

# **Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 19: 1572-73 eBook**

## **Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 19: 1572-73 by John Lothrop Motley**

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## Title: The Rise of the Dutch Republic, 1572-73

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## MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 20.

### THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

1572-73 [*Chapter viii.*]

Affairs in Holland and Zealand—Siege of Tergoes by the patriots— Importance of the place—Difficulty of relieving it—Its position— Audacious plan for sending succor across the "Drowned Land"— Brilliant and successful expedition of Mondragon—The siege raised— Horrible sack of Zutphen—Base conduct of Count Van den Berg— Refusal of Naarden to surrender—Subsequent unsuccessful deputation to make terms with Don Frederic—Don Frederic before Naarden— Treachery of Romero—The Spaniards admitted—General massacre of the garrison and burghers—The city burned to the ground—Warm reception of Orange in Holland—Secret negotiations with the Estates—Desperate character of the struggle between Spain and the provinces —Don Frederic in Amsterdam—Plans for reducing Holland—Skirmish on the ice at Amsterdam—Preparation in Harlem for the expected siege— Description of the city—Early operations—Complete investment— Numbers of besiegers and besieged—Mutual barbarities—



Determined repulse of the first assault—Failure of Batenburg's expedition— Cruelties in city and camp—Mining and countermining—Second assault victoriously repelled—Suffering and disease in Harlem—Disposition of Don Frederic to retire—Memorable rebuke by Alva—Efforts of Orange to relieve the place—Sonoy's expedition—Exploit of John Haring—Cruel execution of prisoners on both sides—Quiryn Dirkzoon and his family put to death in the city—Fleets upon the lake— Defeat of the patriot armada—Dreadful suffering and starvation in the city—Parley with the besiegers—Despair of the city—Appeal to Orange—Expedition under Batenburg to relieve the city—His defeat and death—Desperate condition of Harlem—Its surrender at discretion—Sanguinary executions—General massacre—Expense of the victory in blood and money—Joy of Philip at the news.

While thus Brabant and Flanders were scourged back

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to the chains which they had so recently broken, the affairs of the Prince of Orange were not improving in Zeeland. Never was a twelvemonth so marked by contradictory fortune, never were the promises of a spring followed by such blight and disappointment in autumn than in the memorable year 1572. On the island of Walcheren, Middelburg and Arnemuyde still held for the King—Campveer and Flushing for the Prince of Orange. On the island of South Bevelaad, the city of Goes or Tergoes was still stoutly defended by a small garrison of Spanish troops. As long as the place held out, the city of Middelburg could be maintained. Should that important city fall, the Spaniards would lose all hold upon Walcheren and the province of Zeeland.

Jerome de 't Zeraerts, a brave, faithful, but singularly unlucky officer, commanded for the Prince in Walcheren. He had attempted by various hastily planned expeditions to give employment to his turbulent soldiery, but fortune had refused to smile upon his efforts. He had laid siege to Middelburg and failed. He had attempted Tergoes and had been compelled ingloriously to retreat. The citizens of Flushing, on his return, had shut the gates of the town in his face, and for several days refused to admit him or his troops. To retrieve this disgrace, which had sprung rather from the insubordination of his followers and the dislike which they bore his person than from any want of courage or conduct on his part, he now assembled a force of seven thousand men, marched again to Tergoes, and upon the 26th of August laid siege to the place in forma. The garrison was very insufficient, and although they conducted themselves with great bravery, it was soon evident that unless reinforced they must yield. With their overthrow it was obvious that the Spaniards would lose the important maritime province of Zeeland, and the Duke accordingly ordered D'Avila, who commanded in Antwerp, to throw succor into Tergoes without delay. Attempts were made, by sea and by land, to this effect, but were all unsuccessful. The Zealanders commanded the waters with their fleet,—and were too much at home among those gulfs and shallows not to be more than a match for their enemies. Baffled in their attempt to relieve the town by water or by land, the Spaniards conceived an amphibious scheme. Their plan led to one of the most brilliant feats of arms which distinguishes the history of this war.

The Scheld, flowing past the city of Antwerp and separating the provinces of Flanders and Brabant, opens wide its two arms in nearly opposite directions, before it joins the sea. Between these two arms lie the isles of Zeeland, half floating upon, half submerged by the waves. The town of Tergoes was the chief city of South Beveland, the most important part of this archipelago, but South Beveland had not always been an island. Fifty years before, a tempest, one of the most violent recorded in the stormy annals of that exposed country, had overthrown all barriers,

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the waters of the German Ocean, lashed by a succession of north winds, having been driven upon the low coast of Zealand more rapidly than they could be carried off through the narrow straits of Dover. The dykes of the island had burst, the ocean had swept over the land, hundreds of villages had been overwhelmed, and a tract of country torn from the province and buried for ever beneath the sea. This "Drowned Land," as it is called, now separated the island from the main. At low tide it was, however, possible for experienced pilots to ford the estuary, which had usurped the place of the land. The average depth was between four and five feet at low water, while the tide rose and fell at least ten feet; the bottom was muddy and treacherous, and it was moreover traversed by three living streams or channels; always much too deep to be fordable.

Captain Plomaert, a Fleming of great experience and bravery, warmly attached to the King's cause, conceived the plan of sending reinforcements across this drowned district to the city of Tergoes. Accompanied by two peasants of the country, well acquainted with the track, he twice accomplished the dangerous and difficult passage; which, from dry land to dry land, was nearly ten English miles in length. Having thus satisfied himself as to the possibility of the enterprise, he laid his plan before the Spanish colonel, Mondragon. That courageous veteran eagerly embraced the proposal, examined the ground, and after consultation with Sancho Avila, resolved in person to lead an expedition along the path suggested by Plomaert. Three thousand picked men, a thousand from each nation,—Spaniards, Walloons, and Germans, were speedily and secretly assembled at Bergen op Zoom, from the neighbourhood of which city, at a place called Aggier, it was necessary that the expedition should set forth. A quantity of sacks were provided, in which a supply of, biscuit and of powder was placed, one to be carried by each soldier upon his head. Although it was already late in the autumn, the weather was propitious; the troops, not yet informed: as to the secret enterprise for which they had been selected, were all ready assembled at the edge of the water, and Mondragon, who, notwithstanding his age, had resolved upon heading the hazardous expedition, now briefly, on the evening of the 20th October, explained to them the nature of the service. His statement of the dangers which they were about to encounter, rather inflamed than diminished their ardor. Their enthusiasm became unbounded, as he described the importance of the city which they were about to save, and alluded to the glory which would be won by those who thus courageously came forward to its rescue. The time of about half ebb-tide having arrived, the veteran,—preceded only by the guides and Plomaert, plunged gaily into the waves, followed by his army, almost in single file. The water was never lowed than the breast, often higher than the shoulder. The distance to the island, three and a half leagues at least, was to be accomplished within at most, six hours, or the rising tide would overwhelm them for ever. And thus, across the quaking and uncertain slime, which often refused them a footing, that adventurous band, five hours long, pursued their midnight march, sometimes swimming for their lives, and always struggling with the waves which every instant threatened to engulf them.



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Before the tide had risen to more than half-flood, before the day had dawned, the army set foot on dry land again, at the village of Irseken. Of the whole three thousand, only nine unlucky individuals had been drowned; so much had courage and discipline availed in that dark and perilous passage through the very bottom of the sea. The Duke of Alva might well pronounce it one of the most brilliant and original achievements in the annals of war. The beacon fires were immediately lighted upon the shore; as agreed upon, to inform Sancho d'Avila, who was anxiously awaiting the result at Bergen op Zoom, of the safe arrival of the troops. A brief repose was then allowed. At the approach of daylight, they set forth from Irseken, which lay about four leagues from Tergoes. The news that a Spanish army had thus arisen from the depths of the sea, flew before them as they marched. The besieging force commanded the water with their fleet, the land with their army; yet had these indomitable Spaniards found a path which was neither land nor water, and had thus stolen upon them in the silence of night. A panic preceded them as they fell upon a foe much superior in number to their own force. It was impossible for 't Zeraerts to induce his soldiers to offer resistance. The patriot army fled precipitately and ignominiously to their ships, hotly pursued by the Spaniards, who overtook and destroyed the whole of their rearguard before they could embark. This done, the gallant little garrison which had so successfully held the city, was reinforced with the courageous veterans who had come to their relief. his audacious project thus brilliantly accomplished, the "good old Mondragon," as his soldiers called him, returned to the province of Brabant.

