

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 31: 1580-82 eBook

Rise of the Dutch Republic, the — Volume 31: 1580-82 by John Lothrop Motley

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MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 33

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1580-1582

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

CHAPTER IV.

Captivity of La Noue—Cruel propositions of Philip—Siege of Groningen—Death of Barthold Enter—His character—Hohenlo commands in the north—His incompetence—He is defeated on Hardenberg Heath— Petty operations—Isolation of Orange—Dissatisfaction and departure of Count John—Remonstrance of Archduke Matthias—Embassy to Anjou— Holland and Zeeland offer the sovereignty to Orange—Conquest of Portugal—Granvelle proposes the Ban against the Prince—It is published—The document analyzed—The Apology of Orange analyzed and characterized—Siege of Steenwyk by Renneberg—Forgeries—Siege relieved—Death of Renneberg—Institution of the "land-Council"— Duchess of Parma sent to the Netherlands—Anger of Alexander — Prohibition of Catholic worship in Antwerp, Utrecht, and elsewhere— Declaration of Independence by the United Provinces—Negotiations with Anjou—The sovereignty of



Holland and Zealand provisionally accepted by Orange—Tripartition of the Netherlands—Power of the Prince described—Act of Abjuration analyzed—Philosophy of Netherland politics.—Views of the government compact—Acquiescence by the people in the action of the estates—Departure of Archduke Matthias.

The war continued in a languid and desultory manner in different parts of the country. At an action near Ingelmunster, the brave and accomplished De la Noue was made prisoner. This was a severe loss to the states, a cruel blow to Orange, for he was not only one of the most experienced soldiers, but one of the most accomplished writers of his age. His pen was as celebrated as his sword. In exchange for the illustrious Frenchman the states in vain offered Count Egmont, who had been made prisoner a few weeks before, and De Belles, who was captured shortly afterwards. Parma answered contemptuously, that he would not give a lion for two sheep. Even Champagne was offered in addition, but without success. Parma had written to Philip, immediately upon the capture, that, were it not for Egmont, Seller, and others, then in the power of Oranges he should order the execution of La Noue. Under the circumstances, however, he had begged to be informed as to his Majesty's pleasure, and in the meantime had placed the prisoner in the castle of Limburg, under charge of De Billy.



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[Strada, d. 2, iii. 155, 156. Parma is said to have hinted to Philip that De Billy would willingly undertake, the private assassination of La Noue.—Popeliniere, Hist. des Pays Bas; 1556- 1584.]

His Majesty, of course, never signified his pleasure, and the illustrious soldier remained for five years in a loathsome dungeon more befitting a condemned malefactor than a prisoner of war. It was in the donjon keep of the castle, lighted only by an aperture in the roof, and was therefore exposed to the rain and all inclemencies of the sky, while rats, toads, and other vermin housed in the miry floor. Here this distinguished personage, Francis with the Iron Arm, whom all Frenchmen, Catholic or Huguenot, admired for his genius, bravery, and purity of character, passed five years of close confinement. The government was most anxious to take his life, but the captivity of Egmont and others prevented the accomplishment of their wishes. During this long period, the wife and numerous friends of La Noue were unwearied in, their efforts to effect his ransom or exchange, but none of the prisoners in the hands of the patriots were considered a fair equivalent. The hideous proposition was even made by Philip the Second to La Noue, that he should receive his liberty if he would permit his eyes to be put out, as a preliminary condition. The fact is attested by several letters written by La Noue to his wife. The prisoner, wearied, shattered in health, and sighing for air and liberty, was disposed and even anxious to accept the infamous offer, and discussed the matter philosophically in his letters. That lady, however, horror-struck at the suggestion, implored him to reject the condition, which he accordingly consented to do. At last, in June, 1585, he was exchanged, on extremely rigorous terms, for Egmont. During his captivity in this vile dungeon, he composed not only his famous political and military discourses, but several other works, among the rest; Annotations upon Plutarch and upon the Histories of Guicciardini.

The siege of Groningen proceeded, and Parma ordered some forces under Martin Schenck to advance to its relief. On the other hand, the meagre states' forces under Sonoy, Hohenlo, Entes, and Count John of Nassau's young son, William Louis, had not yet made much impression upon the city. There was little military skill to atone for the feebleness of the assailing army, although there was plenty of rude valor. Barthold Entes, a man of desperate character, was impatient at the dilatoriness of the proceedings. After having been in disgrace with the states, since the downfall of his friend and patron, the Count De la Marck, he had recently succeeded to a regiment in place of Colonel Ysselstein, "dismissed for a homicide or two." On the 17th of May, he had been dining at Rolda, in company with Hohenlo and the young Count of Nassau. Returning to the trenches in a state of wild intoxication, he



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accosted a knot of superior officers, informing them that they were but boys, and that he would show them how to carry the faubourg of Groningen on the instant. He was answered that the faubourg, being walled and moated, could be taken only by escalade or battery. Laughing loudly, he rushed forward toward the counterscarp, waving his sword, and brandishing on his left arm the cover of a butter firkin, which he had taken instead of his buckler. He had advanced, however, but a step, when a bullet from the faubourg pierced his brain, and he fell dead without a word.

So perished one of the wild founders of the Netherland commonwealth—one of the little band of reckless adventurers who had captured the town of Brill in 1572, and thus laid the foundation stone of a great republic, which was to dictate its laws to the empire of Charles the Fifth. He was in some sort a type. His character was emblematical of the worst side of the liberating movement. Desperate, lawless, ferocious—a robber on land, a pirate by sea—he had rendered great service in the cause of his fatherland, and had done it much disgrace. By the evil deeds of men like himself, the fair face of liberty had been profaned at its first appearance. Born of a respectable family, he had been noted, when a student in this very Groningen where he had now found his grave, for the youthful profligacy of his character. After dissipating his patrimony, he had taken to the sea, the legalized piracy of the mortal struggle with Spain offering a welcome refuge to spendthrifts like himself. In common with many a banished noble of ancient birth and broken fortunes, the riotous student became a successful corsair, and it is probable that his prizes were made as well among the friends as the enemies of his country. He amassed in a short time one hundred thousand crowns—no contemptible fortune in those days. He assisted La Marck in the memorable attack upon Brill, but behaved badly and took to flight when Mondragon made his memorable expedition to relieve Tergoes. He had subsequently been imprisoned, with La Marck for insubordination, and during his confinement had dissipated a large part of his fortune. In 1574, after the violation of the Ghent treaty, he had returned to, his piratical pursuits, and having prospered again as rapidly as he had done during his former cruises, had been glad to exchange the ocean for more honorable service on shore. The result was the tragic yet almost ludicrous termination which we have narrated. He left a handsome property, the result of his various piracies, or, according to the usual euphemism, prizes. He often expressed regret at the number of traders whom he had cast into the sea, complaining, in particular, of one victim whom he had thrown overboard, who would never sink, but who for years long ever floated in his wake, and stared him in the face whenever he looked over his vessel's side. A gambler, a profligate, a pirate, he had yet rendered service to the cause of freedom, and his name—sullyng the purer and nobler ones of other founders of the commonwealth—“is enrolled in the capitol.”



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Count Philip Hohenlo, upon whom now, devolved the, entire responsibility of the Groningen siege and of the Friesland operations, was only a few degrees superior to this northern corsair. A noble of high degree, nearly connected with the Nassau family, sprung of the best blood in Germany, handsome and dignified in appearance, he was, in reality only a debauchee and a drunkard. Personal bravery was his main qualification for a general; a virtue which he shared with many of his meanest soldiers. He had never learned the art of war, nor had he the least ambition to acquire it. Devoted to his pleasures, he depraved those under his command, and injured the cause for which he was contending. Nothing but defeat and disgrace were expected by the purer patriots from such guidance. "The benediction of God," wrote Albada, "cannot be hoped for under this chieftain, who by life and manners is fitter to drive swine than to govern pious and honorable men."

The event justified the prophecy. After a few trifling operations before Groningen, Hohenlo was summoned to the neighbourhood of Coewerden, by the reported arrival of Martin Schenck, at the head of a considerable force. On the 15th of June, the Count marched all night and a part of the follow morning, in search of the enemy. He came up with them upon Hardenberg Heath, in a broiling summer forenoon. His men were jaded by the forced march, overcame with the heat, tormented with thirst, and unable to procure even a drop of water. The royalists were fresh so that the result of the contest was easily to be foreseen. Hohenlo's army was annihilated in an hour's time, the whole population fled out of Coewerden, the siege of Groningen was raised; Renneberg was set free to resume his operations on a larger scale, and the fate of all the north-eastern provinces was once more swinging in the wind. The boors of Drenthe and Friesland rose again. They had already mustered in the field at an earlier season of the year, in considerable force. Calling themselves "the desperates," and bearing on their standard an eggshell with the yolk running out—to indicate that, having lost the meat they were yet ready to fight for the shell—they had swept through the open country, pillaging and burning. Hohenlo had defeated them in two enchanter, slain a large number of their forces, and reduced them for a time to tranquillity. His late overthrow once more set them loose. Renneberg, always apt to be over-elated in prosperity, as he was unduly dejected in adversity, now assumed all the airs of a conqueror. He had hardly eight thousand men under his orders, but his strength lay in the weakness of his adversaries. A small war now succeeded, with small generals, small armies, small campaigns, small sieges. For the time, the Prince of Orange was even obliged to content himself with such a general as Hohenlo. As usual, he was almost alone. "Donec eris felix," said he, emphatically—



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“multos numerabis amicos,
Tempera cum erunt nubila, nullus erit,”

and he was this summer doomed to a still harder deprivation by the final departure of his brother John from the Netherlands.

The Count had been wearied out by petty miseries. His stadholderate of Gelderland had overwhelmed him with annoyance, for throughout the north-eastern provinces there was neither system nor subordination. The magistrates could exercise no authority over an army which they did not pay, or a people whom they did not protect. There were endless quarrels between the various boards of municipal and provincial government—particularly concerning contributions and expenditures.

[When the extraordinary generosity of the Count himself; and the altogether unexampled sacrifices of the Prince are taken into account, it may well be supposed that the patience of the brothers would be sorely tried by the parsimony of the states. It appears by a document laid before the states-general in the winter of 1580- 1581, that the Count had himself advanced to Orange 570,000 florins in the cause. The total of money spent by the Prince himself for the sake of Netherland liberty was 2,200,000. These vast sums had been raised in various ways and from various personages. His estates were deeply hypothecated, and his creditors so troublesome, that, in his own language, he was unable to attend properly to public affairs, so frequent and so threatening were the applications made upon him for payment. Day by day he felt the necessity advancing more closely upon him of placing himself personally in the hands of his creditors and making over his estates to their mercy until the uttermost farthing should be paid. In his two campaigns against Alva (1568 and 1572) he had spent 1,050,000 florins. He owed the Elector Palatine 150,000 florins, the Landgrave 60,000, Count John 670,000, and other sums to other individuals.]

During this wrangling, the country was exposed to the forces of Parma, to the private efforts of the Malcontents, to the unpaid soldiery of the states, to the armed and rebellious peasantry. Little heed was paid to the admonitions of Count John, who was of a hotter temper than was the tranquil Prince. The stadholder gave way to fits of passion at the meanness and the insolence to which he was constantly exposed. He readily recognized his infirmity, and confessed himself unable to accommodate his irascibility to the “humores” of the inhabitants. There was often sufficient cause for his petulance. Never had praetor of a province a more penurious civil list. “The baker has given notice,” wrote Count John, in November, “that he will supply no more bread after to-morrow, unless he is paid.” The states would furnish no money to pay the, bill. It was no better with the butcher. “The cook has often no meat to roast,” said the Count, in the same letter, “so



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that we are often obliged to go supperless to bed.” His lodgings were a half-roofed, half-finished, unfurnished barrack, where the stadholder passed his winter days and evenings in a small, dark, freezing-cold chamber, often without fire-wood. Such circumstances were certainly not calculated to excite envy. When in addition to such wretched parsimony, it is remembered that the Count was perpetually worried by the quarrels of the provincial authorities with each other and with himself, he may be forgiven for becoming thoroughly exhausted at last. He was growing “grey and grizzled” with perpetual perplexity. He had been fed with annoyance, as if—to use his own homely expression—“he had eaten it with a spoon.” Having already loaded himself with a debt of six hundred thousand florins, which he had spent in the states’ service, and having struggled manfully against the petty tortures of his situation, he cannot be severely censured for relinquishing his post. The affairs of his own Countship were in great confusion. His children—boys and girls—were many, and needed their fathers’ guidance, while the eldest, William Louis, was already in arms for the-Netherlands, following the instincts of his race. Distinguished for a rash valor, which had already gained the rebuke of his father and the applause of his comrades, he had commenced his long and glorious career by receiving a severe wound at Coewerden, which caused him to halt for life. Leaving so worthy a representative, the Count was more justified in his departure.

