

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

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1585e 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 42

History United Netherlands, Volume 42, 1585

CHAPTER VI., Part 1.

Policy of England—Diplomatic Coquetry—Dutch Envoys in England—Conference of Ortel and Walsingham—Interview with Leicester—Private Audience of the Queen—Letters of the States—General—Ill Effects of Gilpin's Despatch—Close Bargaining of the Queen and States—Guarantees required by England—England's comparative Weakness—The English characterised—Paul Hentzner—The Envoys in London—Their Characters—Olden-Barneveldt described—Reception at Greenwich—Speech of Menin—Reply of the Queen—Memorial of the Envoys—Discussions with the Ministers—Second Speech of the Queen—Third Speech of the Queen

England as we have seen—had carefully watched the negotiations between France and the Netherlands. Although she had—upon the whole, for that intriguing age—been loyal in her bearing towards both parties, she was perhaps not entirely displeased with the result. As her cherished triumvirate was out of the question, it was quite obvious that, now or never, she must come forward to prevent the Provinces from falling back into the hands of Spain. The future was plainly enough foreshadowed, and it was already probable, in case of a prolonged resistance on the part of Holland, that Philip would undertake the reduction of his rebellious subjects by a preliminary conquest of England. It was therefore quite certain that the expense and danger of assisting the Netherlands must devolve upon herself, but, at the same time it was a consolation that her powerful next-door neighbour was not to be made still more powerful by the annexation to his own dominion of those important territories.

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Accordingly, so soon as the deputies in France had received their definite and somewhat ignominious repulse from Henry III. and his mother, the English government lost no time in intimating to the States that they were not to be left without an ally. Queen Elizabeth was however resolutely averse from assuming that sovereignty which she was not unwilling to see offered for her acceptance; and her accredited envoy at the Hague, besides other more secret agents, were as busily employed in the spring of 1585—as Des Pruneaux had been the previous winter on the part of France—to bring about an application, by solemn embassy, for her assistance.

There was, however, a difference of view, from the outset, between the leading politicians of the Netherlands and the English Queen. The Hollanders were extremely desirous of becoming her subjects; for the United States, although they had already formed themselves into an independent republic, were quite ignorant of their latent powers. The leading personages of the country—those who were soon to become the foremost statesmen of the new commonwealth—were already shrinking from the anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form of government, and were seeking protection for and against the people under a foreign sceptre. On the other hand, they were indisposed to mortgage large and important fortified towns, such as Flushing, Brill, and others, for the repayment of the subsidies which Elizabeth might be induced to advance. They preferred to pay in sovereignty rather than in money. The Queen, on the contrary, preferred money to sovereignty, and was not at all inclined to sacrifice economy to ambition. Intending to drive a hard bargain with the States, whose cause was her own, and whose demands for aid she had secretly prompted, she meant to grant a certain number of soldiers for as brief a period as possible, serving at her expense, and to take for such outlay a most ample security in the shape of cautionary towns.

Too intelligent a politician not to feel the absolute necessity of at last coming into the field to help the Netherlanders to fight her own battle, she was still willing, for a season longer, to wear the mask of coyness and coquetry, which she thought most adapted to irritate the Netherlanders into a full compliance with her wishes. Her advisers in the Provinces were inclined to take the same view. It seemed obvious, after the failure in France, that those countries must now become either English or Spanish; yet Elizabeth, knowing the risk of their falling back, from desperation, into the arms of her rival, allowed them to remain for a season on the edge of destruction—which would probably have been her ruin also—in the hope of bringing them to her feet on her own terms. There was something of feminine art in this policy, and it was not without the success which often attends such insincere manoeuvres. At the same time, as the statesmen of the republic knew that it was the Queen's affair, when so near a neighbour's roof was blazing, they entertained little doubt of ultimately obtaining her alliance. It was pity—in so grave an emergency—that a little frankness could not have been substituted for a good deal of superfluous diplomacy.

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Gilpin, a highly intelligent agent of the English government in Zeeland, kept Sir Francis Walsingham thoroughly informed of the sentiments entertained by the people of that province towards England. Mixing habitually with the most influential politicians, he was able to render material assistance to the English council in the diplomatic game which had been commenced, and on which a no less important stake than the crown of England was to be hazarded.

"In conference," he said, "with particular persons that bear any rule or credit, I find a great inclination towards her Majesty, joined notwithstanding with a kind of coldness. They allege that matters of such importance are to be maturely and thoroughly pondered, while some of them harp upon the old string, as if her Majesty, for the security of her own estate, was to have the more care of theirs here."

