

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 22: 1574-76 eBook

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 22: 1574-76 by John Lothrop Motley

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MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 24

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1574-1576

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

1574-1576 [Chapter III.]

Latter days of the Blood Council—Informal and insincere negotiations for peace—Characteristics of the negotiators and of their diplomatic correspondence—Dr. Junius—Secret conferences between Dr. Leoninus and Orange—Steadfastness of the Prince—Changes in the internal government of the northern provinces—Generosity and increasing power of the municipalities—Incipient jealousy in regard to Orange rebuked—His offer of resignation refused by the Estates—His elevation to almost unlimited power—Renewed mediation of Maximilian—Views and positions of the parties—Advice of Orange—Opening of negotiations at Breda—Propositions and counter-propositions—Adroitness of the plenipotentiaries on both sides—Insincere diplomacy and unsatisfactory results—Union of Holland and Zeeland under the Prince of Orange—Act defining his powers—Charlotte de Bourbon—Character, fortunes, and fate of Anna of Saxony—Marriage of Orange with Mademoiselle de Bourbon—Indignation

thereby excited—Horrible tortures inflicted upon Papists by Sonoy in North Holland—Oudewater and Schoonoven taken by Hierges—The isles of Zealand—A submarine expedition projected—Details of the adventure—Its entire success—Death of Chiappin Vitelli—Deliberations in Holland and Zeeland concerning the renunciation of Philip's authority—Declaration at Delft—Doubts as to which of the Great Powers the sovereignty should be offered—Secret international relations—Mission to England—Unsatisfactory negotiations with Elizabeth—Position of the Grand Commander—Siege of Zieriekzee—Generosity of Count John—Desperate project of the Prince—Death and character of Requesens.

The Council of Troubles, or, as it will be for ever denominated in history, the Council of Blood, still existed, although the Grand Commander, upon his arrival in the Netherlands, had advised his sovereign to consent to the immediate abolition of so odious an institution. Philip accepting the advice of his governor and his cabinet, had accordingly authorized him by a letter of the 10th of March, 1574, to take that step if he continued to believe it advisable.

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Requesens had made use of this permission to extort money from the obedient portion of the provinces. An assembly of deputies was held at Brussels on the 7th of June, 1574, and there was a tedious interchange of protocols, reports, and remonstrances. The estates, not satisfied with the extinction of a tribunal which had at last worn itself out by its own violence, and had become inactive through lack of victims, insisted on greater concessions. They demanded the departure of the Spanish troops, the establishment of a council of Netherlanders in Spain for Netherland affairs, the restoration to offices in the provinces of natives and natives only; for these drawers of documents thought it possible, at that epoch, to recover by pedantry what their brethren of Holland and Zealand were maintaining with the sword. It was not the moment for historical disquisition, citations from Solomon, nor chopping of logic; yet with such lucubrations were reams of paper filled, and days and weeks occupied. The result was what might have been expected. The Grand Commander obtained but little money; the estates obtained none of their demands; and the Blood Council remained, as it were, suspended in mid-air. It continued to transact business at intervals during the administration of Requesens, and at last, after nine years of existence, was destroyed by the violent imprisonment of the Council of State at Brussels. This event, however, belongs to a subsequent page of this history.

Noircarmes had argued, from the tenor of Saint Aldegonde's letters, that the Prince would be ready to accept his pardon upon almost any terms. Noircarmes was now dead, but Saint Aldegonde still remained in prison, very anxious for his release, and as well disposed as ever to render services in any secret negotiation. It will be recollected that, at the capitulation of Middelburg, it had been distinctly stipulated by the Prince that Colonel Mondragon should at once effect the liberation of Saint Aldegonde, with certain other prisoners, or himself return into confinement. He had done neither the one nor the other. The patriots still languished in prison, some of them being subjected to exceedingly harsh treatment, but Mondragon, although repeatedly summoned as an officer and a gentleman, by the Prince, to return to captivity, had been forbidden by the Grand Commander to redeem his pledge.

Saint Aldegonde was now released from prison upon parole, and despatched on a secret mission to the Prince and estates. As before, he was instructed that two points were to be left untouched—the authority of the King and the question of religion. Nothing could be more preposterous than to commence a negotiation from which the two important points were thus carefully eliminated. The King's authority and the question of religion covered the whole ground upon which the Spaniards and the Hollanders had been battling for six years, and were destined to battle for three-quarters of a century longer.

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Yet, although other affairs might be discussed, those two points were to be reserved for the more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder. The result of negotiations upon such a basis was easily to be foreseen. Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained. The Prince assured his friend, as he had done secret agents previously sent to him, that he was himself ready to leave the land, if by so doing he could confer upon it the blessing of peace; but that all hopes of reaching a reasonable conclusion from the premises established was futile. The envoy treated also with the estates, and received from them in return an elaborate report, which was addressed immediately to the King. The style of this paper was bold and blunt, its substance bitter and indigestible. It informed Philip what he had heard often enough before, that the Spaniards must go and the exiles come back, the inquisition be abolished and the ancient privileges restored, the Roman Catholic religion renounce its supremacy, and the Reformed religion receive permission to exist unmolested, before he could call himself master of that little hook of sand in the North Sea. With this paper, which was entrusted to Saint Aldegonde, by him to be delivered to the Grand Commander, who was, after reading it, to forward it to its destination, the negotiator returned to his prison. Thence he did not emerge again till the course of events released him, upon the 15th of October, 1574.

This report was far from agreeable to the Governor, and it became the object of a fresh correspondence between his confidential agent, Champagny, and the learned and astute Junius de Jonge, representative of the Prince of Orange and Governor of Yeere. The communication of De Jonge consisted of a brief note and a long discourse. The note was sharp and stinging, the discourse elaborate and somewhat pedantic. Unnecessarily historical and unmercifully extended, it was yet bold, bitter, and eloquent: The presence of foreigners was proved to have been, from the beginning of Philip's reign, the curse of the country. Doctor Sonnius, with his batch of bishops, had sowed the seed of the first disorder. A prince, ruling in the Netherlands, had no right to turn a deaf ear to the petitions of his subjects. If he did so, the Hollanders would tell him, as the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian, that the potentate who had no time to attend to the interests of his subjects, had not leisure enough to be a sovereign. While Holland refused to bow its neck to the Inquisition, the King of Spain dreaded the thunder and lightning of the Pope. The Hollanders would, with pleasure, emancipate Philip from his own thralldom, but it was absurd that he, who was himself a slave to another potentate, should affect unlimited control over a free people. It was Philip's councillors, not the Hollanders, who were his real enemies; for it was they who held him in the subjection by which his power was neutralized and his crown degraded.

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It may be supposed that many long pages, conceived in this spirit and expressed with great vigor, would hardly smooth the way for the more official negotiations which were soon to take place, yet Doctor Junius fairly and faithfully represented the sentiment of his nation.

Towards the close of the year, Doctor Elbertus Leoninus, professor of Louvain, together with Hugo Bonte, ex-pensionary of Middelburg, was commissioned by the Grand Commander to treat secretly with the Prince. He was, however, not found very tractable when the commissioners opened the subject of his own pardon and reconciliation with the King, and he absolutely refused to treat at all except with the cooperation of the estates. He, moreover, objected to the use of the word “pardon” on the ground that he had never done anything requiring his Majesty’s forgiveness. If adversity should visit him, he cared but little for it; he had lived long enough, he said, and should die with some glory, regretting the disorders and oppressions which had taken place, but conscious that it had not been in his power to remedy them. When reminded by the commissioners of the King’s power, he replied that he knew his Majesty to be very mighty, but that there was a King more powerful still—even God the Creator, who, as he humbly hoped, was upon his Side.

At a subsequent interview with Hugo Bonte, the Prince declared it almost impossible for himself or the estates to hold any formal communication with the Spanish government, as such communications were not safe. No trust could be reposed either in safe conducts or hostages. Faith had been too often broken by the administration. The promise made by the Duchess of Parma to the nobles, and afterwards violated, the recent treachery of Mondragon, the return of three exchanged prisoners from the Hague, who died next day of poison administered before their release, the frequent attempts upon his own life—all such constantly recurring crimes made it doubtful, in the opinion of the Prince, whether it would be possible to find commissioners to treat with his Majesty’s government. All would fear assassination, afterwards to be disavowed by the King and pardoned by the Pope. After much conversation in this vein, the Prince gave the Spanish agents warning that he might eventually be obliged to seek the protection of some foreign power for the provinces. In this connection he made use of the memorable metaphor, so often repeated afterwards, that “the country was a beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors able and willing to accept her and defend her against the world.” As to the matter of religion, he said he was willing to leave it to be settled by the estates-general; but doubted whether anything short of entire liberty of worship would ever satisfy the people.

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Subsequently there were held other conferences, between the Prince and Doctor Leoninus, with a similar result, all attempts proving fruitless to induce him to abandon his position upon the subject of religion, or to accept a pardon on any terms save the departure of the foreign troops, the assembling of the estates-general, and entire freedom of religion. Even if he were willing to concede the religious question himself, he observed that it was idle to hope either from the estates or people a hand's-breadth of concession upon that point. Leoninus was subsequently admitted to a secret conference with the estates of Holland, where his representations were firmly met by the same arguments as those already used by the Prince.

