused the demands of Alva, now unanimously resolved to pour forth their gold and their blood at the call of Orange. "Truly," wrote the Duke, a little later, "it almost drives me mad to see the difficulty with which your Majesty's supplies are furnished, and the liberality with which the people place their lives and fortunes at the disposal of this rebel." It seemed strange to the loyal governor that men should support their liberator with greater alacrity than that with which they served their destroyer! It was resolved that the requisite amount should be at once raised, partly from the regular imposts and current "requests," partly by loans from the rich, from the clergy, from the guilds and brotherhoods, partly from superfluous church ornaments and other costly luxuries. It was directed that subscriptions should be immediately opened throughout the land, that gold and silver plate, furniture, jewellery, and other expensive articles should be received by voluntary contributions, for which inventories and receipts should be given by the magistrates of each city, and that upon these money should be raised, either by loan or sale. An enthusiastic and liberal spirit prevailed. All seemed determined rather than pay the tenth to Alva to pay the whole to the Prince.

The estates, furthermore, by unanimous resolution, declared that they recognized the Prince as the King's lawful stadholder over Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Utrecht, and that they would use their influence with the other provinces to procure his appointment as Protector of all the Netherlands during the King's absence. His Highness was requested to appoint an Admiral, on whom, with certain deputies from the Water-cities, the conduct of the maritime war should devolve.

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The conduct of the military operations by land was to be directed by Dort, Leyden, and Enkhuizen, in conjunction with the Count de la Marck. A pledge was likewise exchanged between the estates and the pleni-potentiary, that neither party should enter into any treaty with the King, except by full consent and co-operation of the other. With regard to religion, it was firmly established, that the public exercises of divine worship should be permitted not only to the Reformed Church, but to the Roman Catholic—the clergy of both being protected from all molestation.

After these proceedings, Count de la Marck made his appearance before the assembly. His commission from Orange was read to the deputies, and by them ratified. The Prince, in that document, authorized “his dear cousin” to enlist troops, to accept the fealty of cities, to furnish them with garrisons, to re-establish all the local laws, municipal rights, and ancient privileges which had been suppressed. He was to maintain freedom of religion, under penalty of death to those who infringed it; he was to restore all confiscated property; he was, with advice of his council, to continue in office such city magistrates as were favorable, and to remove those adverse to the cause.

The Prince was, in reality, clothed with dictatorial and even regal powers. This authority had been forced upon him by the prayers of the people, but he manifested no eagerness as he partly accepted the onerous station. He was provisionally the depositary of the whole sovereignty of the northern provinces, but he cared much less for theories of government than for ways and means. It was his object to release the country from the tyrant who, five years long, had been burning and butchering the people. It was his determination to drive out the foreign soldiery. To do this, he must meet his enemy in the field. So little was he disposed to strengthen his own individual power, that he voluntarily imposed limits on himself, by an act, supplemental to the proceedings of the Congress of Dort. In this important ordinance made by the Prince of Orange, as a provisional form of government, he publicly announced “that he would do and ordain nothing except by the advice of the estates, by reason that they were best acquainted with the circumstances and the humours of the inhabitants.” He directed the estates to appoint receivers for all public taxes, and ordained that all military officers should make oath of fidelity to him, as stadholder, and to the estates of Holland, to be true and obedient, in order to liberate the land from the Albanian and Spanish tyranny, for the service of his royal Majesty as Count of Holland. The provisional constitution, thus made by a sovereign prince and actual dictator, was certainly as disinterested as it was sagacious.

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Meanwhile the war had opened vigorously in Hainault. Louis of Nassau had no sooner found himself in possession of Mons than he had despatched Genlis to France, for those reinforcements which had been promised by royal lips. On the other hand, Don Frederic held the city closely beleaguered; sharp combats before the walls were of almost daily occurrence, but it was obvious that Louis would be unable to maintain the position into which he had so chivalrously thrown himself unless he should soon receive important succor. The necessary reinforcements were soon upon the way. Genlis had made good speed with his levy, and it was soon announced that he was advancing into Hainault, with a force of Huguenots, whose numbers report magnified to ten thousand veterans. Louis despatched an earnest message to his confederate, to use extreme caution in his approach. Above all things, he urged him, before attempting to throw reinforcements into the city, to effect a junction with the Prince of Orange, who had already crossed the Rhine with his new army.

Genlis, full of overweening confidence, and desirous of acquiring singly the whole glory of relieving the city, disregarded this advice. His rashness proved his ruin, and the temporary prostration of the cause of freedom. Pushing rapidly forward across the French frontier, he arrived, towards the middle of July, within two leagues of *Mons*. The Spaniards were aware of his approach, and well prepared to frustrate his project. On the 19th, he found himself upon a circular plain of about a league's extent, surrounded with coppices and forests, and dotted with farm-houses and kitchen gardens. Here he paused to send out a reconnoitring party. The little detachment was, however, soon driven in, with the information that Don Frederic of Toledo, with ten thousand men, was coming instantly upon them. The Spanish force, in reality, numbered four thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry; but three thousand half-armed boors had been engaged by Don Frederic, to swell his apparent force. The demonstration produced its effect, and no sooner had the first panic of the intelligence been spread, than Noircarmes came charging upon them at the head of his cavalry. The infantry arrived directly afterwards, and the Huguenots were routed almost as soon as seen. It was a meeting rather than a battle. The slaughter of the French was very great, while but an insignificant number of the Spaniards fell. Chiappin Vitelli was the hero of the day. It was to his masterly arrangements before the combat, and to his animated exertions upon the field, that the victory was owing. Having been severely wounded in the thigh but a few days previously, he caused himself to be carried upon a litter in a recumbent position in front of his troops, and was everywhere seen, encouraging their exertions, and exposing himself, crippled as he was, to the whole brunt of the battle. To him the victory nearly proved fatal; to Don Frederic it brought increased renown. Vitelli's exertions, in his precarious condition, brought on severe inflammation, under which he nearly succumbed, while the son of Alva reaped extensive fame from the total overthrow of the veteran Huguenots, due rather to his lieutenant and to Julian Romero.