After the capture of Mons and the sack of Mechlin, the Duke of Alva had taken his way to Nimwegen, having despatched his son, Don Frederic, to reduce the northern and eastern country, which was only too ready to submit to the conqueror. Very little resistance was made by any of the cities which had so recently, and—with such enthusiasm, embraced the cause of Orange. Zutphen attempted a feeble opposition to the entrance of the King's troops, and received a dreadful chastisement in consequence. Alva sent orders to his son to leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house to the ground. The Duke's command was almost literally obeyed. Don Frederic entered Zutphen, and without a moment's warning put the whole garrison to the sword. The citizens next fell a defenceless, prey; some being, stabbed in the streets, some hanged on the trees which decorated the city, some stripped stark naked; and turned out into the fields to freeze to death in the wintry night. As the work of death became too fatiguing for the butchers, five hundred innocent burghers were tied two and two, back to back, and drowned like dogs in the river Yssel. A few stragglers who had contrived to elude pursuit at first, were

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afterwards taken from their hiding places and hung upon the gallows by the feet, some of which victims suffered four days and nights of agony before death came to their relief. It is superfluous to add that the outrages upon women were no less universal in Zutphen than they had been in every city captured or occupied by the Spanish troops. These horrors continued till scarcely chastity or life remained, throughout the miserable city.

This attack and massacre had been so suddenly executed, that assistance would hardly have been possible, even had there been disposition to render it. There was; however, no such disposition. The whole country was already cowering again, except the provinces of Holland and Zealand. No one dared approach, even to learn what had occurred within the walls of the town, for days after its doom had been accomplished. "A wail of agony was heard above Zutphen last Sunday," wrote Count Nieuwenar, "a sound as of a mighty massacre, but we know not what has taken place."

Count Van, den Bergh, another brother-in-law of Orange, proved himself signally unworthy of the illustrious race to which he was allied. He had, in the earlier part of the year, received the homage of the cities of Gelderland and Overijssel, on behalf of the patriot Prince. He now basely abandoned the field where he had endeavoured to gather laurels while the sun of success had been shining. Having written from Kampen, whither he had retired, that he meant to hold the city to the last gasp, he immediately afterwards fled secretly and precipitately from the country. In his flight he was plundered by his own people, while his wife, Mary of Nassau, then far advanced in pregnancy, was left behind, disguised as a peasant girl, in an obscure village.

With the flight of Van den Bergh, all the cities which, under his guidance, had raised the standard of Orange, deserted the cause at once. Friesland too, where Robles obtained a victory over six thousand patriots, again submitted to the yoke. But if the ancient heart of the free Frisians was beating thus feebly, there was still spirit left among their brethren on the other side of the Zuyder Zee. It was not while William of Orange was within her borders, nor while her sister provinces had proved recreant to him, that Holland would follow their base example. No rebellion being left, except in the north-western extremities of the Netherlands, Don Frederic was ordered to proceed from Zutphen to Amsterdam, thence to undertake the conquest of Holland. The little city of Naarden, on the coast of the Zuyder Zee, lay in his path, and had not yet formally submitted. On the 22nd of November a company of one hundred troopers was sent to the city gates to demand its surrender. The small garrison which had been left by the Prince was not disposed to resist, but the spirit of the burghers was stouter than, their walls. They answered the summons by a declaration that they had thus far held the city for the King and the Prince of Orange, and, with God's help, would continue so to do. As the horsemen departed with this reply, a lunatic, called Adrian Krankhoeft, mounted the ramparts and, discharged a culverine among them. No man was injured, but the

words of defiance, and the shot fired by a madman's hand, were destined to be fearfully answered.

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Meanwhile, the inhabitants of the place, which was at best far from strong, and ill provided with arms, ammunition, or soldiers, despatched importunate messages to Sonoy, and to ether patriot generals nearest to them, soliciting reinforcements. Their messengers came back almost empty handed. They brought a little powder and a great many promises, but not a single man-at-arms, not a ducat, not a piece of artillery. The most influential commanders, moreover, advised an honorable capitulation, if it were still possible.

Thus baffled, the burghers of the little city found their proud position quite untenable. They accordingly, on the 1st of December, despatched the burgomaster and a senator to Amersfoort, to make terms, if possible, with Don Frederic. When these envoys reached the place, they were refused admission to the general's presence. The army had already been ordered to move forward to Naarden, and they were directed to accompany the advance guard, and to expect their reply at the gates of their own city. This command was sufficiently ominous. The impression which it made upon them was confirmed by the warning voices of their friends in Amersfoort, who entreated them not to return to Naarden. The advice was not lost upon one of the two envoys. After they had advanced a little distance on their journey, the burgomaster Laurentszoon slid privately out of the sledge in which they were travelling, leaving his cloak behind him. "Adieu; I think I will not venture back to Naarden at present," said he, calmly, as he abandoned his companion to his fate. The other, who could not so easily desert his children, his wife, and his fellow-citizens, in the hour of danger, went forward as calmly to share in their impending doom.

The army reached Bussem, half a league distant from Naarden, in the evening. Here Don Frederic established his head quarters, and proceeded to invest the city. Senator Gerrit was then directed to return to Naarden and to bring out a more numerous deputation on the following morning, duly empowered to surrender the place. The envoy accordingly returned next day, accompanied by Lambert Hortensius, rector of a Latin academy, together with four other citizens. Before this deputation had reached Bussem, they were met by Julian Romero, who informed them that he was commissioned to treat with them on the part of Don Frederic. He demanded the keys of the city, and gave the deputation a solemn pledge that the lives and property of all the inhabitants should be sacredly respected. To attest this assurance Don Julian gave his hand three several times to Lambert Hortensius. A soldier's word thus plighted, the commissioners, without exchanging any written documents, surrendered the keys, and immediately afterwards accompanied Romero into the city, who was soon followed by five or six hundred musketeers.

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To give these guests a hospitable reception, all the housewives of the city at once set about preparations for a sumptuous feast, to which the Spaniards did ample justice, while the colonel and his officers were entertained by Senator Gerrit at his own house. As soon as this conviviality had come to an end, Romero, accompanied by his host, walked into the square. The great bell had been meantime ringing, and the citizens had been summoned to assemble in the Gast Huis Church, then used as a town hall. In the course of a few minutes five hundred had entered the building, and stood quietly awaiting whatever measures might be offered for their deliberation. Suddenly a priest, who had been pacing to and fro before the church door, entered the building, and bade them all prepare for death; but the announcement, the preparation, and the death, were simultaneous. The door was flung open, and a band of armed Spaniards rushed across the sacred threshold. They fired a single volley upon the defenceless herd, and then sprang in upon them with sword and dagger. A yell of despair arose as the miserable victims saw how hopelessly they were engaged, and beheld the ferocious faces of their butchers. The carnage within that narrow apace was compact and rapid. Within a few minutes all were despatched, and among them Senator Gerrit, from whose table the Spanish commander had but just risen. The church was then set on fire, and the dead and dying were consumed to ashes together.

Inflamed but not satiated, the Spaniards then rushed into the streets, thirsty for fresh horrors. The houses were all rifled of their contents, and men were forced to carry the booty to the camp, who were then struck dead as their reward. The town was then fired in every direction, that the skulking citizens might be forced from their hiding-places. As fast as they came forth they were put to death by their impatient foes. Some were pierced with rapiers, some were chopped to pieces with axes, some were surrounded in the blazing streets by troops of laughing soldiers, intoxicated, not with wine but with blood, who tossed them to and fro with their lances, and derived a wild amusement from their dying agonies. Those who attempted resistance were crimped alive like fishes, and left to gasp themselves to death in lingering torture. The soldiers becoming more and more insane, as the foul work went on, opened the veins of some of their victims, and drank their blood as if it were wine. Some of the burghers were for a time spared, that they might witness the violation of their wives and daughters, and were then butchered in company with these still more unfortunate victims. Miracles of brutality were accomplished. Neither church nor hearth was sacred: Men were slain, women outraged at the altars, in the streets, in their blazing homes. The life of Lambert Hortensius was spared, out of regard to his learning and genius, but he hardly could thank his foes for

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the boon, for they struck his only son dead, and tore his heart out before his father's eyes. Hardly any man or woman survived, except by accident. A body of some hundred burghers made their escape across the snow into the open country. They were, however, overtaken, stripped stark naked, and hung upon the trees by the feet, to freeze, or to perish by a more lingering death. Most of them soon died, but twenty, who happened to be wealthy, succeeded, after enduring much torture, in purchasing their lives of their inhuman persecutors. The principal burgomaster, Heinrich Lambertszoon, was less fortunate. Known to be affluent, he was tortured by exposing the soles of his feet to a fire until they were almost consumed. On promise that his life should be spared, he then agreed to pay a heavy ransom; but hardly had he furnished the stipulated sum when, by express order of Don Frederic himself, he was hanged in his own doorway, and his dissevered limbs afterwards nailed to the gates of the city.

