

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1585d eBook

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1585d by John Lothrop Motley

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HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 41

History United Netherlands, v41, 1584

CHAPTER V., Part 3.

Sainte Aldegonde discouraged—His Critical Position—His Negotiations with the Enemy—Correspondence with Richardot—Commotion in the City—Interview of Marnix with Parma—Suspicious Conduct of Marnix—Deputation to the Prince—Oration of Marnix—Private Views of Parma—Capitulation of Antwerp—Mistakes of Marnix—Philip on the Religious Question—Triumphal Entrance of Alexander—Rebuilding of the Citadel—Gratification of Philip—Note on Sainte Aldegonde



Sainte Aldegonde's position had become a painful one. The net had been drawn closely about the city. The bridge seemed impregnable, the great Kowenstyn was irrecoverably in the hands of the enemy, and now all the lesser forts in the immediate vicinity of Antwerp-Borghet, Hoboken, Cantecroix, Stralen, Berghen, and the rest—had likewise fallen into his grasp. An account of grain, taken on the 1st of June, gave an average of a pound a-head for a month long, or half a pound for two months. This was not the famine-point, according to the standard which had once been established in Leyden; but the courage of the burghers had been rapidly oozing away, under the pressure of their recent disappointments. It seemed obvious to the burgomaster, that the time for yielding had arrived.

"I had maintained the city," he said, "for a long period, without any excessive tumult or great effusion of blood—a city where there was such a multitude of inhabitants, mostly merchants or artisans deprived of all their traffic, stripped of their manufactures, destitute of all commodities and means of living. I had done this in the midst of a great diversity of humours and opinions, a vast

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popular license, a confused anarchy, among a great number of commanders, most of them inexperienced in war; with very little authority of my own, with slender forces of ships, soldiers, and sailors; with alight appearance of support from king or prince without, or of military garrison within; and under all these circumstances I exerted myself to do my uttermost duty in preserving the city, both in regard to its internal government, and by force of arms by land and sea, without sparing myself in any labour or peril.

“I know very well that there are many persons, who, finding themselves quite at their ease, and far away from the hard blows that are passing, are pleased to exhibit their wisdom by sitting in judgment upon others, founding their decision only upon the results. But I demand to be judged by equity and reason, when passion has been set aside. I claim that my honour shall be protected against my calumniators; for all should remember that I am not the first man, nor shall I be the last, that has been blamed unjustly. All persons employed in public affairs are subject to such hazards, but I submit myself to Him who knows all hearts, and who governs all. I take Him to witness that in the affair of Antwerp, as in all my other actions since my earliest youth, I have most sincerely sought His glory and the, welfare of His poor people, without regard to my own private interests.”

For it is not alone the fate of Antwerp that is here to be recorded. The fame of Sainte Aldegonde was now seriously compromised. The character of a great man must always be closely scanned and scrutinised; protected, if needful, against calumny, but always unflinchingly held up to the light. Names illustrious by genius and virtue are History’s most precious treasures, faithfully to be guarded by her, jealously to be watched; but it is always a misfortune when her eyes are deceived by a glitter which is not genuine.

Sainte Aldegonde was a man of unquestionable genius. His character had ever been beyond the reproach of self-seeking or ignoble ambition. He had multiplied himself into a thousand forms to serve the cause of the United Netherland States, and the services so rendered had been brilliant and frequent. A great change in his conduct and policy was now approaching, and it is therefore the more necessary to examine closely at this epoch his attitude and his character.

Early in June, Richardot, president of the council of Artois, addressed a letter to Sainte Aldegonde, by command of Alexander of Parma, suggesting a secret interview between the burgomaster and the Prince.



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On the 8th of June, Sainte Aldegonde replied, in favourable terms, as to the interview; but observed, that, as he was an official personage, it was necessary for him to communicate the project to the magistracy of the city. He expressed likewise the hope that Parma would embrace the present opportunity for making a general treaty with all the Provinces. A special accord with Antwerp, leaving out Holland and Zeeland, would, he said, lead to the utter desolation of that city, and to the destruction of its commerce and manufactures, while the occasion now presented itself to the Prince of “winning praise and immortal glory by bringing back all the country to a voluntary and prompt obedience to his Majesty.” He proposed, that, instead of his coming alone, there should be a number of deputies sent from Antwerp to confer with Alexander.

On the 11th June, Richardot replied by expressing, his own regrets and those of the Prince, that the interview could not have been with the burgomaster alone, but acknowledging the weight of his reasons, and acquiescing in the proposition to send a larger deputation. Three days afterwards, Sainte Aldegonde, on private consultation with some confidential personages, changed his ground; announced his preference for a private interview, under four eyes, with Parma; and requested that a passport might be sent. The passport was accordingly forwarded the same day, with an expression of Alexander’s gratification, and with the offer, on the part of Richardot, to come himself to Antwerp as hostage during the absence of the burgomaster in Parma’s camp at Beveren.

Sainte Aldegonde was accordingly about to start on the following day (16th of June), but meantime the affair had got wind. A secret interview, thus projected, was regarded by the citizens as extremely suspicious. There was much bitter insinuation against the burgomaster— many violent demonstrations. “Aldegonde, they say, is going to see Parma,” said one of the burghers, “which gives much dissatisfaction, because, ’tis feared that he will make a treaty according to the appetite and pleasure of his Highness, having been gained over to the royal cause by money. He says that it would be a misfortune to send a large number of burghers. Last Sunday (16th June) there was a meeting of the broad council. The preachers came into the assembly and so animated the citizens by demonstrations of their religion, that all rushed from the council-house, crying with loud voices that they did not desire peace but war.”

This desire was a healthy and a reasonable one; but, unfortunately, the Antwerpers had not always been so vigorous or so united in their resistance to Parma. At present, however, they were very furious, so soon as the secret purpose of Sainte Aldegonde became generally known. The proposed capitulation, which great mobs had been for weeks long savagely demanding at the hands of the burgomaster, was now ascribed to

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the burgomaster's unblushing corruption. He had obviously, they thought, been purchased by Spanish ducats to do what he had hitherto been so steadily refusing. A certain Van Werne had gone from Antwerp into Holland a few days before upon his own private affairs, with a safe-conduct from Parma. Sainte Aldegonde had not communicated to him the project then on foot, but he had permitted him to seek a secret interview with Count Mansfeld. If that were granted, Van Werne was to hint that in case the Provinces could promise themselves a religious peace it would be possible, in the opinion of Sainte Aldegonde, to induce Holland and Zeeland and all the rest of the United Provinces, to return to their obedience. Van Werne, on his return to Antwerp, divulged these secret negotiations, and so put a stop to Sainte Aldegonde's scheme of going alone to Parma. "This has given a bad suspicion to the people," wrote the burgomaster to Richardot, "so much so that I fear to have trouble. The broad council has been in session, but I don't know what has taken place there, and I do not dare to ask."

Sainte Aldegonde's motive, as avowed by himself, for seeking a private interview, was because he had received no answer to the main point in his first letter, as to the proposition for a general accord. In order therefore to make the deliberations more rapid, he had been disposed to discuss that preliminary question in secret. "But now," said he to Richardot, "as the affair had been too much divulged, as well by diverse reports and writings sown about, very inopportunately, as by the arrival of M. Van Werne, I have not found it practicable to set out upon my road, without communication with the members of the government. This has been done, however, not in the way of consultation, but as the announcement of a thing already resolved upon."

He proceeded to state, that great difficulties had arisen, exactly as he had foreseen. The magistrates would not hear of a general accord, and it was therefore necessary that a delay should be interposed before it would be possible for him to come. He begged Richardot to persuade Alexander, that he was not trifling with him. "It is not," said he, "from lightness, or any other passion, that I am retarding this affair. I will do all in my power to obtain leave to make a journey to the camp of his Highness, at whatever price it may cost and I hope before long to arrive at my object. If I fail, it must be ascribed to the humours of the people; for my anxiety to restore all the Provinces to obedience to his Majesty is extreme."

Richardot, in reply, the next day, expressed regret, without astonishment, on the part of Alexander and himself, at the intelligence thus received. People had such difference of humour, he said, and all men were not equally capable of reason. Nevertheless the citizens were warned not to misconstrue Parma's gentleness, because he was determined to die, with his whole army, rather than not take Antwerp.



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“As for the King,” said Richardot, “he will lay down all his crowns sooner than abandon this enterprise.” Van Werne was represented as free from blame, and sincerely desirous of peace. Richardot had only stated to him, in general terms, that letters had been received from Sainte Aldegonde, expressing an opinion in favour of peace. As for the royalists, they were quite innocent of the reports and writings that had so inopportunately been circulated in the city. It was desirable, however, that the negotiation should not too long be deferred, for otherwise Antwerp might perish, before a general accord with Holland and Zeeland could be made. He begged Sainte Aldegonde to banish all anxiety as to Parma’s sentiments towards himself or the community. “Put yourself, Sir, quite at your ease,” said he. “His Highness is in no respects dissatisfied with you, nor prone to conceive any indignation against this poor people.” He assured the burgomaster that he was not suspected of lightness, nor of a wish to delay matters, but he expressed solicitude with regard to the threatening demonstrations which had been made against him in Antwerp. “For,” said he, “popular governments are full of a thousand hazards, and it would be infinitely painful to me, if you should come to harm.”

Thus it would appear that it was Sainte Aldegonde who was chiefly anxious to effect the reconciliation of Holland and Zeeland with the King. The initiative of this project to include all the United Provinces in one scheme with the reduction of Antwerp came originally from him, and was opposed, at the outset, by the magistrates of that city, by the Prince of Parma and his councillors, and, by the States of Holland and Zeeland. The demonstrations on the part of the preachers, the municipal authorities, and the burghers, against Sainte Aldegonde and his plan for a secret interview, so soon as it was divulged, made it impossible to carry that project into effect.

“Aldegonde, who governs Antwerp,” wrote Parma to Philip, “was endeavouring, eight days ago, to bring about some kind of negotiation for an accord. He manifested a desire to come hither for the sake of a personal interview with me, which I permitted. It was to have taken place last Sunday, 16th of this month, but by reason of a certain popular tumult, which arose out of these circumstances, it has been necessary to defer the meeting.”