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The number of dead left by the French upon the plain amounted to at least twelve hundred, but a much larger number was butchered in detail by the peasantry, among whom they attempted to take refuge, and who had not yet forgotten the barbarities inflicted by their countrymen in the previous war. Many officers were taken prisoners, among whom was the Commander-in-chief, Genlis.

That unfortunate gentleman was destined to atone for his rashness and obstinacy with his life. He was carried to the castle of Antwerp, where, sixteen months afterwards, he was secretly strangled by command of Alva, who caused the report to be circulated that he had died a natural death. About one hundred foot soldiers succeeded in making their entrance into Mona, and this was all the succor which Count Louis was destined to receive from France, upon which country he had built such lofty and such reasonable hopes.

While this unfortunate event was occurring, the Prince had already put his army in motion. On the 7th of July he had crossed the Rhine at Duisburg, with fourteen thousand foot, seven thousand horse, enlisted in Germany, besides a force of three thousand Walloons. On the 23rd of July, he took the city of Roermond, after a sharp cannonade, at which place his troops already began to disgrace the honorable cause in which they were engaged, by imitating the cruelties and barbarities of their antagonists. The persons and property of the burghers were, with a very few exceptions, respected; but many priests and monks were put to death by the soldiery under circumstances of great barbarity. The Prince, incensed at such conduct, but being unable to exercise very stringent authority over troops whose wages he was not yet able to pay in full, issued a proclamation, denouncing such excesses, and commanding his followers, upon pain of death, to respect the rights of all individuals, whether Papist or Protestant, and to protect religious exercises both in Catholic and Reformed churches.

It was hardly to be expected that the troops enlisted by the Prince in the same great magazine of hireling soldiers, Germany, from whence the Duke also derived his annual supplies, would be likely to differ very much in their propensities from those enrolled under Spanish banners; yet there was a vast contrast between the characters of the two commanders. One leader inculcated the practice of robbery, rape, and murder, as a duty, and issued distinct orders to butcher every mother's son in the cities which he captured; the other restrained every excess to, the utmost of his ability, protecting not only life and property, but even the ancient religion.

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The Emperor Maximilian had again issued his injunctions against the military operations of Orange. Bound to the monarch of Spain by so many family ties, being at once cousin, brother-in-law, and father-in-law of Philip, it was difficult for him to maintain the attitude which became him, as chief of that Empire to which the peace of Passau had assured religious freedom. It had, however, been sufficiently proved that remonstrances and intercessions addressed to Philip were but idle breath. It had therefore become an insult to require pacific conduct from the Prince on the ground of any past or future mediation. It was a still grosser mockery to call upon him to discontinue hostilities because the Netherlands were included in the Empire, and therefore protected by the treaties of Passau and Augsburg. Well did the Prince reply to his Imperial Majesty's summons in a temperate but cogent letter, in which he addressed to him from his camp, that all intercessions had proved fruitless, and that the only help for the Netherlands was the sword.

The Prince had been delayed for a month at Roermonde, because, as he expressed it; "he had not a single sou," and because, in consequence, the troops refused to advance into the Netherlands. Having at last been furnished with the requisite guarantees from the Holland cities for three months' pay, on the 27th of August, the day of the publication of his letter to the Emperor, he crossed the Meuse and took his circuitous way through Diest, Tirlemont, Sichein, Louvain, Mechlin, Termonde, Oudenarde, Nivelles. Many cities and villages accepted his authority and admitted his garrisons. Of these Mechlin was the most considerable, in which he stationed a detachment of his troops. Its doom was sealed in that moment. Alva could not forgive this act of patriotism on the part of a town which had so recently excluded his own troops. "This is a direct permission of God," he wrote, in the spirit of dire and revengeful prophecy, "for us to punish her as she deserves, for the image-breaking and other misdeeds done there in the time of Madame de Parma, which our Lord was not willing to pass over without chastisement."

Meantime the Prince continued his advance. Louvain purchased its neutrality for the time with sixteen thousand ducats; Brussels obstinately refused to listen to him, and was too powerful to be forcibly attacked at that juncture; other important cities, convinced by the arguments and won by the eloquence of the various proclamations which he scattered as he advanced, ranged themselves spontaneously and even enthusiastically upon his side. How different would have been the result of his campaign but for the unexpected earthquake which at that instant was to appal Christendom, and to scatter all his well-matured plans and legitimate hopes. His chief reliance, under Providence and his own strong heart, had been upon French assistance. Although Genlis, by his misconduct, had sacrificed

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his army and himself, yet the Prince as still justly sanguine as to the policy of the French court. The papers which had been found in the possession of Genlis by his conquerors all spoke one language. “You would be struck with stupor,” wrote Alva’s secretary, “could you see a letter which is now in my power, addressed by the King of France to Louis of Nassau.” In that letter the King had declared his determination to employ all the forces which God had placed in his hands to rescue the Netherlands from the oppression under which they were groaning. In accordance with the whole spirit and language of the French government, was the tone of Coligny in his correspondence with Orange. The Admiral assured the Prince that there was no doubt as to the earnestness of the royal intentions in behalf of the Netherlands, and recommending extreme caution, announced his hope within a few days to effect a junction with him at the head of twelve thousand French arquebusiers, and at least three thousand cavalry. Well might the Prince of Orange, strong, and soon to be strengthened, boast that the Netherlands were free, and that Alva was in his power. He had a right to be sanguine, for nothing less than a miracle could now destroy his generous hopes—and, alas! the miracle took place; a miracle of perfidy and bloodshed such as the world, familiar as it had ever been and was still to be with massacre, had not yet witnessed. On the 11th of August, Coligny had written thus hopefully of his movements towards the Netherlands, sanctioned and aided by his King. A fortnight from that day occurred the “Paris-wedding;” and the Admiral, with thousands of his religious confederates, invited to confidence by superhuman treachery, and lulled into security by the music of august marriage bells, was suddenly butchered in the streets of Paris by royal and noble hands.