He was also very careful to insinuate the expediency of diplomatic coquetry into the mind of a Princess who needed no such prompting. "The less by outward appearance," said he, "this people shall perceive that her Majesty can be contented to take the protection of them upon her, the forwarder they will be to seek and send unto her, and the larger conditions in treaty may be required. For if they see it to come from herself, then do they persuade themselves that it is for the greater security of our own country and her Highness to fear the King of Spain's greatness. But if they become seekers unto her Majesty, and if they may, by outward show, deem that she accounteth not of the said King's might, but able and sufficient to defend her own realms, then verily I think they may be brought to whatsoever points her Majesty may desire."

Certainly it was an age of intrigue, in which nothing seemed worth getting at all unless it could be got by underhand means, and in which it was thought impossible for two parties to a bargain to meet together except as antagonists, who believed that one could not derive a profit from the transaction unless the other had been overreached. This was neither good morality nor sound diplomacy, and the result of such trifling was much loss of time and great disaster. In accordance with this crafty system, the agent expressed the opinion that it would "be good and requisite for the English government somewhat to temporise," and to dally for a season longer, in order to see what measures the States would take to defend themselves, and how much ability and resources they would show for belligerent purposes. If the Queen were too eager, the Provinces would become jealous, "yielding, as it were, their power, and yet keeping the rudder in their own hands."

At the same time Gilpin was favourably impressed with the character both of the country and the nation, soon to be placed in such important relations with England. "This people," he said, "is such as by fair means they will be won to yield and grant any reasonable motion or demand. What these islands of Zeeland are her Majesty and all my lords of her council do know. Yet for their government thus much I must write; that during these troubles it never was better than now. They draw, in a manner, one line,

long and carefully in their resolution; but the same once taken and promises made, they would perform them to the uttermost."

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Such then was the character of the people, for no man was better enabled to form an opinion on the subject than was Gilpin. Had it not been as well, then, for Englishmen—who were themselves in that age, as in every other, apt to “perform to the uttermost promises once taken and made,” and to respect those endowed with the same wholesome characteristic—to strike hands at once in a cause which was so vital to both nations?

So soon as the definite refusal of Henry III, was known in England, Leicester and Walsingham wrote at once to the Netherlands. The Earl already saw shining through the distance a brilliant prize for his own ambition, although he was too haughty, perhaps too magnanimous, but certainly far too crafty, to suffer such sentiments as yet to pierce to the surface.

“Mr. Davison,” he wrote, “you shall perceive by Mr. Secretary’s letters how the French have dealt with these people. They are well enough served; but yet I think, if they will heartily and earnestly seek it, the Lord hath appointed them a far better defence. But you must so use the matter as that they must seek their own good, although we shall be partakers thereof also. They may now, if they will effectually and liberally deal, bring themselves to a better end than ever France would have brought them.”

At that moment there were two diplomatic agents from the States resident in England—Jacques de Gryze; whom Paul Buys had formerly described as having thrust himself head and shoulders into the matter without proper authority, and Joachim Ortel, a most experienced and intelligent man, speaking and writing English like a native, and thoroughly conversant with English habits and character. So soon as the despatches from France arrived, Walsingham, 18th March, 1585, sent for Ortel, and the two held a long conference.

Walsingham.—“We have just received letters from Lord Derby and Sir Edward Stafford, dated the 13th March. They inform us that your deputies—contrary to all expectation and to the great hopes that had been hold out to them—have received, last Sunday, their definite answer from the King of France. He tells them, that, considering the present condition of his kingdom, he is unable to undertake the protection of the Netherlands; but says that if they like, and if the Queen of England be willing to second his motion, he is disposed to send a mission of mediation to Spain for the purpose of begging the King to take the condition of the provinces to heart, and bringing about some honourable composition, and so forth, and so forth.

“Moreover the King of France has sent Monsieur de Bellievre to Lord Derby and Mr. Stafford, and Bellievre has made those envoys a long oration. He explained to them all about the original treaty between the States and Monsieur, the King’s brother, and what had taken place from that day to this, concluding, after many allegations and divers reasons, that the King could not trouble himself with the provinces at present; but hoped her Majesty would make the best of it, and not be offended with him.

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“The ambassadors say further, that they have had an interview with your deputies, who are excessively provoked at this most unexpected answer from the King, and are making loud complaints, being all determined to take themselves off as fast as possible. The ambassadors have recommended that some of the number should come home by the way of England.”