There was much disappointment felt by the royalist at this unsatisfactory result. “These bravadoes and impertinent demonstrations on the part of some of your people,” wrote Richardot, ten days later, “will be the destruction of the whole country, and will convert the Prince’s gentleness into anger. ’Tis these good and zealous patriots, trusting to a little favourable breeze that blew for a few days past, who have been the cause of all this disturbance, and who are ruining their miserable country—miserable, I say, for having produced such abortions as themselves.”

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Notwithstanding what had passed, however, Richardot intimated that Alexander was still ready to negotiate. "And if you, Sir," he concluded, in his letter to Aldegonde, "concerning whom many of our friends have at present a sinister opinion, as if your object was to circumvent us, are willing to proceed roundly and frankly, as I myself firmly believe that you will do, we may yet hope for a favourable issue."

Thus the burgomaster was already the object of suspicion to both parties. The Antwerpens denounced him as having been purchased by Spanish gold; the royalists accused him of intending to overreach the King. It was not probable therefore that all were correct in their conjectures.

At last it was arranged that deputies should be appointed by the broad council to commence a negotiation with Parma. Sainte Aldegonde informed Richardot, that he would (5th July, 1585) accompany them, if his affairs should permit. He protested his sincerity and frankness throughout the whole affair. "They try to calumniate me," he said, "as much on one side as on the other, but I will overcome by my innocence all the malice of my slanderers. If his Highness should be pleased to grant us some liberty for our religion, I dare to promise such faithful service as will give very great satisfaction."

Four days later, Sainte Aldegonde himself, together with M. de Duffel, M. de Schoonhoven, and Adrian Hesselt, came to Parma's camp at Beveren, as deputies on the part of the Antwerp authorities. They were courteously received by the Prince, and remained three days as his guests. During the period of this visit, the terms of a capitulation were thoroughly discussed, between Alexander and his councillors upon one part, and the four deputies on the other. The envoys endeavoured, with all the arguments at their command, to obtain the consent of the Prince to three preliminary points which they laid down as indispensable. Religious liberty must be granted, the citadel must not be reconstructed, a foreign garrison must not be admitted; they said. As it was the firm intention of the King, however, not to make the slightest concession on any one of these points, the discussion was not a very profitable one. Besides the public interviews at which all the negotiators were present, there was a private conference between Parma and Sainte Aldegonde which lasted more than four hours, in which each did his best to enforce his opinions upon the other. The burgomaster endeavoured to persuade the Prince with all the eloquence for which he was so renowned, that the hearts not of the Antwerpens only, but of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, were easily to be won at that moment. Give them religious liberty, and attempt to govern them by gentleness rather than by Spanish garrisons, and the road was plain to a complete reconciliation of all the Provinces with his Majesty.

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Alexander, who knew his master to be inexorable upon these three points, was courteous but peremptory in his statements. He recommended that the rebels should take into consideration their own declining strength, the inexhaustible resources of the King, the impossibility of obtaining succour from France, and the perplexing dilatoriness of England, rather than waste their time in idle expectations of a change in the Spanish policy. He also intimated, obliquely but very plainly, to Sainte Aldegonde, that his own fortune would be made, and that he had everything to hope from his Majesty's bounty, if he were now willing to make himself useful in carrying into effect the royal plans.

The Prince urged these views with so much eloquence, that he seemed, in his own words, to have been directly inspired by the Lord for this special occasion! Sainte Aldegonde, too, was signally impressed by Alexander's language, and thoroughly fascinated-magnetized, as it were —by his character. He subsequently declared, that he had often conversed familiarly with many eloquent personages, but that he had never known a man more powerful or persuasive than the Prince of Parma. He could honestly say of him—as Hasdrubal had said of Scipio—that Farnese was even more admirable when seen face to face, than he had seemed when one only heard of his glorious achievements.

“The burgomaster and three deputies,” wrote Parma to Philip, “were here until the 12th July. We discussed (30th July, 1585) the points and form of a capitulation, and they have gone back thoroughly satisfied. Sainte Aldegonde especially was much pleased with the long interview which he had with me, alone, and which lasted more than three hours. I told him, as well as my weakness and suffering from the tertian fever permitted, all that God inspired me to say on our behalf.”

Nevertheless, if Sainte Aldegonde and his colleagues went away thoroughly satisfied, they had reason, soon after their return, to become thoroughly dejected. The magistrates and burghers would not listen to a proposition to abandon the three points, however strongly urged to do so by arguments drawn from the necessity of the situation, and by representations of Parma's benignity. As for the burgomaster, he became the target for calumny, so soon as his three hours' private interview became known; and the citizens loudly declared that his head ought to be cut off, and sent in a bag, as a present, to Philip, in order that the traitor might meet the sovereign with whom he sought a reconciliation, face to face, as soon as possible.

The deputies, immediately after their return, made their report to the magistrates, as likewise to the colonels and captains, and to the deans of guilds. Next day, although it was Sunday, there was a session of the broad council, and Sainte Aldegonde made a long address, in which—as he stated in a letter to Richardot—he related everything that had passed in his private conversation with Alexander. An answer was promised to Parma on the following Tuesday, but the burgomaster spoke very discouragingly as to the probability of an accord.

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“The joy with which our return was greeted,” he said, “was followed by a general disappointment and sadness, so soon as the result was known. The want of a religious toleration, as well as the refusal to concede on the other two points, has not a little altered the hearts of all, even of the Catholics. A citadel and a garrison are considered ruin and desolation to a great commercial city. I have done what I can to urge the acceptance of such conditions as the Prince is willing to give, and have spoken in general terms of his benign intentions. The citizens still desire peace. Had his Highness been willing to take both religions under his protection, he might have won all hearts, and very soon all the other Provinces would have returned to their obedience, while the clemency and magnanimity of his Majesty would thus have been rendered admirable throughout the world.”

The power to form an accurate conception as to the nature of Philip and of other personages with whom he was dealing, and as to the general signs of his times, seems to have been wanting in the character of the gifted Aldegonde. He had been dazzled by the personal presence of Parma, and he now spoke of Philip II., as if his tyranny over the Netherlands—which for twenty years had been one horrible and uniform whole—were the accidental result of circumstances, not the necessary expression of his individual character, and might be easily changed at will—as if Nero, at a moment’s warning, might transform himself into Trajan. It is true that the innermost soul of the Spanish king could by no possibility be displayed to any contemporary, as it reveals itself, after three centuries, to those who study the record of his most secret thoughts; but, at any rate, it would seem that his career had been sufficiently consistent, to manifest the amount of “clemency and magnanimity” which he might be expected to exercise.

“Had his Majesty,” wrote Sainte Aldegonde, “been willing, since the year sixty-six, to pursue a course of toleration, the memory of his reign would have been sacred to all posterity, with an immortal praise of sapience, benignity, and sovereign felicity.”

This might be true, but nevertheless a tolerating Philip, in the year 1585, ought to have seemed to Sainte Aldegonde an impossible idea.

“The emperors,” continued the burgomaster, “who immediately succeeded Tiberius were the cause of the wisdom which displayed itself in the good Trajan—also a Spaniard—and in Antoninus, Verus, and the rest: If you think that this city, by the banishment of a certain number of persons, will be content to abandon the profession of the reformed faith, you are much mistaken. You will see, with time, that the exile of this religion will be accompanied by a depopulation and a sorrowful ruin and desolation of this flourishing city. But this will be as it pleases God. Meantime I shall not fail to make all possible exertions to induce the citizens to consent to a reconciliation with his Majesty. The broad council will soon give their answer, and then we shall send a deputation. We shall invite Holland and Zeeland to join with us, but there is little hope of their consent.”

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Certainly there was little hope of their consent. Sainte Aldegonde was now occupied in bringing about the capitulation of Antwerp, without any provision for religious liberty—a concession which Parma had most distinctly refused—and it was not probable that Holland and Zeeland, after twenty years of hard fighting, and with an immediate prospect of assistance from England—could now be induced to resign the great object of the contest without further struggle.

It was not until a month had elapsed that the authorities of Antwerp sent their propositions to the Prince of Parma. On the 12th August, however, Sainte Aldegonde, accompanied by the same three gentlemen who had been employed on the first mission, and by seventeen others besides, proceeded with safe-conduct to the camp at Beveren. Here they were received with great urbanity, and hospitably entertained by Alexander, who received their formal draft of articles for a capitulation, and referred it to be reported upon to Richardot, Pamel, and Vanden Burgh. Meantime there were many long speeches and several conferences, sometimes between all the twenty-one envoys and the Prince together; on other occasions, more secret ones, at which only Aldegonde and one or two of his colleagues were present. It had been obvious, from the date of the first interview, in the preceding month, that the negotiation would be of no avail until the government of Antwerp was prepared to abandon all the conditions which they had originally announced as indispensable. Alexander had not much disposition and no authority whatever to make concessions.

“So far as I can understand,” Parma had written on the 30th July, “they are very far from a conclusion. They have most exorbitant ideas, talking of some kind of liberty of conscience, besides refusing on any account to accept of garrisons, and having many reasons to allege on such subjects.”

The discussions, therefore, after the deputies had at last arrived, though courteously conducted, could scarcely be satisfactory to both parties. “The articles were thoroughly deliberated upon,” wrote Alexander, “by all the deputies, nor did I fail to have private conferences with Aldegonde, that most skilful and practised lawyer and politician, as well as with two or three of the others. I did all in my power to bring them to a thorough recognition of their errors, and to produce a confidence in his Majesty’s clemency, in order that they might concede what was needful for the interests of the Catholic religion and the security of the city. They heard all I had to say without exasperating themselves, and without interposing any strong objections, except in the matter of religion, and, still more, in the matter of the citadel and the garrison. Aldegonde took much pains to persuade me that it would be ruinous for a great, opulent, commercial city to submit to a foreign military force. Even if compelled by necessity to submit now, the inhabitants would



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soon be compelled by the same necessity to abandon the place entirely, and to leave in ruins one of the most splendid and powerful cities in the world, and in this opinion Catholics and heretics unanimously concurred. The deputies protested, with one accord, that so pernicious and abominable a thing as a citadel and garrison could not even be proposed to their constituents. I answered, that, so long as the rebellion of Holland and Zeeland lasted, it would be necessary for your Majesty to make sure of Antwerp, by one or the other of those means, but promised that the city should be relieved of the incumbrance so soon as those islands should be reduced.