Nearly all the inhabitants of Naarden, soldiers and citizens, were thus destroyed; and now Don Frederic issued peremptory orders that no one, on pain of death, should give lodging or food to any fugitive. He likewise forbade to the dead all that could now be forbidden them—a grave. Three weeks long did these unburied bodies pollute the streets, nor could the few wretched women who still cowered within such houses as had escaped the flames ever wave from their lurking-places without treading upon the festering remains of what had been their husbands, their fathers, or their brethren. Such was the express command of him whom the flatterers called the “most divine genius ever known.” Shortly afterwards came an order to dismantle the fortifications, which had certainly proved sufficiently feeble in the hour of need, and to raze what was left of the city from the surface of the earth. The work was faithfully accomplished, and for a longtime Naarden ceased to exist.

Alva wrote, with his usual complacency in such cases, to his sovereign, that “they had cut the throats of the burghers and all the garrison, and that they had not left a mother's son alive.” The statement was almost literally correct, nor was the cant with which these bloodhounds commented upon their crimes less odious than their guilt. “It was a permission of God,” said the Duke, “that these people should have undertaken to defend a city, which was so weak that no other persons would have attempted such a thing.” Nor was the reflection of Mendoza less pious. “The sack of Naarden,” said that really brave and accomplished cavalier, “was a chastisement which must be believed to have taken place by express permission of a Divine Providence; a punishment for having been the first of the Holland towns in which heresy built its nest, whence it has taken flight to all the neighboring cities.”

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It is not without reluctance, but still with a stern determination, that the historian—should faithfully record these transactions. To extenuate would be base; to exaggerate impossible. It is good that the world should not forget how much wrong has been endured by a single harmless nation at the hands of despotism, and in the sacred name of God. There have been tongues and pens enough to narrate the excesses of the people, bursting from time to time out of slavery into madness. It is good, too, that those crimes should be remembered, and freshly pondered; but it is equally wholesome to study the opposite picture. Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself with the same stony features, with the same imposing mask which she has worn through all the ages, can never be too minutely examined, especially when she paints her own portrait, and when the secret history of her guilt is furnished by the confessions of her lovers. The perusal of her traits will not make us love popular liberty the less.

The history of Alva's administration in the Netherlands is one of those pictures which strike us almost dumb with wonder. Why has the Almighty suffered such crimes to be perpetrated in His sacred name? Was it necessary that many generations should wade through this blood in order to acquire for their descendants the blessings of civil and religious freedom? Was it necessary that an Alva should ravage a peaceful nation with sword and flame—that desolation should be spread over a happy land, in order that the pure and heroic character of a William of Orange should stand forth more conspicuously, like an antique statue of spotless marble against a stormy sky?

After the army which the Prince had so unsuccessfully led to the relief of Mons had been disbanded, he had himself repaired to Holland. He had come to Kampen shortly before its defection from his cause. Thence he had been escorted across the Zuyder Zee to Eukhuyzen. He came to that province, the only one which through good and ill report remained entirely faithful to him, not as a conqueror but as an unsuccessful, proscribed man. But there were warm hearts beating within those cold lagunes, and no conqueror returning from a brilliant series of victories could have been received with more affectionate respect than William in that darkest hour of the country's history. He had but seventy horsemen at his back, all which remained of the twenty thousand troops which he had a second time levied in Germany, and he felt that it would be at that period hopeless for him to attempt the formation of a third army. He had now come thither to share the fate of Holland, at least, if he could not accomplish her liberation. He went from city to city, advising with the magistracies and with the inhabitants, and arranging many matters pertaining both to peace and war. At Harlem the States of the Provinces, according to his request, had been assembled. The assembly begged him



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to lay before them, if it were possible, any schemes and means which he might have devised for further resistance to the Duke of Alva. Thus solicited, the Prince, in a very secret session, unfolded his plans, and satisfied them as to the future prospects of the cause. His speech has nowhere been preserved. His strict injunctions as to secrecy, doubtless, prevented or effaced any record of the session. It is probable, however, that he entered more fully into the state of his negotiations with England, and into the possibility of a resumption by Count Louis of his private intercourse with the French court, than it was safe, publicly, to divulge.

While the Prince had been thus occupied in preparing the stout-hearted province for the last death-struggle with its foe, that mortal combat was already fast approaching; for the aspect of the contest in the Netherlands was not that of ordinary warfare. It was an encounter between two principles, in their nature so hostile to each other that the absolute destruction of one was the only, possible issue. As the fight went on, each individual combatant seemed inspired by direct personal malignity, and men found a pleasure in deeds of cruelty, from which generations not educated to slaughter recoil with horror. To murder defenceless prisoners; to drink, not metaphorically but literally, the heart's blood of an enemy; to exercise a devilish ingenuity in inventions of mutual torture, became not only a duty but a rapture. The Liberty of the Netherlands had now been hunted to its lair. It had taken its last refuge among the sands and thickets where its savage infancy had been nurtured, and had now prepared itself to crush its tormentor in a last embrace, or to die in the struggle.

After the conclusion of the sack and massacre of Naarden, Don Frederic had hastened to Amsterdam, where the Duke was then quartered, that he might receive the paternal benediction for his well-accomplished work. The royal approbation was soon afterwards added to the applause of his parent, and the Duke was warmly congratulated in a letter written by Philip as soon as the murderous deed was known, that Don Frederic had so plainly shown himself to be his father's son. There was now more work for father and son. Amsterdam was the only point in Holland which held for Alva, and from that point it was determined to recover the whole province. The Prince of Orange was established in the southern district; Diedrich Sonoy, his lieutenant, was stationed in North Holland. The important city of Harlem lay between the two, at a spot where the whole breadth of the territory, from sea to sea, was less than an hour's walk. With the fall of that city the province would be cut in twain, the rebellious forces utterly dissevered, and all further resistance, it was thought, rendered impossible.



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The inhabitants of Harlem felt their danger. Bossu, Alva's stadholder for Holland, had formally announced the system hitherto pursued at Mechlin, Zutphen, and Naarden, as the deliberate policy of the government. The King's representative had formally proclaimed the extermination of man, woman; and child in every city which opposed his authority, but the promulgation and practice of such a system had an opposite effect to the one intended. The hearts of the Hollanders were rather steeled to resistance than awed into submission by the fate of Naarden." A fortunate event, too, was accepted as a lucky omen for the coming contest. A little fleet of armed vessels, belonging to Holland, had been frozen up in the neighbourhood of Amsterdam. Don Frederic on his arrival from Naarden, despatched a body of picked men over the ice to attack the imprisoned vessels. The crews had, however, fortified themselves by digging a wide trench around the whole fleet, which thus became from the moment an almost impregnable fortress. Out of this frozen citadel a strong band of well-armed and skilful musketeers sallied forth upon skates as the besieging force advanced. A rapid, brilliant, and slippery skirmish succeeded, in which the Hollanders, so accustomed to such sports, easily vanquished their antagonists, and drove them off the field, with the loss of several hundred left dead upon the ice.

"T was a thing never heard of before to-day," said Alva, "to see a body of arquebusiers thus skirmishing upon a frozen sea." In the course of the next four-and-twenty hours a flood and a rapid thaw released the vessels, which all escaped to Enkhuyzen, while a frost, immediately and strangely succeeding, made pursuit impossible.

The Spaniards were astonished at these novel manoeuvres upon the ice. It is amusing to read their elaborate descriptions of the wonderful appendages which had enabled the Hollanders to glide so glibly into battle with a superior force, and so rapidly to glance away, after achieving a signal triumph. Nevertheless, the Spaniards could never be dismayed, and were always apt scholars, even if an enemy were the teacher. Alva immediately ordered seven thousand pairs of skates, and his soldiers soon learned to perform military evolutions with these new accoutrements as audaciously, if not as adroitly, as the Hollanders.