His wife, too, had died in his absence, and household affairs required his attention. It must be confessed, however, that if the memory of his deceased spouse had its claims, the selection of her successor was still more prominent among his anxieties. The worthy gentleman had been supernaturally directed as to his second choice, ere that choice seemed necessary, for before the news of his wife’s death had reached him, the Count dreamed that he was already united in second nuptials to the fair Cunigunda, daughter of the deceased Elector Palatine—a vision which was repeated many times. On the morrow he learned, to his amazement, that he was a widower, and entertained no doubt that he had been specially directed towards the princess seen in his slumbers, whom he had never seen in life. His friends were in favor of his marrying the Electress Dowager, rather than her daughter, whose years numbered less than half his own. The honest Count, however, “after ripe consideration,” decidedly preferred the maid to the widow. “I confess,” he said, with much gravity, “that the marriage with the old Electress, in respect of her God-fearing disposition, her piety, her virtue, and the like, would be much more advisable. Moreover, as she hath borne her cross, and knows how to deal with gentlemen, so much the better would it be for me. Nevertheless, inasmuch as she has already had two husbands, is of a tolerable age, and is taller of stature than myself, my inclination is less towards her than towards her daughter.”



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For these various considerations, Count John, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his brother, definitely laid down his government of Gelderland, and quitted the Netherlands about midsummer. Enough had not been done, in the opinion of the Prince, so long as aught remained to do, and he could not bear that his brother should desert the country in the hour of its darkness, or doubt the Almighty when his hand was veiled in clouds. "One must do one's best," said he, "and believe that when such misfortunes happen, God desires to prove us. If He sees that we do not lose our courage, He will assuredly help us. Had we thought otherwise, we should never have pierced the dykes on a memorable occasion, for it was an uncertain thing and a great sorrow for the poor people; yet did God bless the undertaking. He will bless us still, for his arm hath not been shortened."

On the 22nd of July, 1580, the Archduke Matthias, being fully aware of the general tendency of affairs, summoned a meeting of the generality in Antwerp. He did not make his appearance before the assembly, but requested that a deputation might wait upon him at his lodgings, and to this committee he unfolded his griefs. He expressed his hope that the states were not—in violation of the laws of God and man—about to throw themselves into the arms of a foreign prince. He reminded them of their duty to the holy Catholic religion to the illustrious house of Austria, while he also pathetically called their attention to the necessities of his own household, and hoped that they would, at least, provide for the arrears due to his domestics.

The states-general replied with courtesy as to the personal claims of the Archduke. For the rest, they took higher grounds, and the coming declaration of independence already pierced through the studied decorum of their language. They defended their negotiation with Anjou on the ground of necessity, averring that the King of Spain had proved inexorable to all intercession, while, through the intrigues of their bitterest enemies, they had been entirely forsaken by the Empire.

Soon afterwards, a special legation, with Saint Aldegonde at its head, was despatched to France to consult with the Duke of Anjou, and settled terms of agreement with him by the treaty of Plessis les Tours (on the 29th of September, 1580), afterwards definitely ratified by the convention of Bordeaux, signed on the 23rd of the following January.

The states of Holland and Zealand, however, kept entirely aloof from this transaction, being from the beginning opposed to the choice of Anjou. From the first to the last, they would have no master but Orange, and to him, therefore, this year they formally offered the sovereignty of their provinces; but they offered it in vain.



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The conquest of Portugal had effected a diversion in the affairs of the Netherlands. It was but a transitory one. The provinces found the hopes which they had built upon the necessity of Spain for large supplies in the peninsula—to their own consequent relief—soon changed into fears, for the rapid success of Alva in Portugal gave his master additional power to oppress the heretics of the north. Henry, the Cardinal King, had died in 1580, after succeeding to the youthful adventurer, Don Sebastian, slain during his chivalrous African campaign (4th of August, 1578). The contest for the succession which opened upon the death of the aged monarch was brief, and in fifty-eight days, the bastard Antonio, Philip's only formidable competitor, had been utterly defeated and driven forth to lurk, like 'a hunted wild beast, among rugged mountain caverns, with a price of a hundred thousand crowns upon his head. In the course of the succeeding year, Philip received homage at Lisbon as King of Portugal. From the moment of this conquest, he was more disposed, and more at leisure than ever, to vent his wrath against the Netherlands, and against the man whom he considered the incarnation of their revolt.

Cardinal Granvelle had ever whispered in the King's ear the expediency of taking off the Prince by assassination. It has been seen how subtly distilled, and how patiently hoarded, was this priest's venom against individuals, until the time arrived when he could administer the poison with effect. His hatred of Orange was intense and of ancient date. He was of opinion, too, that the Prince might be scared from the post of duty, even if the assassin's hand were not able to reach his heart. He was in favor of publicly setting a price upon his head—thinking that if the attention of all the murderers in the world were thus directed towards the illustrious victim, the Prince would tremble at the dangers which surrounded him. "A sum of money would be well employed in this way," said the Cardinal, "and, as the Prince of Orange is a vile coward, fear alone will throw him into confusion." Again, a few months later, renewing the subject, he observed, "twould be well to offer a reward of thirty or forty thousand crowns to any one who will deliver the Prince, dead or alive; since from very fear of it—as he is pusillanimous—it would not be unlikely that he should die of his own accord."

It was insulting even to Philip's intelligence to insinuate that the Prince would shrink before danger, or die of fear. Had Orange ever been inclined to bombast, he might have answered the churchman's calumny, as Caesar the soothsayer's warning:—

"-----Danger knows full well
That Caesar is more dangerous than he—"

and in truth, Philip had long trembled on his throne before the genius of the man who had foiled Spain's boldest generals and wiliest statesmen. The King, accepting the priest's advice, resolved to fulminate a ban against the Prince, and to set a price upon his head. "It will be well," wrote Philip to Parma, "to offer thirty thousand crowns or so to



any one who will deliver him dead or alive. Thus the country may be rid of a man so pernicious; or at any rate he will be held in perpetual fear, and therefore prevented from executing leisurely his designs.”



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In accordance with these suggestions and these hopes, the famous ban was accordingly drawn up, and dated on the 15th of March, 1580. It was, however, not formally published in the Netherlands until the month of June of the same year.

This edict will remain the most lasting monument to the memory of Cardinal Granvelle. It will be read when all his other state-papers and epistles—able as they incontestably are—shall have passed into oblivion. No panegyric of friend, no palliating magnanimity of foe, can roll away this rock of infamy from his tomb. It was by Cardinal Granvelle and by Philip that a price was set upon the head of the foremost man of his age, as if he had been a savage beast, and that admission into the ranks of Spain's haughty nobility was made the additional bribe to tempt the assassin.

The ban consisted of a preliminary narrative to justify the penalty with which it was concluded. It referred to the favors conferred by Philip and his father upon the Prince; to his-signal ingratitude and dissimulation. It accused him of originating the Request, the image-breaking, and the public preaching. It censured his marriage with an abbess—even during the lifetime of his wife; alluded to his campaigns against Alva, to his rebellion in Holland, and to the horrible massacres committed by Spaniards in that province—the necessary consequences of his treason. It accused him of introducing liberty of conscience, of procuring his own appointment as Ruward, of violating the Ghent treaty, of foiling the efforts of Don John, and of frustrating the counsels of the Cologne commissioners by his perpetual distrust. It charged him with a newly-organized conspiracy, in the erection of the Utrecht Union; and for these and similar crimes—set forth, with involutions, slow, spiral, and cautious as the head and front of the indictment was direct and deadly—it denounced the chastisement due to the “wretched hypocrite” who had committed such offences.

“For these causes,” concluded the ban, “we declare him traitor and miscreant, enemy of ourselves and of the country. As such we banish him perpetually from all our realms, forbidding all our subjects, of whatever quality, to communicate with him openly or privately—to administer to him victuals, drink, fire, or other necessaries. We allow all to injure him in property or life. We expose the, said William Nassau, as an enemy of the human-race—giving his property to all who may; seize it. And if anyone of our subjects or any stranger should be found sufficiently generous of heart to rid us of this pest, delivering him to us, alive or dead, or taking his life, we will cause to be furnished to him immediately after the deed shall have been done, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns; in gold. If he have committed any crime, however heinous, we promise to pardon him; and if he be not already noble, we will ennoble him for his valor.”

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Such was the celebrated ban against the Prince of Orange. It was answered before the end of the year by the memorable “Apology of the Prince of Orange” one of the most startling documents in history. No defiance was ever thundered forth in the face of a despot in more terrible tones. It had become sufficiently manifest to the royal party that the Prince was not to be purchased by “millions of money,” or by unlimited family advancement—not to be cajoled by flattery or offers of illustrious friendship. It had been decided, therefore, to terrify him into retreat, or to remove him by murder. The Government had been thoroughly convinced that the only way to finish the revolt, was to “finish Orange,” according to the ancient advice of Antonio Perez. The mask was thrown off. It had been decided to forbid the Prince bread, water, fire, and shelter; to give his wealth to the fisc, his heart to the assassin, his soul, as it was hoped, to the Father of Evil. The rupture being thus complete, it was right that the “wretched hypocrite” should answer ban with ban, royal denunciation with sublime scorn. He had ill-deserved, however, the title of hypocrite, he said. When the friend of government, he had warned them that by their complicated and perpetual persecutions they were twisting the rope of their own ruin. Was that hypocrisy? Since becoming their enemy, there had likewise been little hypocrisy found in him—unless it were hypocrisy to make open war upon government, to take their cities, to expel their armies from the country.

The proscribed rebel, towering to a moral and even social superiority over the man who affected to be his master by right divine, swept down upon his antagonist with crushing effect. He repudiated the idea of a king in the Netherlands. The word might be legitimate in Castillo, or Naples, or the Indies, but the provinces knew no such title. Philip had inherited in those countries only the power of Duke or Count—a power closely limited by constitutions more ancient than his birthright. Orange was no rebel then—Philip no legitimate monarch. Even were the Prince rebellious, it was no more than Philip’s ancestor, Albert of Austria, had been towards his anointed sovereign, Emperor Adolphus of Nassau, ancestor of William. The ties of allegiance and conventional authority being, severed, it had become idle for the King to affect superiority of lineage to the man whose family had occupied illustrious stations when the Habsburgs were obscure squires in Switzerland, and had ruled as sovereign in the Netherlands before that overshadowing house had ever been named.

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But whatever the hereditary claims of Philip in the country, he had forfeited them by the violation of his oaths, by his tyrannical suppression of the charters of the land; while by his personal crimes he had lost all pretension to sit in judgment upon his fellow man. Was a people not justified in rising against authority when all their laws had been trodden under foot, “not once only, but a million of times?”—and was William of Orange, lawful husband of the virtuous Charlotte de Bourbon, to be denounced for moral delinquency by a lascivious, incestuous, adulterous, and murderous king? With horrible distinctness he laid before the monarch all the crimes of which he believed him guilty, and having thus told Philip to his beard, “thus diddest thou,” he had a withering word for the priest who stood at his back. “Tell me,” he cried, “by whose command Cardinal Granvelle administered poison to the Emperor Maximilian? I know what the Emperor told me, and how much fear he felt afterwards for the King and for all Spaniards.”

He ridiculed the effrontery of men like Philip and Granvelle; in charging “distrust” upon others, when it was the very atmosphere of their own existence. He proclaimed that sentiment to be the only salvation for the country. He reminded Philip of the words which his namesake of Macedon—a schoolboy in tyranny, compared to himself—had heard from the lips of Demosthenes—that the strongest fortress of a free people against a tyrant was distrust. That sentiment, worthy of eternal memory, the Prince declared that he had taken from the “divine philippic,” to engrave upon the heart, of the nation, and he prayed God that he might be more readily believed than the great orator had been by his people.

He treated with scorn the price set upon his head, ridiculing this project to terrify him, for its want of novelty, and asking the monarch if he supposed the rebel ignorant of the various bargains which had frequently been made before with cutthroats and poisoners to take away his life. “I am in the hand of God,” said William of Orange; “my worldly goods and my life have been long since dedicated to His service. He will dispose of them as seems best for His glory and my salvation.”

On the contrary, however, if it could be demonstrated, or even hoped, that his absence would benefit the cause of the country, he proclaimed himself ready to go into exile.

Would to God,” said he, in conclusion, that my perpetual banishment, or even my death, could bring you a true deliverance from so many calamities. Oh, how consoling would be such banishment—how sweet such a death! For why have I exposed my property? Was it that I might enrich myself? Why have I lost my brothers? Was it that I might find new; ones? Why have I left my son so long a prisoner? Can you give me another? Why have I put my life so often in, danger? What reward, can I hope after my long services, and the

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almost total wreck, of my earthly fortunes, if not the prize, of having acquired, perhaps at the expense of my life, your liberty?—If then, my masters, if you judge that my absence or my death can serve you, behold me ready to obey. Command me —send me to the ends of the earth—I will obey. Here is my head, over which no prince, no monarch, has power but yourselves. Dispose of it for your good, for the preservation of your Republic, but if you judge that the moderate amount of experience and industry which is in me, if you judge that the remainder of my property and of my life can yet be of service to you, I dedicate them afresh to you and to the country.”