“Sainte Aldegonde was not discouraged by this statement, but in the hope of convincing others, or with the wish of showing that he had tried his best, desired that I would hear him before the council of state. I granted the request, and Sainte Aldegonde then made another long and very elegant oration, intended to divert me from my resolution.”

It must be confessed—if the reports, which have come down to us of that long and elegant oration be correct—that the enthusiasm of the burgomaster for Alexander was rapidly degenerating into idolatry.

“We are not here, O invincible Prince,” he said, “that we may excuse, by an anxious legation, the long defence which we have made of our homes. Who could have feared any danger to the most powerful city in the Netherlands from so moderate a besieging force? You would yourself have rather wished for, than approved of, a greater facility on our part, for the brave cannot love the timid. We knew the number of your troops, we had discovered the famine in your camp, we were aware of the paucity of your ships, we had heard of the quarrels in your army, we were expecting daily to hear of a general mutiny among your soldiers. Were we to believe that with ten or eleven thousand men you would be able to block up the city by land and water, to reduce the open country of Brabant, to cut off all aid as well from the neighbouring towns as from the powerful provinces of Holland and Zeeland, to oppose, without a navy, the whole strength of our fleets, directed against the dyke? Truly, if you had been at the head of fifty thousand soldiers, and every soldier had possessed one hundred hands, it would have seemed impossible for you to meet so many emergencies in so many places, and under so many distractions. What you have done we now believe possible to do, only because we see that it has been done. You have subjugated the Scheldt, and forced it to bear its bridge, notwithstanding the strength of its current, the fury of the ocean-tides, the tremendous power of the icebergs, the perpetual conflicts with our fleets. We destroyed your bridge, with great slaughter of your troops. Rendered more courageous by that slaughter, you restored that mighty work. We assaulted the great dyke, pierced it through and through, and opened a path for our ships. You drove us



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off when victors, repaired the ruined bulwark, and again closed to us the avenue of relief. What machine was there that we did not employ? what miracles of fire did we not invent? what fleets and floating citadels did we not put in motion? All that genius, audacity, and art, could teach us we have executed, calling to our assistance water, earth, heaven, and hell itself. Yet with all these efforts, with all this engine, we have not only failed to drive you from our walls, but we have seen you gaining victories over other cities at the same time. You have done a thing, O Prince, than which there is nothing greater either in ancient or modern story. It has often occurred, while a general was besieging one city that he lost another situated farther off. But you, while besieging Antwerp, have reduced simultaneously Dendermonde, Ghent, Nymegen, Brussels, and Mechlin."

All this, and much more, with florid rhetoric, the burgomaster pronounced in honour of Farnese, and the eulogy was entirely deserved. It was hardly becoming, however, for such lips, at such a moment, to sound the praise of him whose victory had just decided the downfall of religious liberty, and of the national independence of the Netherlands. His colleagues certainly must have winced, as they listened to commendations so lavishly bestowed upon the representative of Philip, and it is not surprising that Sainte Aldegonde's growing unpopularity should, from that hour, have rapidly increased. To abandon the whole object of the siege, when resistance seemed hopeless, was perhaps pardonable, but to offer such lip-homage to the conqueror was surely transgressing the bounds of decorum.

His conclusion, too, might to Alexander seem as insolent as the whole tenor of his address had been humble; for, after pronouncing this solemn eulogy upon the conqueror, he calmly proposed that the prize of the contest should be transferred to the conquered.

"So long as liberty of religion, and immunity from citadel and garrison can be relied upon," he said, "so long will Antwerp remain the most splendid and flourishing city in Christendom; but desolation will ensue if the contrary policy is to prevail."

But it was very certain that liberty of religion, as well as immunity from citadel and garrison, were quite out of the question. Philip and Parma had long been inexorably resolved upon all the three points.

"After the burgomaster had finished his oration," wrote Alexander to his sovereign, "I discussed the matter with him in private, very distinctly and minutely."

The religious point was soon given up, Sainte Aldegonde finding it waste of breath to say anything more about freedom of conscience. A suggestion was however made on

the subject of the garrison, which the prince accepted, because it contained a condition which it would be easy to evade.



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“Aldegonde proposed,” said Parma, “that a garrison might be admissible if I made my entrance into the city merely with infantry and cavalry of nations which were acceptable—Walloons, namely, and Germans—and in no greater numbers than sufficient for a body-guard. I accepted, because, in substance, this would amount to a garrison, and because, also, after the magistrates shall have been changed, I shall have no difficulty in making myself master of the people, continuing the garrison, and rebuilding the citadel.”

The Prince proceeded to give his reasons why he was willing to accept the capitulation on what he considered so favourable terms to the besieged. Autumn was approaching. Already the fury of the storms had driven vessels clean over the dykes; the rebels in Holland and Zeeland were preparing their fleets—augmented by many new ships of war and fire-machines—for another desperate attack upon the Palisades, in which there was great possibility of their succeeding; an auxiliary force from England was soon expected; so that, in view of all these circumstances, he had resolved to throw himself at his Majesty’s feet and implore his clemency. “If this people of Antwerp, as the head, is gained,” said he, “there will be tranquillity in all the members.”

These reasons were certainly conclusive; nor is it easy to believe, that, under the circumstances thus succinctly stated by Alexander, it would have been impossible for the patriots to hold out until the promised succour from Holland and from England should arrive. In point of fact, the bridge could not have stood the winter which actually ensued; for it was the repeatedly expressed opinion of the Spanish officers in Antwerp, that the icebergs which then filled the Scheldt must inevitably have shattered twenty bridges to fragments, had there been so many. It certainly was superfluous for the Prince to make excuses to Philip for accepting the proposed capitulation. All the prizes of victory had been thoroughly secured, unless pillage, massacre, and rape, which had been the regular accompaniments of Alva’s victories, were to be reckoned among the indispensable trophies of a Spanish triumph.

Nevertheless, the dearth in the city had been well concealed from the enemy; for, three days after the surrender, not a loaf of bread was to be had for any money in all Antwerp, and Alexander declared that he would never have granted such easy conditions had he been aware of the real condition of affairs.

The articles of capitulation agreed upon between Parma and the deputies were brought before the broad council on the 9th August. There was much opposition to them, as many magistrates and other influential personages entertained sanguine expectations from the English negotiation, and were beginning to rely with confidence upon the promises of Queen Elizabeth. The debate was waxing warm, when some of the councillors, looking out of window of the great hall, perceived

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that a violent mob had collected in the streets. Furious cries for bread were uttered, and some meagre-looking individuals were thrust forward to indicate the famine which was prevailing, and the necessity of concluding the treaty without further delay. Thus the municipal government was perpetually exposed to democratic violence, excited by diametrically opposite influences. Sometimes the burgomaster was denounced for having sold himself and his country to the Spaniards, and was assailed with execrations for being willing to conclude a sudden and disgraceful peace. At other moments he was accused of forging letters containing promises of succour from the Queen of England and from the authorities of Holland, in order to protract the lingering tortures of the war. Upon this occasion the peace-mob carried its point. The councillors, looking out of window, rushed into the hall with direful accounts of the popular ferocity; the magistrates and colonels who had been warmest in opposition suddenly changed their tone, and the whole body of the broad council accepted the articles of capitulation by a unanimous vote.

The window was instantly thrown open, and the decision publicly announced. The populace, wild with delight, rushed through the streets, tearing down the arms of the Duke of Anjou, which had remained above the public edifices since the period of that personage's temporary residence in the Netherlands, and substituting, with wonderful celerity, the escutcheon of Philip the Second. Thus suddenly could an Antwerp mob pass from democratic insolence to intense loyalty.

The articles, on the whole, were as liberal as could have been expected. The only hope for Antwerp and for a great commonwealth of all the Netherlands was in holding out, even to the last gasp, until England and Holland, now united, had time to relieve the city. This was, unquestionably, possible. Had Antwerp possessed the spirit of Leyden, had William of Orange been alive, that Spanish escutcheon, now raised with such indecent haste, might have never been seen again on the outside wall of any Netherland edifice. Belgium would have become at once a constituent portion of a great independent national realm, instead of languishing until our own century, the dependency of a distant and a foreign metropolis. Nevertheless, as the Antwerpers were not disposed to make themselves martyrs, it was something that they escaped the nameless horrors which had often alighted upon cities subjected to an enraged soldiery. It redounds to the eternal honour of Alexander Farnese—when the fate of Naarden and Haarlem and Maestricht, in the days of Alva, and of Antwerp itself in the horrible "Spanish fury," is remembered—that there were no scenes of violence and outrage in the populous and wealthy city, which was at length at his mercy after having defied him so long.

Civil and religious liberty were trampled in the dust, commerce and manufactures were destroyed, the most valuable portion of the citizens sent into hopeless exile, but the remaining inhabitants were not butchered in cold blood.

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The treaty was signed on the 17th August. Antwerp was to return to its obedience. There was to be an entire amnesty and oblivion for the past, without a single exception. Royalist absentees were to be reinstated in their possessions. Monasteries, churches, and the King's domains were to be restored to their former proprietors. The inhabitants of the city were to practise nothing but the Catholic religion. Those who refused to conform were allowed to remain two years for the purpose of winding up their affairs and selling out their property, provided that during that period they lived "without scandal towards the ancient religion"—a very vague and unsatisfactory condition. All prisoners were to be released excepting Teligny. Four hundred thousand florins were to be paid by the authorities as a fine. The patriot garrison was to leave the city with arms and baggage and all the honours of war.

This capitulation gave more satisfaction to the hungry portion of the Antwerpens than to the patriot party of the Netherlands. Sainte Aldegonde was vehemently and unsparingly denounced as a venal traitor. It is certain, whatever his motives, that his attitude had completely changed. For it was not Antwerp alone that he had reconciled or was endeavouring to reconcile with the King of Spain, but Holland and Zeeland as well, and all the other independent Provinces. The ancient champion of the patriot army, the earliest signer of the 'Compromise,' the bosom friend of William the Silent, the author of the 'Wilhelmus' national song, now avowed his conviction, in a published defence of his conduct against the calumnious attacks upon it, "that it was impossible, with a clear conscience, for subjects, under any circumstances, to take up arms against Philip, their king." Certainly if he had always entertained that opinion he must have suffered many pangs of remorse during his twenty years of active and illustrious rebellion. He now made himself secretly active in promoting the schemes of Parma and in counteracting the negotiation with England. He flattered himself, with an infatuation which it is difficult to comprehend, that it would be possible to obtain religious liberty for the revolting Provinces, although he had consented to its sacrifice in Antwerp. It is true that he had not the privilege of reading Philip's secret letters to Parma, but what was there in the character of the King—what intimation had ever been given by the Governor-General—to induce a belief in even the possibility of such a concession?