A portion of the Harlem magistracy, notwithstanding the spirit which pervaded the province, began to tremble as danger approached. They were base enough to enter into secret negotiations with Alva, and to send three of their own number to treat with the Duke at Amsterdam. One was wise enough to remain with the enemy. The other two were arrested on their return, and condemned, after an impartial trial, to death. For, while these emissaries of a cowardly magistracy were absent, the stout commandant of the little garrison, Ripperda, had assembled the citizens and soldiers in the market-place. He warned them

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of the absolute necessity to make a last effort for freedom. In startling colors he held up to them the fate of Mechlin, of Zutphen, of Naarden, as a prophetic mirror, in which they might read their own fate should they be base enough to surrender the city. There was no composition possible, he urged, with foes who were as false as they were sanguinary, and whose foul passions were stimulated, not slaked, by the horrors with which they had already feasted themselves.

Ripperda addressed men who could sympathize with his bold and lofty sentiments. Soldiers and citizens cried out for defence instead of surrender, as with one voice, for there were no abject spirits at Harlem, save among the magistracy; and Saint Aldegonde, the faithful minister of Orange, was soon sent to Harlem by the Prince to make a thorough change in that body.

Harlem, over whose ruins the Spanish tyranny intended to make its entrance into Holland, lay in the narrowest part of that narrow isthmus which separates the Zuyder Zee from the German Ocean. The distance from sea to sea is hardly five English miles across. Westerly from the city extended a slender strip of land, once a morass, then a fruitful meadow; maintained by unflagging fortitude in the very jaws of a stormy ocean. Between the North Sea and the outer edge of this pasture surged those wild and fantastic downs, heaped up by wind and wave in mimicry of mountains; the long coils of that rope of sand, by which, plaited into additional strength by the slenderest of bulrushes, the waves of the North Sea were made to obey the command of man. On the opposite, or eastern aide, Harlem looked towards Amsterdam. That already flourishing city was distant but ten miles. The two cities were separated by an expanse of inland water, and united by a slender causeway. The Harlem Lake, formed less than a century before by the bursting of four lesser, meres during a storm which had threatened to swallow the whole Peninsula, extended itself on the south and east; a sea of limited dimensions, being only fifteen feet in depth with seventy square miles of surface, but, exposed as it lay to all the winds of heaven, often lashed into storms as dangerous as those of the Atlantic. Beyond the lake, towards the north, the waters of the Y nearly swept across the Peninsula. This inlet of the Zuyder Zee was only separated from the Harlem mere by a slender thread of land. Over this ran the causeway between the two sister cities, now so unfortunately in arms against each other. Midway between the two, the dyke was pierced and closed again with a system of sluice-works, which when opened admitted the waters of the lake into those of the estuary, and caused an inundation of the surrounding country.

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The city was one of the largest and most beautiful in the Netherlands. It was also one of the weakest.—The walls were of antique construction, turreted, but not strong. The extent and feebleness of the defences made a large garrison necessary, but unfortunately, the garrison was even weaker than the walls. The city's main reliance was on the stout hearts of the inhabitants. The streets were, for that day, spacious and regular; the canals planted with limes and poplars. The ancient church of Saint Bavon, a large imposing structure of brick, stood almost in the centre of the place, the most prominent object, not only of the town but of the province, visible over leagues of sea and of land more level than the sea, and seeming to gather the whole quiet little city under its sacred and protective wings. Its tall open-work leaden spire was surmounted by a colossal crown, which an exalted imagination might have regarded as the emblematic guerdon of martyrdom held aloft over the city, to reward its heroism and its agony.

It was at once obvious that the watery expanse between Harlem and Amsterdam would be the principal theatre of the operations about to commence. The siege was soon begun. The fugitive burgomaster, De Fries, had the effrontery, with the advice of Alva, to address a letter to the citizens, urging them to surrender at discretion. The messenger was hanged—a cruel but practical answer, which put an end to all further traitorous communications. This was in the first week of December. On the 10th, Don Frederic, sent a strong detachment to capture the fort and village of Sparendam, as an indispensable preliminary to the commencement of the siege. A peasant having shown Zapata, the commander of the expedition, a secret passage across the flooded and frozen meadows, the Spaniards stormed the place gallantly, routed the whole garrison, killed three hundred, and took possession of the works and village. Next day, Don Frederic appeared before the walls of Harlem, and proceeded regularly to invest the place. The misty weather favored his operations, nor did he cease reinforcing himself; until at least thirty thousand men, including fifteen hundred cavalry, had been encamped around the city. The Germans, under Count Overstein, were stationed in a beautiful and extensive grove of limes and beeches, which spread between the southern walls and the shore of Harlem Lake. Don Frederic, with his Spaniards, took up a position on the opposite side, at a place called the House of Kleef, the ruins of which still remain. The Walloons, and other regiments were distributed in different places, so as completely to encircle the town.

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[Pierre Sterlinckx: *Eene come Waerachtige Beschryvinghe van alle Geschiedinissen, Anschlagen, Stormen, Schermutsingen oude Schieten voor de vroomme Stadt Haerlem in Holland gheschicht, etc., etc.*— Delft, 1574.—This is by far the best contemporary account of the famous siege. The author was a citizen of Antwerp, who kept a daily journal of the events as they occurred at Harlem. It is a dry, curt register of horrors, jotted down without passion or comment.— Compare Bor, vi. 422, 423; Meteren, iv. 79; Mendoza, viii. 174, 175; Wagenaer, *vad. Hist.*, vi. 413, 414.]

On the edge of the mere the Prince of Orange had already ordered a cluster of forts to be erected, by which the command of its frozen surface was at first secured for Harlem. In the course of the siege, however, other forts were erected by Don Frederic, so that the aspect of things suffered a change.

Against this immense force, nearly equal in number to that of the whole population of the city, the garrison within the walls never amounted to more than four thousand men. In the beginning it was much less numerous. The same circumstances, however, which assisted the initiatory operations of Don Frederic, were of advantage to the Harleimers. A dense frozen fog hung continually over the surface of the lake. Covered by this curtain, large supplies of men, provisions, and ammunition were daily introduced into the city, notwithstanding all the efforts of the besieging force. Sledges skimming over the ice, men, women, and even children, moving on their skates as swiftly as the wind, all brought their contributions in the course of the short dark days and long nights of December, in which the wintry siege was opened.

The garrison at last numbered about one thousand pioneers or delvers, three thousand fighting men, and about three hundred fighting women. The last was a most efficient corps, all females of respectable character, armed with sword, musket, and dagger. Their chief, Kenau Hasselaer, was a widow of distinguished family and unblemished reputation, about forty-seven years of age, who, at the head of her amazons, participated in many of the most fiercely contested actions of the siege, both within and without the walls. When such a spirit animated the maids and matrons of the city, it might be expected that the men would hardly surrender the place without a struggle. The Prince had assembled a force of three or four thousand men at Leyden, which he sent before the middle of December towards the city under the command of De la Marck. These troops were, however, attacked on the way by a strong detachment under Bossu, Noircarmes, and Romero. After a sharp, action in a heavy snow-storm, De la Marek was completely routed. One thousand of his soldiers were cut to pieces, and a large number carried off as prisoners to the gibbets, which were already conspicuously erected in the Spanish camp, and which from the commencement to the close of the

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siege were never bare of victims. Among the captives was a gallant officer, Baptist van Trier, for whom De la Marck in vain offered two thousand crowns and nineteen Spanish prisoners. The proposition was refused with contempt. Van Trier was hanged upon the gallows by one leg until he was dead, in return for which barbarity the nineteen Spaniards were immediately gibbeted by De la Marck. With this interchange of cruelties the siege may be said to have opened.

Don Frederic had stationed himself in a position opposite to the gate of the Cross, which was not very strong, but fortified by a ravelin. Intending to make a very short siege of it, he established his batteries immediately, and on the 18th, 19th, and 20th December directed a furious cannonade against the Cross-gate, the St. John's-gate, and the curtain between the two. Six hundred and eighty shots were discharged on the first, and nearly as many on each of the two succeeding days. The walls were much shattered, but men, women, and children worked night and day within the city, repairing the breaches as fast as made. They brought bags of sand; blocks of stone, cart-loads of earth from every quarter, and they stripped the churches of all their statues, which they threw by heaps into the gaps. If they sought thus a more practical advantage from those sculptured saints than they could have gained by only imploring their interposition. The fact, however, excited horror among the besiegers. Men who were daily butchering their fellow-beings, and hanging their prisoners in cold blood, affected to shudder at the enormity of the offence thus exercised against graven images.