His motto—most appropriate to his life and character—“Je maintiendrai,” was the concluding phrase of the document. His arms and signature were also formally appended, and the Apology, translated into most modern languages, was sent, to nearly every potentate in Christendom. It had been previously, on the 13th of December, 1580, read before the assembly of the united states at Delft, and approved as cordially as the ban was indignantly denounced.

During the remainder of the year 1580, and the half of the following year, the seat of hostilities was mainly in the northeast-Parma, while waiting the arrival of fresh troops, being inactive. The operations, like the armies and the generals, were petty. Hohenlo was opposed to Renneberg. After a few insignificant victories, the latter laid siege to Steenwyk, a city in itself of no great importance, but the key to the province of Drenthe. The garrison consisted of six hundred soldiers, and half as many trained burghers. Renneberg, having six thousand foot and twelve hundred horse, summoned the place to surrender, but was answered with defiance. Captain Cornput, who had escaped from Groningen, after unsuccessfully warning the citizens of Renneberg’s meditated treason, commanded in Steenwyk, and his courage and cheerfulness sustained the population of the city during a close winter siege. Tumultuous mobs in the streets demanding that the place should be given over ere it was too late, he denounced to their faces as “flocks of gabbling geese,” unworthy the attention of brave men. To a butcher who, with the instinct of his craft, begged to be informed what the population were to eat when the meat was all gone, he coolly observed, “We will eat you, villain, first of all, when the time comes; so go home and rest assured that you, at least, are not to die of starvation.”

With such rough but cheerful admonitions did the honest soldier, at the head of his little handful, sustain the courage of the beleaguered city. Meantime Renneberg pressed it hard. He bombarded it with red-hot balls, a new invention introduced five years before by Stephen Bathor, King of Poland, at the siege of Dantzic. Many houses were consumed, but still Cornput and the citizens held firm. As the winter advanced, and the succor which had been promised still

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remained in the distance, Renneberg began to pelt the city with sarcasms, which, it was hoped, might prove more effective than the red-hot balls. He sent a herald to know if the citizens had eaten all their horses yet; a question which was answered by an ostentatious display of sixty starving hacks—all that could be mustered—upon the heights. He sent them on another occasion, a short letter, which ran as follows:

“Most honorable, most steadfast,—As, during the present frost, you have but little exercise in the trenches—as you cannot pass your time in twirling your finger-rings, seeing that they have all been sold to pay your soldiers’ wages—as you have nothing to rub your teeth upon, nor to scour your stomachs withal, and as, nevertheless, you require something if only to occupy your minds, I send you the enclosed letter, in hope it may yield amusement.—January 15, 1581.”

The enclosure was a letter from the Prince of Orange to the Duke of Anjou, which, as it was pretended, had been intercepted. It was a clumsy forgery, but it answered the purpose of more skilful counterfeiting, at a period when political and religious enmity obscured men’s judgment. “As to the point of religion,” the Prince was made to observe, for example, to his illustrious correspondent, “that is all plain and clear. No sovereign who hopes to come to any great advancement ought to consider religion, or hold it in regard. Your Highness, by means of the garrisons, and fortresses, will be easily master of the principal cities in Flanders and Brabant, even if the citizens were opposed to you. Afterwards you will compel them without difficulty to any religion which may seem most conducive to the interests of your Highness.”

Odious and cynical as was the whole tone of the letter, it was extensively circulated. There were always natures base and brutal enough to accept the calumny and to make it current among kindred souls. It may be doubted whether Renneberg attached faith to the document; but it was natural that he should take a malicious satisfaction in spreading this libel against the man whose perpetual scorn he had so recently earned. Nothing was more common than such forgeries, and at that very moment a letter, executed with equal grossness, was passing from hand to hand, which purported to be from the Count himself to Parma. History has less interest in contradicting the calumnies against a man like Renneberg. The fictitious epistle of Orange, however, was so often republished, and the copies so carefully distributed, that the Prince had thought it important to add an express repudiation of its authorship, by way of appendix to his famous Apology. He took the occasion to say, that if a particle of proof could be brought that he had written the letter, or any letter resembling it, he would forthwith leave the Netherlands, never to show his face there again.

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Notwithstanding this well known denial, however, Renneberg thought it facetious to send the letter into Steenvayk, where it produced but small effect upon the minds' of the burghers. Meantime, they had received intimation that succor was on its way. Hollow balls containing letters were shot into the town, bringing the welcome intelligence that the English colonel, John Norris, with six thousand states' troops, would soon make his appearance for their relief, and the brave Cornput added his cheerful exhortations to heighten the satisfaction thus produced. A day or two afterwards, three quails were caught in the public square, and the commandant improved the circumstance by many quaint homilies. The number three, he observed, was typical of the Holy Trinity, which had thus come symbolically to their relief. The Lord had sustained the fainting Israelites with quails. The number three indicated three weeks, within which time the promised succor was sure to arrive. Accordingly, upon the 22nd of February, 1581, at the expiration of the third week, Norris succeeded in victualling the town, the merry and steadfast Cornput was established as a true prophet, and Count Renneberg abandoned the siege in despair.

The subsequent career of that unhappy nobleman was brief. On the 19th of July his troops were signally defeated by Sonny—and Norris, the fugitive royalists retreating into Groningen at the very moment when their general, who had been prevented by illness from commanding them, was receiving the last sacraments. Remorse, shame, and disappointment had literally brought Renneberg to his grave.

“His treason,” says a contemporary, “was a nail in his coffin, and on his deathbed he bitterly bemoaned his crime. ‘Groningen! Groningen!’ would that I had never seen thy walls!” he cried repeatedly in his last hours. He refused to see his sister, whose insidious counsels had combined with his own evil passions to make him a traitor; and he died on the 23rd of July, 1581, repentant and submissive. His heart, after his decease, was found “shrivelled to the dimensions of a walnut,” a circumstance attributed to poison by some, to remorse by others. His regrets; his early death, and his many attractive qualities, combined to: save his character from universal denunciation, and his name, although indelibly stained by treason, was ever mentioned with pity rather than with rancor.

Great changes, destined to be perpetual, were steadily preparing in the internal condition of the provinces. A preliminary measure of an important character had been taken early this year by the assembly of the united provinces held in the month of January at Delft. This was the establishment of a general executive council. The constitution of the board was arranged on the 13th of the month, and was embraced in eighteen articles. The number of councillors was fixed at thirty, all to be native Netherlanders; a certain proportion to be appointed from each province by its estates. The advice and consent of this body as to treaties with foreign powers were to be indispensable, but they were not to interfere with the rights and duties of the states-general, nor to interpose any obstacle to the arrangements with the Duke of Anjou.

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While this additional machine for the self-government of the provinces was in the course of creation; the Spanish monarch, on the other hand, had made another effort to recover the authority which he felt slipping from his grasp. Philip was in Portugal, preparing for his coronation in, that, new kingdom—an event to be nearly contemporaneous with his deposition from the Netherland sovereignty, so solemnly conferred upon him a quarter of a century before in Brussels; but although thus distant, he was confident that he could more wisely govern the Netherlands than the inhabitants could do, and unwilling as ever to confide in the abilities of those to whom he had delegated his authority. Provided; as he unquestionably was at that moment, with a more energetic representative than any who had before exercised the functions of royal governor in the provinces, he was still disposed to harass, to doubt, and to interfere. With the additional cares of the Portuguese Conquest upon his hands, he felt as irresistibly impelled as ever to superintend the minute details of provincial administration. To do this was impossible. It was, however, not impossible, by attempting to do it, to produce much mischief. “It gives me pain,” wrote Granvelle, “to see his Majesty working as before—choosing to understand everything and to do everything. By this course, as I have often said before, he really accomplishes much less.” The King had, moreover, recently committed the profound error of sending the Duchess Margaret of Parma to the Netherlands again. He had the fatuity to believe her memory so tenderly cherished in the provinces as to ensure a burst of loyalty at her reappearance, while the irritation which he thus created in the breast of her son he affected to disregard. The event was what might have been foreseen. The Netherlanders were very moderately excited by the arrival of their former regent, but the Prince of Parma was furious. His mother actually arrived at Namur in the month of August, 1580, to assume the civil administration of the provinces,—and he was himself, according to the King’s request, to continue in the command of the army. Any one who had known human nature at all, would have recognized that Alexander Farnese was not the man to be put into leading strings. A sovereign who was possessed of any administrative sagacity, would have seen the absurdity of taking the reins of government at that crisis from the hands of a most determined and energetic man, to confide them to the keeping of a woman. A king who was willing to reflect upon the consequences of his own acts, must have foreseen the scandal likely to result from an open quarrel for precedence between such a mother and son. Margaret of Parma was instantly informed, however, by Alexander, that a divided authority like that proposed was entirely out of the question. Both offered to resign; but Alexander was unflinching in his determination to retain all the power or none.

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The Duchess, as docile to her son after her arrival as she had been to the King on undertaking the journey, and feeling herself unequal to the task imposed upon her, implored Philip's permission to withdraw, almost as soon as she had reached her destination. Granvelle's opinion was likewise opposed to this interference with the administration of Alexander, and the King at last suffered himself to be overruled. By the end of the year 1581, letters arrived confirming the Prince of Parma in his government, but requesting the Duchess of Parma to remain, privately in the Netherlands. She accordingly continued to reside there under an assumed name until the autumn of 1583, when she was at last permitted to return to Italy.

During the summer of 1581, the same spirit of persecution which had inspired the Catholics to inflict such infinite misery upon those of the Reformed faith in the Netherlands, began to manifest itself in overt acts against the Papists by those who had at last obtained political ascendancy over them. Edicts were published in Antwerp, in Utrecht, and in different cities of Holland, suspending the exercise of the Roman worship. These statutes were certainly a long way removed in horror from those memorable placards which sentenced the Reformers by thousands to the axe, the cord, and the stake, but it was still melancholy to see the persecuted becoming persecutors in their turn. They were excited to these stringent measures by the noisy zeal of certain Dominican monks in Brussels, whose extravagant discourses were daily inflaming the passions of the Catholics to a dangerous degree. The authorities of the city accordingly thought it necessary to suspend, by proclamation, the public exercise of the ancient religion, assigning, as their principal reason for this prohibition, the shocking jugglery by which simple-minded persons were constantly deceived. They alluded particularly to the practice of working miracles by means of relics, pieces of the holy cross, bones of saints, and the perspiration of statues. They charged that bits of lath were daily exhibited as fragments of the cross; that the bones of dogs and monkeys were held up for adoration as those of saints; and that oil was poured habitually into holes drilled in the heads of statues, that the populace might believe in their miraculous sweating. For these reasons, and to avoid the tumult and possible bloodshed to which the disgust excited by such charlatany might give rise, the Roman Catholic worship was suspended until the country should be restored to greater tranquillity. Similar causes led to similar proclamations in other cities. The Prince of Orange lamented the intolerant spirit thus showing itself among those who had been its martyrs, but it was not possible at that moment to keep it absolutely under control.

A most important change was now to take place in his condition, a most vital measure was to be consummated by the provinces. The step, which could never be retraced was, after long hesitation, finally taken upon the 26th of July, 1581, upon which day the united provinces, assembled at the Hague, solemnly declared their independence of Philip, and renounced their allegiance for ever.



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This act was accomplished with the deliberation due to its gravity. At the same time it left the country in a very divided condition. This was inevitable. The Prince had done all that one man could do to hold the Netherlands together and unite them perpetually into one body politic, and perhaps, if he had been inspired by a keener personal ambition, this task might have been accomplished.—The seventeen provinces might have accepted his dominion, but they would agree to that of no other sovereign. Providence had not decreed that the country, after its long agony, should give birth to a single and perfect commonwealth. The Walloon provinces had already fallen off from the cause, notwithstanding the entreaties of the Prince. The other Netherlands, after long and tedious negotiation with Anjou, had at last consented to his supremacy, but from this arrangement Holland and Zeeland held themselves aloof. By a somewhat anomalous proceeding, they sent deputies along with those of the other provinces, to the conferences with the Duke, but it was expressly understood that they would never accept him as sovereign. They were willing to contract with him and with their sister provinces—over which he was soon to exercise authority—a firm and perpetual league, but as to their own chief, their hearts were fixed. The Prince of Orange should be their lord and master, and none other. It lay only in his self-denying character that he had not been clothed with this dignity long before. He had, however, persisted in the hope that all the provinces might be brought to acknowledge the Duke of Anjou as their sovereign, under conditions which constituted a free commonwealth with an hereditary chief, and in this hope he had constantly refused concession to the wishes of the northern provinces. He in reality exercised sovereign power over nearly the whole population, of the Netherlands. Already in 1580, at the assembly held in April, the states of Holland had formally requested him to assume the full sovereignty over them, with the title of Count of Holland and Zeeland forfeited by Philip. He had not consented, and the proceedings had been kept comparatively secret. As the negotiations with Anjou advanced, and as the corresponding abjuration of Philip was more decisively indicated, the consent of the Prince to this request was more warmly urged. As it was evident that the provinces thus bent upon placing him at their head, could by no possibility be induced to accept the sovereignty of Anjou—as, moreover; the act of renunciation of Philip could no longer be deferred, the Prince of Orange reluctantly and provisionally accepted the supreme power over Holland and Zeeland. This arrangement was finally accomplished upon the 24th of July, 1581, and the act of abjuration took place two days afterwards. The offer of the sovereignty over the other united provinces had been accepted by Anjou six months before.