The Prince proceeded on his march, during which the heavy news had been brought to him, but he felt convinced that, with the very arrival of the awful tidings, the fate of that campaign was sealed, and the fall of Mons inevitable. In his own language, he had been struck to the earth “with the blow of a sledge-hammer,”—nor did the enemy draw a different augury from the great event.

The crime was not committed with the connivance of the Spanish government. On the contrary, the two courts were at the moment bitterly hostile to each other. In the beginning of the summer, Charles IX. and his advisers were as false to Philip, as at the end of it they were treacherous to Coligny and Orange. The massacre of the Huguenots had not even the merit of being a well-contrived and intelligently executed scheme. We have seen how steadily, seven years before, Catharine de Medici had rejected the advances of Alva towards the arrangement of a general plan for the extermination of all heretics within France and the Netherlands at the same moment. We have seen the disgust with which Alva turned from

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the wretched young King at Bayonne, when he expressed the opinion that to take arms against his own subjects was wholly out of the question, and could only be followed by general ruin. "Tis easy to see that he has been tutored," wrote Alva to his master. Unfortunately, the same mother; who had then instilled those lessons of hypocritical benevolence, had now wrought upon her son's cowardly but ferocious nature with a far different intent. The incomplete assassination of Coligny, the dread of signal vengeance at the hands of the Huguenots, the necessity of taking the lead in the internecine snuggle; were employed with Medicean art, and with entire success. The King was lashed into a frenzy. Starting to his feet, with a howl of rage and terror, "I agree to the scheme," he cried, "provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France to reproach me with the deed."

That night the slaughter commenced. The long premeditated crime was executed in a panic, but the work was thoroughly done. The King, who a few days before had written with his own hand to Louis of Nassau, expressing his firm determination to sustain the Protestant cause both in France and the Netherlands, who had employed the counsels of Coligny in the arrangement, of his plans, and who had sent French troops, under Genlis and La None, to assist their Calvinist brethren in Flanders, now gave the signal for the general massacre of the Protestants, and with his own hands, from his own palace windows, shot his subjects with his arquebuss as if they had been wild beasts.

Between Sunday and Tuesday, according to one of the most moderate calculations, five thousand Parisians of all ranks were murdered. Within the whole kingdom, the number of victims was variously estimated at from twenty-five thousand to one hundred thousand. The heart of Protestant Europe, for an instant, stood still with horror. The Queen of England put on mourning weeds, and spurned the apologies of the French envoy with contempt. At Rome, on the contrary, the news of the massacre created a joy beyond description. The Pope, accompanied by his cardinals, went solemnly to the church of Saint Mark to render thanks to God for the grace thus singularly vouchsafed to the Holy See and to all Christendom; and a Te Deum was performed in presence of the same august assemblage.

But nothing could exceed the satisfaction which the event occasioned in the mind of Philip the Second. There was an end now of all assistance from the French government to the Netherland Protestants. "The news of the events upon Saint Bartholomew's day," wrote the French envoy at Madrid, Saint Goard, to Charles IX., "arrived on the 7th September. The King, on receiving the intelligence, showed, contrary to his natural custom, so much gaiety, that he seemed more delighted than with all the good fortune or happy incidents which had ever before occurred to him. He called all his familiars about him in order to assure them that your Majesty was his good

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brother, and that no one else deserved the title of Most Christian. He sent his secretary Cayas to me with his felicitations upon the event, and with the information that he was just going to Saint Jerome to render thanks to God, and to offer his prayers that your Majesty might receive Divine support in this great affair. I went to see him next morning, and as soon as I came into his presence he began to laugh, and with demonstrations of extreme contentment, to praise your Majesty as deserving your title of Most Christian, telling me there was no King worthy to be your Majesty's companion, either for valor or prudence. He praised the steadfast resolution and the long dissimulation of so great an enterprise, which all the world would not be able to comprehend."

"I thanked him," continued the ambassador, "and I said that I thanked God for enabling your Majesty to prove to his Master that his apprentice had learned his trade, and deserved his title of most Christian King. I added, that he ought to confess that he owed the preservation of the Netherlands to your Majesty."

Nothing certainly could, in Philip's apprehension, be more delightful than this most unexpected and most opportune intelligence. Charles IX., whose intrigues in the Netherlands he had long known, had now been suddenly converted by this stupendous crime into his most powerful ally, while at the same time the Protestants of Europe would learn that there was still another crowned head in Christendom more deserving of abhorrence than himself. He wrote immediately to Alva, expressing his satisfaction that the King of France had disembarrassed himself of such pernicious men, because he would now be obliged to cultivate the friendship of Spain, neither the English Queen nor the German Protestants being thenceforth capable of trusting him. He informed the Duke, moreover, that the French envoy, Saint Gourd, had been urging him to command the immediate execution of Genlis and his companions, who had been made prisoners, as well as all the Frenchmen who would be captured in Mons; and that he fully concurred in the propriety of the measure. "The sooner," said Philip, "these noxious plants are extirpated from the earth, the less fear there is that a fresh crop will spring up." The monarch therefore added, with his own hand, to the letter, "I desire that if you have not already disembarrassed the world of them, you will do it immediately, and inform me thereof, for I see no reason why it should be deferred."