After three days' cannonade, the assault was ordered, Don Frederic only intending a rapid massacre, to crown his achievements at—Zutphen and Naarden. The place, he thought, would fall in a week, and after another week of sacking, killing, and ravishing, he might sweep on to "pastures new" until Holland was overwhelmed. Romero advanced to the breach, followed by a numerous storming party, but met with a resistance which astonished the Spaniards. The church bells rang the alarm throughout the city, and the whole population swarmed to the walls. The besiegers were encountered not only with sword and musket, but with every implement which the burghers' hands could find. Heavy stones, boiling oil, live coals, were hurled upon the heads of the soldiers; hoops, smeared with pitch and set on fire, were dexterously thrown upon their necks. Even Spanish courage and Spanish ferocity were obliged to shrink before the steady determination of a whole population animated by a single spirit. Romero lost an eye in the conflict, many officers were killed and wounded, and three or four hundred soldiers left dead in the breach, while only three or four of the townsmen lost their lives. The signal of recal was reluctantly given, and the Spaniards abandoned the assault. Don Frederic was now aware that Harlem would not fall at his feet at the first sound of his trumpet. It was obvious that a siege must precede the massacre. He gave orders therefore that the ravelin should be undermined, and doubted not that, with a few days' delay, the place would be in his hands.

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Meantime, the Prince of Orange, from his head-quarters at Sassenheim, on the southern extremity of the mere, made a fresh effort to throw succor into the place. Two thousand men, with seven field-pieces, and many wagon-loads of munitions, were sent forward under Batenburg. This officer had replaced De la Marck, whom the Prince had at last deprived of his commission. The reckless and unprincipled freebooter was no longer to serve a cause which was more sullied by his barbarity than it could be advanced by his desperate valor. Batenburg's expedition was, however, not more successful than the one made by his predecessor. The troops, after reaching the vicinity of the city, lost their way in the thick mists, which almost perpetually enveloped the scene. Cannons were fired, fog-bells were rung, and beacon fires were lighted on the ramparts, but the party was irretrievably lost. The Spaniards fell upon them before they could find their way to the city. Many were put to the sword, others made their escape in different directions; a very few succeeded in entering Harlem. Batenburg brought off a remnant of the forces, but all the provisions so much needed were lost, and the little army entirely destroyed.

De Koning, the second in command, was among the prisoners. The Spaniards cut off his head and threw it over the walls into the city, with this inscription: "This is the head of Captain de Koning, who is on his way with reinforcements for the good city of Harlem." The citizens retorted with a practical jest, which was still more barbarous. They cut off the heads of eleven prisoners and put them into a barrel, which they threw into the Spanish camp. A Label upon the barrel contained these words: "Deliver these ten heads to Duke Alva in payment of his tenpenny tax, with one additional head for interest." With such ghastly merriment did besieged and besiegers vary the monotonous horror of that winter's siege. As the sallies and skirmishes were of daily occurrence, there was a constant supply of prisoners, upon whom both parties might exercise their ingenuity, so that the gallows in camp or city was perpetually garnished.

Since the assault of the 21st December, Don Frederic had been making his subterranean attack by regular approaches. As fast, however, as the Spaniards mined, the citizens countermined. Spaniard and Netherlander met daily in deadly combat within the bowels of the earth. Desperate and frequent were the struggles within gangways so narrow that nothing but daggers could be used, so obscure that the dim lanterns hardly lighted the death-stroke. They seemed the conflicts, not of men but of evil spirits. Nor were these hand-to-hand battles all. A shower of heads, limbs, mutilated trunks, the mangled remains of hundreds of human beings, often spouted from the earth as if from an invisible volcano. The mines were sprung with unexampled frequency and determination. Still the Spaniards toiled on with undiminished zeal, and still the besieged, undismayed, delved below their works, and checked their advance by sword, and spear, and horrible explosions.



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The Prince of Orange, meanwhile, encouraged the citizens to persevere, by frequent promises of assistance. His letters, written on extremely small bits of paper; were sent into the town by carrier pigeons. On the 28th of January he despatched a considerable supply of the two necessaries, powder and bread, on one hundred and seventy sledges across the Harlem Lake, together with four hundred veteran soldiers. The citizens continued to contest the approaches to the ravelin before the Cross-gate, but it had become obvious that they could not hold it long. Secretly, steadfastly, and swiftly they had, therefore, during the long wintry nights, been constructing a half moon of solid masonry on the inside of the same portal. Old men, feeble women, tender children, united with the able-bodied to accomplish this work, by which they hoped still to maintain themselves after the ravelin had fallen:

On the 31st of January, after two or three days' cannonade against the gates of the Cross and of Saint John, and the intervening curtains, Don Frederic ordered a midnight assault. The walls had been much shattered, part of the John's-gate was in ruins; the Spaniards mounted the breach in great numbers; the city was almost taken by surprise; while the Commander-in-chief, sure of victory, ordered the whole of his forces under arms to cut off the population who were to stream panic-struck from every issue. The attack was unexpected, but the forty or fifty sentinels defended the walls while they sounded the alarm. The tocsin bells tolled, and the citizens, whose sleep was not apt to be heavy during that perilous winter, soon manned the ramparts again. The daylight came upon them while the fierce struggle was still at its height. The besieged, as before, defended themselves with musket and rapier, with melted pitch, with firebrands, with clubs and stones. Meantime, after morning prayers in the Spanish camp, the trumpet for a general assault was sounded. A tremendous onset was made upon the gate of the Cross, and the ravelin was carried at last. The Spaniards poured into this fort, so long the object of their attack, expecting instantly to sweep into the city with sword and fire. As they mounted its wall they became for the first time aware of the new and stronger fortification which had been secretly constructed on the inner side. The reason why the ravelin had been at last conceded was revealed. The half moon, whose existence they had not suspected, rose before them bristling with cannon. A sharp fire was instantly opened upon the besiegers, while at the same instant the ravelin, which the citizens had undermined, blew up with a severe explosion, carrying into the air all the soldiers who had just entered it so triumphantly. This was the turning point. The retreat was sounded, and the Spaniards fled to their camp, leaving at least three hundred dead beneath the walls. Thus was a second assault, made by an overwhelming force and led by the most accomplished generals of Spain, signally and gloriously repelled by the plain burghers of Harlem.

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It became now almost evident that the city could be taken neither by regular approaches nor by sudden attack. It was therefore resolved that it should be reduced by famine. Still, as the winter wore on, the immense army without the walls were as great sufferers by that scourge as the population within. The soldiers fell in heaps before the diseases engendered by intense cold and insufficient food, for, as usual in such sieges, these deaths far outnumbered those inflicted by the enemy's hand. The sufferings inside the city necessarily increased day by day, the whole population being put on a strict allowance of food. Their supplies were daily diminishing, and with the approach of the spring and the thawing of the ice on the lake, there was danger that they would be entirely cut off. If the possession of the water were lost, they must yield or starve; and they doubted whether the Prince would be able to organize a fleet. The gaunt spectre of Famine already rose before them with a menace which could not be misunderstood. In their misery they longed for the assaults of the Spaniards, that they might look in the face of a less formidable foe. They paraded the ramparts daily, with drums beating, colors flying, taunting the besiegers to renewed attempts. To inflame the religious animosity of their antagonists, they attired themselves in the splendid, gold-embroidered vestments of the priests, which they took from the churches, and moved about in mock procession, bearing aloft images bedizened in ecclesiastical finery, relics, and other symbols, sacred in Catholic eyes, which they afterwards hurled from the ramparts, or broke, with derisive shouts, into a thousand fragments.

It was, however, at that season earnestly debated by the enemy whether or not to raise the siege. Don Frederic was clearly of opinion that enough had been done for the honor of the Spanish arms. He was wearied with seeing his men perish helplessly around him, and considered the prize too paltry for the lives it must cost. His father thought differently. Perhaps he recalled the siege of Metz, and the unceasing regret with which, as he believed, his imperial master had remembered the advice received from him. At any rate the Duke now sent back Don Bernardino de Mendoza, whom Don Frederic had despatched to Nimwegen, soliciting his father's permission to raise the siege, with this reply: "Tell Don Frederic," said Alva, "that if he be not decided to continue the siege till the town be taken, I shall no longer consider him my son, whatever my opinion may formerly have been. Should he fall in the siege, I will myself take the field to maintain it, and when we have both perished, the Duchess, my wife, shall come from Spain to do the same."



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Such language was unequivocal, and hostilities were resumed as fiercely as before. The besieged welcomed them with rapture, and, as usual, made daily the most desperate sallies. In one outbreak the Harleimers, under cover of a thick fog, marched up to the enemy's chief battery, and attempted to spike the guns before his face. They were all slain at the cannon's mouth, whither patriotism, not vainglory, had led them, and lay dead around the battery, with their hammers and spikes in their hands. The same spirit was daily manifested. As the spring advanced; the kine went daily out of the gates to their peaceful pasture, notwithstanding, all the turmoil within and around; nor was it possible for the Spaniards to capture a single one of these creatures, without paying at least a dozen soldiers as its price. "These citizens," wrote Don Frederic, "do as much as the best soldiers in the world could do."