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Thus, the Netherlands were divided into three portions—the reconciled provinces, the united provinces under Anjou, and the northern provinces under Orange; the last division forming the germ, already nearly developed, of the coming republic. The constitution, or catalogue of conditions, by which the sovereignty accorded to Anjou was reduced to such narrow limits as to be little more than a nominal authority, while the power remained in the hands of the representative body of the provinces, will be described, somewhat later, together with the inauguration of the Duke. For the present it is necessary that the reader should fully understand the relative position of the Prince and of the northern provinces. The memorable act of renunciation—the Netherland declaration of independence—will then be briefly explained.

On the 29th of March, 1580, a resolution passed the assembly of Holland and Zealand never to make peace or enter into any negotiations with the King of Spain on the basis of his sovereignty. The same resolution provided that his name—hitherto used in all public acts—should be for ever discarded, that his seal should be broken, and that the name and seal of the Prince of Orange should be substituted in all commissions and public documents. At almost the same time the states of Utrecht passed a similar resolution. These offers were, however, not accepted, and the affair was preserved profoundly secret. On the 5th of July, 1581, “the knights, nobles, and cities of Holland and Zealand,” again, in an urgent and solemn manner, requested the Prince to accept the “entire authority as sovereign and chief of the land, as long as the war should continue.” This limitation as to time was inserted most reluctantly by the states, and because it was perfectly well understood that without it the Prince would not accept the sovereignty at all. The act by which this dignity was offered, conferred full power to command all forces by land and sea, to appoint all military officers, and to conduct all warlike operations, without the control or advice of any person whatsoever. It authorized him, with consent of the states, to appoint all financial and judicial officers, created him the supreme executive chief, and fountain of justice and pardon, and directed him “to maintain the exercise only of the Reformed evangelical religion, without, however, permitting that inquiries should be made into any man’s belief or conscience, or that any injury or hindrance should be offered to any man on account of his religion.”

The sovereignty thus pressingly offered, and thus limited as to time, was finally accepted by William of Orange, according to a formal act dated at the Hague, 5th of July, 1581, but it will be perceived that no powers were conferred by this new instrument beyond those already exercised by the Prince. It was, as it were, a formal continuance of the functions which he had exercised since 1576 as the King’s

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stadholder, according to his old commission of 1555, although a vast, difference existed in reality. The King's name was now discarded and his sovereignty disowned, while the proscribed rebel stood in his place, exercising supreme functions, not vicariously, but in his own name. The limitation as to time was, moreover, soon afterwards secretly, and without the knowledge of Orange, cancelled by the states. They were determined that the Prince should be their sovereign—if they could make him so—for the term of his life.

The offer having thus been made and accepted upon the 5th of July, oaths of allegiance and fidelity were exchanged between the Prince and the estates upon the 24th of the same month. In these solemnities, the states, as representing the provinces, declared that because the King of Spain, contrary to his oath as Count of Holland and Zealand, had not only not protected these provinces, but had sought with all his might to reduce them to eternal slavery, it had been found necessary to forsake him. They therefore proclaimed every inhabitant absolved from allegiance, while at the same time, in the name of the population, they swore fidelity to the Prince of Orange, as representing the supreme authority.

Two days afterwards, upon the 26th of July, 1581, the memorable declaration of independence was issued by the deputies of the united provinces, then solemnly assembled at the Hague. It was called the Act of Abjuration. It deposed Philip from his sovereignty, but was not the proclamation of a new form of government, for the united provinces were not ready to dispense with an hereditary chief. Unluckily, they had already provided themselves with a very bad one to succeed Philip in the dominion over most of their territory, while the northern provinces were fortunate enough and wise enough to take the Father of the country for their supreme magistrate.

The document by which the provinces renounced their allegiance was not the most felicitous of their state papers. It was too prolix and technical. Its style had more of the formal phraseology of legal documents than befitted this great appeal to the whole world and to all time. Nevertheless, this is but matter of taste. The Netherlanders were so eminently a law-abiding people, that, like the American patriots of the eighteenth century, they on most occasions preferred punctilious precision to florid declamation. They chose to conduct their revolt according to law. At the same time, while thus decently wrapping herself in conventional garments, the spirit of Liberty revealed none the less her majestic proportions.

At the very outset of the Abjuration, these fathers of the Republic laid down wholesome truths, which at that time seemed startling blasphemies in the ears of Christendom. "All mankind know," said the preamble, "that a prince is appointed by God to cherish his subjects, even as a shepherd to guard his sheep. When, therefore, the prince—does not fulfil his duty as protector; when he oppresses his subjects, destroys their ancient liberties, and treats them as slaves, he is to be considered, not a prince, but a tyrant.

As such, the estates of the land may lawfully and reasonably depose him, and elect another in his room.”

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Having enunciated these maxims, the estates proceeded to apply them to their own case, and certainly never was an ampler justification for renouncing a prince since princes were first instituted. The states ran through the history of the past quarter of a century, patiently accumulating a load of charges against the monarch, a tithe of which would have furnished cause for his dethronement. Without passion or exaggeration, they told the world their wrongs. The picture was not highly colored. On the contrary, it was rather a feeble than a striking portrait of the monstrous iniquity which had so long been established over them. Nevertheless, they went through the narrative conscientiously and earnestly. They spoke of the King's early determination to govern the Netherlands, not by natives but by Spaniards; to treat them not as constitutional countries, but as conquered provinces; to regard the inhabitants not as liege subjects, but as enemies; above all, to supersede their ancient liberty by the Spanish Inquisition, and they alluded to the first great step in this scheme—the creation of the new bishoprics, each with its staff of inquisitors.

They noticed the memorable Petition, the mission of Berghen and Montigny, their imprisonment and taking off, in violation of all national law, even that which had ever been held sacred by the most cruel and tyrannical princes. They sketched the history of Alva's administration; his entrapping the most eminent nobles by false promises, and delivering them to the executioner; his countless sentences of death, outlawry, and confiscation; his erection of citadels to curb, his imposition of the tenth and twentieth penny to exhaust the land; his Blood Council and its achievements; and the immeasurable, woe produced by hanging, burning, banishing, and plundering, during his seven years of residence. They adverted to the Grand Commander, as having been sent, not to improve the condition of the country, but to pursue the same course of tyranny by more concealed ways. They spoke of the horrible mutiny which broke forth at his death; of the Antwerp Fury; of the express approbation rendered to that great outrage by the King, who had not only praised the crime, but promised to recompense the criminals. They alluded to Don John of Austria and his duplicity; to his pretended confirmation of the Ghent treaty; to his attempts to divide the country against itself; to the Escovedo policy; to the intrigues with the German regiments. They touched upon the Cologne negotiations, and the fruitless attempt of the patriots upon that occasion to procure freedom of religion, while the object of the royalists was only to distract and divide the nation. Finally, they commented with sorrow and despair upon that last and crowning measure of tyranny—the ban against the Prince of Orange.



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They calmly observed, after this recital, that they were sufficiently justified in forsaking a sovereign who for more than twenty years had forsaken them. Obeying the law of nature—desirous of maintaining the rights, charters, and liberties of their fatherland—determined to escape from slavery to Spaniards—and making known their decision to the world, they declared the King of Spain deposed from his sovereignty, and proclaimed that they should recognize thenceforth neither his title nor jurisdiction. Three days afterwards, on the 29th of July, the assembly adopted a formula, by which all persons were to be required to signify their abjuration.

Such were the forms by which the united provinces threw off their allegiance to Spain, and ipso facto established a republic, which was to flourish for two centuries. This result, however, was not exactly foreseen by the congress which deposed Philip. The fathers of the commonwealth did not baptize it by the name of Republic. They did not contemplate a change in their form of government. They had neither an aristocracy nor a democracy in their thoughts. Like the actors in our own great national drama, these Netherland patriots were struggling to sustain, not to overthrow; unlike them, they claimed no theoretical freedom for humanity—promulgated no doctrine of popular sovereignty: they insisted merely on the fulfilment of actual contracts, signed sealed, and sworn to by many successive sovereigns. Acting, upon the principle that government should be for the benefit of the governed, and in conformity to the dictates of reason and justice, they examined the facts by those divine lights, and discovered cause to discard their ruler. They did not object to being ruled. They were satisfied with their historical institutions, and preferred the mixture of hereditary sovereignty with popular representation, to which they were accustomed. They did not devise an a priori constitution. Philip having violated the law of reason and the statutes of the land, was deposed, and a new chief magistrate was to be elected in his stead. This was popular sovereignty in fact, but not in words. The deposition and election could be legally justified only by the inherent right of the people to depose and to elect; yet the provinces, in their Declaration of Independence, spoke of the divine right of kings, even while dethroning, by popular right, their own King!

So also, in the instructions given by the states to their envoys charged to justify the abjuration before the Imperial diet held at Augsburg, twelve months later, the highest ground was claimed for the popular right to elect or depose the sovereign, while at the same time, kings were spoken of as “appointed by God.” It is true that they were described, in the same clause, as “chosen by the people”—which was, perhaps, as exact a concurrence in the maxim of *Vox populi, vox Dei*, as the boldest democrat of the day could demand. In truth, a more democratic

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course would have defeated its own ends. The murderous and mischievous pranks of Imbize, Ryhove, and such demagogues, at Ghent and elsewhere, with their wild theories of what they called Grecian, Roman, and Helvetian republicanism, had inflicted damage enough on the cause of freedom, and had paved the road for the return of royal despotism. The senators assembled at the Hague gave more moderate instructions to their delegates at Augsburg. They were to place the King's tenure upon contract—not an implied one, but a contract as literal as the lease of a farm. The house of Austria, they were to maintain, had come into the possession of the seventeen Netherlands upon certain express conditions, and with the understanding that its possession was to cease with the first condition broken. It was a question of law and fact, not of royal or popular right. They were to take the ground, not only that the contract had been violated, but that the foundation of perpetual justice upon which it rested; had likewise been undermined. It was time to vindicate both written charters and general principles. "God has given absolute power to no mortal man," said Saint Aldegonde, "to do his own will against all laws and all reason." "The contracts which the King has broken are no pedantic fantasies," said the estates, "but laws planted by nature in the universal heart of mankind, and expressly acquiesced in by prince and people." All men, at least, who speak the English tongue, will accept the conclusion of the provinces, that when laws which protected the citizen against arbitrary imprisonment and guaranteed him a trial in his own province—which forbade the appointment of foreigners to high office—which secured the property of the citizen from taxation, except by the representative body—which forbade intermeddling on the part of the sovereign with the conscience of the subject in religious matters—when such laws had been subverted by blood tribunals, where drowsy judges sentenced thousands to stake and scaffold without a hearing by excommunication, confiscation, banishment-by hanging, beheading, burning, to such enormous extent and with such terrible monotony that the executioner's sword came to be looked upon as the only symbol of justice—then surely it might be said, without exaggeration, that the complaints of the Netherlanders were "no pedantic fantasies," and that the King had ceased to perform his functions as dispenser of God's justice.

The Netherlanders dealt with facts. They possessed a body of laws, monuments of their national progress, by which as good a share of individual liberty was secured to the citizen as was then enjoyed in any country of the world. Their institutions admitted of great improvement, no doubt; but it was natural that a people so circumstanced should be unwilling to exchange their condition for the vassalage of "Moors or Indians."



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At the same time it may be doubted whether the instinct for political freedom only would have sustained them in the long contest, and whether the bonds which united them to the Spanish Crown would have been broken, had it not been for the stronger passion for religious liberty, by which so large a portion of the people was animated. Boldly as the united states of the Netherlands laid down their political maxima, the quarrel might perhaps have been healed if the religious question had admitted of a peaceable solution. Philip's bigotry amounting to frenzy, and the Netherlanders of "the religion" being willing, in their own words, "to die the death" rather than abandon the Reformed faith, there was upon this point no longer room for hope. In the act of abjuration, however, it was thought necessary to give offence to no class of the inhabitants, but to lay down such principles only as enlightened Catholics would not oppose. All parties abhorred the Inquisition, and hatred to that institution is ever prominent among the causes assigned for the deposition of the monarch. "Under pretence of maintaining the Roman religion," said the estates, "the King has sought by evil means to bring into operation the whole strength of the placards and of the Inquisition—the first and true cause of all our miseries."

Without making any assault upon the Roman Catholic faith, the authors of the great act by which Philip was for ever expelled from the Netherlands showed plainly enough that religious persecution had driven them at last to extremity. At the same time, they were willing—for the sake of conciliating all classes of their countrymen—to bring the political causes of discontent into the foreground, and to use discreet language upon the religious question.