This is the demoniacal picture painted by the French ambassador, and by Philip's own hand, of the Spanish monarch's joy that his "Most Christian" brother had just murdered twenty-five thousand of his own subjects. In this cold-blooded way, too, did his Catholic Majesty order the execution of some thousand Huguenots additionally, in order more fully to carry out his royal brother's plans; yet Philip could write of himself, "that all the world recognized the gentleness of his nature and the mildness of his intentions."

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In truth, the advice thus given by Saint Gourd on the subject of the French prisoners in Alva's possessions, was a natural result of the Saint Bartholomew. Here were officers and soldiers whom Charles IX. had himself sent into the Netherlands to fight for the Protestant cause against Philip and Alva. Already, the papers found upon them had placed him in some embarrassment, and exposed his duplicity to the Spanish government, before the great massacre had made such signal reparation for his delinquency. He had ordered Mondoucet, his envoy in the Netherlands, to use dissimulation to an unstinted amount, to continue his intrigues with the Protestants, and to deny stoutly all proofs of such connivance. "I see that the papers found upon Genlis;" he wrote twelve days before the massacre, "have been put into the hands of Assonleville, and that they know everything done by Genlis to have been committed with my consent."

[These remarkable letters exchanged between Charles IX. and Mondoucet have recently been published by M. Emile Gachet (chef du bureau paleographique aux Archives de Belgique) from a manuscript discovered by him in the library at Rheims.—*Compte Rendu de la Com. Roy. d'Hist.*, iv. 340, sqq.]

"Nevertheless, you will tell the Duke of Alva that these are lies invented to excite suspicion against me. You will also give him occasional information of the enemy's affairs, in order to make him believe in your integrity. Even if he does not believe you, my purpose will be answered, provided you do it dexterously. At the same time you must keep up a constant communication with the Prince of Orange, taking great care to prevent discovery of your intelligence with King."

Were not these masterstrokes of diplomacy worthy of a King whom his mother, from boyhood upwards, had caused to study Macchiavelli's "Prince," and who had thoroughly taken to heart the maxim, often repeated in those days, that the "Science of reigning was the science of lying"?

The joy in the Spanish camp before Mons was unbounded. It was as if the only bulwark between the Netherland rebels and total destruction had been suddenly withdrawn. With anthems in Saint Gudule, with bonfires, festive illuminations, roaring artillery, with trumpets also, and with shawms, was the glorious holiday celebrated in court and camp, in honor of the vast murder committed by the Most Christian King upon his Christian subjects; nor was a moment lost in apprising the Huguenot soldiers shut up with Louis of Nassau in the beleaguered city of the great catastrophe which was to render all their valor fruitless. "'T was a punishment," said a Spanish soldier, who fought most courageously before Mons, and who elaborately described the siege afterwards, "well worthy of a king whose title is 'The Most Christian,' and it was still more honorable to inflict it with his own hands as he did." Nor was the observation a pithy sarcasm, but a frank expression of opinion, from a man celebrated alike for the skill with which he handled both his sword and his pen.

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The, French envoy in the Netherlands was, of course, immediately informed by his sovereign of the great event: Charles IX. gave a very pithy account of the transaction. "To prevent the success of the enterprise planned by the Admiral," wrote the King on the 26th of August, with hands yet reeking, and while the havoc throughout France was at its height, "I have been obliged to permit the said Guises to rush upon the said Admiral, —which they have done, the said Admiral having been killed and all his adherents. A very great number of those belonging to the new religion have also been massacred and cut to pieces. It is probable that the fire thus kindled will spread through all the cities of my kingdom, and that all those of the said religion will be made sure of." Not often, certainly, in history, has a Christian king spoken thus calmly of butchering his subjects while the work was proceeding all around him. It is to be observed, moreover, that the usual excuse for such enormities, religious fanaticism, can not be even suggested on this occasion. Catharine, in times past had favored Huguenots as much as Catholics, while Charles had been, up to the very moment of the crime, in strict alliance with the heretics of both France and Flanders, and furthering the schemes of Orange and Nassau. Nay, even at this very moment, and in this very letter in which he gave the news of the massacre, he charged his envoy still to maintain the closest but most secret intelligence with the Prince of Orange; taking great care that the Duke of Alva should not discover these relations. His motives were, of course, to prevent the Prince from abandoning his designs, and from coming to make a disturbance in France. The King, now that the deed was done, was most anxious to reap all the fruits of his crime. "Now, M. de Mondoucet, it is necessary in such affairs," he continued, "to have an eye to every possible contingency. I know that this news will be most agreeable to the Duke of Alva, for it is most favorable to his designs. At the same time, I don't desire that he alone should gather the fruit. I don't choose that he should, according to his excellent custom, conduct his affairs in such wise as to throw the Prince of Orange upon my hands, besides sending back to France Genlis and the other prisoners, as well as the French now shut up in *Mons*."

This was a sufficiently plain hint, which Mondoucet could not well misunderstand. "Observe the Duke's countenance carefully when you give him this message," added the King, "and let me know his reply." In order, however, that there might be no mistake about the matter, Charles wrote again to his ambassador, five days afterwards, distinctly stating the regret which he should feel if Alva should not take the city of Mons, or if he should take it by composition. "Tell the Duke," said he, "that it is most important for the service of his master and of God that those Frenchmen and others in Mons should be cut in pieces."