Ortel.—“It seems necessary to take active measures at once, and to leave no duty undone in this matter. It will be advisable to confer, so soon as may be, with some of the principal counsellors of her Majesty, and recommend to them most earnestly the present condition of the provinces. They know the affectionate confidence which the States entertain towards England, and must now, remembering the sentiments of goodwill which they have expressed towards the Netherlands, be willing to employ their efforts with her Majesty in this emergency.”

Walsingham (with much show of vexation).—“This conduct on the part of the French court has been most pernicious. Your envoys have been delayed, fed with idle hopes, and then disgracefully sent away, so that the best part of the year has been consumed, and it will be most difficult now, in a great hurry, to get together a sufficient force of horse and foot folk, with other necessities in abundance. On the contrary, the enemy, who knew from the first what result was to be expected in France, has been doing his best to be beforehand with you in the field: add, moreover, that this French negotiation has given other princes a bad taste in their mouths. This is the case with her Majesty. The Queen is, not without reason, annoyed that the States have not only despised her friendly and good-hearted offers, but have all along been endeavouring to embark her in this war, for the defence of the Provinces, which would have cost her several millions, without offering to her the slightest security. On the contrary, others, enemies of the religion, who are not to be depended upon—who had never deserved well of the States or assisted them in their need, as she has done—have received this large offer of sovereignty without any reserve whatever.”

Ortel (not suffering himself to be disconcerted at this unjust and somewhat insidious attack).—“That which has been transacted with France was not done except with the express approbation and full foreknowledge of her Majesty, so far back as the lifetime of his Excellency (William of Orange), of high and laudable memory. Things had already gone so far, and the Provinces had agreed so entirely together, as to make it inexpedient to bring about a separation in policy. It was our duty to hold together, and, once for all, thoroughly to understand what the King of France, after such manifold presentations through Monsieur Des Pruneaux and others, and in various letters of his own, finally intended to do. At the same time, notwithstanding these negotiations, we had always an especial eye upon her Majesty. We felt a hopeful confidence that she would never desert us, leaving us without aid or counsel, but would consider that these affairs do not concern the Provinces alone or even especially, but are just as deeply important to her and to all other princes of the religion.”

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After this dialogue, with much more conversation of a similar character, the Secretary and the envoy set themselves frankly and manfully to work. It was agreed between them that every effort should be made with the leading members of the Council to induce the Queen “in this terrible conjuncture, not to forsake the Provinces, but to extend good counsel and prompt assistance to them in their present embarrassments.”

There was, however, so much business in Parliament just then, that it was impossible to obtain immediately the desired interviews.

On the 20th, Ortel and De Gryze had another interview with Walsingham at the Palace of Greenwich. The Secretary expressed the warmest and most sincere affection for the Provinces, and advised that one of the two envoys should set forth at once for home in order to declare to the States, without loss of time, her Majesty's good inclination to assume the protection of the land, together with the maintenance of the reformed religion and the ancient privileges. Not that she was seeking her own profit, or wished to obtain that sovereignty which had just been offered to another of the contrary religion, but in order to make manifest her affectionate solicitude to preserve the Protestant faith and to support her old allies and neighbours. Nevertheless, as she could not assume this protectorate without embarking in a dangerous war with the King of Spain, in which she would not only be obliged to spend the blood of her subjects, but also at least two millions of gold, there was the more reason that the States should give her certain cities as security. Those cities would be held by certain of her gentlemen, nominated thereto, of quality, credit, and religion, at the head of good, true, and well-paid garrisons, who should make oath never to surrender them to the King of Spain or to any one else without consent of the States. The Provinces were also reciprocally to bind themselves by oath to make no treaty with the King, without the advice and approval of her Majesty. It was likewise thoroughly to be understood that such cautionary towns should be restored to the States so soon as payment should be made of all moneys advanced during the war.

Next day the envoys had an interview with the Earl of Leicester, whom they found as amicably disposed towards their cause as Secretary Walsingham had been. “Her Majesty,” said the Earl, “is excessively indignant with the King of France, that he should so long have abused the Provinces, and at last have dismissed their deputies so contemptuously. Nevertheless,” he continued, “’tis all your own fault to have placed your hopes so entirely upon him as to entirely forget other princes, and more especially her Majesty. Notwithstanding all that has passed, however, I find her fully determined to maintain the cause of the Provinces. For my own part, I am ready to stake my life, estates, and reputation, upon this issue, and to stand side by side with other gentlemen in persuading her Majesty to do her utmost for the assistance of your country.”