Such, then, being the spirit which prompted the provinces upon this great occasion, it may be asked who were the men who signed a document of such importance? In whose name and by what authority did they act against the sovereign? The signers of the declaration of independence acted in the name and by the authority of the Netherlands people. The estates were the constitutional representatives of that people. The statesmen of that day discovering, upon cold analysis of facts, that Philip's sovereignty was, legally forfeited; formally proclaimed that forfeiture. Then inquiring what had become of the sovereignty, they found it not in the mass of the people, but in the representative body, which actually personated the people. The estates of the different provinces—consisting of the knights, nobles, and burgesses of each—sent, accordingly, their deputies to the general assembly at the Hague; and by this congress the decree of abjuration was issued. It did, not occur to any one to summon the people in their primary assemblies, nor would the people of that day, have comprehended the objects of such a summons. They were accustomed to the action of the estates, and those bodies represented as large



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a number of political capacities as could be expected of assemblies chosen then upon general principles. The hour had not arrived for more profound analysis of the social compact. Philip was accordingly deposed justly, legally formally justly, because it had become necessary to abjur a monarch who was determined not only to oppress; but to exterminate his people; legally, because he had habitually violated the constitutions which he had sworn to support; formally, because the act was done in the name of the people, by the body historically representing the people.

What, then, was the condition of the nation, after this great step had been taken? It stood, as it were, with its sovereignty in its hand, dividing it into two portions, and offering it, thus separated, to two distinct individuals. The sovereignty of Holland and Zealand had been reluctantly accepted by Orange. The sovereignty of the united provinces had been offered to Anjou, but the terms of agreement with that Duke had not yet been ratified. The movement was therefore triple, consisting of an abjuration and of two separate elections of hereditary chiefs; these two elections being accomplished in the same manner, by the representative bodies respectively of the united provinces, and of Holland and Zealand. Neither the abjuration nor the elections were acted upon beforehand by the communities, the train-bands, or the guilds of the cities—all represented, in fact, by the magistrates and councils of each; nor by the peasantry of the open country—all supposed to be represented by the knights and nobles. All classes of individuals, however; arranged in various political or military combinations, gave their acquiescence afterwards, together with their oaths of allegiance. The people approved the important steps taken by their representatives.

Without a direct intention on the part of the people or its leaders to establish a republic, the Republic established itself. Providence did not permit the whole country, so full of wealth intelligence, healthy political action—so stocked with powerful cities and an energetic population, to be combined into one free and prosperous commonwealth. The factious ambition of a few grandees, the cynical venality of many nobles, the frenzy of the Ghent democracy, the spirit of religious intolerance, the consummate military and political genius of Alexander Farnese, the exaggerated self-abnegation and the tragic fate of Orange, all united to dissever this group of flourishing and kindred provinces.

The want of personal ambition on the part of William the Silent inflicted perhaps a serious damage upon his country. He believed a single chief requisite for the united states; he might have been, but always refused to become that chief; and yet he has been held up for centuries by many writers as a conspirator and a self-seeking intriguer. "It seems to me," said he, with equal pathos and truth, upon one occasion, "that I was born in this



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bad planet that all which I do might be misinterpreted.” The people worshipped him, and there was many an occasion when his election would have been carried with enthusiasm. “These provinces,” said John of Nassau, “are coming very unwillingly into the arrangement with the Duke of Alencon, The majority feel much more inclined to elect the Prince, who is daily, and without intermission, implored to give his consent. His Grace, however, will in no wise agree to this; not because he fears the consequences, such as loss of property or increased danger, for therein he is plunged as deeply as he ever could be;—on the contrary, if he considered only the interests of his race and the grandeur of his house, he could expect nothing but increase of honor, gold, and gear, with all other prosperity. He refuses only on this account that it may not be thought that, instead of religious freedom for the country, he has been seeking a kingdom for himself and his own private advancement. Moreover, he believes that the connexion with France will be of more benefit to the country and to Christianity than if a peace should be made with Spain, or than if he should himself accept the sovereignty, as he is desired to do.”

The unfortunate negotiations with Anjou, to which no man was more opposed than Count John, proceeded therefore. In the meantime, the sovereignty over the united provinces was provisionally held by the national council, and, at the urgent solicitation of the states-general, by the Prince. The Archduke Matthias, whose functions were most unceremoniously brought to an end by the transactions which we have been recording, took his leave of the states, and departed in the month of October. Brought to the country a beardless boy, by the intrigues of a faction who wished to use him as a tool against William of Orange, he had quietly submitted, on the contrary, to serve as the instrument of that great statesman. His personality during his residence was null, and he had to expiate, by many a petty mortification, by many a bitter tear, the boyish ambition which brought him to the Netherlands. He had certainly had ample leisure to repent the haste with which he had got out of his warm bed in Vienna to take his bootless journey to Brussels. Nevertheless, in a country where so much baseness, cruelty, and treachery was habitually practised by men of high position, as was the case in the Netherlands; it is something in favor of Matthias that he had not been base, or cruel, or treacherous. The states voted him, on his departure, a pension of fifty thousand guldens annually, which was probably not paid with exemplary regularity.

CHAPTER V.



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Policy of electing Anjou as sovereign—Commode et incommode—Views of Orange—Opinions at the French Court,—Anjou relieves Cambray— Parma besieges Tournay— Brave defence by the Princess of Espinoy— Honorable capitulation—Anjou's courtship in England—The Duke's arrival in the Netherlands—Portrait of Anjou—Festivities in Flushing—Inauguration at Antwerp—The conditions or articles subscribed to by the Duke—Attempt upon the life of Orange—The assassin's papers—Confession of Venero—Gaspar Anastro—His escape —Execution of Venero and Zimmermann—Precarious condition of the Prince—His recovery—Death of the Princess—Premature letters of Parma—Further negotiations with Orange as to the sovereignty of Holland and Zeeland —Character of the revised Constitution— Comparison of the positions of the Prince before and after his acceptance of the courtship.

Thus it was arranged that, for the—present, at least, the Prince should exercise sovereignty over Holland and Zeeland; although he had himself used his utmost exertions to induce those provinces to join the rest of the United Netherlands in the proposed election of Anjou. This, however, they sternly refused to do. There was also a great disinclination felt by many in the other states to this hazardous offer of their allegiance, and it was the personal influence of Orange that eventually carried the measure through. Looking at the position of affairs and at the character of Anjou, as they appear to us now, it seems difficult to account for the Prince's policy. It is so natural to judge only by the result, that we are ready to censure statesmen for consequences which beforehand might seem utterly incredible, and for reading falsely human characters whose entire development only a late posterity has had full opportunity to appreciate. Still, one would think that Anjou had been sufficiently known to inspire distrust.

There was but little, too, in the aspect of the French court to encourage hopes of valuable assistance from that quarter. It was urged, not without reason, that the French were as likely to become as dangerous as the Spaniards; that they would prove nearer and more troublesome masters; that France intended the incorporation of the Netherlands into her own kingdom; that the provinces would therefore be dispersed for ever from the German Empire; and that it was as well to hold to the tyrant under whom they had been born, as to give themselves voluntarily to another of their own making. In short, it was maintained, in homely language, that "France and Spain were both under one coverlid." It might have been added that only extreme misery could make the provinces take either bedfellow. Moreover, it was asserted, with reason, that Anjou would be a very expensive master, for his luxurious and extravagant habits were notorious—that he was a man in whom no confidence could be placed, and one who would grasp at arbitrary power by any means which might present themselves.

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Above all, it was urged that he was not of the true religion, that he hated the professors of that faith in his heart, and that it was extremely unwise for men whose dearest interests were their religious ones, to elect a sovereign of opposite creed to their own. To these plausible views the Prince of Orange and those who acted with him, had, however; sufficient answers. The Netherlands had waited long enough for assistance from other quarters. Germany would not lift a finger in the cause; on the contrary, the whole of Germany, whether Protestant or Catholic, was either openly or covertly hostile. It was madness to wait till assistance came to them from unseen sources. It was time for them to assist themselves, and to take the best they could get; for when men were starving they could not afford to be dainty. They might be bound, hand and foot, they might be overwhelmed a thousand times before they would receive succor from Germany, or from any land but France. Under the circumstances in which they found themselves, hope delayed was but a cold and meagre consolation.

“To speak plainly,” said Orange, “asking us to wait is very much as if you should keep a man three days without any food in the expectation of a magnificent banquet, should persuade him to refuse bread, and at the end of three days should tell him that the banquet was not ready, but that a still better one was in preparation. Would it not be better, then, that the poor man, to avoid starvation, should wait no longer, but accept bread wherever he might find it? Such is our case at present.”

It was in this vein that he ever wrote and spoke: The Netherlands were to rely upon their own exertions, and to procure the best alliance, together with the most efficient protection possible. They were not strong enough to cope singlehanded with their powerful tyrant, but they were strong enough if they used the instruments which Heaven offered. It was not trusting but tempting Providence to wait supinely, instead of grasping boldly at the means of rescue within reach. It became the character of brave men to act, not to expect. “Otherwise,” said the Prince, “we may climb to the top of trees, like the Anabaptists of Munster, and expect God’s assistance to drop from the clouds.” It is only by listening to these arguments so often repeated, that we can comprehend the policy of Orange at thin period. “God has said that he would furnish the ravens with food, and the lions with their prey,” said he; “but the birds and the lions do not, therefore, sit in their nests and their lairs waiting for their food to descend from heaven, but they seek it where it is to be found.” So also, at a later day, when events seemed to have justified the distrust so, generally felt in Anjou, the Prince; nevertheless, held similar language. “I do not,” said he, calumniate those who tell us to put our trust in God. That is my opinion also. But it is trusting God to use the means which he places in our hands, and to ask that his blessings may come upon them.



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There was a feeling entertained by the more sanguine that the French King would heartily assist the Netherlands, after his brother should be fairly installed. He had expressly written to that effect, assuring Anjou that he would help him with all his strength, and would enter into close alliance with those Netherlands which should accept him as prince and sovereign. In another and more private letter to the Duke, the King promised to assist his brother, "even to his last shirt." There is no doubt that it was the policy of the statesmen of France to assist the Netherlands, while the "mignons" of the worthless King were of a contrary opinion. Many of them were secret partizans of Spain; and found it more agreeable to receive the secret pay of Philip than to assist his revolted provinces. They found it easy to excite the jealousy of the monarch against his brother—a passion which proved more effective than the more lofty ambition of annexing the Low Countries, according to the secret promptings of many French politicians. As for the Queen Mother, she was fierce in her determination to see fulfilled in this way the famous prediction of Nostradamus. Three of her sons had successively worn the crown of France. That she might be "the mother of four kings," without laying a third child in the tomb, she was greedy for this proffered sovereignty to her youngest and favorite son. This well-known desire of Catherine de Medici was duly insisted upon by the advocates of the election; for her influence, it was urged, would bring the whole power of France to support the Netherlands.

At any rate, France could not be worse—could hardly be so bad—as their present tyranny. "Better the government of the Gaul, though suspect and dangerous," said Everard Reynd, "than the truculent dominion of the Spaniard. Even thus will the partridge fly to the hand of man, to escape the talons of the hawk." As for the individual character of Anjou, proper means would be taken, urged the advocates of his sovereignty, to keep him in check, for it was intended so closely to limit the power conferred upon him, that it would be only supreme in name. The Netherlands were to be, in reality, a republic, of which Anjou was to be a kind of Italian or Frisian podesta. "The Duke is not to act according to his pleasure," said one of the negotiators, in a private letter to Count John; "we shall take care to provide a good muzzle for him." How conscientiously the "muzzle" was prepared, will appear from the articles by which the states soon afterwards accepted the new sovereign. How basely he contrived to slip the muzzle—in what cruel and cowardly fashion he bathed his fangs in the blood of the flock committed to him, will also but too soon appear.



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As for the religious objection to Anjou, on which more stress was laid than upon any other, the answer was equally ready. Orange professed himself “not theologian enough” to go into the subtleties brought forward. As it was intended to establish most firmly a religious peace, with entire tolerance for all creeds, he did not think it absolutely essential to require a prince of the Reformed faith. It was bigotry to dictate to the sovereign, when full liberty in religious matters was claimed for the subject. Orange was known to be a zealous professor of the Reformed worship himself; but he did not therefore reject political assistance, even though offered by a not very enthusiastic member of the ancient Church.

“If the priest and the Levite pass us by when we are fallen among thieves,” said he, with much aptness and some bitterness, “shall we reject the aid proffered by the Samaritan, because he is of a different faith from the worthy fathers who have left us to perish?” In short, it was observed with perfect truth that Philip had been removed, not because he was a Catholic, but because he was a tyrant; not because his faith was different from that of his subjects, but because he was resolved to exterminate all men whose religion differed from his own. It was not, therefore, inconsistent to choose another Catholic for a sovereign, if proper guarantees could be obtained that he would protect and not oppress the Reformed churches. “If the Duke have the same designs as the King,” said Saint Aldegonde, “it would be a great piece of folly to change one tyrant and persecutor for another. If, on the contrary, instead of oppressing our liberties, he will maintain them, and in place of extirpating the disciples of the true religion, he will protect them, then are all the reasons of our opponents without vigor.”