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He wrote another letter upon the name day, such was his anxiety upon the subject, instructing the envoy to urge upon Alva the necessity of chastising those rebels to the French crown. "If he tells you," continued Charles, "that this is tacitly requiring him to put to death all the French prisoners now in hand as well to cut in pieces every man in Mons, you will say to him that this is exactly what he ought to do, and that he will be guilty of a great wrong to Christianity if he does otherwise." Certainly, the Duke, having been thus distinctly ordered, both by his own master and by his Christian Majesty, to put every one of these Frenchmen to death, had a sufficiency of royal warrant. Nevertheless, he was not able to execute entirely these ferocious instructions. The prisoners already in his power were not destined to escape, but the city of Mons, in his own language, "proved to have sharper teeth than he supposed."

Mondoucet lost no time in placing before Alva the urgent necessity of accomplishing the extensive and cold-blooded massacre thus proposed. "The Duke has replied," wrote the envoy to his sovereign, "that he is executing his prisoners every day, and that he has but a few left. Nevertheless, for some reason which he does not mention, he is reserving the principal noblemen and chiefs." He afterwards informed his master that Genlis, Jumelles, and the other leaders, had engaged, if Alva would grant them a reasonable ransom, to induce the French in Mons to leave the city, but that the Duke, although his language was growing less confident, still hoped to take the town by assault. "I have urged him," he added, "to put them all to death, assuring him that he would be responsible for the consequences of a contrary course."—"Why does not your Most Christian master," asked Alva, "order these Frenchmen in Mons to come to him under oath to make no disturbance? Then my prisoners will be at my discretion and I shall get my city."—"Because," answered the envoy, "they will not trust his Most Christian Majesty, and will prefer to die in *Mons*."—[Mondoucet to Charles IX., 15th September, 1572.]

This certainly was a most sensible reply, but it is instructive to witness the cynicism with which the envoy accepts this position for his master, while coldly recording the results of all these sanguinary conversations.

Such was the condition of affairs when the Prince of Orange arrived at Peronne, between Binche and the Duke of Alva's entrenchments. The besieging army was rich in notabilities of elevated rank. Don Frederic of Toledo had hitherto commanded, but on the 27th of August, the Dukes of Medina Coeli and of Alva had arrived in the camp. Directly afterwards came the warlike Archbishop of Cologne, at the head of two thousand cavalry. There was but one chance for the Prince of Orange, and experience had taught him, four years before, its slenderness. He might still provoke his adversary into a pitched battle,

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and he relied upon God for the result. In his own words, "he trusted ever that the great God of armies was with him, and would fight in the midst of his forces." If so long as Alva remained in his impregnable camp, it was impossible to attack him, or to throw reinforcements into *Mons*. The Prince soon found, too, that Alva was far too wise to hazard his position by a superfluous combat. The Duke knew that the cavalry of the Prince was superior to his own. He expressed himself entirely unwilling to play into the Prince's hands, instead of winning the game which was no longer doubtful. The Huguenot soldiers within *Mons* were in despair and mutiny; Louis of Nassau lay in his bed consuming with a dangerous fever; Genlis was a prisoner, and his army cut to pieces; Coligny was murdered, and Protestant France paralyzed; the troops of Orange, enlisted but for three months, were already rebellious, and sure to break into open insubordination when the consequences of the Paris massacre should become entirely clear to them; and there were, therefore, even more cogent reasons than in 1568, why Alva should remain perfectly still, and see his enemy's cause founder before his eyes. The valiant Archbishop of Cologne was most eager for the fray. He rode daily at the Duke's side, with harness on his back and pistols in his holsters, armed and attired like one of his own troopers, and urging the Duke, with vehemence, to a pitched battle with the Prince. The Duke commended, but did not yield to, the prelate's enthusiasm. "'Tis a fine figure of a man, with his corslet and pistols," he wrote to Philip, "and he shows great affection for your Majesty's service."

The issue of the campaign was inevitable. On the 11th September, Don Frederic, with a force of four thousand picked men, established himself at Saint Florian, a village near the Havre gate of the city, while the Prince had encamped at Hermigny, within half a league of the same place, whence he attempted to introduce reinforcements into the town. On the night of the 11th and 12th, Don Frederic hazarded an encamisada upon the enemy's camp, which proved eminently successful, and had nearly resulted in the capture of the Prince himself. A chosen band of six hundred arquebussers, attired, as was customary in these nocturnal expeditions, with their shirts outside their armor, that they might recognize each other in the darkness, were led by Julian Romero, within the lines of the enemy. The sentinels were cut down, the whole army surprised, and for a moment powerless, while, for two hours long, from one o'clock in the morning until three, the Spaniards butchered their foes, hardly aroused from their sleep, ignorant by how small a force they had been thus suddenly surprised, and unable in the confusion to distinguish between friend and foe. The boldest, led by Julian in person, made at once for the Prince's tent. His guards and himself were in profound sleep, but a small spaniel, who always passed the night upon

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his bed, was a more faithful sentinel. The creature sprang forward, barking furiously at the sound of hostile footsteps, and scratching his master's face with his paws.—There was but just time for the Prince to mount a horse which was ready saddled, and to effect his escape through the darkness, before his enemies sprang into the tent. His servants were cut down, his master of the horse and two of his secretaries, who gained their saddles a moment later, all lost their lives, and but for the little dog's watchfulness, William of Orange, upon whose shoulders the whole weight of his country's fortunes depended, would have been led within a week to an ignominious death. To his dying day, the Prince ever afterwards kept a spaniel of the same race in his bed-chamber. The midnight slaughter still continued, but the Spaniards in their fury, set fire to the tents. The glare of the conflagration showed the Orangists by how paltry a force they had been surprised. Before they could rally, however, Romero led off his arquebusiers, every one of whom had at least killed his man. Six hundred of the Prince's troops had been put to the sword, while many others were burned in their beds, or drowned in the little rivulet which flowed outside their camp. Only sixty Spaniards lost their lives.