These proceedings on the part of Saint Aldegonde, Champagne, Junius, and Elbertus Leoninus extended through the whole summer and autumn of 1574, and were not terminated until January of the following year.

Changes fast becoming necessary in the internal government of the provinces, were also undertaken during this year. Hitherto the Prince had exercised his power under the convenient fiction of the King's authority, systematically conducting the rebellion in the name of his Majesty, and as his Majesty's stadholder. By this process an immense power was lodged in his hands; nothing less, indeed, than the supreme executive and legislative functions of the land; while since the revolt had become, as it were, perpetual, ample but anomalous functions had been additionally thrust upon him by the estates and by the general voice of the people.

The two provinces, even while deprived of Harlem and Amsterdam, now raised two hundred and ten thousand florins monthly, whereas Alva had never been able to extract from Holland more than two hundred and seventy-one thousand florins yearly. They paid all rather than pay a tenth. In consequence of this liberality, the cities insensibly acquired a greater influence in the government. The coming contest between the centrifugal aristocratic principle, represented by these corporations, and the central popular authority of the stadholder, was already foreshadowed, but at first the estates were in perfect harmony with the Prince. They even urged upon him more power than he desired, and declined functions which he wished them to exercise. On the 7th of September, 1573, it had been formally proposed by the general council to confer a regular and unlimited dictatorship upon him, but in the course of a year from that time, the cities had begun to feel their increasing importance. Moreover, while growing more ambitious, they became less liberal.

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The Prince, dissatisfied with the conduct of the cities, brought the whole subject before an assembly of the estates of Holland on the 20th October, 1574. He stated the inconveniences produced by the anomalous condition of the government. He complained that the common people had often fallen into the error that the money raised for public purposes had been levied for his benefit only, and that they had, therefore, been less willing to contribute to the taxes. As the only remedy for these evils, he tendered his resignation of all the powers with which he was clothed, so that the estates might then take the government, which they could exercise without conflict or control. For himself, he had never desired power, except as a means of being useful to his country, and he did not offer his resignation from unwillingness to stand by the cause, but from a hearty desire to save it from disputes among its friends. He was ready, now as ever, to shed the last drop of his blood to maintain the freedom of the land.

This straightforward language produced an instantaneous effect. The estates knew that they were dealing with a man whose life was governed by lofty principles, and they felt that they were in danger of losing him through their own selfishness and low ambition. They were embarrassed, for they did not like to, relinquish the authority which they had begun to relish, nor to accept the resignation of a man who was indispensable. They felt that to give up William of Orange at that time was to accept the Spanish yoke for ever. At an assembly held at Delft on the 12th of November, 1574, they accordingly requested him "to continue in his blessed government, with the council established near him," and for this end, they formally offered to him, "under the name of Governor or Regent, "absolute power, authority, and sovereign command. In particular, they conferred on him the entire control of all the ships of war, hitherto reserved to the different cities, together with the right to dispose of all prizes and all monies raised for the support of fleets. They gave him also unlimited power over the domains; they agreed that all magistracies, militia bands, guilds, and communities, should make solemn oath to contribute taxes and to receive garrisons, exactly as the Prince, with his council, should ordain; but they made it a condition that the estates should be convened and consulted upon requests, impositions, and upon all changes in the governing body. It was also stipulated that the judges of the supreme court and of the exchequer, with other high officers, should be appointed by and with the consent of the estates.

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The Prince expressed himself willing to accept the government upon these terms. He, however, demanded an allowance of forty-five thousand florins monthly for the army expenses and other current outlays. Here, however, the estates refused their consent. In a mercantile spirit, unworthy the occasion and the man with whom they were dealing, they endeavoured to chaffer where they should have been only too willing to comply, and they attempted to reduce the reasonable demand of the Prince to thirty thousand florins. The Prince, who had poured out his own wealth so lavishly in the cause—who, together with his brothers, particularly the generous John of Nassau, had contributed all which they could raise by mortgage, sales of jewellery and furniture, and by extensive loans, subjecting themselves to constant embarrassment, and almost to penury, felt himself outraged by the paltriness of this conduct. He expressed his indignation, and denounced the niggardliness of the estates in the strongest language, and declared that he would rather leave the country for ever, with the maintenance of his own honor, than accept the government upon such disgraceful terms. The estates, disturbed by his vehemence, and struck with its justice, instantly, and without further deliberation, consented to his demand. They granted the forty-five thousand florins monthly, and the Prince assumed the government, thus remodelled.

During the autumn and early winter of the year 1574, the Emperor Maximilian had been actively exerting himself to bring about a pacification of the Netherlands. He was certainly sincere, for an excellent reason. “The Emperor maintains,” said Saint Goard, French ambassador at Madrid, “that if peace is not made with the Beggars, the Empire will depart from the house of Austria, and that such is the determination of the electors.” On the other hand, if Philip were not weary of the war, at any rate his means for carrying it on were diminishing daily. Requesens could raise no money in the Netherlands; his secretary wrote to Spain, that the exchequer was at its last gasp, and the cabinet of Madrid was at its wits’ end, and almost incapable of raising ways and means. The peace party was obtaining the upper hand; the fierce policy of Alva regarded with increasing disfavor. “The people here,” wrote Saint Goard from Madrid, “are completely desperate, whatever pains they take to put a good face on the matter. They desire most earnestly to treat, without losing their character.” It seemed, nevertheless, impossible for Philip to bend his neck. The hope of wearing the Imperial crown had alone made his bigotry feasible. To less potent influences it was adamant; and even now, with an impoverished exchequer, and, after seven years of unsuccessful warfare, his purpose was not less rigid than at first. “The Hollanders demand liberty of conscience,” said Saint Goard, “to which the King will never consent, or I am much mistaken.”

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As for Orange, he was sincerely in favor of peace—but not a dishonorable peace, in which should be renounced all the objects of the war. He was far from sanguine on the subject, for he read the signs of the times and the character of Philip too accurately to believe much more in the success of the present than in that of the past efforts of Maximilian. He was pleased that his brother-in-law, Count Schwartzburg, had been selected as the Emperor's agent in the affair, but expressed his doubts whether much good would come of the proposed negotiations. Remembering the many traps which in times past had been set by Philip and his father, he feared that the present transaction might likewise prove a snare. "We have not forgotten the words I 'ewig' and 'einig' in the treaty with Landgrave Philip," he wrote; "at the same time we beg to assure his Imperial Majesty that we desire nothing more than a good peace, tending to the glory of God, the service of the King of Spain, and the prosperity of his subjects."

This was his language to his brother, in a letter which was meant to be shown to the Emperor. In another, written on the same day, he explained himself with more clearness, and stated his distrust with more energy. There were no papists left, except a few ecclesiastics, he said; so much had the number of the Reformers been augmented, through the singular grace of God. It was out of the question to suppose, therefore, that a measure, dooming all who were not Catholics to exile, could be entertained. None would change their religion, and none would consent, voluntarily, to abandon for ever their homes, friends, and property. "Such a peace," he said, "would be poor and pitiable indeed."

These, then, were the sentiments of the party now about to negotiate. The mediator was anxious for a settlement, because the interests of the Imperial house required it. The King of Spain was desirous of peace, but was unwilling to concede a hair. The Prince of Orange was equally anxious to terminate the war, but was determined not to abandon the objects for which it had been undertaken. A favorable result, therefore, seemed hardly possible. A whole people claimed the liberty to stay at home and practice the Protestant religion, while their King asserted the right to banish them for ever, or to burn them if they remained. The parties seemed too far apart to be brought together by the most elastic compromise. The Prince addressed an earnest appeal to the assembly of Holland, then in session at Dort, reminding them that, although peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war, and entreating them, therefore, to conclude no treaty which should be inconsistent with the privileges of the country and their duty to God.

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It was now resolved that all the votes of the assembly should consist of five: one for the nobles and large cities of Holland, one for the estates of Zeeland, one for the small cities of Holland, one for the cities Bommel and Buren, and the fifth for William of Orange. The Prince thus effectually held in his hands three votes: his own, that of the small cities, which through his means only had been admitted to the assembly, and thirdly, that of Buren, the capital of his son's earldom. He thus exercised a controlling influence over the coming deliberations. The ten commissioners, who were appointed by the estates for the peace negotiations, were all his friends. Among them were Saint Aldegonde, Paul Buis, Charles Boisot, and Doctor Junius. The plenipotentiaries of the Spanish government were Leoninus, the Seigneur de Rassingham, Cornelius Suis, and Arnold Sasbout.