The frost broke up by the end of February. Count Bossu, who had been building a fleet of small vessels in Amsterdam, soon afterwards succeeded in entering the lake with a few gun-boats, through a breach which he had made in the Overtoom, about half a league from that city. The possession of the lake was already imperilled. The Prince, however, had not been idle, and he, too, was soon ready to send his flotilla to the mere. At the same time, the city of Amsterdam was in almost as hazardous a position as Harlem. As the one on the lake, so did the other depend upon its dyke for its supplies. Should that great artificial road which led to Muyden and Utrecht be cut asunder, Amsterdam might be starved as soon as Harlem. "Since I came into the world," wrote Alva, "I have never, been in such anxiety. If they should succeed in cutting off the communication along the dykes, we should have to raise the siege of Harlem, to surrender, hands crossed, or to starve." Orange was fully aware of the position of both places, but he was, as usual, sadly deficient in men and means. He wrote imploringly to his friends in England, in France, in Germany. He urged his brother Louis to bring a few soldiers, if it were humanly possible. "The whole country longs for you," he wrote to Louis, "as if you were the archangel Gabriel."

The Prince, however, did all that it was possible for man, so hampered, to do. He was himself, while anxiously writing, hoping, and waiting for supplies of troops from Germany or France, doing his best with such volunteers as he could raise. He was still established at Sassenheim, on the south of the city, while Sonoy with his slender forces was encamped on the north. He now sent that general with as large a party as he could muster to attack the Diemerdyk. His men entrenched themselves as strongly as they could between the Diemer and the Y, at the same time opening the sluices and breaking through the dyke. During the absence of their commander, who had gone to Edam for reinforcements, they were attacked by a large force from Amsterdam. A fierce amphibious contest took place, partly in boats, partly on the slippery causeway, partly in the water, resembling in character the frequent combats between the ancient Batavians and Romans during the wars of Civilis. The patriots were eventually overpowered.

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Sonoy, who was on his way to their rescue, was frustrated in his design by the unexpected faint-heartedness of the volunteers whom he had enlisted at Edam. Braving a thousand perils, he advanced, almost unattended, in his little vessel, but only to witness the overthrow and expulsion of his band. It was too late for him singly to attempt to rally the retreating troops. They had fought well, but had been forced to yield before superior numbers, one individual of the little army having performed prodigies of valor. John Haring, of Horn, had planted himself entirely alone upon the dyke, where it was so narrow between the Y on the one side and the Diemer Lake on the other, that two men could hardly stand abreast. Here, armed with sword and shield, he had actually opposed and held in check one thousand of the enemy, during a period long enough to enable his own men, if they, had been willing, to rally, and effectively to repel the attack. It was too late, the battle was too far lost to be restored; but still the brave soldier held the post, till, by his devotion, he had enabled all those of his compatriots who still remained in the entrenchments to make good their retreat. He then plunged into the sea, and, untouched by spear or bullet, effected his escape. Had he been a Greek or a Roman, an Horatius or a Chabrias, his name would have been famous in history—his statue erected in the market-place; for the bold Dutchman on his dyke had manifested as much valor in a sacred cause as the most classic heroes of antiquity.

This unsuccessful attempt to cut off the communication between Amsterdam and the country strengthened the hopes of Alva. Several hundreds of the patriots were killed or captured, and among the slain was Antony Oliver, the painter, through whose agency Louis of Nassau had been introduced into *Mons*. His head was cut off by two ensigns in Alva's service, who received the price which had been set upon it of two thousand caroli. It was then labelled with its owner's name, and thrown into the city of Harlem. At the same time a new gibbet was erected in the Spanish camp before the city, in a conspicuous situation, upon which all the prisoners were hanged, some by the neck, some by the heels, in full view of their countrymen. As usual, this especial act of cruelty excited the emulation of the citizens. Two of the old board of magistrates, belonging to the Spanish party, were still imprisoned at Harlem; together with seven other persons, among whom was a priest and a boy of twelve years. They were now condemned to the gallows. The wife of one of the ex-burgomasters and his daughter, who was a beguin, went by his side as he was led to execution, piously exhorting him to sustain with courage the execrations of the populace and his ignominious doom. The rabble, irritated by such boldness, were not satisfied with wreaking their vengeance on the principal victims, but after the execution had taken place they hunted the wife and daughter into

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the water, where they both perished. It is right to record these instances of cruelty, sometimes perpetrated by the patriots as well as by their oppressors—a cruelty rendered almost inevitable by the incredible barbarity of the foreign invader. It was a war of wolfish malignity. In the words of Mendoza, every man within and without Harlem “seemed inspired by a spirit of special and personal vengeance.” The innocent blood poured out in Mechlin, Zutphen, Naarden, and upon a thousand scaffolds, had been crying too long from the ground. The Hollanders must have been more or less than men not to be sometimes betrayed into acts which justice and reason must denounce. [No! It was as evil for one side as the other. D.W.]

The singular mood which has been recorded of a high-spirited officer of the garrison, Captain Corey, illustrated the horror with which such scenes of carnage were regarded by noble natures. Of a gentle disposition originally, but inflamed almost to insanity by a contemplation of Spanish cruelty, he had taken up the profession of arms, to which he had a natural repugnance. Brave to recklessness, he led his men on every daring outbreak, on every perilous midnight adventure. Armed only with his rapier, without defensive armor, he was ever found where the battle raged most fiercely, and numerous were the victims who fell before his sword. On returning, however, from such excursions, he invariably shut himself in his quarters, took to his bed, and lay for days, sick with remorse, and bitterly lamenting all that bloodshed in which he had so deeply participated, and which a cruel fate seemed to render necessary. As the gentle mood subsided, his frenzy would return, and again he would rush to the field, to seek new havoc and fresh victims for his rage.

The combats before the walls were of almost daily occurrence. On the 25th March, one thousand of the besieged made a brilliant sally, drove in all the outposts of the enemy, burned three hundred tents, and captured seven cannon, nine standards, and many wagon-loads of provisions, all which they succeeded in bringing with them into the city. —Having thus reinforced themselves, in a manner not often practised by the citizens of a beleaguered town, in the very face of thirty thousand veterans—having killed eight hundred of the enemy, which was nearly one for every man engaged, while they lost but four of their own party—the Harleimers, on their return, erected a trophy of funereal but exulting aspect. A mound of earth was constructed upon the ramparts, in the form of a colossal grave, in full view of the enemy’s camp, and upon it were planted the cannon and standards so gallantly won in the skirmish, with the taunting inscription floating from the centre of the mound “Harlem is the graveyard of the Spaniards.”

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Such were the characteristics of this famous siege during the winter and early spring. Alva might well write to his sovereign, that “it was a war such as never before was seen or heard of in any land on earth.” Yet the Duke had known near sixty years of warfare. He informed Philip that “never was a place defended with such skill and bravery as Harlem, either by rebels or by men fighting for their lawful Prince.” Certainly his son had discovered his mistake in asserting that the city would yield in a week; while the father, after nearly six years’ experience, had found this “people of butter” less malleable than even those “iron people” whom he boasted of having tamed. It was seen that neither the skies of Greece or Italy, nor the sublime scenery of Switzerland, were necessary to arouse the spirit of defiance to foreign oppression—a spirit which beat as proudly among the wintry mists and the level meadows of Holland as it had ever done under sunnier atmospheres and in more romantic lands.

Mendoza had accomplished his mission to Spain, and had returned with supplies of money within six weeks from the date of his departure. Owing to his representations and Alva’s entreaties, Philip had, moreover, ordered Requesens, governor of Milan, to send forward to the Netherlands three veteran Spanish regiments, which were now more required at Harlem than in Italy. While the land force had thus been strengthened, the fleet upon the lake had also been largely increased. The Prince of Orange had, on the other hand, provided more than a hundred sail of various descriptions, so that the whole surface of the mere was now alive with ships. Seafights and skirmishes took place almost daily, and it was obvious that the life and death struggle was now to be fought upon the water. So long as the Hollanders could hold or dispute the possession of the lake, it was still possible to succor Harlem from time to time. Should the Spaniards overcome the Prince’s fleet, the city must inevitably starve.