Whatever Sainte Aldegonde's opinions, it is certain that Philip had no intention of changing his own policy. He at first suspected the burgomaster of a wish to protract the negotiations for a perfidious purpose.

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“Necessity has forced Antwerp,” he wrote on the 17th of August—the very day on which the capitulation was actually signed—“to enter into negotiation. I understand the artifice of Aldegonde in seeking to prolong and make difficult the whole affair, under pretext of treating for the reduction of Holland and Zeeland at the same time. It was therefore very adroit in you to defeat this joint scheme at once, and urge the Antwerp matter by itself, at the same time not shutting the door on the others. With the prudence and dexterity with which this business has thus far been managed I am thoroughly satisfied.”

The King also expressed his gratification at hearing from Parma that the demand for religious liberty in the Netherlands would soon be abandoned.

“In spite of the vehemence,” he said, “which they manifest in the religious matter, desiring some kind of liberty, they will in the end, as you say they will, content themselves with what the other cities, which have returned to obedience, have obtained. This must be done in all cases without flinching, and without permitting any modification.”

What “had been obtained” by Brussels, Mechlin, Ghent, was well known. The heretics had obtained the choice of renouncing their religion or of going into perpetual exile, and this was to be the case “without flinching” in Holland and Zeeland, if those provinces chose to return to obedience. Yet Sainte Aldegonde deluded himself with the thought of a religious peace.

In another and very important letter of the same date Philip laid down his policy very distinctly. The Prince of Parma, by no means such a bigot as his master, had hinted at the possibility of tolerating the reformed religion in the places recovered from the rebels, *sub silentio*, for a period not defined, and long enough for the heretics to awake from their errors.

“You have got an expression of opinion, I see,” wrote the King to Alexander, “of some grave men of wisdom and conscience, that the limitation of time, during which the heretics may live without scandal, may be left undefined; but I feel very keenly the danger of such a proposition. With regard to Holland and Zeeland, or any other provinces or towns, the first step must be for them to receive and maintain alone the exercise of the Catholic religion, and to subject themselves to the Roman church, without tolerating the exercise of any other religion, in city, village, farm-house, or building thereto destined in the fields, or in any place whatsoever; and in this regulation there is to be no flaw, no change, no concession by convention or otherwise of a religious peace, or anything of the sort. They are all to embrace the Roman Catholic religion, and the exercise of that is alone to be permitted.”

This certainly was distinct enough, and nothing had been ever said in public to induce a belief in any modification of the principles on which Philip had uniformly acted. That

monarch considered himself born to suppress heresy, and he had certainly been carrying out this work during his whole lifetime.

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The King was willing, however, as Alexander had intimated in his negotiations with Antwerp, and previously in the capitulation of Brussels, Ghent, and other places, that there should be an absence of investigation into the private chambers of the heretics, during the period allotted them for choosing between the Papacy and exile.

“It may be permitted,” said Philip, “to abstain from inquiring as to what the heretics are doing within their own doors, in a private way, without scandal, or any public exhibition of their rites during a fixed time. But this connivance, and the abstaining from executing the heretics, or from chastising them, even although they may be living very circumspectly, is to be expressed in very vague terms.”

Being most anxious to provide against a second crop of heretics to succeed the first, which he was determined to uproot, he took pains to enjoin with his own hand upon Parma the necessity of putting in Catholic schoolmasters and mistresses to the exclusion of reformed teachers into all the seminaries of the recovered Provinces, in order that all the boys and girls might grow up in thorough orthodoxy.

Yet this was the man from whom Sainte Aldegonde imagined the possibility of obtaining a religious peace.

Ten days after the capitulation, Parma made his triumphal entrance into Antwerp; but, according to his agreement, he spared the citizens the presence of the Spanish and Italian soldiers, the military procession being composed of the Germans and Walloons. Escorted by his body-guard, and surrounded by a knot of magnates and veterans, among whom the Duke of Arschot, the Prince of Chimay, the Counts Mansfeld, Egmont, and Aremberg, were conspicuous, Alexander proceeded towards the captured city. He was met at the Keyser Gate by a triumphal chariot of gorgeous workmanship, in which sat the fair nymph Antwerpia, magnificently bedizened, and accompanied by a group of beautiful maidens. Antwerpia welcomed the conqueror with a kiss, recited a poem in his honour, and bestowed upon him the keys of the city, one of which was in gold. This the Prince immediately fastened to the chain around his neck, from which was suspended the lamb of the golden fleece, with which order he had just been, amid great pomp and ceremony, invested.

On the public square called the Mere, the Genoese merchants had erected two rostral columns, each surmounted by a colossal image, representing respectively Alexander of Macedon and Alexander of Parma. Before the house of Portugal was an enormous phoenix, expanding her wings quite across the street; while, in other parts of the town, the procession was met by ships of war, elephants, dromedaries, whales, dragons, and other triumphal phenomena. In the market-place were seven statues in copper, personifying the seven planets, together with an eighth representing Bacchus; and perhaps there were good mythological reasons why the god of wine, together with so large a portion of our solar system, should be done in copper by Jacob Jongeling, to honour the triumph of Alexander, although the key to the enigma has been lost.

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The cathedral had been thoroughly fumigated with frankincense, and besprinkled with holy water, to purify the sacred precincts from their recent pollution by the reformed rites; and the Protestant pulpits which had been placed there, had been soundly beaten with rods, and then burned to ashes. The procession entered within its walls, where a magnificent Te Deum was performed, and then, after much cannon-firing, bell-ringing, torch-light exhibition, and other pyrotechnics, the Prince made his way at last to the palace provided for him. The glittering display, by which the royalists celebrated their triumph, lasted three days' long, the city being thronged from all the country round with eager and frivolous spectators, who were never wearied with examining the wonders of the bridge and the forts, and with gazing at the tragic memorials which still remained of the fight on the Kowenstyn.

During this interval, the Spanish and Italian soldiery, not willing to be outdone in demonstrations of respect to their chief, nor defrauded of their rightful claim to a holiday amused themselves with preparing a demonstration of a novel character. The bridge, which, as it was well known, was to be destroyed within a very few days, was adorned with triumphal arches, and decked with trees and flowering plants; its roadway was strewn with branches; and the palisades, parapets, and forts, were garnished with wreaths, emblems, and poetical inscriptions in honour of the Prince. The soldiers themselves, attired in verdurous garments of foliage and flower-work, their swart faces adorned with roses and lilies, paraded the bridge and the dyke in fantastic procession with clash of cymbal and flourish of trumpet, dancing, singing, and discharging their carbines, in all the delirium of triumph. Nor was a suitable termination to the festival wanting, for Alexander, pleased with the genial character of these demonstrations, repaired himself to the bridge, where he was received with shouts of rapture by his army, thus whimsically converted into a horde of fauns and satyrs. Afterwards, a magnificent banquet was served to the soldiers upon the bridge. The whole extent of its surface, from the Flemish to the Brabant shore—the scene so lately of deadly combat, and of the midnight havoc caused by infernal machinery—was changed, as if by the stroke of a wand, into a picture of sylvan and Arcadian merry-making, and spread with tables laden with delicate viands. Here sat that host of war—bronzed figures, banqueting at their ease, their heads crowned with flowers, while the highest magnates of the army, humouring them in their masquerade, served them with dainties, and filled their goblets with wine.

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After these festivities had been concluded, Parma set himself to practical business. There had been a great opposition, during the discussion of the articles of capitulation to the reconstruction of the famous citadel. That fortress had been always considered, not as a defence of the place against a foreign enemy, but as an instrument to curb the burghers themselves beneath a hostile power. The city magistrates, however, as well as the dean and chief officers in all the guilds and fraternities, were at once changed by Parma—Catholics being uniformly substituted for heretics. In consequence, it was not difficult to bring about a change of opinion in the broad council. It is true that neither Papists nor Calvinists regarded with much satisfaction the prospect of military violence being substituted for civic rule, but in the first effusion of loyalty, and in the triumph of the ancient religion, they forgot the absolute ruin to which their own action was now condemning their city. Champagny, who had once covered himself with glory by his heroic though unsuccessful efforts to save Antwerp from the dreadful “Spanish fury” which had descended from that very citadel, was now appointed governor of the town, and devoted himself to the reconstruction of the hated fortress. “Champagny has particularly aided me,” wrote Parma, “with his rhetoric and clever management, and has brought the broad council itself to propose that the citadel should be rebuilt. It will therefore be done, as by the burghers themselves, without your Majesty or myself appearing to desire it.”

This was, in truth, a triumph of “rhetoric and clever management,” nor could a city well abase itself more completely, kneeling thus cheerfully at its conqueror’s feet, and requesting permission to put the yoke upon its own neck. “The erection of the castle has thus been determined upon,” said Parma, “and I am supposed to know nothing of the resolution.”

A little later he observed that they, were “working away most furiously at the citadel, and that within a month it would be stronger than it ever had been before.”

The building went on, indeed, with astonishing celerity, the fortress rising out of its ruins almost as rapidly, under the hands of the royalists, as it had been demolished, but a few years before, by the patriots. The old foundations still remained, and blocks of houses, which had been constructed out of its ruins, were thrown down that the materials might be again employed in its restoration.