The proceedings were opened at Breda upon the 3rd of March, 1575. The royal commissioners took the initiative, requesting to be informed what complaints the estates had to make, and offering to remove, if possible, all grievances which they might be suffering. The states' commissioners replied that they desired nothing, in the first place, but an answer to the petition which they had already presented to the King. This was the paper placed in the hands of Saint Aldegonde during the informal negotiations of the preceding year. An answer was accordingly given, but couched in such vague and general language as to be quite without meaning. The estates then demanded a categorical reply to the two principal demands in the petition, namely, the departure of the foreign troops and the assembling of the states-general. They were asked what they understood by foreigners and by the assembly of states-general. They replied that by foreigners they meant those who were not natives, and particularly the Spaniards. By the estates-general they meant the same body before which, in 1555, Charles had resigned his sovereignty to Philip. The royal commissioners made an extremely unsatisfactory answer, concluding with a request that all cities, fortresses, and castles, then in the power of the estates, together with all their artillery and vessels of war, should be delivered to the King. The Roman Catholic worship, it was also distinctly stated, was to be re-established at once exclusively throughout the Netherlands; those of the Reformed religion receiving permission, for that time only, to convert their property into cash within a certain time, and to depart the country.

Orange and the estates made answer on the 21st March. It could not be called hard, they said, to require the withdrawal of the Spanish troops, for this had been granted in 1559, for less imperious reasons. The estates had, indeed, themselves made use of foreigners, but those foreigners had never been allowed to participate in the government. With regard to the assembly of the states-general, that body had always enjoyed

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the right of advising with the Sovereign on the condition of the country, and on general measures of government. Now it was only thought necessary to summon them, in order that they might give their consent to the King's "requests." Touching the delivery of cities and citadels, artillery and ships, the proposition was, pronounced to resemble that made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable—that the dogs should be delivered up, as a preliminary to a lasting peace. It was unreasonable to request the Hollanders to abandon their religion or their country. The reproach of heresy was unjust, for they still held to the Catholic Apostolic Church, wishing only to purify, it of its abuses. Moreover, it was certainly more cruel to expel a whole population than to dismiss three or four thousand Spaniards who for seven long years had been eating their fill at the expense of the provinces. It would be impossible for the exiles to dispose of their property, for all would, by the proposed measure, be sellers, while there would be no purchasers.

The royal plenipotentiaries, making answer to this communication upon the 1st of April, signified a willingness that the Spanish soldiers should depart, if the states would consent to disband their own foreign troops. They were likewise in favor of assembling the states-general, but could not permit any change in the religion of the country. His Majesty had sworn to maintain the true worship at the moment of assuming the sovereignty. The dissenters might, however, be allowed a period of six months in which to leave the land, and eight or ten years for the sale of their property. After the heretics had all departed, his Majesty did not doubt that trade and manufactures would flourish again, along with the old religion. As for the Spanish inquisition, there was not, and there never had been, any intention of establishing it in the Netherlands.

No doubt there was something specious in this paper. It appeared to contain considerable concessions. The Prince and estates had claimed the departure of the Spaniards. It was now promised that they should depart. They had demanded the assembling of the states-general. It was now promised that they should assemble. They had denounced the inquisition. It was now averred that the Spanish inquisition was not to be established.

Nevertheless, the commissioners of the Prince were not deceived by such artifices. There was no parity between the cases of the Spanish soldiery and of the troops in service of the estates. To assemble the estates-general was idle, if they were to be forbidden the settlement of the great question at issue. With regard to the Spanish inquisition, it mattered little whether the slaughter-house were called Spanish or Flemish, or simply the Blood-Council. It was, however, necessary for the states' commissioners to consider their reply very carefully; for the royal plenipotentiaries had placed themselves upon specious grounds. It was not enough to feel that the King's government was paltering with them; it was likewise necessary for the states' agents to impress this fact upon the people.

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There was a pause in the deliberations. Meantime, Count Schwartzburg, reluctantly accepting the conviction that the religious question was an insurmountable obstacle to a peace, left the provinces for Germany. The last propositions of the government plenipotentiaries had been discussed in the councils of the various cities, so that the reply of the Prince, and estates was delayed until the 1st of June. They admitted, in this communication, that the offer to restore ancient privileges had an agreeable sound; but regretted that if the whole population were to be banished, there would be but few to derive advantage from the restoration. If the King would put an end to religious persecution, he would find as much loyalty in the provinces as his forefathers had found. It was out of the question, they said, for the states to disarm and to deliver up their strong places, before the Spanish soldiery had retired, and before peace had been established. It was their wish to leave the question of religion, together with all other disputed matters, to the decision of the assembly. Were it possible, in the meantime, to devise any effectual method for restraining hostilities, it would gladly be embraced.

On the 8th of July, the royal commissioners inquired what guarantee the states would be willing to give, that the decision of the general assembly, whatever it might be, should be obeyed. The demand was answered by another, in which the King's agents were questioned as to their own guarantees. Hereupon it was stated that his Majesty would give his word and sign manual, together with the word and signature of the Emperor into the bargain. In exchange for these promises, the Prince and estates were expected to give their own oaths and seals, together with a number of hostages. Over and above this, they were requested to deliver up the cities of Brill and Enkhuizen, Flushing and Arnemuyde. The disparity of such guarantees was ridiculous. The royal word, even when strengthened by the imperial promise, and confirmed by the autographs of Philip and Maximilian, was not so solid a security, in the opinion of Netherlanders, as to outweigh four cities in Holland and Zealand, with all their population and wealth. To give collateral pledges and hostages upon one side, while the King offered none, was to assign a superiority to the royal word, over that of the Prince and the estates which there was no disposition to recognize. Moreover, it was very cogently urged that to give up the cities was to give as security for the contract, some of the principal contracting parties.

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This closed the negotiations. The provincial plenipotentiaries took their leave by a paper dated 13th July, 1575, which recapitulated the main incidents of the conference. They expressed their deep regret that his Majesty should insist so firmly on the banishment of the Reformers, for it was unjust to reserve the provinces to the sole use of a small number of Catholics. They lamented that the proposition which had been made, to refer the religious question to the estates, had neither been loyally accepted, nor candidly refused. They inferred, therefore, that the object of the royal government had, been to amuse the states, while time was thus gained for reducing the country into a slavery more abject than any which had yet existed. On the other hand, the royal commissioners as solemnly averred that the whole responsibility for the failure of the negotiations belonged to the, estates.

It was the general opinion in the insurgent provinces that the government had been insincere from the beginning, and had neither expected nor desired to conclude a peace. It is probable, however, that Philip was sincere; so far as it could be called sincerity to be willing to conclude a peace, if the provinces would abandon the main objects of the war. With his impoverished exchequer, and ruin threatening his whole empire, if this mortal combat should be continued many years longer, he could have no motive for further bloodshed, provided all heretics should consent to abandon the country. As usual, however, he left his agents in the dark as to his real intentions. Even Requesens was as much in doubt as to the King's secret purposes as Margaret of Parma had ever been in former times.

[Compare the remarks of Groen v. Prinst., Archives, etc., v 259- 262; Bor, viii. 606, 615; Meteren, v. 100; Hoofd, g. 410.—Count John of Nassau was distrustful and disdainful from the beginning. Against his brother's loyalty and the straightforward intentions of the estates, he felt that the whole force of the Macchiavelli system of policy would be brought to bear with great effect. He felt that the object of the King's party was to temporize, to confuse, and to deceive. He did not believe them capable of conceding the real object in dispute, but he feared lest they might obscure the judgment of the plain and well meaning people with whom they had to deal. Alluding to the constant attempts made to poison himself and his brother, he likens the pretended negotiations to Venetian drugs, by which eyesight, hearing, feeling, and intellect were destroyed. Under this pernicious influence, the luckless people would not perceive the fire burning around them, but would shrink at a rustling leaf. Not comprehending then the tendency of their own acts, they would "lay bare their own backs to the rod, and bring faggots for their own funeral pile."-Archives, etc., v. 131-137.]

Moreover, the Grand Commander and the government had,

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after all, made a great mistake in their diplomacy. The estates of Brabant, although strongly desirous that the Spanish troops should be withdrawn, were equally staunch for the maintenance of the Catholic religion, and many of the southern provinces entertained the same sentiments. Had the Governor, therefore, taken the states' commissioners at their word, and left the decision of the religious question to the general assembly, he might perhaps have found the vote in his favor. In this case, it is certain that the Prince of Orange and his party would have been placed in a very awkward position.

The internal government of the insurgent provinces had remained upon the footing which we have seen established in the autumn of 1574, but in the course of this summer (1575), however, the foundation was laid for the union of Holland and Zeeland, under the authority of Orange. The selfish principle of municipal aristocracy, which had tended to keep asunder these various groups of cities, was now repressed by the energy of the Prince and the strong determination of the people.

In April, 1575, certain articles of union between Holland and Zeeland were proposed, and six commissioners appointed to draw up an ordinance for the government of the two provinces. This ordinance was accepted in general assembly of both. It was in twenty articles. It declared that, during the war the Prince as sovereign, should have absolute power in all matters concerning the defence of the country. He was to appoint military officers, high and low, establish and remove garrisons, punish offenders against the laws of war. He was to regulate the expenditure of all money voted by the estates. He was to maintain the law, in the King's name, as Count of Holland, and to appoint all judicial officers upon nominations by the estates. He was, at the usual times, to appoint and renew the magistracies of the cities, according to their constitutions. He was to protect the exercise of the Evangelical Reformed religion, and to suppress the exercise of the Roman religion, without permitting, however, that search should be made into the creed of any person. A deliberative and executive council, by which the jealousy of the corporations had intended to hamper his government, did not come into more than nominal existence.