This disaster did not alter the plans of the Prince, for those plans had already been frustrated. The whole marrow of his enterprise had been destroyed in an instant by the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. He retreated to Wronne and Nivelles, an assassin, named Heist, a German, by birth, but a French chevalier, following him secretly in his camp, pledged to take his life for a large reward promised by Alva—an enterprise not destined, however, to be successful. The soldiers flatly refused to remain an hour longer in the field, or even to furnish an escort for Count Louis, if, by chance, he could be brought out of the town. The Prince was obliged to inform his brother of the desperate state of his affairs, and to advise him to capitulate on the best terms which he could make. With a heavy heart, he left the chivalrous Louis besieged in the city which he had so gallantly captured, and took his way across the Meuse towards the Rhine. A furious mutiny broke out among his troops. His life was, with difficulty, saved from the brutal soldiery—infuriated at his inability to pay them, except in the over-due securities of the Holland cities—by the exertions of the officers who still regarded him with veneration and affection. Crossing the Rhine at Orsoy, he disbanded his army and betook himself, almost alone, to Holland.

Yet even in this hour of distress and defeat, the Prince seemed more heroic than many a conqueror in his day of triumph. With all his hopes blasted, with the whole fabric of his country's fortunes shattered by the colossal crime of his royal ally, he never lost his confidence in himself nor his unfaltering trust in God. All the cities which, but a few weeks before, had so eagerly raised his standard, now fell off at once. He went to Holland, the only province which remained true, and which still looked up to him as its saviour, but he went thither expecting and prepared to perish. "There I will make my sepulchre," was his simple and sublime expression in a private letter to his brother.

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He had advanced to the rescue of Louis, with city after city opening its arms to receive him. He had expected to be joined on the march by Coligny, at the head of a chosen army, and he was now obliged to leave his brother to his fate, having the massacre of the Admiral and his confederates substituted for their expected army of assistance, and with every city and every province forsaking his cause as eagerly as they had so lately embraced it. "It has pleased God," he said, "to take away every hope which we could have founded upon man; the King has published that the massacre was by his orders, and has forbidden all his subjects, upon pain of death, to assist me; he has, moreover, sent succor to Alva. Had it not been for this, we had been masters of the Duke, and should have made him capitulate at our pleasure." Yet even then he was not cast down.

Nor was his political sagacity liable to impeachment by the extent to which he had been thus deceived by the French court. "So far from being reprehensible that I did not suspect such a crime," he said, "I should rather be chargeable with malignity had I been capable of so sinister a suspicion. 'Tis not an ordinary thing to conceal such enormous deliberations under the plausible cover of a marriage festival."

Meanwhile, Count Louis lay confined to his couch with a burning fever. His soldiers refused any longer to hold the city, now that the altered intentions of Charles IX. were known and the forces of Orange withdrawn. Alva offered the most honorable conditions, and it was therefore impossible for the Count to make longer resistance. The city was so important, and time was at that moment so valuable that the Duke was willing to forego his vengeance upon the rebel whom he so cordially detested, and to be satisfied with depriving him of the prize which he had seized with such audacity. "It would have afforded me sincere pleasure," wrote the Duke, "over and above the benefit to God and your Majesty, to have had the Count of Nassau in my power. I would overleap every obstacle to seize him, such is the particular hatred which I bear the man." Under the circumstances, however, he acknowledged that the result of the council of war could only be to grant liberal terms.

On the 19th September, accordingly, articles of capitulation were signed between the distinguished De la Nune with three others on the one part, and the Seigneur de Noircarmes and three others on the side of Spain. The town was given over to Alva, but all the soldiers were to go out with their weapons and property. Those of the townspeople who had borne arms against his Majesty, and all who still held to the Reformed religion, were to retire with the soldiery. The troops were to pledge themselves not to serve in future against the Kings of France or Spain, but from this provision Louis, with his English and German soldiers, was expressly excepted, the Count indignantly repudiating the idea of such a pledge, or of discontinuing his hostilities for an instant. It was also agreed that convoys should be furnished, and hostages exchanged, for the due observance of the terms of the treaty. The preliminaries having been thus settled, the patriot forces abandoned the town.

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Count Louis, rising from his sick bed, paid his respects in person to the victorious generals, at their request. He was received in Alva's camp with an extraordinary show of admiration and esteem. The Duke of Medina Coeli overwhelmed him with courtesies and "basolomanos," while Don Frederic assured him, in the high-flown language of Spanish compliment, that there was nothing which he would not do to serve him, and that he would take a greater pleasure in executing his slightest wish than if he had been his next of kin.

As the Count next day, still suffering with fever, and attired in his long dressing-gown, was taking his departure from the city, he ordered his carriage to stop at the entrance to Don Frederic's quarters. That general, who had been standing incognito near the door, gazing with honest admiration at the hero of so many a hard-fought field, withdrew as he approached, that he might not give the invalid the trouble of alighting. Louis, however, recognising him, addressed him with the Spanish salutation, "Perdone vuestra Senoria la pesedumbre," and paused at the gate. Don Frederic, from politeness to his condition, did not present himself, but sent an aid-de-camp to express his compliments and good wishes. Having exchanged these courtesies, Louis left the city, conveyed, as had been agreed upon, by a guard of Spanish troops. There was a deep meaning in the respect with which the Spanish generals had treated the rebel chieftain. Although the massacre of Saint Bartholomew met with Alva's entire approbation, yet it was his cue to affect a holy horror at the event, and he avowed that he would "rather cut off both his hands than be guilty of such a deed"—as if those hangman's hands had the right to protest against any murder, however wholesale. Count Louis suspected at once, and soon afterwards thoroughly understood; the real motives of the chivalrous treatment which he had received. He well knew that these very men would have sent him to the scaffold; had he fallen into their power, and he therefore estimated their courtesy at its proper value.