By midsummer the Duke of Anjou made his appearance in the western part of the Netherlands. The Prince of Parma had recently come before Cambray with the intention of reducing that important city. On the arrival of Anjou, however, at the head of five thousand cavalry—nearly all of them gentlemen of high degree, serving as volunteers—and of twelve thousand infantry, Alexander raised the siege precipitately, and retired towards Tournay. Anjou victualled the city, strengthened the garrison, and then, as his cavalry had only enlisted for a summer’s amusement, and could no longer be held together, he disbanded his forces. The bulk of the infantry took service for the states under the Prince of Espinoy, governor of Tournay. The Duke himself, finding that, notwithstanding the treaty of Plessis les Tours and the present showy demonstration upon his part, the states were not yet prepared to render him formal allegiance, and being, moreover, in the heyday of what was universally considered his prosperous courtship of Queen Elizabeth, soon afterwards took his departure for England.

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Parma; being thus relieved of his interference, soon afterwards laid siege to the important city of Tournay. The Prince of Espinoy was absent with the army in the north, but the Princess commanded in his absence. She fulfilled her duty in a manner worthy of the house from which she sprang, for the blood of Count Horn was in her veins. The daughter of Mary, de Montmorency, the admiral's sister, answered the summons of Parma to surrender at discretion with defiance. The garrison was encouraged by her steadfastness. The Princess appeared daily among her troops, superintending the defences, and personally directing the officers. During one of the assaults, she is said, but perhaps erroneously; to have been wounded in the arm, notwithstanding which she refused to retire.

The siege lasted two months. Meantime, it became impossible for Orange and the estates, notwithstanding their efforts, to raise a sufficient force to drive Parma from his entrenchments. The city was becoming gradually and surely undermined from without, while at the same time the insidious art of a Dominican friar, Father Gery by name, had been as surely sapping the fidelity of the garrison from within. An open revolt of the Catholic population being on the point of taking place, it became impossible any longer to hold the city. Those of the Reformed faith insisted that the place should be surrendered; and the Princess, being thus deserted by all parties, made an honorable capitulation with Parma. She herself, with all her garrison, was allowed to retire with personal property, and with all the honors of war, while the sack of the city was commuted for one hundred thousand crowns, levied upon the inhabitants: The Princess, on leaving the gates, was received with such a shout of applause from the royal army that she seemed less like a defeated commander than a conqueror. Upon the 30th November, Parma accordingly entered the place which he had been besieging since the 1st of October.

By the end of the autumn, the Prince of Orange, more than ever dissatisfied with the anarchical condition of affairs, and with the obstinate jealousy and parsimony of the different provinces, again summoned the country in the most earnest language to provide for the general defence, and to take measures for the inauguration of Anjou. He painted in sombre colors the prospect which lay before them, if nothing was done to arrest the progress of the internal disorders and of the external foe, whose forces were steadily augmenting: Had the provinces followed his advice, instead of quarreling among themselves, they would have had a powerful army on foot to second the efforts of Anjou, and subsequently to save Tournay. They had remained supine and stolid, even while the cannonading against these beautiful cities was in their very ears. No man seemed to think himself interested in public affair, save when his own province or village was directly attacked. The general interests of

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the commonwealth were forgotten, in local jealousy. Had it been otherwise, the enemy would have long since been driven over the Meuse. "When money," continued the Prince, "is asked for to carry on the war, men answer as if they were talking with the dead Emperor. To say, however, that they will pay no more, is as much as to declare that they will give up their land and their religion both. I say this, not because I have any desire to put my hands into the common purse. You well know that I have never touched the public money, but it is important that you should feel that there is no war in the country except the one which concerns you all."

The states, thus shamed and stimulated, set themselves in earnest to obey the mandates of the Prince, and sent a special mission to England, to arrange with the Duke of Anjou for his formal installation as sovereign. Saint Aldegonde and other commissioners were already there. It was the memorable epoch in the Anjou wooing, when the rings were exchanged between Elizabeth and the Duke, and when the world thought that the nuptials were on the point of being celebrated. Saint Aldegonde wrote to the Prince of Orange on the 22nd of November, that the marriage had been finally settled upon that day. Throughout the Netherlands, the auspicious tidings were greeted with bonfires, illuminations, and cannonading, and the measures for hailing the Prince, thus highly favored by so great a Queen, as sovereign master of the provinces, were pushed forward with great energy.

Nevertheless, the marriage ended in smoke. There were plenty of tournaments, pageants, and banquets; a profusion of nuptial festivities, in short, where nothing was omitted but the nuptials. By the end of January, 1582, the Duke was no nearer the goal than upon his arrival three months before. Acceding, therefore, to the wishes of the Netherland envoys, he prepared for a visit to their country, where the ceremony of his joyful entrance as Duke of Brabant and sovereign of the other provinces was to take place. No open rupture with Elizabeth occurred. On the contrary, the Queen accompanied the Duke, with a numerous and stately retinue, as far as Canterbury, and sent a most brilliant train of her greatest nobles and gentlemen to escort him to the Netherlands, communicating at the same time, by special letter, her wishes to the estates-general, that he should be treated with as much honor "as if he were her second self."

On the 10th of February, fifteen large vessels cast anchor at Flushing. The Duke of Anjou, attended by the Earl of Leicester, the Lords Hunsdon, Willoughby, Sheffield, Howard, Sir Philip Sidney, and many other personages of high rank and reputation, landed from this fleet. He was greeted on his arrival by the Prince of Orange, who, with the Prince of Espinoy and a large deputation of the states-general, had been for some days waiting to welcome him. The man whom the Netherlands had chosen for their new master



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stood on the shores of Zealand. Francis Hercules, Son of France, Duke of Alencon and Anjou, was at that time just twenty-eight years of age; yet not even his flatterers, or his "minions," of whom he had as regular a train as his royal brother, could claim for him the external graces of youth or of princely dignity. He was below the middle height, puny and ill-shaped. His hair and eyes were brown, his face was seamed with the small-pox, his skin covered with blotches, his nose so swollen and distorted that it seemed to be double. This prominent feature did not escape the sarcasms of his countrymen, who, among other gibes, were wont to observe that the man who always wore two faces, might be expected to have two noses also. It was thought that his revolting appearance was the principal reason for the rupture of the English marriage, and it was in vain that his supporters maintained that if he could forgive her age, she might, in return, excuse his ugliness. It seemed that there was a point of hideousness beyond which even royal princes could not descend with impunity, and the only wonder seemed that Elizabeth, with the handsome Robert Dudley ever at her feet, could even tolerate the addresses of Francis Valois.

His intellect was by no means contemptible. He was not without a certain quickness of apprehension and vivacity of expression which passed current, among his admirers for wit and wisdom. Even the experienced Saint Aldegonde was deceived in his character, and described him after an hour and half's interview, as a Prince overflowing with bounty, intelligence, and sincerity. That such men as Saint Aldegonde and the Prince of Orange should be at fault in their judgment, is evidence not so much of their want of discernment, as of the difference between the general reputation of the Duke at that period, and that which has been eventually established for him in history. Moreover, subsequent events were to exhibit the utter baseness of his character more signally than it had been displayed during his previous career, however vacillating. No more ignoble yet more dangerous creature had yet been loosed upon the devoted soil of the Netherlands. Not one of the personages who had hitherto figured in the long drama of the revolt had enacted so sorry a part. Ambitious but trivial, enterprising but cowardly, an intriguer and a dupe, without religious convictions or political principles, save that he was willing to accept any creed or any system which might advance his own schemes, he was the most unfit protector for a people who, whether wrong or right; were at least in earnest, and who were accustomed to regard truth as one of the virtues. He was certainly not deficient in self-esteem. With a figure which was insignificant, and a countenance which was repulsive, he had hoped to efface the impression made upon Elizabeth's imagination by the handsomest man in Europe. With a commonplace capacity, and with a narrow political education, he intended to circumvent the most profound statesman of his age. And there, upon the pier at Flushing, he stood between them both; between the magnificent Leicester, whom he had thought to outshine, and the silent Prince of Orange, whom he was determined to outwit. Posterity has long been aware how far he succeeded in the one and the other attempt.



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The Duke's arrival was greeted with the roar of artillery, the ringing of bells, and the acclamations of a large concourse of the inhabitants; suitable speeches were made by the magistrates of the town, the deputies of Zeeland, and other functionaries, and a stately banquet was provided, so remarkable "for its sugar-work and other delicacies, as to entirely astonish the French and English lords who partook thereof." The Duke visited Middelburg, where he was received with great state, and to the authorities of which he expressed his gratification at finding two such stately cities situate so close to each other on one little island.

On the 17th of February, he set sail for Antwerp. A fleet of fifty-four vessels, covered with flags and streamers, conveyed him and his retinue, together with the large deputation which had welcomed him at Flushing, to the great commercial metropolis. He stepped on shore at Kiel within a bowshot of the city—for, like other Dukes of Brabant, he was not to enter Antwerp until he had taken the oaths to respect the constitution—and the ceremony of inauguration was to take place outside the walls. A large platform had been erected for this purpose, commanding a view of the stately city, with its bristling fortifications and shady groves. A throne, covered with velvet and gold, was prepared, and here the Duke took his seat, surrounded by a brilliant throng, including many of the most distinguished personages in Europe.

It was a bright winter's morning. The gaily bannered fleet lay conspicuous in the river, while an enormous concourse of people were thronging from all sides to greet the new sovereign. Twenty thousand burgher troops, in bright uniforms, surrounded the platform, upon the tapestried floor of which stood the magistrates of Antwerp, the leading members of the Brabant estates, with the Prince of Orange at their head, together with many other great functionaries. The magnificence everywhere displayed, and especially the splendid costumes of the military companies, excited the profound astonishment of the French, who exclaimed that every soldier seemed a captain, and who regarded with vexation their own inferior equipments.

Andrew Hesaels, 'doctor utriusque juris', delivered a salutatory oration, in which, among other flights of eloquence, he expressed the hope of the provinces that the Duke, with the beams of his greatness, wisdom, and magnanimity, would dissipate all the mists, fogs, and other exhalations which were pernicious to their national prosperity, and that he would bring back the sunlight of their ancient glory.

Anjou answered these compliments with equal courtesy, and had much to say of his willingness to shed every drop of his blood in defence of the Brabant liberties; but it might have damped the enthusiasm of the moment could the curtain of the not very distant future have been lifted. The audience, listening to these promises, might have seen that it was not so much his blood as theirs which he was disposed to shed, and less, too, in defence than in violation of those same liberties which he was swearing to protect.



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Orator Hessels then read aloud the articles of the Joyous Entry, in the Flemish language, and the Duke was asked if he required any explanations of that celebrated constitution. He replied that he had thoroughly studied its provisions, with the assistance of the Prince of Orange, during his voyage from Flushing, and was quite prepared to swear to maintain them. The oaths, according to the antique custom, were then administered. Afterwards, the ducal hat and the velvet mantle, lined with ermine, were brought, the Prince of Orange assisting his Highness to assume this historical costume of the Brabant dukes, and saying to him, as he fastened the button at the throat, "I must secure this robe so firmly, my lord, that no man may ever tear it from your shoulders."

Thus arrayed in his garment of sovereignty, Anjou was compelled to listen to another oration from, the pensionary of Antwerp, John Van der Werken. He then exchanged oaths with the magistrates of the city, and received the keys, which he returned for safe-keeping to the burgomaster. Meanwhile the trumpets sounded, largess of gold and silver coins was scattered among the people, and the heralds cried aloud, "Long live the Duke of Brabant."

A procession was then formed to escort the new Duke to his commercial capital. A stately and striking procession it was. The Hanseatic merchants in ancient German attires the English merchants in long velvet cassocks, the heralds in their quaint costume, the long train of civic militia with full, bands of music, the chief functionaries of city and province in their black mantles and gold chains, all marching under emblematical standards or time-honored blazons, followed each other in dignified order. Then came the Duke himself on a white Barbary horse, caparisoned with cloth of gold. He was surrounded with English, French, and Netherland grandees, many of them of world-wide reputation. There was the stately Leicester; Sir Philip Sidney, the mirror of chivalry; the gaunt and imposing form of William the Silent; his son; Count Maurice of Nassau, destined to be the first captain of his age, then a handsome, dark-eyed lad of fifteen; the Dauphin of Auvergne; the Marechal de Biron and his sons; the Prince of Espinoy; the Lords Sheffield; Willoughby, Howard; Hunsdon, and many others of high degree and distinguished reputation. The ancient guilds of the crossbow-men; and archers of Brabant, splendidly accoutred; formed the bodyguard of the Duke, while his French cavaliers, the life-guardsmen of the Prince of Orange, and the troops of their line; followed in great numbers, their glittering uniforms all, gaily intermingled, "like the flowers de luce upon a royal mantle!" The procession, thus gorgeous and gay, was terminated by, a dismal group of three hundred malefactors, marching in fetters, and imploring pardon of the Duke, a boon which was to be granted at evening. Great torches, although it was high noon were burning along the road, at intervals of four or five feet, in a continuous line reaching from the platform at Kiel to the portal of Saint Joris, through which the entrance to the city was to be made.