The articles of union having been agreed upon, the Prince, desiring an unfettered expression of the national will, wished the ordinance to be laid before the people in their primary assemblies. The estates, however, were opposed to this democratic proceeding. They represented that it had been customary to consult, after the city magistracies, only the captains of companies and the deans of guilds on matters of government. The Prince, yielding the point, the captains of companies and deans of guilds accordingly alone united with the aristocratic boards in ratifying the instrument by which his authority over the two united provinces was established. On the 4th of June this first union was solemnized.

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Upon the 11th of July, the Prince formally accepted the government. He, however, made an essential change in a very important clause of the ordinance. In place of the words, the "Roman religion," he insisted that the words, "religion at variance with the Gospel," should be substituted in the article by which he was enjoined to prohibit the exercise of such religion. This alteration rebuked the bigotry which had already grown out of the successful resistance to bigotry, and left the door open for a general religious toleration.

Early in this year the Prince had despatched Saint Aldegonde on a private mission to the Elector Palatine. During some of his visits to that potentate he had seen at Heidelberg the Princess Charlotte of Bourbon. That lady was daughter of the Due de Montpensier, the most ardent of the Catholic Princes of France, and the one who at the conferences of Bayonne had been most indignant at the Queen Dowager's hesitation to unite heartily with the, schemes of Alva and Philip for the extermination of the Huguenots. His daughter, a woman of beauty, intelligence, and virtue, forced before the canonical age to take the religious vows, had been placed in the convent of Joliarrs, of which she had become Abbess. Always secretly inclined to the Reformed religion, she had fled secretly from her cloister, in the year of horrors 1572, and had found refuge at the court of the Elector Palatine, after which step her father refused to receive her letters, to contribute a farthing to her support, or even to acknowledge her claims upon him by a single line or message of affection.

Under these circumstances the outcast princess, who had arrived at the years of maturity, might be considered her own mistress, and she was neither morally nor legally bound, when her hand was sought in marriage by the great champion of the Reformation, to ask the consent of a parent who loathed her religion and denied her existence. The legality of the divorce from Anne of Saxony had been settled by a full expression of the ecclesiastical authority which she most respected;

[Acte de, cinq Ministres du St. Evangile par lequel ils declarent le mariage du Prince d'Orange etre legitime.—Archives, *etc.*, v. 216-226.]

the facts upon which the divorce had been founded having been proved beyond peradventure.

Nothing, in truth, could well be more unfortunate in its results than the famous Saxon marriage, the arrangements for which had occasioned so much pondering to Philip, and so much diplomatic correspondence on the part of high personages in Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain. Certainly, it was of but little consequence to what church the unhappy Princess belonged, and they must be lightly versed in history or in human nature who can imagine these nuptials to have exercised any effect upon the religious or political sentiments of Orange. The Princess was of a stormy, ill-regulated

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nature; almost a lunatic from the beginning. The dislike which succeeded to her fantastic fondness for the Prince, as well as her general eccentricity, had soon become the talk of all the court at Brussels. She would pass week after week without emerging from her chamber, keeping the shutters closed and candles burning, day and night. She quarrelled violently, with Countess Egmont for precedence, so that the ludicrous contentions of the two ladies in antechambers and doorways were the theme and the amusement of society. Her insolence, not only in private but in public, towards her husband became intolerable: "I could not do otherwise than bear it with sadness and patience," said the Prince, with great magnanimity, "hoping that with age would come improvement." Nevertheless, upon one occasion, at a supper party, she had used such language in the presence of Count Horn and many other nobles, "that all wondered that he could endure the abusive terms which she applied to him."

When the clouds gathered about him, when he had become an exile and a wanderer, her reproaches and her violence increased. The sacrifice of their wealth, the mortgages and sales which he effected of his estates, plate, jewels, and furniture, to raise money for the struggling country, excited her bitter resentment. She separated herself from him by degrees, and at last abandoned him altogether. Her temper became violent to ferocity. She beat her servants with her hands and with clubs; she threatened the lives of herself, of her attendants, of Count John of Nassau, with knives and daggers, and indulged in habitual profanity and blasphemy, uttering frightful curses upon all around. Her original tendency to intemperance had so much increased, that she was often unable to stand on her feet. A bottle of wine, holding more than a quart, in the morning, and another in the evening, together with a pound of sugar, was her usual allowance. She addressed letters to Alva complaining that her husband had impoverished himself "in his good-for-nothing Beggar war," and begging the Duke to furnish her with a little ready money and with the means of arriving at the possession of her dower.

An illicit connexion with a certain John Rubens, an exiled magistrate of Antwerp, and father of the celebrated painter, completed the list of her delinquencies, and justified the marriage of the Prince with Charlotte de Bourbon. It was therefore determined by the Elector of Saxony and the Landgrave William to remove her from the custody of the Nassaus. This took place with infinite difficulty, at the close of the year 1575. Already, in 1572; Augustus had proposed to the Landgrave that she should be kept in solitary confinement, and that a minister should preach to her daily through the grated aperture by which her food was to be admitted. The Landgrave remonstrated at so inhuman a proposition, which was, however, carried into effect. The wretched Princess, now completely a lunatic, was imprisoned in the electoral palace, in a chamber where the windows were walled up and a small grating let into the upper part of the door. Through this wicket came her food, as well as the words of the holy man appointed to preach daily for her edification.

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Two years long, she endured this terrible punishment, and died mad, on the 18th of December, 1577. On the following day, she was buried in the electoral tomb at Meissen; a pompous procession of "school children, clergy, magistrates, nobility, and citizens" conducting her to that rest of which she could no longer be deprived by the cruelty of man nor her own violent temperament.

[It can certainly be considered no violation of the sanctity of archives to make these slender allusions to a tale, the main features of which have already been published, not only by *mm.* Groan v. Prinsterer and Bakhuyzen, in Holland, but by the Saxon Professor Bottiger, in Germany. It is impossible to understand the character and career of Orange, and his relations with Germany, without a complete view of the Saxon marriage. The extracts from the "geomantic letters" of Elector Augustus, however, given in Bottiger (*Hist. Taschenb.* 1836, p. 169-173), with their furious attacks upon the Prince and upon Charlotte of Bourbon, seem to us too obscene to be admitted, even in a note to these pages, and in a foreign language.]

So far, therefore, as the character of Mademoiselle de Bourbon and the legitimacy of her future offspring were concerned, she received ample guarantees. For the rest, the Prince, in a simple letter, informed her that he was already past his prime, having reached his forty-second year, and that his fortune was encumbered not only with settlements for his children by previous marriages, but by debts contracted in the cause of his oppressed country. A convention of doctors and bishops of France; summoned by the Duc de Montpensier, afterwards confirmed the opinion that the conventual vows of the Princess Charlotte had been conformable neither to the laws of France nor to the canons of the Trent Council. She was conducted to Brill by Saint Aldegonde, where she was received by her bridegroom, to whom she was united on the 12th of June. The wedding festival was held at Dort with much revelry and holiday making, "but without dancing."

In this connexion, no doubt the Prince consulted his inclination only. Eminently domestic in his habits, he required the relief of companionship at home to the exhausting affairs which made up his life abroad. For years he had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals, with man or woman; it was natural, therefore, that he should contract this marriage. It was equally natural that he should make many enemies by so impolitic a match. The Elector Palatine, who was in place of guardian to the bride, decidedly disapproved, although he was suspected of favoring the alliance. The Landgrave of Hesse for a time was furious; the Elector of Saxony absolutely delirious with rage. The Diet of the Empire was to be held within a few weeks at Frankfort, where it was very certain that the outraged and influential Elector would make his appearance, overflowing with anger,

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and determined to revenge upon the cause of the Netherland Reformation the injury which he had personally received. Even the wise, considerate, affectionate brother, John of Nassau, considered the marriage an act of madness. He did what he could, by argument and entreaty, to dissuade the Prince from its completion; although he afterwards voluntarily confessed that the Princess Charlotte had been deeply calumniated, and was an inestimable treasure to his brother. The French government made use of the circumstance to justify itself in a still further alienation from the cause of the Prince than it had hitherto manifested, but this was rather pretence than reality.

It was not in the nature of things, however, that the Saxon and Hessian indignation could be easily allayed. The Landgrave was extremely violent. "Truly, I cannot imagine," he wrote to the Elector of Saxony, "quo consilio that wiseacre of an Aldegonde, and whosoever else has been aiding and abetting, have undertaken this affair. Nam si pietatem respicias, it is to be feared that, considering she is a Frenchwoman, a nun, and moreover a fugitive nun, about whose chastity there has been considerable question, the Prince has got out of the frying-pan into the fire. Si formam it is not to be supposed that it was her beauty which charmed him, since, without doubt, he must be rather frightened than delighted, when he looks upon her. Si spem prolis, the Prince has certainly only too many heirs already, and ought to wish that he had neither wife nor children. Si amicitiam, it is not to be supposed, while her father expresses himself in such threatening language with regard to her, that there will be much cordiality of friendship on his part. Let them look to it, then, lest it fare with them no better than with the Admiral, at his Paris wedding; for those gentlemen can hardly forgive such injuries, sine mercurio et arsenico sublimato."