It was distinctly stated, in the capitulation of the city, that all the soldiers, as well as such of the inhabitants as had borne arms, should be allowed to leave the city, with all their property. The rest of the people, it was agreed, might remain without molestation to their persons or estates. It has been the general opinion of historians that the articles of this convention were maintained by the conquerors in good faith. Never was a more signal error. The capitulation was made late at night, on the 20th September, without the provision which Charles IX. had hoped for: the massacre, namely, of De la Nune and his companions. As for Genlis and those who had been taken prisoners at his defeat, their doom had already been sealed. The city was evacuated on the 21st September: Alva entered it upon the 24th. Most of the volunteers departed

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with the garrison, but many who had, most unfortunately, prolonged their farewells to their families, trusting to the word of the Spanish Captain Molinos, were thrown into prison. Noircarmes the butcher of Valenciennes, now made his appearance in *Mons*. As grand bailiff of Hainault, he came to the place as one in authority, and his deeds were now to complete the infamy which must for ever surround his name. In brutal violation of the terms upon which the town had surrendered, he now set about the work of massacre and pillage. A Commission of Troubles, in close imitation of the famous Blood Council at Brussels, was established, the members of the tribunal being appointed by Noircarmes, and all being inhabitants of the town. The council commenced proceedings by condemning all the volunteers, although expressly included in the capitulation. Their wives and children were all banished; their property all confiscated. On the 15th December, the executions commenced. The intrepid De Leste, silk manufacturer, who had commanded a band of volunteers, and sustained during the siege the assaults of Alva's troops with remarkable courage at a very critical moment, was one of the earliest victims. In consideration "that he was a gentleman, and not among the most malicious," he was executed by sword. "In respect that he heard the mass, and made a sweet and Catholic end," it was allowed that he should be "buried in consecrated earth." Many others followed in quick succession. Some were beheaded, some were hanged, some were burned alive. All who had borne arms or worked at the fortifications were, of course, put to death. Such as refused to confess and receive the Catholic sacraments perished by fire. A poor wretch, accused of having ridiculed these mysteries, had his tongue torn out before being beheaded. A cobbler, named Blaise Bouzet, was hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday. He was also accused of going to the Protestant preachings for the sake of participating in the alms distributed on these occasions, a crime for which many other paupers were executed. An old man of sixty-two was sent to the scaffold for having permitted his son to bear arms among the volunteers. At last, when all pretexts were wanting to justify executions; the council assigned as motives for its decrees an adhesion of heart on the part of the victims to the cause of the insurgents, or to the doctrines of the Reformed Church. Ten, twelve, twenty persons, were often hanged, burned, or beheaded in a single day. Gibbets laden with mutilated bodies lined the public highways,—while Noircarmes, by frightful expressions of approbation, excited without ceasing the fury of his satellites. This monster would perhaps, be less worthy of execration had he been governed in these foul proceedings by fanatical bigotry or by political hatred; but his motives were of the most sordid description. It was mainly to acquire gold for himself that he ordained all this

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carnage. With the same pen which signed the death-sentences of the richest victims, he drew orders to his own benefit on their confiscated property. The lion's share of the plunder was appropriated by himself. He desired the estate; of Francois de Glarges, Seigneur d'Eslesmes. The gentleman had committed no offence of any kind, and, moreover, lived beyond the French frontier. Nevertheless, in contempt of international law, the neighbouring territory was invaded, and d'Eslesmes dragged before the blood tribunal of Mons. Noircarmes had drawn up beforehand, in his own handwriting, both the terms of the accusation and of the sentence. The victim was innocent and a Catholic, but he was rich. He confessed to have been twice at the preaching, from curiosity, and to have omitted taking the sacrament at the previous Easter. For these offences he was beheaded, and his confiscated estate adjudged at an almost nominal price to the secretary of Noircarmes, bidding for his master. "You can do me no greater pleasure," wrote Noircarmes to the council, "than to make quick work with all these rebels, and to proceed with the confiscation of their estates, real and personal. Don't fail to put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got."

Notwithstanding the unexampled docility of the commissioners, they found it difficult to extract from their redoubted chief a reasonable share in the wages of blood. They did not scruple, therefore, to display their, own infamy, and to enumerate their own crimes, in order to justify their demand for higher salaries. "Consider," they said, in a petition to this end, "consider closely, all that is odious in our office, and the great number of banishments and of executions which we have pronounced among all our own relations and friends."

It may be added, moreover, as a slight palliation for the enormous crimes committed by these men, that, becoming at last weary of their business, they urged Noircarmes to desist from the work of proscription. Longehaye, one of the commissioners, even waited upon him personally, with a plea for mercy in favor of "the poor people, even beggars, who, although having borne arms during the siege, might then be pardoned." Noircarmes, in a rage at the proposition, said that "if he did not know the commissioners to be honest men, he should believe that their palms had been oiled," and forbade any farther words on the subject. When Longehaye still ventured to speak in favor of certain persons "who were very poor and simple, not charged with duplicity, and good Catholics besides," he fared no better. "Away with you!" cried Noircarmes in a great fury, adding that he had already written to have execution done upon the whole of them. "Whereupon," said poor blood-councillor Longehaye, in his letter to his colleagues, "I retired, I leave you to guess how."

Thus the work went on day after day, month after month. Till the 27th August of the following year (1573) the executioner never rested, and when Requesens, successor to Alva, caused the prisons of Mons to be opened, there were found still seventy-five individuals condemned to the block, and awaiting their fate.