At last, on the 28th of May, a decisive engagement of the fleets took place. The vessels grappled with each other, and there was a long, fierce, hand-to-hand combat. Under Bossu were one hundred vessels; under Martin Brand, admiral of the patriot fleet, nearly one hundred and fifty, but of lesser dimensions. Batenhurg commanded the troops on board the Dutch vessels. After a protracted conflict, in which several thousands were killed, the victory was decided in favor of the Spaniards. Twenty-two of the Prince’s vessels being captured, and the rest totally routed, Bossu swept across the lake in triumph. The forts belonging to the patriots were immediately taken, and the Harleimers, with their friends, entirely excluded from the lake.

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This was the beginning of the end. Despair took possession of the city. The whole population had been long subsisting upon an allowance of a pound of bread to each man, and half-a-pound for each woman; but the bread was now exhausted, the famine had already begun, and with the loss of the lake starvation was close at their doors. They sent urgent entreaties to, the Prince to attempt something in their behalf. Three weeks more they assigned as the longest term during which they could possibly hold out. He sent them word by carrier pigeons to endure yet a little time, for he was assembling a force, and would still succeed in furnishing them with supplies. Meantime, through the month of June the sufferings of the inhabitants increased hourly. Ordinary food had long since vanished. The population now subsisted on linseed and rape-seed; as these supplies were exhausted they devoured cats, dogs, rats, and mice, and when at last these unclean animals had been all consumed, they boiled the hides of horses and oxen; they ate shoe-leather; they plucked the nettles and grass from the graveyards, and the weeds which grew between the stones of the pavement, that with such food they might still support life a little longer, till the promised succor should arrive. Men, women, and children fell dead by scores in the streets, perishing of pure starvation, and the survivors had hardly the heart or the strength to bury them out of their sight. They who yet lived seemed to flit like shadows to and fro, envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated by death.

Thus wore away the month of June. On the 1st of July the burghers consented to a parley. Deputies were sent to confer with the besiegers, but the negotiations were abruptly terminated, for no terms of compromise were admitted by Don Frederic. On the 3rd a tremendous cannonade was re-opened upon the city. One thousand and eight balls were discharged—the most which had ever been thrown in one day, since the commencement of the siege. The walls were severely shattered, but the assault was not ordered, because the besiegers were assured that it was physically impossible for the inhabitants to hold out many days longer. A last letter, written in blood, was now despatched to the Prince of Orange, stating the forlorn condition to which they were reduced. At the same time, with the derision of despair, they flung into the hostile camp the few loaves of bread which yet remained within the city walls. A day or two later, a second and third parley were held, with no more satisfactory result than had attended the first. A black flag was now hoisted on the cathedral tower, the signal of despair to friend and foe, but a pigeon soon afterwards flew into the town with a letter from the Prince, begging them to maintain themselves two days longer, because succor was approaching.

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The Prince had indeed been doing all which, under the circumstances, was possible. He assembled the citizens of Delft in the market-place, and announced his intention of marching in person to the relief of the city, in the face of the besieging army, if any troops could be obtained. Soldiers there were none; but there was the deepest sympathy for Harlem throughout its sister cities, Delft, Rotterdam, Gouda. A numerous mass of burghers, many of them persons of station, all people of respectability, volunteered to march to the rescue. The Prince highly disapproved of this miscellaneous army, whose steadfastness he could not trust. As a soldier, he knew that for such a momentous enterprise, enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience. Nevertheless, as no regular troops could be had, and as the emergency allowed no delay, he drew up a commission, appointing Paulus Buys to be governor during his absence, and provisional stadholder, should he fall in the expedition. Four thousand armed volunteers, with six hundred mounted troopers, under Carlo de Noot, had been assembled, and the Prince now placed himself at their head. There was, however, a universal cry of remonstrance from the magistracies and burghers of all the towns, and from the troops themselves, at this project. They would not consent that a life so precious, so indispensable to the existence of Holland, should be needlessly hazarded. It was important to succor Harlem, but the Prince was of more value than many cities. He at last reluctantly consented, therefore, to abandon the command of the expedition to Baron Batenburg, the less willingly from the want of confidence which he could not help feeling in the character of the forces. On the 8th of July, at dusk, the expedition set forth from Sassenheim. It numbered nearly five thousand men, who had with them four hundred wagon-loads of provisions and seven field-pieces. Among the volunteers, Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious in the history of the Republic; marched in the ranks, with his musket on his shoulder. Such was a sample of the spirit which pervaded the population of the province.

Batenburg came to a halt in the woods of Nordwyk, on the south aide of the city, where he remained till midnight. All seemed still in the enemy's camp. After prayers, he gave orders to push forward, hoping to steal through the lines of his sleeping adversaries and accomplish the relief by surprise. He was destined to be bitterly disappointed. His plans and his numbers were thoroughly known to the Spaniards, two doves, bearing letters which contained the details of the intended expedition, having been shot and brought into Don Frederic's camp.



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The citizens, it appeared, had broken through the curtain work on the side where Batenburg was expected, in order that a sally might be made in co-operation with the relieving force, as soon as it should appear. Signal fires had been agreed upon, by which the besieged were to be made aware of the approach of their friends. The Spanish Commander accordingly ordered a mass of green branches, pitch, and straw, to be lighted opposite to the gap in the city wall. Behind it he stationed five thousand picked troops. Five thousand more, with a force of cavalry, were placed in the neighbourhood of the downs, with orders to attack the patriot army on the left. Six regiments, under Romero, were ordered to move eastward, and assail their right. The dense mass of smoke concealed the beacon lights displayed by Batenburg from the observation of the townspeople, and hid the five thousand Spaniards from the advancing Hollanders. As Batenburg emerged from the wood, he found himself attacked by a force superior to his own, while a few minutes later he was entirely enveloped by overwhelming numbers. The whole Spanish army was, indeed; under arms, and had been expecting him for two days. The unfortunate citizens alone were ignorant of his arrival. The noise of the conflict they supposed to be a false alarm created by the Spaniards, to draw them into their camp; and they declined a challenge which they were in no condition to accept.

Batenburg was soon slain, and his troops utterly routed. The number killed was variously estimated at from six hundred to two and even three thousand. It is, at any rate, certain that the whole force was entirely destroyed or dispersed, and the attempt to relieve the city completely frustrated. The death of Batenburg was the less regretted, because he was accused, probably with great injustice, of having been intoxicated at the time of action, and therefore incapable of properly, conducting the enterprise entrusted to him.

The Spaniards now cut off the nose and ears of a prisoner and sent him into the city, to announce the news, while a few heads were also thrown over the walls to confirm the intelligence. When this decisive overthrow became known in Delft, there was even an outbreak of indignation against Orange. According to a statement of Alva, which, however, is to be received with great distrust, some of the populace wished to sack the Prince's house, and offered him personal indignities. Certainly, if these demonstrations were made, popular anger was never more senseless; but the tale rests entirely, upon a vague assertion of the Duke, and is entirely, at variance with every other contemporaneous account of these transactions. It had now become absolutely, necessary, however, for the heroic but wretched town to abandon itself to its fate. It was impossible to attempt anything more in its behalf. The lake and its forts were in the hands of the enemy, the best force which could be mustered to make head against the besieging army had been cut to pieces, and the Prince of Orange, with a heavy heart, now sent word that the burghers were to make the best terms they could with the enemy.

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The tidings of despair created a terrible commotion in the starving city. There was no hope either in submission or resistance. Massacre or starvation was the only alternative. But if there was no hope within the walls, without there was still a soldier's death. For a moment the garrison and the able-bodied citizens resolved to advance from the gates in a solid column, to cut their way through the enemy's camp, or to perish on the field. It was thought that the helpless and the infirm, who would alone be left in the city, might be treated with indulgence after the fighting men had all been slain. At any rate, by remaining the strong could neither protect nor comfort them. As soon, however, as this resolve was known, there was such wailing and outcry of women and children as pierced the hearts of the soldiers and burghers, and caused them to forego the project. They felt that it was cowardly not to die in their presence. It was then determined to form all the females, the sick, the aged, and the children, into a square, to surround them with all the able-bodied men who still remained, and thus arrayed to fight their way forth from the gates, and to conquer by the strength of despair, or at least to perish all together.