The Elector of Saxony was frantic with choler, and almost ludicrous in the vehemence of its expression. Count John was unceasing in his exhortations to his brother to respect the sensitiveness of these important personages, and to remember how much good and how much evil it was in their power to compass, with regard to himself and to the great cause of the Protestant religion. He reminded him, too, that the divorce had not been, and would not be considered impregnable as to form, and that much discomfort and detriment was likely to grow out of the whole proceeding, for himself and his family. The Prince, however, was immovable in his resolution, and from the whole tone of his correspondence and deportment it was obvious that his marriage was one rather of inclination than of policy. "I can assure you, my brother," he wrote to Count John, "that my character has always tended to this— to care neither for words nor menaces in any matter where I can act with a clear conscience, and without doing injury to my neighbour. Truly, if I had paid regard to the threats of princes, I should never have embarked in so many dangerous affairs, contrary to the will of the King, my master, in times past, and even to the advice of many of my relatives and friends."

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The evil consequences which had been foreseen were not slow to manifest themselves. There was much discussion of the Prince's marriage at the Diet of Frankfort, and there was even a proposition, formally to declare the Calvinists excluded in Germany from the benefits of the Peace of Passau. The Archduke Rudolph was soon afterwards elected King of the Romans and of Bohemia, although hitherto, according to the policy of the Prince of Orange, and in the expectation of benefit to the cause of the Reformation in Germany and the Netherlands, there has been a strong disposition to hold out hopes to Henry the Third, and to excite the fears of Maximilian.

While these important affairs, public and private, had been occurring in the south of Holland and in Germany, a very nefarious transaction had disgraced the cause of the patriot party in the northern quarter. Diedrich Sonoy, governor of that portion of Holland, a man of great bravery but of extreme ferocity of character, had discovered an extensive conspiracy among certain of the inhabitants, in aid of an approaching Spanish invasion. Bands of land-loupers had been employed, according to the intimation which he had received or affected to have received, to set fire to villages and towns in every direction, to set up beacons, and to conduct a series of signals by which the expeditions about to be organized were to be furthered in their objects. The Governor, determined to show that the Duke of Alva could not be more prompt nor more terrible than himself, improvised, of his own authority, a tribunal in imitation of the infamous Blood-Council. Fortunately for the character of the country, Sonoy was not a Hollander, nor was the jurisdiction of this newly established court allowed to extend beyond very narrow limits. Eight vagabonds were, however, arrested and doomed to tortures the most horrible, in order to extort from them confessions implicating persons of higher position in the land than themselves. Seven, after a few turns of the pulley and the screw, confessed all which they were expected to confess, and accused all whom they were requested to accuse. The eighth was firmer, and refused to testify to the guilt of certain respectable householders, whose names he had, perhaps, never heard, and against whom there was no shadow of evidence. He was, however, reduced by three hours and a half of sharp torture to confess, entirely according to their orders, so that accusations and evidence were thus obtained against certain influential gentlemen of the province, whose only crime was a secret adherence to the Catholic Faith.

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The eight wretches who had been induced by promises of unconditional pardon upon one hand, and by savage torture on the other, to bear this false witness, were condemned to be burned alive, and on their way to the stake, they all retracted the statements which had only been extorted from them by the rack. Nevertheless, the individuals who had been thus designated, were arrested. Charged with plotting a general conflagration of the villages and farmhouses, in conjunction with an invasion by Hierges and other Papist generals, they indignantly protested their innocence; but two of them, a certain Kopp Corneliszoon, and his son, Nanning Koppezoon, were selected to undergo the most cruel torture which had yet been practised in the Netherlands. Sonoy, to his eternal shame, was disposed to prove that human ingenuity to inflict human misery had not been exhausted in the chambers of the Blood Council, for it was to be shown that Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors in this diabolical science. Kopp, a man advanced in years, was tortured during a whole day. On the following morning he was again brought to the rack, but the old man was too weak to endure all the agony which his tormentors had provided for him. Hardly had he been placed upon the bed of torture than he calmly expired, to the great indignation of the tribunal. "The Devil has broken his neck and carried him off to hell," cried they ferociously. "Nevertheless, that shall not prevent him from being hung and quartered." This decree of impotent vengeance was accordingly executed. The son of Kopp, however, Nanning Koppezoon, was a man in the full vigor of his years. He bore with perfect fortitude a series of incredible tortures, after which, with his body singed from head to heel, and his feet almost entirely flayed, he was left for six weeks to crawl about his dungeon on his knees. He was then brought back to the torture-room, and again stretched upon the rack, while a large earthen vessel, made for the purpose, was placed, inverted, upon his naked body. A number of rats were introduced under this cover, and hot coals were heaped upon the vessel, till the rats, rendered furious by the heat, gnawed into the very bowels of the victim, in their agony to escape.

[Bor (viii. 628) conscientiously furnishes diagrams of the machinery by aid of which this devilish cruelty was inflicted. The rats were sent by the Governor himself.—Vide Letter of the Commissioners to Sonoy, apud Bor, viii. 640, 641. The whole letter is a wonderful monument of barbarity. The incredible tortures to which the poor creatures had been subjected are detailed in a business-like manner, as though the transactions were quite regular and laudable, The Commissioners conclude with pious wishes for the Governor's welfare: "Noble, wise, virtuous, and very discreet sir," they say, "we have wished to apprise you of the foregoing, and we now pray that God Almighty may spare you

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in a happy, healthy and long-continued government”—It will be seen, however, that the wise, virtuous, and very discreet Governor, who thus caused his fellow- citizens bowels to be gnawed by rats, was not allowed to remain much longer in his “happy and healthy government”]

The holes thus torn in his bleeding flesh were filled with red-hot coals. He was afterwards subjected to other tortures too foul to relate; nor was it till he had endured all this agony, with a fortitude which seemed supernatural, that he was at last discovered to be human. Scorched; bitten, dislocated in every joint, sleepless, starving, perishing with thirst, he was at last crushed into a false confession, by a promise of absolute forgiveness. He admitted everything which was brought to his charge, confessing a catalogue of contemplated burnings and beacon firings of which he had never dreamed, and avowing himself in league with other desperate Papists, still more dangerous than himself.

Notwithstanding the promises of pardon, Nanning was then condemned to death. The sentence ordained that his heart should be torn from his living bosom, and thrown in his face, after which his head was to be taken off and exposed on the church steeple of his native village. His body was then to be cut in four, and a quarter fastened upon different towers of the city of Alkmaar, for it was that city, recently so famous for its heroic resistance to the Spanish army, which was now sullied by all this cold-blooded atrocity. When led to execution, the victim recanted indignantly the confessions forced from him by weakness of body, and exonerated the persons whom he had falsely accused. A certain clergyman, named Jurian Epeszoon, endeavored by loud praying to drown his voice, that the people might not rise with indignation, and the dying prisoner with his last breath solemnly summoned this unworthy pastor of Christ to meet him within three days before the judgment-seat of God. It is a remarkable and authentic fact, that the clergyman thus summoned, went home pensively from the place of execution, sickened immediately and died upon the appointed day.

Notwithstanding this solemn recantation, the, persons accused were arrested, and in their turn subjected to torture, but the affair now reached the ears of Orange. His peremptory orders, with the universal excitement produced in the neighbourhood, at last checked the course of the outrage, and the accused persons were remanded to prison, where they remained till liberated by the Pacification of Ghent. After their release they commenced legal proceedings against Sonoy, with a view of establishing their own innocence, and of bringing the inhuman functionary to justice. The process languished, however, and was finally abandoned, for the powerful Governor had rendered such eminent service in the cause of liberty, that it was thought unwise to push him to extremity. It is no impeachment upon the character of the Prince that these horrible

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crimes were not prevented. It was impossible for him to be omnipresent. Neither is it just to consider the tortures and death thus inflicted upon innocent men an indelible stain upon the cause of liberty. They were the crimes of an individual who had been useful, but who, like the Count De la Marck, had now contaminated his hand with the blood of the guiltless. The new tribunal never took root, and was abolished as soon as its initiatory horrors were known.

On the 19th of July, Oudewater, entirely unprepared for such an event, was besieged by Hierges, but the garrison and the population, although weak, were brave. The town resisted eighteen days, and on the 7th of August was carried by assault, after which the usual horrors were fully practised, after which the garrison was put to the sword, and the townspeople fared little better. Men, women, and children were murdered in cold blood, or obliged to purchase their lives by heavy ransoms, while matrons and maids were sold by auction to the soldiers at two or three dollars each. Almost every house in the city was burned to the ground, and these horrible but very customary scenes having been enacted, the army of Hierges took its way to Schoonhoven. That city, not defending itself, secured tolerable terms of capitulation, and surrendered on the 24th of August.