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He intimated however, as Walsingham had done, that the matter of cautionary towns would prove an indispensable condition, and recommended that one of the two envoys should proceed homeward at once, in order to procure, as speedily as possible, the appointment of an embassy for that purpose to her Majesty. "They must bring full powers," said the Earl, "to give her the necessary guarantees, and make a formal demand for protection; for it would be unbecoming, and against her reputation, to be obliged to present herself, unsought by the other party."

In conclusion, after many strong expressions of good-will, Leicester promised to meet them next day at court, where he would address the Queen personally on the subject, and see that they spoke with her as well. Meantime he sent one of his principal gentlemen to keep company with the envoys, and make himself useful to them. This personage, being "of good quality and a member of Parliament," gave them much useful information, assuring them that there was a strong feeling in England in favour of the Netherlands, and that the matter had been very vigorously taken up in the national legislature. That assembly had been strongly encouraging her Majesty boldly to assume the protectorate, and had manifested a willingness to assist her with the needful. "And if," said he, "one subsidy should not be enough, she shall have three, four, five, or six, or as much as may be necessary."

The same day, the envoys had an interview with Lord Treasurer Burghley, who held the same language as Walsingham and Leicester had done. "The Queen, to his knowledge," he said, "was quite ready to assume the protectorate; but it was necessary that it should be formally offered, with the necessary guarantees, and that without further loss of time."

On the 22nd March, according to agreement, Ortel and De Gryze went to the court at Greenwich. While waiting there for the Queen, who had ridden out into the country, they had more conversation with Walsingham, whom they found even more energetically disposed in their favour than ever, and who assured them that her Majesty was quite ready to assume the protectorate so soon as offered. "Within a month," he said, "after the signing of a treaty, the troops would be on the spot, under command of such a personage of quality and religion as would be highly satisfactory." While they were talking, the Queen rode into the court-yard, accompanied by the Earl of Leicester and other gentlemen. Very soon afterwards the envoys were summoned to her presence, and allowed to recommend the affairs of the Provinces to her consideration. She lamented the situation of their country, and in a few words expressed her inclination to render assistance, provided the States would manifest full confidence in her. They replied by offering to take instant measures to gratify all her demands, so soon as those demands should be made known; and the Queen finding herself surrounded by so many gentlemen and by a crowd of people, appointed them accordingly to come to her private apartments the same afternoon.

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At that interview none were present save Walsingham and Lord Chamberlain Howard. The Queen showed herself “extraordinarily resolute” to take up the affairs of the Provinces. “She had always been sure,” she said, “that the French negotiation would have no other issue than the one which they had just seen. She was fully aware what a powerful enemy she was about to make—one who could easily create mischief for her in Scotland and Ireland; but she was nevertheless resolved, if the States chose to deal with her frankly and generously, to take them under her protection. She assured the envoys that if a deputation with full powers and reasonable conditions should be immediately sent to her, she would not delay and dally with them, as had been the case in France, but would despatch them back again at the speediest, and would make her good inclination manifest by deeds as well as words. As she was hazarding her treasure together with the blood and repose of her subjects, she was not at liberty to do this except on receipt of proper securities.”

Accordingly De Gryze went to the Provinces, provided with complimentary and affectionate letters from the Queen, while Ortel remained in England. So far all was plain and above-board; and Walsingham, who, from the first, had been warmly in favour of taking up the Netherland cause, was relieved by being able to write in straightforward language. Stealthy and subtle, where the object was to get within the guard of an enemy who menaced a mortal blow, he was, both by nature and policy, disposed to deal frankly with those he called his friends.

“Monsieur de Gryze repaireth presently,” he wrote to Davison, “to try if he can induce the States to send their deputies hither, furnished with more ample instructions than they had to treat with the French King, considering that her Majesty carryeth another manner of princely disposition than that sovereign. Meanwhile, for that she doubteth lest in this hard estate of their affairs, and the distrust they have conceived to be relieved from hence, they should from despair throw themselves into the course of Spain, her pleasure therefore is—though by Burnham I sent you directions to put them in comfort of relief, only as of yourself—that you shall now, as it were, in her name, if you see cause sufficient, assure some of the aptest instruments that you shall make choice of for that purpose, that her Majesty, rather than that they should perish, will be content to take them under her protection.”

He added that it was indispensable for the States, upon their part, to offer “such sufficient cautions and assurances as she might in reason demand.”