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It is the most dreadful commentary upon the times in which these transactions occurred, that they could sink so soon into oblivion. The culprits took care to hide the records of their guilt, while succeeding horrors, on a more extensive scale, at other places, effaced the memory of all these comparatively obscure murders and spoliations. The prosperity of Mons, one of the most flourishing and wealthy manufacturing towns in the Netherlands, was annihilated, but there were so many cities in the same condition that its misery was hardly remarkable. Nevertheless, in our own days, the fall of a mouldering tower in the ruined Chateau de Naast at last revealed the archives of all these crimes. How the documents came to be placed there remains a mystery, but they have at last been brought to light.

The Spaniards had thus recovered Mons, by which event the temporary revolution throughout the whole Southern Netherlands was at an end. The keys of that city unlocked the gates of every other in Brabant and Flanders. The towns which had so lately embraced the authority of Orange now hastened to disavow the Prince, and to return to their ancient, hypocritical, and cowardly allegiance. The new oaths of fidelity were in general accepted by Alva, but the beautiful archiepiscopal city of Mechlin was selected for an example and a sacrifice.

There were heavy arrears due to the Spanish troops. To indemnify them, and to make good his blasphemous prophecy of Divine chastisement for its past misdeeds, Alva now abandoned this town to the licence of his soldiery. By his command Don Frederic advanced to the gates and demanded its surrender. He was answered by a few shots from the garrison. Those cowardly troops, however, having thus plunged the city still more deeply into the disgrace which, in Alva's eyes, they had incurred by receiving rebels within their walls after having but just before refused admittance to the Spanish forces, decamped during the night, and left the place defenceless.

Early next morning there issued from the gates a solemn procession of priests, with banner and crozier, followed by a long and suppliant throng of citizens, who attempted by this demonstration to avert the wrath of the victor. While the penitent psalms were resounding, the soldiers were busily engaged in heaping dried branches and rubbish into the moat. Before the religious exercises were concluded, thousands had forced the gates or climbed the walls; and entered the city with a celerity which only the hope of rapine could inspire. The sack instantly commenced. The property of friend and foe, of Papist and Calvinist, was indiscriminately rifled. Everything was dismantled and destroyed. "Hardly a nail," said a Spaniard, writing soon afterwards from Brussels, "was left standing in the walls." The troops seemed to imagine themselves in a Turkish town, and wreaked the Divine vengeance which Alva had denounced upon the city with an energy which met with his fervent applause.

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Three days long the horrible scene continued, one day for the benefit of the Spaniards, two more for that of the Walloons and Germans. All the churches, monasteries, religious houses of every kind, were completely sacked. Every valuable article which they contained, the ornaments of altars, the reliquaries, chalices, embroidered curtains, and carpets of velvet or damask, the golden robes of the priests, the repositories of the host, the precious vessels of chrism and extreme unction, the rich clothing and jewellery adorning the effigies of the Holy Virgin, all were indiscriminately rifled by the Spanish soldiers. The holy wafers were trampled underfoot, the sacramental wine was poured upon the ground, and, in brief, all the horrors which had been committed by the iconoclasts in their wildest moments, and for a thousandth part of which enormities heretics had been burned in droves, were now repeated in Mechlin by the especial soldiers of Christ, by Roman Catholics who had been sent to the Netherlands to avenge the insults offered to the Roman Catholic faith. The motive, too, which inspired the sacrilegious crew was not fanaticism, but the desire of plunder. The property of Romanists was taken as freely as that of Calvinists, of which sect there were; indeed, but few in the archiepiscopal city. Cardinal Granvelle's house was rifled. The pauper funds deposited in the convents were not respected. The beds were taken from beneath sick and dying women, whether lady abbess or hospital patient, that the sacking might be torn to pieces in search of hidden treasure.

The iconoclasts of 1566 had destroyed millions of property for the sake of an idea, but they had appropriated nothing. Moreover, they had scarcely injured a human being; confining their wrath to graven images. The Spaniards at Mechlin spared neither man nor woman. The murders and outrages would be incredible, were they not attested by most respectable Catholic witnesses. Men were butchered in their houses, in the streets, at the altars. Women were violated by hundreds in churches and in graveyards. Moreover, the deed had been as deliberately arranged as it was thoroughly performed. It was sanctioned by the highest authority. Don Frederic, Son of Alva, and General Noircarmes were both present at the scene, and applications were in vain made to them that the havoc might be stayed. "They were seen whispering to each other in the ear on their arrival," says an eye-witness and a Catholic, "and it is well known that the affair had been resolved upon the preceding day. The two continued together as long as they remained in the city." The work was, in truth, fully accomplished. The ultra-Catholic, Jean Richardot, member of the Grand Council, and nephew of the Bishop of Arras, informed the State Council that the sack of Mechlin had been so horrible that the poor and unfortunate mothers had not a single morsel of bread to put in the mouths of their children, who were dying before their eyes—so insane and cruel had been the avarice of the plunderers. "He could say more," he added, "if his hair did not stand on end, not only at recounting, but even at remembering the scene."

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Three days long the city was abandoned to that trinity of furies which ever wait upon War's footsteps—Murder, Lust, and Rapine—under whose promptings human beings become so much more terrible than the most ferocious beasts. In his letter to his master, the Duke congratulated him upon these foul proceedings as upon a pious deed well accomplished. He thought it necessary, however; to excuse himself before the public in a document, which justified the sack of Mechlin by its refusal to accept his garrison a few months before, and by the shots which had been discharged at his troops as they approached the city. For these offences, and by his express order, the deed was done. Upon his head must the guilt for ever rest.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Hanged for having eaten meat-soup upon Friday
Provided not one Huguenot be left alive in France
Put all those to the torture out of whom anything can be got
Saint Bartholomew's day
Science of reigning was the science of lying

*** *End of the project gutenberg EBOOK the Dutch Republic, 1572* ***

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