The Grand Commander had not yet given up the hope of naval assistance from Spain, notwithstanding the abrupt termination to the last expedition which had been organized. It was, however, necessary that a foothold should be recovered upon the seaboard, before a descent from without could be met with proper co-operation from the land forces withal; and he was most anxious, therefore, to effect the reconquest of some portion of Zealand. The island of Tholen was still Spanish, and had been so since the memorable expedition of Mondragon to South Beveland. From this interior portion of the archipelago the Governor now determined to attempt an expedition against the outer and more important territory. The three principal islands were Tholen; Duiveland, and Sehouwen. Tholen was the first which detached itself from the continent. Neat, and separated from it by a bay two leagues in width, was Duiveland, or the Isle of Doves. Beyond, and parted by a narrower frith, was Schouwen, fronting directly upon the ocean, fortified by its strong capital city; Zieriekzee, and containing other villages of inferior consequence.

Requesens had been long revolving in his mind the means of possessing himself of this important island. He had caused to be constructed, a numerous armada of boats and light vessels of various dimensions, and he now came to Tholen to organize the expedition. His prospects were at first not flattering, for the gulfs and estuaries swarmed with Zealand vessels, manned by crews celebrated for their skill and audacity. Traitors, however, from Zealand itself now came forward to teach the Spanish Commander how to strike at the

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heart of their own country. These refugees explained to Requesens that a narrow flat extended under the sea from Philipsland, a small and uninhabited islet situate close to Tholen, as far as the shore of Duiveland. Upon this submerged tongue of land the water, during ebb-tide, was sufficiently shallow to be waded, and it would therefore be possible for a determined band, under cover of the night, to make the perilous passage. Once arrived at Duiveland, they could more easily cross the intervening creek to Schouwen, which was not so deep and only half as wide, so that a force thus, sent through these dangerous shallows, might take possession of Duiveland and lay siege to Zierickzee, in the very teeth of the Zealand fleet, which would be unable to sail near enough to intercept their passage.

The Commander determined that the enterprise should be attempted. It was not a novelty, because Mondragon, as we have seen, had already most brilliantly conducted a very similar expedition. The present was, however, a much more daring scheme. The other exploit, although sufficiently hazardous, and entirely, successful, had been a victory gained over the sea alone. It had been a surprise, and had been effected without any opposition from human enemies. Here, however, they were to deal, not only with the ocean and darkness, but with a watchful and determined foe. The Zealanders were aware that the enterprise was in contemplation, and their vessels lay about the contiguous waters in considerable force. Nevertheless, the determination of the Grand Commander was hailed with enthusiasm by his troops. Having satisfied himself by personal experiment that the enterprise was possible, and that therefore his brave soldiers could accomplish it, he decided that the glory of the achievement should be fairly shared, as before, among the different nations which served the King.

After completing his preparations, Requesens came to Tholen, at which rendezvous were assembled three thousand infantry, partly Spaniards, partly Germans, partly Walloons. Besides these, a picked corps of two hundred sappers and miners was to accompany the expedition, in order that no time might be lost in fortifying themselves as soon as they had seized possession of Schouwen. Four hundred mounted troopers were, moreover, stationed in the town of Tholen, while the little fleet, which had been prepared at Antwerp; lay near that city ready to co-operate with the land force as soon as they, should complete their enterprise. The Grand Commander now divided the whole force into two parts: One half was to remain in the boats, under the command of Mondragon; the other half, accompanied by the two hundred pioneers, were to wade through the sea from Philipsland to Duiveland and Schouwen. Each soldier of this detachment was provided with a pair of shoes, two pounds of powder, and rations for three days in a canvas bag suspended at his neck. The leader of this expedition was Don Osorio d'Ulloa, an officer distinguished for his experience and bravery.

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On the night selected for the enterprise, that of the 27th September, the moon was a day old in its fourth quarter, and rose a little before twelve. It was low water at between four and five in the morning. The Grand Commander, at the appointed hour of midnight, crossed to Philipsland, and stood on the shore to watch the setting forth of the little army. He addressed a short harangue to them, in which he skillfully struck the chords of Spanish chivalry, and the national love of glory, and was answered with loud and enthusiastic cheers. Don Osorio d'Ulloa then stripped and plunged into the sea immediately after the guides. He was followed by the Spaniards, after whom came the Germans and then the Walloons. The two hundred sappers and miners came next, and Don Gabriel Peralta, with his Spanish company; brought up the rear. It was a wild night. Incessant lightning, alternately revealed and obscured the progress of the midnight march through the black waters, as the anxious Commander watched the expedition from the shore, but the soldiers were quickly swallowed up in the gloom. As they advanced cautiously, two by two, the daring adventurers found themselves soon nearly up to their necks in the waves, while so narrow was the submerged bank along which they were marching, that a misstep to the right or left was fatal. Luckless individuals repeatedly sank to rise no more. Meantime, as the sickly light, of the waning moon came forth at intervals through the stormy clouds the soldiers could plainly perceive the files of Zealand vessels through which they were to march, and which were anchored as close to the flat as the water would allow. Some had recklessly stranded themselves, in their eagerness to interrupt the passage, of the troops, and the artillery played unceasingly from the larger vessels. Discharges of musketry came continually from all, but the fitful lightning rendered the aim difficult and the fire comparatively harmless while the Spaniards were, moreover, protected, as to a large part of their bodies, by the water in which they were immersed.

At times; they halted for breath, or to engage in fierce skirmishes with their nearest assailants. Standing breast-high in the waves, and surrounded at intervals by total darkness, they were yet able to pour an occasional well-directed volley into the hostile ranks. The Zealanders, however, did, not assail them with fire-arms alone. They transfixed some with their fatal harpoons; they dragged others from the path with boathooks; they beat out the brains of others with heavy flails. Many were the mortal duels thus fought in the darkness, and, as it were, in the bottom of the sea; many were the deeds of audacity which no eye was to mark save those by whom they were achieved. Still, in spite of all impediments and losses, the Spaniards steadily advanced. If other arms proved less available, they were attached by the fierce taunts and invectives of their often

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invisible foes who reviled them as water-dogs, fetching and carrying for a master who despised them; as mercenaries who coined their blood for gold, and were employed by tyrants for the basest uses. If stung by these mocking voices, they turned in the darkness to chastise their unseen tormentors, they were certain to be trampled upon by their comrades, and to be pushed from their narrow pathway into the depths of the sea. Thus many perished.

The night wore on, and the adventurers still fought it out manfully, but very slowly, the main body of Spaniards, Germans, and Walloons, soon after daylight, reaching the opposite shore, having sustained considerable losses, but in perfect order. The pioneers were not so fortunate. The tide rose over them before they could effect their passage, and swept nearly every one away. The rearguard, under Peralta, not surprised, like the pioneers, in the middle of their passage, by the rising tide, but prevented, before it was too late; from advancing far beyond the shore from which they had departed were fortunately enabled to retrace their steps.

Don Osorio, at the head of the successful adventurers, now effected his landing upon Duiveland. Reposing themselves but for an instant after this unparalleled march through the water, of more than six hours, they took a slight refreshment, prayed to the Virgin Mary and to Saint James, and then prepared to meet their new enemies on land. Ten companies of French, Scotch, and English auxiliaries lay in Duiveland, under the command of Charles Van Boisot. Strange to relate, by an inexplicable accident, or by treason, that general was slain by his own soldiers, at the moment when the royal troops landed. The panic created by this event became intense, as the enemy rose suddenly, as it were, out of the depths of the ocean to attack them. They magnified the numbers of their assailants, and fled terror-stricken in every direction. Some swam to the Zealand vessels which lay in the neighbourhood; others took refuge in the forts which had been constructed on the island; but these were soon carried by the Spaniards, and the conquest of Duiveland was effected.

The enterprise was not yet completed, but the remainder was less difficult and not nearly so hazardous, for the creek which separated Duiveland from Schouwen was much narrower than the estuary which they had just traversed. It was less than a league in width, but so encumbered by rushes and briers that, although difficult to wade, it was not navigable for vessels of any kind. This part of the expedition was accomplished with equal resolution, so that, after a few hours' delay, the soldiers stood upon the much-coveted island of Schouwen. Five companies of states' troops, placed to oppose their landing, fled in the most cowardly manner at the first discharge of the Spanish muskets, and took refuge in the city of Zierickzee, which was soon afterwards beleaguered.

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The troops has been disembarked upon Duiveland from the armada, which had made its way to the scene of action, after having received, by signal, information that the expedition through the water had been successful. Brouwershaven, on the northern side of Schouwen, was immediately reduced, but Bommenede resisted till the 25th of October, when it was at last carried by assault, and delivered over to fire and sword. Of the whole population and garrison not twenty were left alive. Siege was then laid to Zierickzee, and Colonel Mondragon was left in charge of the operations. Requesens himself came to Schouwen to give directions concerning this important enterprise.