The citizens, impoverished and wretched, humbly demanded that the expense of building the citadel might be in part defrayed by the four hundred thousand florins in which they had been mulcted by the capitulation. “I don’t marvel at this,” said Parma, “for certainly the poor city is most forlorn and poverty-stricken, the heretics having all left it.” It was not long before it was very satisfactorily established, that the presence of those

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same heretics and liberty of conscience for all men, were indispensable conditions for the prosperity of the great capital. Its downfall was instantaneous. The merchants and industrious artisans all wandered away from the place which had been the seat of a world-wide traffic. Civilisation and commerce departed, and in their stead were the citadel and the Jesuits. By express command of Philip, that order, banished so recently, was reinstated in Antwerp, as well as throughout the obedient provinces; and all the schools and colleges were placed under its especial care. No children could be thenceforth instructed except by the lips of those fathers. Here was a curb more efficacious even than the citadel. That fortress was at first garrisoned with Walloons and Germans. "I have not yet induced the citizens," said Parma, "to accept a Spanish garrison, nor am I surprised; so many of them remembering past events (alluding to the 'Spanish fury,' but not mentioning it by name), and observing the frequent mutinies at the present time. Before long, I expect, however, to make the Spaniards as acceptable and agreeable as the inhabitants of the country themselves."

It may easily be supposed that Philip was pleased with the triumphs that had thus been achieved. He was even grateful, or affected to be grateful, to him who had achieved them. He awarded great praise to Alexander for his exertions, on the memorable occasions of the attack upon the bridge, and the battle of the Kowenstyn; but censured him affectionately for so rashly exposing his life. "I have no words," he said, "to render the thanks which are merited for all that you have been doing. I recommend you earnestly however to have a care for the security of your person, for that is of more consequence than all the rest."

After the news of the reduction of the city, he again expressed gratification, but in rather cold language. "From such obstinate people," said he, "not more could be extracted than has been extracted; therefore the capitulation is satisfactory." What more he wished to extract it would be difficult to say, for certainly the marrow had been extracted from the bones, and the dead city was thenceforth left to moulder under the blight of a foreign garrison and an army of Jesuits. "Perhaps religious affairs will improve before long," said Philip. They did improve very soon, as he understood the meaning of improvement. A solitude of religion soon brought with it a solitude in every other regard, and Antwerp became a desert, as Sainte Aldegonde had foretold would be the case.

The King had been by no means so calm, however, when the intelligence of the capitulation first reached him at Madrid. On the contrary, his oldest courtiers had never seen him exhibit such marks of hilarity.

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When he first heard of the glorious victory at Lepanto, his countenance had remained impassive, and he had continued in the chapel at the devotional exercises which the messenger from Don John had interrupted. Only when the news of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew first reached him, had he displayed an amount of cheerfulness equal to that which he manifested at the fall of Antwerp. “Never,” said Granvelle, “had the King been so radiant with joy as when he held in his hand the despatches which announced the capitulation.” The letters were brought to him after he had retired to rest, but his delight was so great that he could not remain in his bed. Rushing from his chamber, so soon as he had read them, to that of his dearly-beloved daughter, Clara Isabella, he knocked loudly at the door, and screaming through the keyhole the three words, “Antwerp is ours,” returned precipitately again to his own apartment.

It was the general opinion in Spain, that the capture of this city had terminated the resistance of the Netherlands. Holland and Zeeland would, it was thought, accept with very little hesitation the terms which Parma had been offering, through the agency of Sainte Aldegonde; and, with the reduction of those two provinces, the Spanish dominion over the whole country would of course become absolute. Secretary Idiaquez observed, on drawing up instructions for Carlo Coloma, a Spanish financier then departing on special mission for the Provinces, that he would soon come back to Spain, for the Prince of Parma was just putting an end to the whole Belgic war.

Time was to show whether Holland and Zeeland were as malleable as Antwerp, and whether there would not be a battle or two more to fight before that Belgic war would come to its end. Meantime Antwerp was securely fettered, while the spirit of commerce—to which its unexampled prosperity had been due—now took its flight to the lands where civil and religious liberty had found a home.

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Note on Marnix de Sainte Aldegonde.

As every illustration of the career and character of this eminent personage excites constant interest in the Netherlands, I have here thrown together, in the form of an Appendix, many important and entirely unpublished details, drawn mainly from the Archives of Simancas, and from the State Paper Office and British Museum in London.

The ex-burgomaster seemed determined to counteract the policy of those Netherlanders who wished to offer the sovereignty of the Provinces to the English Queen. He had been earnestly in favour of annexation to France, for his sympathies and feelings were eminently French. He had never been a friend to England, and he was soon aware that a strong feeling of indignation—whether just or unjust—existed against him both in that country and in the Netherlands, on account of the surrender of Antwerp.



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“I have had large conference with Villiers,” wrote Sir John Norris to Walsingham, “he condemneth *Ste. Aldegonde’s* doings, but will impute it to fear and not to malice. *Ste. Aldegonde*, notwithstanding that he was forbidden to come to Holland, and laid for at the fleet, yet stole secretly to Dort, where they say he is staid, but I doubt he will be heard speak, and then assuredly he will do great hurt.”

It was most certainly *Sainte Aldegonde’s* determination, so soon as the capitulation of Antwerp had been resolved upon, to do his utmost to restore all the independent Provinces to their ancient allegiance. Rather Spanish than English was his settled resolution. Liberty of religion, if possible—that was his cherished wish—but still more ardently, perhaps, did he desire to prevent the country from falling into the hands of Elizabeth.

“The Prince of Parma hath conceived such an assured hope of the fidelity of *Aldegonde*,” wrote one of Walsingham’s agents, Richard Tomson, “in reducing the Provinces, yet enemies, into a perfect subjection, that the Spaniards are so well persuaded of the man as if he had never been against them. They say, about the middle of this month, he departed for Zeeland and Holland, to prosecute the effect of his promises, and I am the more induced to believe that he is become altogether Spanish, for that the common bruit goeth that he hastened the surrendering of the town of Antwerp, after he had intelligence of the coming of the English succours.”

There was naturally much indignation felt in the independent Provinces, against all who had been thought instrumental in bringing about the reduction of the great cities of Flanders. *Famars*, governor of Mechlin, *Van den Tynpel*, governor of Brussels, *Martini*, who had been active in effecting the capitulation of Antwerp, were all arrested in Holland. “From all that I can hear,” said Parma, “it is likely that they will be very severely handled, which is the reason why *Ste. Aldegonde*, although he sent his wife and children to Holland, has not ventured thither himself: It appears that they threaten him there, but he means now to go, under pretext of demanding to justify himself from the imputations against him. Although he tells me freely that, without some amplification of the concessions hitherto made on the point of religion, he hopes for no good result, yet I trust that he will do good offices in the meantime, in spite of the difficulties which obstruct his efforts. On my part, every exertion will be made, and not without hope of some fruit, if not before, at least after, these people have become as tired of the English as they were of the French.”

Of this mutual ill-feeling between the English and the burgomaster, there can be no doubt whatever. The Queen’s government was fully aware of his efforts to counteract its negotiation with the Netherlands, and to bring about their reconciliation with Spain. When the Earl of Leicester—as will soon be related—arrived in the Provinces, he was not long in comprehending his attitude and his influence.

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“I wrote somewhat of Sir Aldegonde in putting his case,” wrote Leicester, “but this is certain, I have the copy of his very letters sent hither to practise the peace not two days before I came, and this day one hath told me that loves him well, that he hates our countrymen unrecoverably. I am sorry for it.”

On the other hand, the Queen was very indignant with the man whom she looked upon as the paid agent of Spain. She considered him a renegade, the more dangerous because his previous services had been so illustrious. “Her Majesty’s mislike towards *Ste. Aldegonde* continueth,” wrote Walsingham to Leicester, “and she taketh offence that he was not restrained of his liberty by your Lordship’s order.” It is unquestionable that the exburgomaster intended to do his best towards effecting the reconciliation of all the Provinces with Spain; and it is equally certain that the King had offered to pay him well, if he proved successful in his endeavours. There is no proof, however, and no probability that *Sainte Aldegonde* ever accepted or ever intended to accept the proffered bribe. On the contrary, his whole recorded career ought to disprove the supposition. Yet it is painful, to find him, at this crisis, assiduous in his attempts to undo the great work of his own life, and still more distressing to find that great rewards were distinctly offered to him for such service. Immense promises had been frequently made no doubt to William the Silent; nor could any public man, in such times, be so pure that an attempt to tamper with him might not be made: but when the personage, thus solicited, was evidently acting in the interests of the tempters, it is not surprising that he should become the object of grave suspicion.

“It does not seem to me bad,” wrote Philip to Parma, “this negotiation which you have commenced with *Ste. Aldegonde*, in order to gain him, and thus to employ his services in bringing about a reduction of the islands (Holland and Zeeland). In exchange for this work, any thing which you think proper to offer to him as a reward, will be capital well invested; but it must not be given until the job is done.”

But the job was hard to do, and *Sainte Aldegonde* cared nothing for the offered bribe. He was, however, most strangely confident of being able to overcome, on the one hand, the opposition of Holland and Zeeland to the hated authority of Spain, and, on the other, the intense abhorrence entertained by Philip to liberty of conscience.

Soon after the capitulation, he applied for a passport to visit those two Provinces. Permission to come was refused him. Honest men from Antwerp, he was informed, would be always welcome, but there was no room for him. There was, however—or Parma persuaded himself that there was—a considerable party in those countries in favour of reconciliation with Spain. If the ex-burgomaster could gain a hearing, it was thought probable that his eloquence would prove very effective.

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“We have been making efforts to bring about negotiations with Holland and Zeeland,” wrote Alexander to Philip. “Gelderland and Overysseel likewise show signs of good disposition, but I have not soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad. As for Holland and Zeeland, there is a strong inclination on the part of the people to a reconciliation, if some concession could be made on the religious question, but the governors oppose it, because they are perverse, and are relying on assistance from England. Could this religious concession be made, an arrangement could, without doubt, be accomplished, and more quickly than people think. Nevertheless, in such a delicate matter, I am obliged to await your Majesty’s exact instructions and ultimatum.”

He then proceeded to define exactly the position and intentions of the burgomaster.

“The government of Holland and Zeeland,” he said, “have refused a passport to *Ste. Aldegonde*, and express dissatisfaction with him for having surrendered Antwerp so soon. They know that he has much credit with the people and with the ministers of the sects, and they are in much fear of him because he is inclined for peace, which is against their interests. They are, therefore, endeavouring to counteract my negotiations with him. These have been, thus far, only in general terms. I have sought to induce him to perform the offices required, without giving him reason to expect any concession as to the exercise of religion. He persuades himself that, in the end, there will be some satisfaction obtained upon this point, and, under this impression he considers the peace as good as concluded, there remaining no doubt as to other matters. He has sent his wife to Zeeland, and is himself going to Germany, where, as he says, he will do all the good service that he can. He hopes that very shortly the Provinces will not only invite, but implore him to come to them; in which case, he promises me to perform miracles.”