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Inside the gate a stupendous allegory was awaiting the approach of the new sovereign. A huge gilded car, crowded with those emblematical and highly bedizened personages so dear to the Netherlanders, obstructed the advance of the procession. All the virtues seemed to have come out for an airing in one chariot, and were now waiting to offer their homage to Francis Hercules Valois. Religion in "red satin," holding the gospel in her hand, was supported by Justice, "in orange velvet," armed with blade and beam. Prudence and Fortitude embraced each other near a column entwined by serpents "with their tails in their ears to typify deafness to flattery," while Patriotism as a pelican, and Patience as a brooding hen, looked benignantly upon the scene. This greeting duly acknowledged, the procession advanced into the city. The streets were lined with troops and with citizens; the balconies were filled with fair women; "the very gables," says an enthusiastic contemporary, "seemed to laugh with ladies' eyes." The market-place was filled with waxen torches and with blazing tar barrels, while in its centre stood the giant Antigonus— founder of the city thirteen hundred years before the Christian era—the fabulous personage who was accustomed to throw the right hands of all smuggling merchants into the Scheld. This colossal individual, attired in a "surcoat of sky-blue," and holding a banner emblazoned with the arms of Spain, turned its head as the Duke entered the square, saluted the new sovereign, and then dropping the Spanish scutcheon upon the ground, raised aloft another bearing the arms of Anjou.

And thus, amid exuberant outpouring of confidence, another lord and master had made his triumphal entrance into the Netherlands. Alas how often had this sanguine people greeted with similar acclamations the advent of their betrayers and their tyrants! How soon were they to discover that the man whom they were thus receiving with the warmest enthusiasm was the most treacherous tyrant of all.

It was nightfall before the procession at last reached the palace of Saint Michael, which had been fitted up for the temporary reception of the Duke. The next day was devoted to speech-making; various deputations waiting upon the new Duke of Brabant with congratulatory addresses. The Grand Pensionary delivered a pompous oration upon a platform hung with sky-blue silk, and carpeted with cloth of gold. A committee of the German and French Reformed Churches made a long harangue, in which they expressed the hope that the Lord would make the Duke "as valiant as David, as wise as Solomon, and as pious as Hezekiah." A Roman Catholic deputation informed his Highness that for eight months the members of the Ancient Church had been forbidden all religious exercises, saving baptism, marriage, visitation of the sick, and burials. A promise was therefore made that this prohibition, which had been the result of the disturbances recorded



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in a preceding chapter, should be immediately modified, and on the 15th of March, accordingly, it was arranged, by command of the magistrates, that all Catholics should have permission to attend public worship, according to the ancient ceremonial, in the church of Saint Michael, which had been originally designated for the use of the new Duke of Brabant. It was, however, stipulated that all who desired to partake of this privilege should take the oath of abjuration beforehand, and go to the church without arms.

Here then had been oaths enough, orations enough, compliments enough, to make any agreement steadfast, so far as windy suspirations could furnish a solid foundation for the social compact. Bells, trumpets, and the brazen throats of men and of cannons had made a sufficient din, torches and tar-barrels had made a sufficient glare, to confirm—so far as noise and blazing pitch could confirm—the decorous proceedings of church and town-house, but time was soon to show the value of such demonstrations. Meantime, the “muzzle” had been fastened with solemnity and accepted with docility. The terms of the treaty concluded at Plessis lea Tours and Bordeaux were made public. The Duke had subscribed to twenty-seven articles; which made as stringent and sensible a constitutional compact as could be desired by any Netherland patriot. These articles, taken in connection with the ancient charters which they expressly upheld, left to the new sovereign no vestige of arbitrary power. He was merely the hereditary president of a representative republic. He was to be Duke, Count, Margrave, or Seigneur of the different provinces on the same terms which his predecessors had accepted. He was to transmit the dignities to his children. If there were more than one child, the provinces were to select one of the number for their sovereign. He was to maintain all the ancient privileges, charters, statutes, and customs, and to forfeit his sovereignty at the first violation. He was to assemble the states-general at least once a year. He was always to reside in the Netherlands. He was to permit none but natives to hold office. His right of appointment to all important posts was limited to a selection from three candidates, to be proposed by the estates of the province concerned, at each vacancy. He was to maintain “the Religion” and the religious peace in the same state in which they then were, or as should afterwards be ordained by the estates of each province, without making any innovation on his own part. Holland and Zealand were to remain as they were, both in the matter of religion and otherwise. His Highness was not to permit that any one should be examined or molested in his house, or otherwise, in the matter or under pretext of religion. He was to procure the assistance of the King of France for the Netherlands. He was to maintain a perfect and a perpetual league, offensive and defensive, between that kingdom and the provinces; without; however, permitting any incorporation of territory. He was to carry on the war against Spain with his own means and those furnished by his royal brother, in addition to a yearly, contribution by the estates of two million four hundred thousand guildens. He was to dismiss all troops at command of the states-general. He was to make no treaty with Spain without their consent.



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It would be superfluous to point out the great difference between the notions entertained upon international law in the sixteenth century and in our own. A state of nominal peace existed between Spain, France and England; yet here was the brother of the French monarch, at the head of French troops, and attended by the grandees of England solemnly accepting the sovereignty over the revolted provinces of Spain. It is also curious to observe that the constitutional compact, by which the new sovereign of the Netherlands was admitted to the government, would have been repudiated as revolutionary and republican by the monarchs of France or England, if an attempt had been made to apply it to their own realms, for the ancient charters—which in reality constituted a republican form of government—had all been re-established by the agreement with Anjou. The first-fruits of the ban now began to display themselves. Sunday, 18th of March, 1582, was the birthday of the Duke of Anjou, and a great festival had been arranged, accordingly, for the evening, at the palace of Saint Michael, the Prince of Orange as well as all the great French lords being of course invited. The Prince dined, as usual, at his house in the neighbourhood of the citadel, in company with the Counts Hohenlo and Laval, and the two distinguished French commissioners, Bonnavet and Des Pruneaux. Young Maurice of Nassau, and two nephews of the Prince, sons of his brother John, were also present at table. During dinner the conversation was animated, many stories being related of the cruelties which had been practised by the Spaniards in the provinces. On rising from the table, Orange led the way from the dining room to his own apartments, showing the noblemen in his company as he passed along, a piece of tapestry upon which some Spanish soldiers were represented. At this moment, as he stood upon the threshold of the ante-chamber, a youth of small stature, vulgar mien, and pale dark complexion, appeared from among the servants and offered him a petition. He took the paper, and as he did so, the stranger suddenly drew a pistol and discharged it at the head of the Prince. The ball entered the neck under the right ear, passed through the roof of the mouth, and came out under the left jaw-bone, carrying with it two teeth. The pistol had been held so near, that the hair and beard of the Prince were set on fire by the discharge. He remained standing, but blinded, stunned, and for a moment entirely ignorant of what had occurred. As he afterwards observed, he thought perhaps that a part of the house had suddenly fallen. Finding very soon that his hair and beard were burning, he comprehended what had occurred; and called out quickly, "Do not kill him—I forgive him my death!" and turning to the French noblemen present, he added, "Alas! what a faithful servant does his Highness lose in me!"



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These were his first words, spoken when, as all believed, he had been mortally wounded. The message of mercy came, however, too late; for two of the gentlemen present, by an irresistible impulse, had run the assassin through with their rapiers. The halberdiers rushed upon him immediately afterwards, so that he fell pierced in thirty-two vital places. The Prince, supported by his friends, walked to his chamber, where he was put to bed, while the surgeons examined and bandaged the wound. It was most dangerous in appearance, but a very strange circumstance gave more hope than could otherwise have been entertained. The flame from the pistol had been so close that it had actually cauterized the wound inflicted by the ball. But for this, it was supposed that the flow of blood from the veins which had been shot through would have proved fatal before the wound could be dressed. The Prince, after the first shock, had recovered full possession of his senses, and believing himself to be dying, he expressed the most unaffected sympathy for the condition in which the Duke of Anjou would be placed by his death. "Alas, poor Prince!" he cried frequently; "alas, what troubles will now beset thee!" The surgeons enjoined and implored his silence, as speaking might cause the wound to prove immediately fatal. He complied, but wrote incessantly. As long as his heart could beat, it was impossible for him not to be occupied with his country.

Lion Petit, a trusty Captain of the city guard, forced his way to the chamber, it being, absolutely necessary, said the honest burgher, for him to see with his own eyes that the Prince was living, and report the fact to the townspeople otherwise, so great was the excitement, it was impossible to say what might be the result. It was in fact believed that the Prince was already dead, and it was whispered that he had been assassinated by the order of Anjou. This horrible suspicion was flying through the city, and producing a fierce exasperation, as men talked of the murder of Coligny, of Saint Bartholomew, of the murderous propensities of the Valois race. Had the attempt taken place in the evening, at the birth-night banquet of Anjou, a horrible massacre would have been the inevitable issue. As it happened, however, circumstances soon occurred to remove the suspicion from the French, and to indicate the origin of the crime. Meantime, Captain Petit was urged by the Prince, in writing, to go forth instantly with the news that he yet survived, but to implore the people, in case God should call him to Himself, to hold him in kind remembrance, to make no tumult, and to serve the Duke obediently and faithfully.



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Meantime, the youthful Maurice of Nassau was giving proof of that cool determination which already marked his character. It was natural that a boy of fifteen should be somewhat agitated at seeing such a father shot through the head before his eyes. His situation was rendered doubly grave by the suspicions which were instantly engendered as to the probable origin of the attempt. It was already whispered in the hall that the gentlemen who had been so officious in slaying the assassin, were his accomplices, who—upon the principle that dead men would tell no tales—were disposed, now that the deed was done, to preclude inconvenient revelations as to their own share in the crime. Maurice, notwithstanding these causes for perturbation, and despite his grief at his father's probable death, remained steadily by the body of the murderer. He was determined, if possible, to unravel the plot, and he waited to possess himself of all papers and other articles which might be found upon the person of the deceased.

A scrupulous search was at once made by the attendants, and everything placed in the young Count's own hands. This done, Maurice expressed a doubt lest some of the villain's accomplices might attempt to take the articles from him, whereupon a faithful old servant of his father came forward, who with an emphatic expression of the importance of securing such important documents, took his young master under his cloak, and led him to a retired apartment of the house. Here, after a rapid examination, it was found that the papers were all in Spanish, written by Spaniards to Spaniards, so that it was obvious that the conspiracy, if one there were, was not a French conspiracy. The servant, therefore, advised Maurice to go to his father, while he would himself instantly descend to the hall with this important intelligence. Count Hohenlo had, from the instant of the murder, ordered the doors to be fastened, and had permitted no one to enter or to leave the apartment without his permission. The information now brought by the servant as to the character of the papers caused great relief to the minds of all; for, till that moment, suspicion had even lighted upon men who were the firm friends of the Prince.

Saint Aldegonde, who had meantime arrived, now proceeded, in company of the other gentlemen, to examine the papers and other articles taken from the assassin. The pistol with which he had done the deed was lying upon the floor; a naked poniard, which he would probably have used also, had his thumb not been blown off by the discharge of the pistol, was found in his trunk hose. In his pockets were an Agnus Dei, a taper of green wax, two bits of hareskin, two dried toads—which were supposed to be sorcerer's charms—a crucifix, a Jesuit catechism, a prayer-book, a pocket-book containing two Spanish bills of exchange—one for two thousand, and one for eight hundred and seventy-seven crowns—and a set of writing tablets.

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These last were covered with vows and pious invocations, in reference to the murderous affair which the writer had in hand. He had addressed fervent prayers to the Virgin Mary, to the Angel Gabriel, to the Saviour, and to the Saviour's Son" as if, "says the Antwerp chronicler, with simplicity, "the Lord Jesus had a son"—that they might all use their intercession with the Almighty towards the certain and safe accomplishment of the contemplated deed. Should he come off successful and unharmed, he solemnly vowed to fast a week on bread and water. Furthermore, he promised to Christ a "new coat of costly pattern;" to the Mother of God, at Guadalupe, a new gown; to Our Lady of Montserrat, a crown, a gown, and a lamp; and so on through along list of similar presents thus contemplated for various Shrines. The poor fanatical fool had been taught by deeper villains than himself that his pistol was to rid the world of a tyrant, and to open his own pathway to Heaven, if his career should be cut short on earth. To prevent so undesirable a catastrophe to himself, however, his most natural conception had been to bribe the whole heavenly host, from the Virgin Mary downwards, for he had been taught that absolution for murder was to be bought and sold like other merchandise. He had also been persuaded that, after accomplishing the deed, he would become invisible.

Saint Aldegonde hastened to lay the result of this examination before the Duke of Anjou. Information was likewise instantly conveyed to the magistrates at the Town House, and these measures were successful in restoring confidence throughout the city as to the intentions of the new government. Anjou immediately convened the State Council, issued a summons for an early meeting of the states-general, and published a proclamation that all persons having information to give concerning the crime which had just been committed, should come instantly forward, upon pain of death. The body of the assassin was forthwith exposed upon the public square, and was soon recognized as that of one Juan Jaureguy, a servant in the employ of Gaspar d'Anastro, a Spanish merchant of Antwerp. The letters and bills of exchange had also, on nearer examination at the Town House, implicated Anastro in the affair. His house was immediately searched, but the merchant had taken his departure, upon the previous Tuesday, under pretext of pressing affairs at Calais. His cashier, Venero, and a Dominican friar, named Antony Zimmermann, both inmates of his family, were, however, arrested upon suspicion. On the following day the watch stationed at the gate carried the foreign post-bags, as soon as they arrived, to the magistracy, when letters were found from Anastro to Venero, which made the affair quite plain. After they had been thoroughly studied, they were shown to Venero, who, seeing himself thus completely ruined, asked for pen and ink, and wrote a full confession.