Chiapin Vitelli also came thither in the middle of the winter, and was so much injured by a fall from his litter, while making the tour of the island, that he died on shipboard during his return to Antwerp. This officer had gained his laurels upon more than one occasion, his conduct in the important action near Mons, in which the Huguenot force under Genlis was defeated, having been particularly creditable. He was of a distinguished Umbrian family, and had passed his life in camps, few of the generals who had accompanied Alva to the Netherlands being better known or more odious to the inhabitants. He was equally distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence. The last characteristic was so remarkable that he was almost monstrous in his personal appearance. His protuberant stomach was always supported in a bandage suspended from his neck, yet in spite of this enormous impediment, he was personally active on the battle-field, and performed more service, not only as a commander but as a subaltern, than many a younger and lighter man.

The siege of Zierickzee was protracted till the following June, the city holding out with firmness. Want of funds caused the operations to be, conducted with languor, but the same cause prevented the Prince from accomplishing its relief. Thus the expedition from Philipsland, the most brilliant military exploit of the whole war, was attended with important results. The communication between Walcheren and the rest of Zeeland was interrupted; the province cut in two; a foothold on the ocean; for a brief interval at least, acquired by Spain. The Prince was inexpressibly chagrined by these circumstances, and felt that the moment had arrived when all honorable means were to be employed to obtain foreign assistance. The Hollanders and Zealanders had fought the battles of freedom alone hitherto, and had fought them well, but poverty was fast rendering them incapable of sustaining much longer the unequal conflict. Offers of men, whose wages the states were to furnish, were refused; as worse than fruitless. Henry of Navarre, who perhaps deemed it possible to acquire the sovereignty of the provinces by so barren a benefit, was willing to send two or three thousand men, but not at his own expense. The proposition was respectfully declined.

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The Prince and his little country, were all alone. "Even if we should not only see ourselves deserted by all the world, but also all the world against us," he said, "we should not cease to defend ourselves even to the last man. Knowing the justice of our cause, we repose, entirely in the mercy of God." He determined, however, once more to have recourse to the powerful of the earth, being disposed to test the truth of his celebrated observation, that "there would be no lack of suitors for the bride that he had to bestow." It was necessary, in short, to look the great question of formally renouncing Philip directly in the face.

Hitherto the fiction of allegiance had been preserved, and, even by the enemies of the Prince, it, was admitted: that it had been retained with no disloyal intent. The time however, had come when it was necessary. to throw off allegiance, provided another could be found strong enough and frank enough to accept the authority which Philip had forfeited. The question was, naturally, between France and England; unless the provinces could effect their re-admission into the body of the Germanic Empire. Already in June the Prince had laid the proposition formally before the states, "whether they should not negotiate with the Empire on the subject of their admission, with maintenance of their own constitutions," but it was understood that this plan was not to be carried out, if the protection of the Empire could be obtained under easier conditions.

Nothing came of the proposition at that time. The nobles and the deputies of South Holland now voted, in the beginning of the ensuing month, "that it was their duty to abandon the King, as a tyrant who sought to oppress and destroy his subjects; and that it behooved them to seek another protector." This was while the Breda negotiations were still pending, but when their inevitable result was very visible. There was still a reluctance at taking the last and decisive step in the rebellion, so that the semblance of loyalty was still retained; that ancient scabbard, in which the sword might yet one day be sheathed. The proposition was not adopted at the diet. A committee of nine was merely appointed to deliberate with the Prince upon the "means of obtaining foreign assistance, without accepting foreign authority, or severing their connexion with his Majesty." The estates were, however, summoned a few months later, by the Prince, to deliberate on this important matter at Rotterdam. On the 1st of October he then formally proposed, either to make terms with their enemy, and that the sooner the better, or else, once for all, to separate entirely from the King of Spain, and to change their sovereign, in order, with the assistance and under protection of another Christian potentate, to maintain the provinces against their enemies. Orange, moreover, expressed the opinion that upon so important a subject it was decidedly incumbent upon them all to take the sense

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of the city governments. The members for the various municipalities acquiesced in the propriety of this suggestion, and resolved to consult their constituents, while the deputies of the nobility also desired to consult with their whole body. After an adjournment of a few days, the diet again assembled at Delft, and it was then unanimously resolved by the nobles and the cities, "that they would forsake the King and seek foreign assistance; referring the choice to the Prince, who, in regard to the government, was to take the opinion of the estates."

Thus, the great step was taken, by which two little provinces declared themselves independent of their ancient master. That declaration, although taken in the midst of doubt and darkness, was not destined to be cancelled, and the germ of a new and powerful commonwealth was planted. So little, however, did these republican fathers foresee their coming republic, that the resolution to renounce one king was combined with a proposition to ask for the authority of another. It was not imagined that those two slender columns, which were all that had yet been raised. of the future stately peristyle, would be strong enough to stand alone. The question now arose, to what foreign power application should be made. But little hope was to be entertained from Germany, a state which existed only in name, and France was still in a condition of religious and intestine discord. The attitude of revolt maintained by the Duc d'Alencon seemed to make it difficult and dangerous to enter into negotiations with a country where the civil wars had assumed so complicated a character, that loyal and useful alliance could hardly be made with any party. The Queen of England, on the other hand; dreaded the wrath of Philip, by which her perpetual dangers from the side of Scotland would be aggravated, while she feared equally the extension of French authority in the Netherlands, by which increase her neighbour would acquire an overshadowing power. She was also ashamed openly to abandon the provinces to their fate, for her realm was supposed to be a bulwark of the Protestant religion. Afraid to affront Philip, afraid to refuse the suit of the Netherlands, afraid to concede as aggrandizement to France, what course was open to the English Queen. That which, politically and personally, she loved the best—a course of barren coquetry. This the Prince of Orange foresaw; and although not disposed to leave a stone unturned in his efforts to find assistance for his country, he on the whole rather inclined for France. He, however, better than any man, knew how little cause there was for sanguine expectation from either source.

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It was determined, in the name of his Highness and the estates, first to send a mission to England, but there had already been negotiations this year of an unpleasant character with that power. At the request of the Spanish envoy, the foremost Netherland rebels, in number about fifty, including by name the Prince of Orange, the Counts of Berg and Culemburg, with Saint Aldegonde, Boisot, Junius, and others, had been formally forbidden by Queen Elizabeth to enter her realm. The Prince had, in consequence, sent Aldegonde and Junius on a secret mission to France, and the Queen; jealous and anxious, had thereupon sent Daniel Rogers secretly to the Prince. At the same time she had sent an envoy to the Grand Commander, counselling, conciliatory measures; and promising to send a special mission to Spain with the offer of her mediation, but it was suspected by those most in the confidence of the Spanish government at Brussels, that there was a great deal of deception in these proceedings. A truce for six months having now been established between the Duc d'Alencon and his brother, it was supposed, that an alliance between France and England, and perhaps between Alencon and Elizabeth, was on the carpet, and that a kingdom of the Netherlands was to be the wedding present of the bride to her husband. These fantasies derived additional color from the fact that, while the Queen was expressing the most amicable intentions towards Spain, and the greatest jealousy of France, the English residents at Antwerp and other cities of the Netherlands, had received private instructions to sell out their property as fast as possible, and to retire from the country. On the whole, there was little prospect either of a final answer, or of substantial assistance from the Queen.

The envoys to England were Advocate Buis and Doctor Francis Maalzon, nominated by the estates, and Saint Aldegonde, chief of the mission, appointed by the Prince. They arrived in England at Christmas-tide. Having represented to the Queen the result of the Breda negotiations, they stated that the Prince and the estates, in despair of a secure peace, had addressed themselves to her as an upright protector of the Faith, and as a princess descended from the blood of Holland. This allusion to the intermarriage of Edward III. of England with Philippa, daughter of Count William III. of Hainault and Holland, would not, it was hoped, be in vain. They furthermore offered to her Majesty, in case she were willing powerfully to assist the states, the sovereignty over Holland and Zeeland, under certain conditions.

The Queen listened graciously to the envoys, and appointed commissioners to treat with them on the subject. Meantime, Requesens sent Champagny to England, to counteract the effect of this embassy of the estates, and to beg the Queen to give no heed to the prayers of the rebels, to enter into no negotiations with them, and to expel them at once from her kingdom.

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The Queen gravely assured Champagny “that the envoys were no rebels, but faithful subjects of his Majesty.” There was certainly some effrontery in such a statement, considering the solemn offer which had just been made by the envoys. If to renounce allegiance to Philip and to propose the sovereignty to Elizabeth did not constitute rebellion, it would be difficult to define or to discover rebellion anywhere. The statement was as honest, however, as the diplomatic grimace with which Champagny had reminded Elizabeth of the ancient and unbroken friendship which had always, existed between herself and his Catholic Majesty. The attempt of Philip to procure her dethronement and assassination but a few years before was, no doubt, thought too trifling a circumstance to have for a moment interrupted those harmonious relations. Nothing came of the negotiations on either side. The Queen coquetted, as was her custom. She could not accept the offer of the estates; she could not say them nay. She would not offend Philip; she would not abandon the provinces; she would therefore negotiate—thus there was an infinite deal of diplomatic nothing spun and unravelled, but the result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip.

In the first answer given by her commissioners to the states’ envoys, it was declared, “that her Majesty considered it too expensive to assume the protection of both provinces.” She was willing to protect them in name, but she should confer the advantage exclusively on Walcheren in reality. The defence of Holland must be maintained at the expense of the Prince and the estates.