Matters were so well managed that by the 22nd April the States-General addressed a letter to the Queen, in which they notified her, that the desired deputation was on the point of setting forth. “Recognizing,” they said, “that there is no prince or potentate to whom they are more obliged than they are to your Majesty, we are about to request you very humbly to accept the sovereignty of these Provinces, and the people of the same for your very humble vassals and subjects.” They added that, as the necessity of the

case was great, they hoped the Queen would send, so soon as might be, a force of four or five thousand men for the purpose of relieving the siege of Antwerp.

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A similar letter was despatched by the same courier to the Earl of Leicester.

On the 1st of May, Ortel had audience of the Queen, to deliver the letters from the States-General. He found that despatches, very encouraging and agreeable in their tenor, had also just arrived from Davison. The Queen was in good humour. She took the letter from Ortel, read it attentively, and paused a good while. Then she assured him that her good affection towards the Provinces was not in the least changed, and that she thanked the States for the confidence in her that they were manifesting. "It is unnecessary," said the Queen, "for me to repeat over and over again sentiments which I have so plainly declared. You are to assure the States that they shall never be disappointed in the trust that they have reposed in my good intentions. Let them deal with me sincerely, and without holding open any back-door. Not that I am seeking the sovereignty of the Provinces, for I wish only to maintain their privileges and ancient liberties, and to defend them in this regard against all the world. Let them ripely consider, then, with what fidelity I am espousing their cause, and how, without fear of any one, I am arousing most powerful enemies."

Ortel had afterwards an interview with Leicester, in which the Earl assured him that her Majesty had not in the least changed in her sentiments towards the Provinces. "For myself," said he, "I am ready, if her Majesty choose to make use of me, to go over there in person, and to place life, property, and all the assistance I can gain from my friends, upon the issue. Yea, with so good a heart, that I pray the Lord may be good to me, only so far as I serve faithfully in this cause." He added a warning that the deputies to be appointed should come with absolute powers, in order that her Majesty's bountiful intentions might not be retarded by their own fault.

Ortel then visited Walsingham at his house, Barn-Elms, where he was confined by illness. Sir Francis assured the envoy that he would use every effort, by letter to her Majesty and by verbal instructions to his son-in-law, Sir Philip Sidney, to further the success of the negotiation, and that he deeply regretted his enforced absence from the court on so important an occasion.

Matters were proceeding most favourably, and the all-important point of sending an auxiliary force of Englishmen to the relief of Antwerp—before it should be too late, and in advance of the final conclusion of the treaty between the countries—had been nearly conceded. Just at that moment, however, "as ill-luck would have it," said Ortel, "came a letter from Gilpin. I don't think he meant it in malice, but the effect was most pernicious. He sent the information that a new attack was to be made by the 10th May upon the Kowenstyn, that it was sure to be successful, and that the siege of Antwerp was as good as raised. So Lord Burghley informed

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me, in presence of Lord Leicester, that her Majesty was determined to await the issue of this enterprise. It was quite too late to get troops in readiness; to co-operate with the States' army, so soon as the 10th May, and as Antwerp was so sure to be relieved, there was no pressing necessity for haste. I uttered most bitter complaints to these lords and to other counsellors of the Queen, that she should thus draw back, on account of a letter from a single individual, without paying sufficient heed to the despatches from the States-General, who certainly knew their own affairs and their own necessities better than any one else could do, but her Majesty sticks firm to her resolution."

Here were immense mistakes committed on all sides. The premature shooting up of those three rockets from the cathedral-tower, on the unlucky 10th May, had thus not only ruined the first assault against the Kowenstyn, but also the second and the more promising adventure. Had the four thousand bold Englishmen there enlisted, and who could have reached the Provinces in time to cooperate in that great enterprise, have stood side by side with the Hollanders, the Zeelanders, and the Antwerpers, upon that fatal dyke, it is almost a certainty that Antwerp would have been relieved, and the whole of Flanders and Brabant permanently annexed to the independent commonwealth, which would have thus assumed at once most imposing proportions.

It was a great blunder of Sainte Aldegonde to station in the cathedral, on so important an occasion, watchmen in whose judgment he could not thoroughly rely. It was a blunder in Gilpin, intelligent as he generally showed himself, to write in such sanguine style before the event. But it was the greatest blunder of all for Queen Elizabeth to suspend her cooperation at the very instant when, as the result showed, it was likely to prove most successful. It was a chapter of blunders from first to last, but the most fatal of all the errors was the one thus prompted by the great Queen's most traitorous characteristic, her obstinate parsimony.