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It appeared that the crime was purely a commercial speculation on the part of Anastro. That merchant, being on the verge of bankruptcy, had entered with Philip into a mutual contract, which the King had signed with his hand and sealed with his seal, and according to which Anastro, within a certain period, was to take the life of William of Orange, and for so doing was to receive eighty thousand ducats, and the cross of Santiago. To be a knight companion of Spain's proudest order of chivalry was the guerdon, over and above the eighty thousand pieces of silver, which Spain's monarch promised the murderer, if he should succeed. As for Anastro himself, he was too frugal and too wary to risk his own life, or to lose much of the premium. With tears streaming down his cheeks, he painted to his faithful cashier the picture which his master would present, when men should point at him and say, "Behold yon bankrupt!" protesting, therefore, that he would murder Orange and secure the reward, or perish in the attempt. Saying this, he again shed many tears. Venero, seeing his master thus disconsolate, wept bitterly likewise; and begged him not to risk his own precious life. After this pathetic commingling of their grief, the merchant and his book-keeper became more composed, and it was at last concerted between them that John Jaureguay should be entrusted with the job. Anastro had intended—as he said in a letter afterwards intercepted—"to accomplish the deed with his own hand; but, as God had probably reserved him for other things, and particularly to be of service to his very affectionate friends, he had thought best to entrust the execution of the design to his servant." The price paid by the master to the man, for the work, seems to have been but two thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven crowns. The cowardly and crafty principal escaped. He had gone post haste to Dunkirk, pretending that the sudden death of his agent in Calais required his immediate presence in that city. Governor Sweveseel, of Dunkirk, sent an orderly to get a passport for him from La Motte, commanding at Gravelingen. Anastro being on tenter-hooks lest the news should arrive that the projected murder had been consummated before he had crossed the border, testified extravagant joy on the arrival of the passport, and gave the messenger who brought it thirty pistoles. Such conduct naturally excited a vague suspicion in the mind of the governor, but the merchant's character was good, and he had brought pressing letters from Admiral Treslong. Sweveseel did not dare to arrest him without cause, and he neither knew that any crime had been committed; nor that the man before him was the criminal. Two hours after the traveller's departure, the news arrived of the deed, together with orders to arrest Anastro, but it was too late. The merchant had found refuge within the lines of Parma.

Meanwhile, the Prince lay in a most critical condition. Believing that his end was fast approaching; he dictated letters to the states-general, entreating them to continue in their obedience to the Duke, than whom he affirmed that he knew no better prince for the government of the provinces. These letters were despatched by Saint Aldegonde to the assembly, from which body a deputation, in obedience to the wishes of Orange, was sent to Anjou, with expressions of condolence and fidelity.

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On Wednesday a solemn fast was held, according to proclamation, in Antwerp, all work and all amusements being prohibited, and special prayers commanded in all the churches for the recovery of the Prince. "Never, within men's memory," says an account published at the moment, in Antwerp, "had such crowds been seen in the churches, nor so many tears been shed."

The process against Venero and Zimmermann was rapidly carried through, for both had made a full confession of their share in the crime. The Prince had enjoined from his sick bed, however, that the case should be conducted with strict regard to justice, and, when the execution could no longer be deferred, he had sent a written request, by the hands of Saint Aldegonde, that they should be put to death in the least painful manner. The request was complied with, but there can be no doubt that the criminals, had it not been made, would have expiated their offence by the most lingering tortures. Owing to the intercession of the man who was to have been their victim, they were strangled, before being quartered, upon a scaffold erected in the market-place, opposite the Town House. This execution took place on Wednesday, the 28th of March.

The Prince, meanwhile, was thought to be mending, and thanksgivings began to be mingled with the prayers offered almost every hour in the churches; but for eighteen days he lay in a most precarious state. His wife hardly left his bedside, and his sister, Catharine Countess of Schwartzburg, was indefatigable in her attentions. The Duke of Anjou visited him daily, and expressed the most filial anxiety for his recovery, but the hopes, which had been gradually growing stronger, were on the 5th of April exchanged for the deepest apprehensions. Upon that day the cicatrix by which the flow of blood from the neck had been prevented, almost from the first infliction of the wound, fell off. The veins poured forth a vast quantity of blood; it seemed impossible to check the haemorrhage, and all hope appeared to vanish. The Prince resigned himself to his fate, and bade his children "good night for ever," saying calmly, "it is now all over with me."

It was difficult, without suffocating the patient, to fasten a bandage tightly enough to staunch the wound, but Leonardo Botalli, of Asti, body physician of Anjou, was nevertheless fortunate enough to devise a simple mechanical expedient, which proved successful. By his advice; a succession of attendants, relieving each other day and night, prevented the flow of blood by keeping the orifice of the wound slightly but firmly compressed with the thumb. After a period of anxious expectation, the wound again closed; and by the end of the month the Prince was convalescent. On the 2nd of May he went to offer thanksgiving in the Great Cathedral, amid the joyful sobs of a vast and most earnest throng.



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The Prince, was saved, but unhappily the murderer had yet found an illustrious victim. The Princess of Orange; Charlotte de Bourbon—the devoted wife who for seven years, had so faithfully shared his joys and sorrows—lay already on her death-bed. Exhausted by anxiety, long watching; and the alternations of hope and fear during the first eighteen days, she had been prostrated by despair at the renewed haemorrhage. A violent fever seized her, under which she sank on the 5th of May, three days after the solemn thanksgiving for her husband's recovery. The Prince, who loved her tenderly, was in great danger of relapse upon the sad event, which, although not sudden, had not been anticipated. She was laid in her grave on the 9th of May, amid the lamentations of the whole country, for her virtues were universally known and cherished. She was a woman of rare intelligence, accomplishment, and gentleness of disposition; whose only offence had been to break, by her marriage, the Church vows to which she had been forced in her childhood, but which had been pronounced illegal by competent authority, both ecclesiastical and lay. For this, and for the contrast which her virtues afforded to the vices of her predecessor, she was the mark of calumny and insult. These attacks, however, had cast no shadow upon the serenity of her married life, and so long as she lived she was the trusted companion and consoler of her husband. "His Highness," wrote Count John in 1580, "is in excellent health, and, in spite of adversity, incredible labor, perplexity, and dangers, is in such good spirits that, it makes me happy to witness it. No doubt a chief reason is the consolation he derives from the pious and highly-intelligent wife whom, the Lord has given him—a woman who ever conforms to his wishes, and is inexpressibly dear to him."

The Princess left six daughters—Louisa Juliana, Elizabeth, Catharina Belgica, Flandrina, Charlotta Brabantica, and Emilia Secunda.

Parma received the first intelligence of the attempt from the mouth of Anastro himself, who assured him that the deed had been entirely successful, and claimed the promised reward.

Alexander, in consequence, addressed circular letters to the authorities of Antwerp, Brussels, Bruges, and other cities, calling upon them, now that they had been relieved of their tyrant and their betrayer, to return again to the path of their duty and to the ever open arms of their lawful monarch. These letters were premature. On the other hand, the states of Holland and Zealand remained in permanent session, awaiting with extreme anxiety the result of the Prince's wound. "With the death of his Excellency, if God should please to take him to himself," said the magistracy of Leyden, "in the death of the Prince we all foresee our own death." It was, in truth, an anxious moment, and the revulsion of feeling consequent on his recovery was proportionately intense.

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In consequence of the excitement produced by this event, it was no longer possible for the Prince to decline accepting the countship of Holland and Zeeland, which he had refused absolutely two years before, and which he had again rejected, except for a limited period, in the year 1581. It was well understood, as appears by the treaty with Anjou, and afterwards formally arranged, "that the Duke was never, to claim sovereignty over Holland and Zeeland," and the offer of the sovereign countship of Holland was again made to the Prince of Orange in most urgent terms. It will be recollected that he had accepted the sovereignty on the 5th of July, 1581, only for the term of the war. In a letter, dated Bruges, 14th of August, 1582, he accepted the dignity without limitation. This offer and acceptance, however, constituted but the preliminaries, for it was further necessary that the letters of "Renversal" should be drawn up, that they should be formally delivered, and that a new constitution should be laid down, and confirmed by mutual oaths. After these steps had been taken, the ceremonious inauguration or rendering of homage was to be celebrated.

All these measures were duly arranged, except the last. The installation of the new Count of Holland was prevented by his death, and the northern provinces remained a Republic, not only in fact but in name.

In political matters; the basis of the new constitution was the "Great Privilege" of the Lady Mary, the Magna Charta of the country. That memorable monument in the history of the Netherlands and of municipal progress had, been overthrown by Mary's son, with the forced acquiescence of the states, and it was therefore stipulated by the new article, that even such laws and privileges as had fallen into disuse should be revived. It was furthermore provided that the little state should be a free Countship, and should thus silently sever its connexion with the Empire.

With regard to the position of the Prince, as hereditary chief of the little commonwealth, his actual power was rather diminished than increased by his new dignity. What was his position at the moment? He was sovereign during the war, on the general basis of the authority originally bestowed upon him by the King's commission of stadholder. In 1581, his Majesty had been abjured and the stadholder had become sovereign. He held in his hands the supreme power, legislative, judicial, executive. The Counts of Holland—and Philip as their successor—were the great fountains of that triple stream. Concessions and exceptions had become so extensive; no doubt, that the provincial charters constituted a vast body of "liberties" by which the whole country was reasonably well supplied. At the same time, all the power not expressly granted away remained in the breast of the Count. If ambition, then, had been William's ruling principle, he had exchanged substance for shadow, for the new state now constituted was a free commonwealth—a republic in all but name.

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By the new constitution he ceased to be the source of governmental life, or to derive his own authority from above by right divine. The sacred oil which had flowed from Charles the Simple's beard was dried up. Orange's sovereignty was from the estates; as legal representatives of the people; and, instead of exercising all the powers not otherwise granted away, he was content with those especially conferred upon him. He could neither declare war nor conclude peace without the co-operation of the representative body. The appointing power was scrupulously limited. Judges, magistrates, governors, sheriffs, provincial and municipal officers, were to be nominated by the local authorities or by the estates, on the triple principle. From these triple nominations he had only the right of selection by advice and consent of his council. He was expressly enjoined to see that the law was carried to every man's door, without any distinction of persons; to submit himself to its behests, to watch against all impedimenta to the even flow of justice, to prevent false imprisonments, and to secure trials for every accused person by the local tribunals. This was certainly little in accordance with the arbitrary practice of the past quarter of a century.

With respect to the great principle of taxation, stricter bonds even were provided than those which already existed. Not only the right of taxation remained with the states, but the Count was to see that, except for war purposes, every impost was levied by a unanimous vote. He was expressly forbidden to tamper with the currency. As executive head, save in his capacity as Commander-in-chief by land or sea, the new sovereign was, in short, strictly limited by self-imposed laws. It had rested with him to dictate or to accept a constitution. He had in his memorable letter of August, 1582, from Bruges, laid down generally the articles prepared at Plessia and Bourdeaux, for Anjou-together with all applicable provisions of the Joyous Entry of Brabant—as the outlines of the constitution for the little commonwealth then forming in the north. To these provisions he was willing to add any others which, after ripe deliberation, might be thought beneficial to the country.

Thus limited were his executive functions. As to his judicial authority it had ceased to exist. The Count of Holland was now the guardian of the laws, but the judges were to administer them. He held the sword of justice to protect and to execute, while the scales were left in the hands which had learned to weigh and to measure.

As to the Count's legislative authority, it had become coordinate with, if not subordinate to, that of the representative body. He was strictly prohibited from interfering with the right of the separate or the general states to assemble as often as they should think proper; and he was also forbidden to summon them outside their own territory. This was one immense step in the progress of representative

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liberty, and the next was equally important. It was now formally stipulated that the estates were to deliberate upon all measures which “concerned justice and polity,” and that no change was to be made—that is to say, no new law was to pass without their consent as well as that of the council. Thus, the principle was established of two legislative chambers, with the right, but not the exclusive right, of initiation on the part of government, and in the sixteenth century one would hardly look for broader views of civil liberty and representative government. The foundation of a free commonwealth was thus securely laid, which had William lived, would have been a representative monarchy, but which his death converted into a federal republic. It was necessary for the sake of unity to give a connected outline of these proceedings with regard to the sovereignty of Orange. The formal inauguration, only remained, and this, as will be seen, was for ever interrupted.

ETEXT EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

Character of brave men to act, not to expect
Colonel Ysselstein, “dismissed for a homicide or two”
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Unduly dejected in adversity

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