Alexander then proceeded to pay a distinct tribute to *Sainte Aldegonde*’s motives; and, when it is remembered that the statement thus made is contained in a secret despatch, in cipher, to the King, it may be assumed to convey the sincere opinion of the man most qualified to judge correctly as to this calumniated person’s character.

“*Ste. Aldegonde* offers me wonders,” he said, “and I have promised him that he shall be recompensed very largely; yet, although he is poor, I do not find him influenced by mercenary or selfish considerations, but only very set in opinions regarding his religion.”



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The Prince had however no doubt of Sainte Aldegonde's sincerity, for sincerity was a leading characteristic of the man. His word, once given, was sacred, and he had given his word to do his best towards effecting a reconciliation of the Provinces with Spain, and frustrating the efforts of England. "Through the agency of *Ste. Aldegonde* and that of others" wrote Parma, "I shall watch, day and night, to bring about a reduction of Holland and Zeeland, if humanly possible. I am quite persuaded that they will soon be sick of the English, who are now arriving, broken down, without arms or money, and obviously incapable of holding out very long. Doubtless, however, this English alliance, and the determination of the Queen to do her utmost against us, complicates matters, and assists the government of Holland and Zeeland in opposing the inclinations of their people."

Nothing ever came of these intended negotiations. The miracles were never wrought, and even had Sainte Aldegonde been as venal as he was suspected of being—which we have thus proof positive that he was not—he never could have obtained the recompense, which, according to Philip's thrifty policy, was not to be paid until it had been earned. Sainte Aldegonde's hands were clean. It is pity that we cannot render the same tribute to his political consistency of character. It is also certain that he remained—not without reason—for a long time under a cloud. He became the object of unbounded and reckless calumny. Antwerp had fallen, and the necessary consequence of its reduction was the complete and permanent prostration of its commerce and manufactures. These were transferred to the new, free, national, independent, and prosperous commonwealth that had risen in the "islands" which Parma and Sainte Aldegonde had vainly hoped to restore to their ancient servitude. In a very few years after the subjugation of Antwerp, it appeared by statistical documents that nearly all the manufactures of linen, coarse and fine cloths, serges, fustians, tapestry, gold-embroidery, arms-work, silks, and velvets, had been transplanted to the towns of Holland and Zeeland, which were flourishing and thriving, while the Flemish and Brabantine cities had become mere dens of thieves and beggars. It was in the mistaken hope of averting this catastrophe—as melancholy as it was inevitable and in despair of seeing all the Netherlands united, unless united in slavery, and in deep-rooted distrust of the designs and policy of England, that this statesman, once so distinguished, had listened to the insidious tongue of Parma. He had sought to effect a general reconciliation with Spain, and the only result of his efforts was a blight upon his own illustrious name.



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He published a defence of his conduct, and a detailed account of the famous siege. His apology, at the time, was not considered conclusive, but his narrative remains one of the clearest and most trustworthy sources for the history of these important transactions. He was never brought to trial, but he discovered, with bitterness, that he had committed a fatal error, and that his political influence had passed away. He addressed numerous private epistles to eminent persons, indignantly denying the imputations against his character, and demanding an investigation. Among other letters he observed in one to Count Hohenlo, that he was astonished and grieved to find that all his faithful labours and sufferings in the cause of his fatherland had been forgotten in an hour. In place of praise and gratitude, he had reaped nothing but censure and calumny; because men ever judged, not by the merits, but by the issue. That common people should be so unjust, he said, was not to be wondered at, but of men like Hohenlo he had hoped better things. He asserted that he had saved Antwerp from another "Spanish fury," and from impending destruction—a city in which there was not a single regular soldier, and in which his personal authority was so slight that he was unable to count the number of his masters. If a man had ever performed a service to his country, he claimed to have done so in this capitulation. Nevertheless, he declared that he was the same Philip Marnix, earnestly devoted to the service of God, the true religion, and the fatherland; although he avowed himself weary of the war, and of this perpetual offering of the Netherland sovereignty to foreign potentates. He was now going, he said, to his estates in Zeeland; there to turn farmer again; renouncing public affairs, in the administration of which he had experienced so much ingratitude from his countrymen. Count Maurice and the States of Holland and Zeeland wrote to him, however, in very plain language, describing the public indignation as so strong as to make it unsafe for him to visit the country.

The Netherlands and England—so soon as they were united in policy—were, not without reason, indignant with the man who had made such strenuous efforts to prevent that union. The English were, in truth, deeply offended. He had systematically opposed their schemes, and to his prejudice against their country, and distrust of their intentions, they attributed the fall of Antwerp. Envoy Davison, after his return to Holland, on the conclusion of the English treaty, at once expressed his suspicions of the ex-burgomaster, and the great dangers to be apprehended from his presence in the free States. "Here is some working underhand," said he to Walsingham, "to draw hither Sainte Aldegonde, under a pretext of his justification, which—as it has hitherto been denied him—so is the sequel suspected, if he should obtain it before they were well settled here, betwixt her Majesty and them,



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considering the manifold presumptions that the subject of his journey should be little profitable or advantageous to the state of these poor countries, as tending, at the best, to the propounding of some general reconciliation.” It was certainly not without substantial grounds that the English and Hollanders, after concluding their articles of alliance, felt uneasy at the possibility of finding their plans reversed by the intrigues of a man whom they knew to be a mediator between Spain and her revolted Provinces, and whom they suspected of being a venal agent of the Catholic King. It was given out that Philip had been induced to promise liberty of religion, in case of reconciliation. We have seen that Parma was at heart in favour of such a course, and that he was very desirous of inducing Marnix to believe in the possibility of obtaining such a boon, however certain the Prince had been made by the King’s secret letters, that such a belief was a delusion. “Martini hath been examined,” wrote Davison, “who confesseth both for himself and others, to become hither by direction of the Prince of Parma and intelligence of Sainte Aldegonde, from whom he was first addressed by Villiers and afterwards to others for advice and assistance. That the scope of this direction was to induce them here to hearken to a peace, wherein the Prince of Parma promiseth them toleration of religion, although he confesseth yet to have no absolute power in that behalf, but hath written thereof to the King expressly, and holdeth himself assured thereof by the first post, as I have likewise been advertised from Rowland York, which if it had been propounded openly here before things had been concluded with her Majesty, and order taken for her assurance, your honour can judge what confusion it must of necessity have brought forth.”

At last, when Marnix had become convinced that the toleration would not arrive “by the very next mail from Spain,” and that, in truth, such a blessing was not to be expected through the post-office at all, he felt an inward consciousness of the mistake which he had committed. Too credulously had he inclined his ear to the voice of Parma; too obstinately had he steeled his heart against Elizabeth, and he was now the more anxious to clear himself at least from the charges of corruption so clamorously made against him by Holland and by England. Conscious of no fault more censurable than credulity and prejudice, feeling that his long fidelity to the reformed religion ought to be a defence for him against his calumniators, he was desirous both to clear his own honour, and to do at least a tardy justice to England. He felt confident that loyal natures, like those of Davison and his colleagues at home, would recognize his own loyalty. He trusted, not without cause, to English honour, and coming to his manor-house of Zoubourg, near Flushing, he addressed a letter to the ambassador of Elizabeth, in which the strong desire to vindicate his aspersed integrity is quite manifest.



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“I am very joyous,” said he, “that coming hither in order to justify myself against the false and malignant imputations with which they charge me, I have learned your arrival here on the part of her Majesty, as well as the soon expected coming of the Earl of Leicester. I see, in truth, that the Lord God is just, and never abandons his own. I have never spared myself in the service of my country, and I would have sacrificed my life, a thousand times, had it been possible, in her cause. Now, I am receiving for all this a guerdon of blame and calumny, which is cast upon me in order to cover up faults which have been committed by others in past days. I hope, however, to come soon to give you welcome, and to speak more particularly to you of all these things. Meantime demanding my justification before these gentlemen, who ought to have known me better than to have added faith to such villanous imputations, I will entreat you that my definite justification, or condemnation, if I have merited it, may be reserved till the arrival of Lord Leicester.”

This certainly was not the language of a culprit, Nevertheless, his words did not immediately make a deep impression on the hearts of those who heard him. He had come secretly to his house at Zoubourg, having previously published his memorable apology; and in accordance with the wishes of the English government, he was immediately confined to his own house. Confidence in the intention of a statesman, who had at least committed such grave errors of judgment, and who had been so deeply suspected of darker faults, was not likely very soon to revive. So far from shrinking from an investigation which would have been dangerous, even to his life, had the charges against his honour been founded in fact, he boldly demanded to be confronted with his accusers, in order that he might explain his conduct before all the world. “Sir, yesternight, at the shutting of the gates,” wrote Davison to Walsingham, transmitting the little note from Marnix, which has just been cited— “I was advertised that *Ste. Aldegonde* was not an hour before secretly landed at the head on the other side the Rammekens, and come to his house at Zoubourg, having prepared his way by an apology, newly published in his defence, whereof I have as yet recovered one only copy, which herewith I send your honour. This day, whilst I was at dinner, he sent his son unto me, with a few lines, whereof I send you the copy, advertising me of his arrival (which he knew I understood before), together with the desire he had to see me, and speak with me, if the States, before whom he was to come to purge himself of the crimes wherewith he stood, as he with, unjustly charged, would vouchsafe him so much liberty. The same morning, the council of Zeeland, taking knowledge of his arrival, sent unto him the pensioner of Middelburgh and this town, to sound the causes of his coming, and to will him, in their behalf, to keep his house,



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and to forbear all meddling by word or writing, with any whatsoever, till they should further advise and determine in his cause. In defence thereof, he fell into large and particular discourse with the deputies, accusing his enemies of malice and untruth, offering himself to any trial, and to abide what punishment the laws should lay upon him, if he were found guilty of the crimes imputed to him. Touching the cause of his coming, he pretended and protested that he had no other end than his simple justification, preferring any hazard he might incur thereby, to his honour and good fame." As to the great question at issue, Marnix had at last become conscious that he had been a victim to Spanish dissimulation, and that Alexander Fainese was in reality quite powerless to make that concession of religious liberty, without which a reconciliation between Holland and Philip was impossible. "Whereas," said Davison, "it was supposed that *Ste. Aldegonde* had commission from the Prince of Parma to make some offer of peace, he assured them of the contrary as a thing which neither the Prince had any power to yield unto with the surety of religion, or himself would, in conscience, persuade without it; with a number of other particularities in his excuse; amongst the rest, allowing and commending in his speech, the course they had taken with her Majesty, as the only safe way of deliverance for these afflicted countries—letting them understand how much the news thereof— specially since the entry of our garrison into this place (which before they would in no sort believe), hath troubled the enemy, who doth what he may to suppress the bruit thereof, and yet comforteth himself with the hope that between the factions and partialities nourished by his industry, and musters among the towns, especially in Holland and Zeeland (where he is persuaded to find some pliable to a reconcilment) and the disorders and misgovernment of our people, there will be yet occasion offered him to make his profit and advantage. I find that the gentleman hath here many friends indifferently persuaded of his innocency, notwithstanding the closing up of his apology doth make but little for him. Howsoever it be, it falleth out the better that the treaty with her Majesty is finished, and the cautionary towns assured before his coming, which, if he be ill affected, will I hope either reform his judgment or restrain his will. I will not forget to do the best I can to sift and decipher him yet more narrowly and particularly."