This was certainly not munificent, and the envoys insisted upon more ample and liberal terms. The Queen declined, however, committing herself beyond this niggardly and inadmissible offer. The states were not willing to exchange the sovereignty over their country for so paltry a concession. The Queen declared herself indisposed to go further, at least before consulting parliament. The commissioners waited for the assembling of parliament. She then refused to lay the matter before that body, and forbade the Hollanders taking any steps for that purpose. It was evident that she was disposed to trifle with the provinces, and had no idea of encountering the open hostility of Philip. The envoys accordingly begged for their passports. These were granted in April, 1576, with the assurance on the part of her Majesty that “she would think more of the offer made to her after she had done all in her power to bring about an arrangement between the provinces and Philip.”

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After the result of the negotiations of Breda, it is difficult to imagine what method she was likely to devise for accomplishing such a purpose. The King was not more disposed than during the preceding summer to grant liberty of religion, nor were the Hollanders more ready than they had been before to renounce either their faith or their fatherland. The envoys, on parting, made a strenuous effort to negotiate a loan, but the frugal Queen considered the proposition quite inadmissible. She granted them liberty to purchase arms and ammunition, and to levy a few soldiers with their own money, and this was accordingly done to a limited extent. As it was not difficult to hire soldiers or to buy gunpowder anywhere, in that warlike age, provided the money were ready, the states had hardly reason to consider themselves under deep obligation for this concession. Yet this was the whole result of the embassy. Plenty of fine words had, been bestowed, which might or might not have meaning, according to the turns taken by coming events. Besides these cheap and empty civilities, they received permission to defend Holland at their own expense; with the privilege, of surrendering its sovereignty, if they liked, to Queen Elizabeth-and this was all.

On the 19th of April, the envoys returned to their country, and laid before the estates the meagre result of their negotiations. Very soon afterwards, upon an informal suggestion from Henry III. and the Queen Mother, that a more favorable result might be expected, if the same applications were made to the Duc d'Alencon which had been received in so unsatisfactory a manner by Elizabeth, commissioners were appointed to France. It proved impossible, however, at that juncture, to proceed with the negotiations, in consequence of the troubles occasioned by the attitude of the Duke. The provinces were still, even as they had been from the beginning, entirely alone.

Requesens was more than ever straitened for funds, wringing, with increasing difficulty, a slender subsidy, from time to time, out of the reluctant estates of Brabant, Flanders, and the other obedient provinces. While he was still at Duiveland, the estates-general sent him a long remonstrance against the misconduct of the soldiery, in answer to his demand for supplies. "Oh, these estates! these estates!" cried the Grand Commander, on receiving such vehement reproaches instead of his money; "may the Lord deliver me from these estates!" Meantime, the important siege of Zierickzee continued, and it was evident that the city must fall. There was no money at the disposal of the Prince. Count John, who was seriously embarrassed by reason of the great obligations in money which he, with the rest of his family, had incurred on behalf of the estates, had recently made application to the Prince for his influence towards procuring him relief. He had forwarded an account of the great advances made by himself and his brethren

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in money, plate, furniture, and endorsements of various kinds, for which a partial reimbursement was almost indispensable to save him from serious difficulties. The Prince, however, unable to procure him any assistance, had been obliged him once more to entreat him to display the generosity and the self-denial which the country had never found wanting at his hands or at those of his kindred. The appeal had not been, in vain, but the Count was obviously not in a condition to effect anything more at that moment to relieve the financial distress of the states. The exchequer was crippled. [The contributions of Holland and Zeeland for war expenses amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand florins monthly. The pay of a captain was eighty florins monthly; that of a lieutenant, forty; that of a corporal, fifteen; that of a drummer, fifer, or Minister, twelve; that of a common soldier, seven and a half. A captain had also one hundred and fifty florins each month to distribute among the most meritorious of his company. Each soldier was likewise furnished with food; bedding, fire, light, and washing.—Renom de France *Ms*, vol. ii. c. 46,]

Holland and Zeeland were cut in twain by the occupation of Schouwen and the approaching fall of its capital. Germany, England, France; all refused to stretch out their hands to save the heroic but exhaustless little provinces. It was at this moment that a desperate but sublime resolution took possession of the Prince's mind. There seemed but one way left to exclude the Spaniards for ever from Holland and Zeeland, and to rescue the inhabitants from impending ruin. The Prince had long brooded over the scheme, and the hour seemed to have struck for its fulfilment. His project was to collect all the vessels, of every description, which could be obtained throughout the Netherlands. The whole population of the two provinces, men, women, and children, together with all the moveable property of the country, were then to be embarked on board this numerous fleet, and to seek a new home beyond the seas. The windmills were then to be burned, the dykes pierced, the sluices opened in every direction, and the country restored for ever to the ocean, from which it had sprung.

It is difficult to say whether the resolution, if Providence had permitted its fulfilment, would have been, on the whole, better or worse for humanity and civilization. The ships which would have borne the heroic Prince and his fortunes might have taken the direction of the newly-discovered Western hemisphere. A religious colony, planted by a commercial and liberty-loving race, in a virgin soil, and directed by patrician but self-denying hands, might have preceded, by half a century, the colony which a kindred race, impelled by similar motives, and under somewhat similar circumstances and conditions, was destined to plant upon the stern shores of New England. Had they directed their course to the warm and fragrant islands of the East, an independent Christian commonwealth might have arisen among those prolific regions, superior in importance to any subsequent colony of Holland, cramped from its birth by absolute subjection to a far distant metropolis.

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The unexpected death of Requesens suddenly dispelled these schemes. The siege of Zierickzee had occupied much of the Governor's attention, but he had recently written to his sovereign, that its reduction was now certain. He had added an urgent request for money, with a sufficient supply of which he assured Philip that he should be able to bring the war to an immediate conclusion. While waiting for these supplies, he had, contrary to all law or reason, made an unsuccessful attempt to conquer the post of Embden, in Germany. A mutiny had at about the same time, broken out among his troops in Harlem, and he had furnished the citizens with arms to defend themselves, giving free permission to use them against the insurgent troops. By this means the mutiny had been quelled, but a dangerous precedent established. Anxiety concerning this rebellion is supposed to have hastened the Grand Commander's death. A violent fever seized him on the 1st, and terminated his existence on the 5th of March, in the fifty-first year of his life.

It is not necessary to review elaborately his career, the chief incidents of which have been sufficiently described. Requesens was a man of high position by birth and office, but a thoroughly commonplace personage. His talents either for war or for civil employments were not above mediocrity. His friends disputed whether he were greater in the field or in the council, but it is certain that he was great in neither. His bigotry was equal to that of Alva, but it was impossible to rival the Duke in cruelty. Moreover, the condition of the country, after seven years of torture under his predecessor, made it difficult for him, at the time of his arrival, to imitate the severity which had made the name of Alva infamous. The Blood Council had been retained throughout his administration, but its occupation was gone, for want of food for its ferocity. The obedient provinces had been purged of Protestants; while crippled, too, by confiscation, they offered no field for further extortion. From Holland and Zeeland, whence Catholicism had been nearly excluded, the King of Spain was nearly excluded also. The Blood Council which, if set up in that country, would have executed every living creature of its population, could only gaze from a distance at those who would have been its victims. Requesens had been previously distinguished in two fields of action: the Granada massacres and the carnage of Lepanto. Upon both occasions he had been the military tutor of Don John of Austria, by whom he was soon to be succeeded in the government of the Netherlands. To the imperial bastard had been assigned the pre-eminence, but it was thought that the Grand Commander had been entitled to a more than equal share of the glory.

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We have seen how much additional reputation was acquired by Requesens in the provinces. The expedition against Duiveland and Schouwen, was, on the whole, the most brilliant feat of arms during the war, and its success reflects an undying lustre on the hardihood and discipline of the Spanish, German, and Walloon soldiery. As an act of individual audacity in a bad cause, it has rarely been equalled. It can hardly be said, however, that the Grand Commander was entitled to any large measure of praise for the success of the expedition. The plan was laid by Zeeland traitors. It was carried into execution by the devotion of the Spanish, Walloon, and German troops; while Requesens was only a spectator of the transaction. His sudden death arrested, for a moment, the ebb-tide in the affairs of the Netherlands, which was fast leaving the country bare and desolate, and was followed by a train of unforeseen transactions, which it is now our duty to describe.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

As the old woman had told the Emperor Adrian
Beautiful damsel, who certainly did not lack suitors
Breath, time, and paper were profusely wasted and nothing gained
Care neither for words nor menaces in any matter
Distinguished for his courage, his cruelty, and his corpulence
He had never enjoyed social converse, except at long intervals
Human ingenuity to inflict human misery
Peace was desirable, it might be more dangerous than war
Proposition made by the wolves to the sheep, in the fable
Rebuked the bigotry which had already grown
Reformers were capable of giving a lesson even to inquisitors
Result was both to abandon the provinces and to offend Philip
Suppress the exercise of the Roman religion
The more conclusive arbitration of gunpowder

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