These desperate projects, which the besieged were thought quite capable of executing, were soon known in the Spanish camp. Don Frederic felt, after what he had witnessed in the past seven months, that there was nothing which the Harleimers could not do or dare. He feared lest they should set fire to their city, and consume their houses, themselves, and their children, to ashes together; and he was unwilling that the fruits of his victory, purchased at such a vast expense, should be snatched from his hand as he was about to gather them. A letter was accordingly, by his order, sent to the magistracy and leading citizens, in the name of Count Overstein, commander of the German forces in the besieging army. This despatch invited a surrender at discretion, but contained the solemn assurance that no punishment should be inflicted except upon those who, in the judgment of the citizens themselves, had deserved it, and promised ample forgiveness if the town should submit without further delay. At the moment of sending this letter, Don Frederic was in possession of strict orders from his father not to leave a man alive of the garrison, excepting only the Germans, and to execute besides a large number of the burghers. These commands he dared not disobey,—even if he had felt any inclination to do so. In consequence of the semi-official letter of Overstein, however, the city formally surrendered at discretion on the 12th July.



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The great bell was tolled, and orders were issued that all arms in the possession of the garrison or the inhabitants should be brought to the town-house. The men were then ordered to assemble in the cloister of Zyl, the women in the cathedral. On the same day, Don Frederic, accompanied by Count Bossu and a numerous staff, rode into the city. The scene which met his view might have moved a heart of stone. Everywhere was evidence of the misery which had been so bravely endured during that seven months' siege. The smouldering ruins of houses, which had been set on fire by balls, the shattered fortifications, the felled trunks of trees, upturned pavements, broken images and other materials for repairing gaps made by the daily cannonade, strewn around in all directions, the skeletons of unclean animals from which the flesh had been gnawed, the unburied bodies of men and women who had fallen dead in the public thoroughfares—more than all, the gaunt and emaciated forms of those who still survived, the ghosts of their former selves, all might have induced at least a doubt whether the suffering inflicted already were not a sufficient punishment, even for crimes so deep as heresy and schism. But this was far from being the sentiment of Don Frederic. He seemed to read defiance as well as despair in the sunken eyes which glared upon him as he entered the place, and he took no thought of the pledge which he had informally but sacredly given.

All the officers of the garrison were at once arrested. Some of them had anticipated the sentence of their conqueror by a voluntary death. Captain Bordet, a French officer of distinction, like Brutus, compelled his servant to hold the sword upon which he fell, rather than yield himself alive to the vengeance of the Spaniards. Traits of generosity were not wanting. Instead of Peter Hasselaer, a young officer who had displayed remarkable bravery throughout the siege, the Spaniards by mistake arrested his cousin Nicholas. The prisoner was suffering himself to be led away to the inevitable scaffold without remonstrance, when Peter Hasselaer pushed his way violently through the ranks of the captors. "If you want Ensign Hasselaer, I am the man. Let this innocent person depart," he cried. Before the sun set his head had fallen. All the officers were taken to the House of Kleef, where they were immediately executed.—Captain Ripperda, who had so heroically rebuked the craven conduct of the magistracy, whose eloquence had inflamed the soldiers and citizens to resistance, and whose skill and courage had sustained the siege so long, was among the first to suffer. A natural son of Cardinal Granvelle, who could have easily saved his life by proclaiming a parentage which he loathed, and Lancelot Brederode, an illegitimate scion of that ancient house, were also among these earliest victims.

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The next day Alva came over to the camp. He rode about the place, examining the condition of the fortifications from the outside, but returned to Amsterdam without having entered the city. On the following morning the massacre commenced. The plunder had been commuted for two hundred and forty thousand guilders, which the citizens bound themselves to pay in four instalments; but murder was an indispensable accompaniment of victory, and admitted of no compromise. Moreover, Alva had already expressed the determination to effect a general massacre upon this occasion. The garrison, during the siege, had been reduced from four thousand to eighteen hundred. Of these the Germans, six hundred in number, were, by Alva's order, dismissed, on a pledge to serve no more against the King. All the rest of the garrison were immediately butchered, with at least as many citizens. Drummers went about the city daily, proclaiming that all who harbored persons having, at any former period, been fugitives, were immediately to give them up, on pain of being instantly hanged themselves in their own doors. Upon these refugees and upon the soldiery fell the brunt of the slaughter; although, from day to day, reasons were perpetually discovered for putting to death every individual at all distinguished by service, station, wealth, or liberal principles; for the carnage could not be accomplished at once, but, with all the industry and heartiness employed, was necessarily protracted through several days. Five executioners, with their attendants, were kept constantly at work; and when at last they were exhausted with fatigue, or perhaps sickened with horror, three hundred wretches were tied two and two, back to back, and drowned in the Harlem Lake.

At last, after twenty-three hundred human creatures had been murdered in cold blood, within a city where so many thousands had previously perished by violent or by lingering deaths; the blasphemous farce of a pardon was enacted. Fifty-seven of the most prominent burghers of the place were, however, excepted from the act of amnesty, and taken into custody as security for the future good conduct of the other citizens. Of these hostages some were soon executed, some died in prison, and all would have been eventually sacrificed, had not the naval defeat of Bossu soon afterwards enabled the Prince of Orange to rescue the remaining prisoners. Ten thousand two hundred and fifty-six shots had been discharged against the walls during the siege. Twelve thousand of the besieging army had died of wounds or disease, during the seven months and two days, between the investment and the surrender. In the earlier part of August, after the executions had been satisfactorily accomplished, Don Frederic made his triumphal entry, and the first chapter in the invasion of Holland was closed. Such was the memorable siege of Harlem, an event in which we are called upon to wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery.

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The Spaniards celebrated a victory, while in Utrecht they made an effigy of the Prince of Orange, which they carried about in procession, broke upon the wheel, and burned. It was, however, obvious, that if the reduction of Harlem were a triumph, it was one which the conquerors might well exchange for a defeat. At any rate, it was certain that the Spanish empire was not strong enough to sustain many more such victories. If it had required thirty thousand choice troops, among which were three regiments called by Alva respectively, the “Invincibles,” the “Immortals,” and the “None-such,” to conquer the weakest city of Holland in seven months, and with the loss of twelve thousand men; how many men, how long a time, and how many deaths would it require to reduce the rest of that little province? For, as the sack of Naarden had produced the contrary effect from the one intended, inflaming rather than subduing the spirit of Dutch resistance, so the long and glorious defence of Harlem, notwithstanding its tragical termination, had only served to strain to the highest pitch the hatred and patriotism of the other cities in the province. Even the treasures of the New World were inadequate to pay for the conquest of that little sand-bank. Within five years, twenty-five millions of florins had been sent from Spain for war expenses in the Netherlands.—Yet, this amount, with the addition of large sums annually derived from confiscations, of five millions, at which the proceeds of the hundredth penny was estimated, and the two millions yearly, for which the tenth and twentieth pence had been compounded, was insufficient to save the treasury from beggary and the unpaid troops from mutiny.

Nevertheless, for the moment the joy created was intense. Philip was lying dangerously ill at the wood of Segovia, when the happy tidings of the reduction of Harlem, with its accompanying butchery, arrived. The account of all this misery, minutely detailed to him by Alva, acted like magic. The blood of twenty-three hundred of his fellow-creatures—coldly murdered, by his orders, in a single city—proved for the sanguinary monarch the elixir of life: he drank and was refreshed. “The principal medicine which has cured his Majesty,” wrote Secretary Cayas from Madrid to Alva, “is the joy caused to him by the good news which you have communicated of the surrender of Harlem.” In the height of his exultation, the King forgot how much dissatisfaction he had recently felt with the progress of events in the Netherlands; how much treasure had been annually expended with an insufficient result. “Knowing your necessity,” continued Cayas, “his Majesty instantly sent for Doctor Velasco, and ordered him to provide you with funds, if he had to descend into the earth to dig for it.” While such was the exultation of the Spaniards, the Prince of Orange was neither dismayed nor despondent. As usual, he trusted to a higher power than man. “I had hoped to send you better news,” he wrote, to Count

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Louis, "nevertheless, since it has otherwise pleased the good God, we must conform ourselves to His divine will. I take the same God to witness that I have done everything according to my means, which was possible, to succor the city." A few days later, writing in the same spirit, he informed his brother that the Zealanders had succeeded in capturing the castle of Rammekens, on the isle of Walcheren. "I hope," he said, "that this will reduce the pride of our enemies, who, after the surrender of Harlem, have thought that they were about to swallow us alive. I assure myself, however, that they will find a very different piece of work from the one which they expect."

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Enthusiasm could not supply the place of experience  
Envyng those whose sufferings had already been terminated  
Leave not a single man alive in the city, and to burn every house  
Not strong enough to sustain many more such victories  
Oldenbarneveld; afterwards so illustrious  
Sent them word by carrier pigeons  
Three hundred fighting women  
Tyranny, ever young and ever old, constantly reproducing herself  
Wonder equally at human capacity to inflict and to endure misery

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