Thus, while the scales had at length fallen from the eyes of Marnix, it was not strange that the confidence which he now began to entertain in the policy of England, should not be met, at the outset, with a corresponding sentiment on the part of the statesman by whom that policy was regulated. "Howsoever *Ste. Aldegonde* would seem to purge himself," said Davison, "it is suspected that his end is dangerous. I have done what I may to restrain him, so nevertheless as it may not seem to come from me." And again—"Ste. Aldegonde," he wrote, "contimieth still our neighbor at his house between this and Middelburg; yet unmolested. He findeth many favourers, and, I fear, doth no good offices. He desireth to be reserved till the coming of my Lord of Leicester, before whom he pretends a desired trial."

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This covert demeanour on the part of the ambassador was in accordance with, the wishes of his government. It was thought necessary that Sainte Aldegonde should be kept under arrest until the arrival of the Earl, but deemed preferable that the restraint should proceed from the action of the States rather than from the order of the Queen. Davison was fulfilling orders in attempting, by underhand means, to deprive Marnix, for a time, of his liberty. "Let him, I pray you, remain in good safety in any wise," wrote Leicester, who was uneasy at the thought of so influential, and, as he thought, so ill-affected a person being at large, but at the same time disposed to look dispassionately upon his past conduct, and to do justice, according to the results of an investigation. "It is thought meet," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "that you should do your best endeavour to procure that *Ste. Aldegonde* may be restrained, which in mine opinion were fit to be handled in such sort, as the restraint might rather proceed from themselves than by your solicitation. And yet rather than he should remain at liberty to practise underhand, whereof you seem to stand in great doubt, it is thought meet that you should make yourself a partizan, to seek by all the means that you may to have him restrained under the guard of some well affected patriot until the Earl's coming, at what time his cause may receive examination."

This was, however, a result somewhat difficult to accomplish; for twenty years of noble service in the cause of liberty had not been utterly in vain, and there were many magnanimous spirits to sympathize with a great man struggling thus in the meshes of calumny. That the man who challenged rather than shunned investigation, should be thrown into prison, as if he were a detected felon upon the point of absconding, seemed a heartless and superfluous precaution. Yet Davison and others still feared the man whom they felt obliged to regard as a baffled intriguer. "Touching the restraint of *Ste. Aldegonde*," wrote Davison to Lord Burghley, "which I had order from Mr. Secretary to procure underhand, I find the difficulty will be great in regard of his many friends and favourers, preoccupied with some opinion of his innocence, although I have travailed with divers of them underhand, and am promised that some order shall be taken in that behalf, which I think will be harder to execute as long as Count Maurice is here. For *Ste. Aldegonde*'s affection, I find continual matter to suspect it inclined to a peace, and that as one notably prejudging our scope and proceeding in this cause, doth lie in wait for an occasion to set it forward, being, as it seems, fed with a hope of 'telle quelle liberte de conscience,' which the Prince of Parma and others of his council have, as he confesseth, earnestly solicited at the King's hands. This appeareth, in truth, the only apt and easy way for them to prevail both against religion and the



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liberty of these poor countries, having thereby once recovered the authority which must necessarily follow a peace, to renew and alter the magistrates of the particular towns, which, being at their devotion, may turn, as we say, all upside down, and so in an instant being under their servitude, if not wholly, at the least in a great part of the country, leaving so much the less to do about the rest, a thing confessed and looked for of all men of any judgment here, if the drift of our peace-makers may take effect.”

Sainte Aldegonde had been cured of his suspicions of England, and at last the purity of his own character shone through the mists.

One winter’s morning, two days after Christmas, 1585, Colonel Morgan, an ingenuous Welshman, whom we have seen doing much hard fighting on Kowenstyn Dyke, and at other places, and who now commanded the garrison at Flushing, was taking a walk outside the gates, and inhaling the salt breezes from the ocean. While thus engaged he met a gentleman coming along, staff in hand, at a brisk pace towards the town, who soon proved to be no other than the distinguished and deeply suspected Sainte Aldegonde. The two got at once into conversation. “He began,” said Morgan, “by cunning insinuations, to wade into matters of state, and at the last fell to touching the principal points, to wit, her Majesty’s entrance into the cause now in hand, which, quoth he, was an action of high importance, considering how much it behoved her to go through the same, as well in regard of the hope that thereby was given to the distressed people of these parts, as also in consideration of that worthy personage whom she hath here placed, whose estate and credit may not be suffered to quail, but must be upholden as becometh the lieutenant of such a princess as her Majesty.”

“The opportunity thus offered,” continued honest Morgan, “and the way opened by himself, I thought good to discourse with him to the full, partly to see the end and drift of his induced talk, and consequently to touch his quick in the suspected cause of Antwerp.” And thus, word for word, taken down faithfully the same day, proceeded the dialogue that wintry morning, near three centuries ago. From that simple record—mouldering unseen and unthought of for ages, beneath piles of official dust—the forms of the illustrious Fleming and the bold Welsh colonel, seem to start, for a brief moment, out of the three hundred years of sleep which have succeeded their energetic existence upon earth. And so, with the bleak winds of December whistling over the breakers of the North Sea, the two discoursed together, as they paced along the coast.

Morgan.—“I charge you with your want of confidence in her Majesty’s promised aid. ’Twas a thing of no small moment had it been embraced when it was first most graciously offered.”



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Sainte Aldegonde.—“I left not her prince-like purpose unknown to the States, who too coldly and carelessly passed over the benefit thereof, until it was too late to put the same in practice. For my own part, I acknowledge that indeed I thought some further advice would either alter or at least detract from the accomplishment of her determination. I thought this the rather because she had so long been wedded to peace, and I supposed it impossible to divorce her from so sweet a spouse. But, set it down that she were resolute, yet the sickness of Antwerp was so dangerous, as it was to be doubted the patient would be dead before the physician could come. I protest that the state of the town was much worse than was known to any but myself and some few private persons. The want of victuals was far greater than they durst bewray, fearing lest the common people, perceiving the plague of famine to be at hand, would rather grow desperate than patiently expect some happy event. For as they were many in number, so were they wonderfully divided: some being Martinists, some Papists, some neither the one nor the other, but generally given to be factious, so that the horror at home was equal to the hazard abroad.”

Morgan.—“But you forget the motion made by the martial men for putting out of the town such as were simple artificers, with women and children, mouths that consumed meat, but stood in no stead for defence.”

Sainte Aldegonde.—“Alas, alas! would you have had me guilty of the slaughter of so many innocents, whose lives were committed to my charge, as well as the best? Or might I have answered my God when those massacred creatures should have stood up against me, that the hope of Antwerp’s deliverance was purchased with the blood of so many simple souls? No, no. I should have found my conscience such a hell and continual worm as the gnawing thereof would have been more painful and bitter than the possession of the whole world would have been pleasant.”

Morgan continued to press the various points which had created suspicion as to the character and motives of Marnix, and point by point Marnix answered his antagonist, impressing him, armed as he had been in distrust, with an irresistible conviction as to the loftiness of the nature which had been so much calumniated.

Sainte Aldegonde (with vehemence).—“I do assure you, in conclusion, that I have solemnly vowed service and duty to her Majesty, which I am ready to perform where and when it may best like her to use the same. I will add moreover that I have oftentimes determined to pass into England to make my own purgation, yet fearing lest her Highness would mislike so bold a resolution, I have checked that purpose with a resolution to tarry the Lord’s leisure, until some better opportunity might answer my desire. For since I know not how I stand in her grace, unwilling I am to attempt her presence without permission; but might it please her to command my attendance, I should not only most joyfully accomplish the same, but also satisfy her of and in all such matters as I stand charged with, and afterwards spend life, land, and goods, to witness my duty towards her Highness.”



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Morgan.—“I tell you plainly, that if you are in heart the same man that you seem outwardly to be, I doubt not but her Majesty might easily be persuaded to conceive a gracious opinion of you. For mine own part, I will surely advertise Sir Francis Walsingham of as much matter as this present conference hath ministered.

“Hereof,” said the Colonel—when, according to his promise, faithfully recording the conversation in all its details for Mr. Secretary’s benefit,” he seemed not only content but most glad. Therefore I beseech your honour to vouchsafe some few lines herein, that I may return him some part of your mind. I have already written thereof to Sir Philip Sidney, lord governor of Flushing, with request that his Excellency the Earl of Leicester may presently be made acquainted with the cause.”

Indeed the brave Welshman was thoroughly converted from his suspicions by the earnest language and sympathetic presence of the fallen statesman. This result of the conference was creditable to the ingenuous character of both personages.

“Thus did he,” wrote Morgan to Sir Francis, “from point to point, answer all objections from the first to the last, and that in such sound and substantial manner, with a strong show of truth, as I think his very enemies, having heard his tale, would be satisfied. And truly, Sir, as heretofore I have thought hardly of him, being led by a superficial judgment of things as they stood in outward appearance; so now, having pierced deep, and weighed causes by a sounder and more deliberate consideration, I find myself somewhat changed in conceit—not so much carried away by the sweetness of his speech, as confirmed by the force of his religious profession, wherein he remaineth constant, without wavering—an argument of great strength to set him free from treacherous attempts; but as I am herein least able and most unworthy to yield any censure, much less to give advice, so I leave the man and the matter to your honour’s opinion. Only (your graver judgment reserved) thus I think, that it were good either to employ him as a friend, or as an enemy to remove him farther from us, being a man of such action as the world knoweth he is. And to conclude,” added Morgan, “this was the upshot between us.”

Nevertheless, he remained in this obscurity for a long period. When, towards the close of the year 1585, the English government was established in Holland, he was the object of constant suspicion.

“Here is Aldegonde,” wrote Sir Philip Sidney to Lord Leicester from Flushing, “a man greatly suspected, but by no man charged. He lives restrained to his own house, and for aught I can find, deals with nothing, only desiring to have his cause wholly referred to your Lordship, and therefore, with the best heed I can to his proceedings, I will leave him to his clearing or condemning, when your Lordship shall hear him.”

In another letter, Sir Philip again spoke of Sainte Aldegonde as “one of whom he kept a good opinion, and yet a suspicious eye.”



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Leicester himself was excessively anxious on the subject, deeply fearing the designs of a man whom he deemed so mischievous, and being earnestly desirous that he should not elude the chastisement which he seemed to deserve.

“Touching *Ste. Aldegonde*,” he wrote to Davison, “I grieve that he is at his house without good guard. I do earnestly pray you to move such as have power presently to commit a guard about him, for I know he is a dangerous and a bold man, and presumes yet to carry all, for he hath made many promises to the Prince of Parma. I would he were in Fort Rammekyns, or else that Mr. Russell had charge of him, with a recommendation from me to Russell to look well to him till I shall arrive. You must have been so commanded in this from her Majesty, for she thinks he is in close and safe guard. If he is not, look for a turn of all things, for he hath friends, I know.”

But very soon after his arrival, the Earl, on examining into the matter, saw fit to change his opinions and his language. Persuaded, in spite of his previous convictions, even as the honest Welsh colonel had been, of the upright character of the man, and feeling sure that a change had come over the feelings of Marnix himself in regard to the English alliance, Leicester at once interested himself in removing the prejudices entertained towards him by the Queen.

“Now a few words for *Ste. Aldegonde*,” said he in his earliest despatches from Holland; “I will beseech her Majesty to stay her judgment till I write next. If the man be as he now seemeth, it were pity to lose him, for he is indeed marvellously friended. Her Majesty will think, I know, that I am easily pacified or led in such a matter, but I trust so to deal as she shall give me thanks. Once if he do offer service it is sure enough, for he is esteemed that way above all the men in this country for his word, if he give it. His worst enemies here procure me to win him, for sure, just matter for his life there is none. He would fain come into England, so far is he come already, and doth extol her Majesty for this work of hers to heaven, and confesseth, till now an angel could not make him believe it.”

Here certainly was a noble tribute paid unconsciously, as it were, to the character of the maligned statesman. “Above all the men in the country for his word, if he give it.” What wonder that Orange had leaned upon him, that Alexander had sought to gain him, and how much does it add to our bitter regret that his prejudices against England should not have been removed until too late for Antwerp and for his own usefulness. Had his good angel really been present to make him believe in that “work of her Majesty,” when his ear was open to the seductions of Parma, the destiny of Belgium and his own subsequent career might have been more fortunate than they became.

The Queen was slow to return from her prejudices. She believed—not without reason—that the opposition of *Ste. Aldegonde* to her policy had been disastrous to the cause both of England and the Netherlands; and it had been her desire that he should be imprisoned, and tried for his life. Her councillors came gradually to take a more

favourable view of the case, and to be moved by the pathetic attitude of the man who had once been so conspicuous.



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“I did acquaint Sir Christopher Hatton,” wrote Walsingham to Leicester, “with the letter which *Ste. Aldegonde* wrote to your Lordship, which, carrying a true picture of an afflicted mind, cannot but move an honest heart, weighing the rare parts the gentleman is endowed withal, to pity his distressed estate, and, to procure him relief and comfort, which Mr. Vice-Chamberlain (Hatton) hath promised on his part to perform. I thought good to send *Ste. Aldegonde*’s letter unto the Lord Treasurer (Burghley), who heretofore has carried a hard conceit of the gentleman, hoping that the view of his letter will breed some remorse towards him. I have also prayed his Lordship, if he see cause, to acquaint her Majesty with the said letter.”

But his high public career was closed. He lived down calumny; and put his enemies to shame, but the fatal error which he had committed, in taking the side of Spain rather than of England at so momentous a crisis, could never be repaired. He regained the good opinion of the most virtuous and eminent personages in Europe, but in the noon of life he voluntarily withdrew from public affairs. The circumstances just detailed had made him impossible as a political leader, and it was equally impossible for him to play a secondary part. He occasionally consented to be employed in special diplomatic missions, but the serious avocations of his life now became theological and literary. He sought—in his own words—to penetrate himself still more deeply than ever with the spirit of the reformation, and to imbue the minds of the young with that deep love for the reformed religion which had been the guiding thought of his own career. He often spoke with a sigh of his compulsory exile from the field where he had been so conspicuous all his lifetime; he bitterly lamented the vanished dream of the great national union between Belgium and Holland, which had flattered his youth and his manhood; and he sometimes alluded with bitterness to the calumny which had crippled him of his usefulness. He might have played a distinguished part in that powerful commonwealth which was so steadily and splendidly arising out of the lagunes of Zeeland and Holland, but destiny and calumny and his own error had decided otherwise.

“From the depth of my exile—” he said, “for I am resolved to retire, I know not where, into Germany, perhaps into Sarmatia, I shall look from afar upon the calamities of my country. That which to me is most mournful is no longer to be able to assist my fatherland by my counsels and my actions.” He did not go into exile, but remained chiefly at his mansion of Zoubourg, occupied with agriculture and with profound study. Many noble works conspicuous in the literature of the epoch—were the results of his learned leisure; and the name of Marnix of Sainte Aldegonde will be always as dear to the lovers of science and letters as to the believers in civil and religious liberty. At the request

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of the States of Holland he undertook, in 1593, a translation of the Scriptures from the original, and he was at the same time deeply engaged with a History of Christianity, which he intended for his literary master-piece. The man whose sword had done knightly service on many a battle-field for freedom, whose tongue had controlled mobs and senates, courts and councils, whose subtle spirit had metamorphosed itself into a thousand shapes to do battle with the genius of tyranny, now quenched the feverish agitation of his youth and manhood in Hebrew and classical lore. A grand and noble figure always: most pathetic when thus redeeming by vigorous but solitary and melancholy hard labor, the political error which had condemned him to retirement. To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature. Repose in the other world, "Repos ailleurs" was the device which he assumed in earliest youth, and to which he was faithful all his days.

A great and good man whose life had been brim-full of noble deeds, and who had been led astray from the path, not of virtue, but of sound policy, by his own prejudices and by the fascination of an intellect even more brilliant than his own, he at least enjoyed in his retirement whatever good may come from hearty and genuine labor, and from the high regard entertained for him by the noblest spirits among his contemporaries.

"They tell me," said La Noue, "that the Seigneur de *Ste. Aldegonde* has been suspected by the Hollanders and the English. I am deeply grieved, for 'tis a personage worthy to be employed. I have always known him to be a zealous friend of his religion and his country, and I will bear him this testimony, that his hands and his heart are clean. Had it been otherwise, I must have known it. His example has made me regret the less the promise I was obliged to make, never to bear arms again in the Netherlands. For I have thought that since this man, who has so much credit and authority among your people, after having done his duty well, has not failed to be calumniated and ejected from service, what would they have done with me, who am a stranger, had I continued in their employment? The consul Terentius Varro lost, by his fault, the battle of Cannae; nevertheless, when he returned to Rome, offering the remainder of his life in the cause of his Republic reduced to extremity, he was not rejected, but well received, because he hoped well for the country. It is not to be imputed as blame to *Ste. Aldegonde* that he lost Antwerp, for he surrendered when it could not be saved. What I now say is drawn from me by the compassion I feel when persons of merit suffer without cause at the hands of their fellow citizens. In these terrible tempests, as it is a duty rigorously to punish the betrayers of their country, even so it is an obligation upon us to honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors, that we may all encourage each other to do the right."

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Strange too as it may now seem to us, a reconciliation of the Netherlands with Philip was not thought an impossibility by other experienced and sagacious patriots, besides Marnix. Even Olden-Barneveld, on taking office as Holland's Advocate, at this period, made it a condition that his service was to last only until the reunion of the Provinces with Spain.

There was another illustrious personage in a foreign land who ever rendered homage to the character of the retired Netherland statesman. Amid the desolation of France, Duplessis Mornay often solaced himself by distant communion with that kindred and sympathizing spirit.

"Plunged in public annoyances," he wrote to Sainte Aldegonde, "I find no consolation, except in conference with the good, and among the good I hold you for one of the best. With such men I had rather sigh profoundly than laugh heartily with others. In particular, Sir, do me the honor to love me, and believe that I honor you singularly. Impart to me something from your solitude, for I consider your deserts to be more fruitful and fertile than our most cultivated habitations. As for me, think of me as of a man drowning in the anxieties of the time, but desirous, if possible, of swimming to solitude."

Thus solitary, yet thus befriended,—remote from public employment, yet ever employed, doing his daily work with all his soul and strength, Marnix passed the fifteen years yet remaining to him. Death surprised him at last, at Leyden, in the year 1598, while steadily laboring upon his Flemish translation of the Old Testament, and upon the great political, theological, controversial, and satirical work on the differences of religion, which remains the most stately, though unfinished, monument of his literary genius. At the age of sixty he went at last to the repose which he had denied to himself on earth. "Repos ailleurs."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Honor good patriots, and to support them in venial errors
Possible to do, only because we see that it has been done
Repose in the other world, "Repos ailleurs"
Soldiers enough to animate the good and terrify the bad
To work, ever to work, was the primary law of his nature
When persons of merit suffer without cause

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