And now began a series of sharp chafferings on both sides, not very much to the credit of either party. The kingdom of England, and the rebellious Provinces of Spain, were drawn to each other by an irresistible law of political attraction. Their absorption into each other seemed natural and almost inevitable; and the weight of the strong Protestant organism, had it been thus completed, might have balanced the great Catholic League which was clustering about Spain.

It was unfortunate that the two governments of England and the Netherlands should now assume the attitude of traders driving a hard bargain with each other, rather than that of two important commonwealths, upon whose action, at that momentous epoch, the weal and wo of Christendom was hanging. It is quite true that the danger to England was great, but that danger in any event was to be confronted—Philip

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was to be defied, and, by assuming the cause of the Provinces to be her own, which it unquestionably was, Elizabeth was taking the diadem from her head—as the King of Sweden well observed—and adventuring it upon the doubtful chance of war. Would it not have been better then—her mind being once made up—promptly to accept all the benefits, as well as all the hazards, of the bold game to which she was of necessity a party? But she could not yet believe in the incredible meanness of Henry III. “I asked her Majesty” (3rd May, 1585), said Ortel, “whether, in view of these vast preparations in France, it did not behove her to be most circumspect and upon her guard. For, in the opinion of many men, everything showed one great scheme already laid down—a general conspiracy throughout Christendom against the reformed religion. She answered me, that thus far she could not perceive this to be the case; ‘nor could she believe,’ she said, ‘that the King of France could be so faint-hearted as to submit to such injuries from the Guises.’”

Time was very soon to show the nature of that unhappy monarch with regard to injuries, and to prove to Elizabeth the error she had committed in doubting his faint-heartedness. Meanwhile, time was passing, and the Netherlands were shivering in the storm. They, needed the open sunshine which her caution kept too long behind the clouds. For it was now enjoined upon Walsingham to manifest a coldness upon the part of the English government towards the States. Davison was to be allowed to return; “but,” said Sir Francis, “her Majesty would not have you accompany the commissioners who are coming from the Low Countries; but to come over, either before them or after them, lest it be thought they come over by her Majesty’s procurement.”

As if they were not coming over by her Majesty’s most especial procurement, and as if it would matter to Philip—the union once made between England and Holland—whether the invitation to that union came first from the one party or the other!

“I am retired for my health from the court to mine own house,” said Walsingham, “but I find those in whose judgment her Majesty reposeth greatest trust so coldly affected unto the cause, as I have no great hope of the matter; and yet, for that the hearts of princes are in the hands of God, who both can will and dispose them at his pleasure, I would be loath to hinder the repair of the commissioners.”

Here certainly, had the sun gone most suddenly into a cloud. Sir Francis would be loath to advise the commissioners to stay at home, but he obviously thought them coming on as bootless an errand as that which had taken their colleagues so recently into France.

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The cause of the trouble was Flushing. Hence the tears, and the coldness, and the scoldings, on the part of the imperious and the economical Queen. Flushing was the patrimony—a large portion of that which was left to him—of Count Maurice. It was deeply mortgaged for the payment of the debts of William the Silent, but his son Maurice, so long as the elder brother Philip William remained a captive in Spain, wrote himself Marquis of Flushing and Kampveer, and derived both revenue and importance from his rights in that important town. The States of Zeeland, while desirous of a political fusion of the two countries, were averse from the prospect of converting, by exception, their commercial, capital into an English city, the remainder of the Provinces remaining meanwhile upon their ancient footing. The negotiations on the subject caused a most ill-timed delay. The States finding the English government cooling, affected to grow tepid themselves. This was the true mercantile system, perhaps, for managing a transaction most thriftily, but frankness and promptness would have been more statesmanlike at such a juncture.

“I am sorry to understand,” wrote Walsingham, “that the States are not yet grown to a full resolution for the delivering of the town of Flushing into her Majesty’s hands. The Queen finding the people of that island so wavering and inconstant, besides that they can hardly, after the so long enjoying a popular liberty, bear a regal authority, would be loath to embark herself into so dangerous a war without some sufficient caution received from them. It is also greatly to be doubted, that if, by practice and corruption, that town might be recovered by the Spaniards, it would put all the rest of the country in peril. I find her Majesty, in case that town may be gotten, fully resolved to receive them into her protection, so as it may also be made probable unto her that the promised three hundred thousand guilders the month will be duly paid.”

A day or two after writing this letter, Walsingham sent one afternoon, in a great hurry, for Ortel, and informed him very secretly, that, according to information just received, the deputies from the States were coming without sufficient authority in regard to this very matter. Thus all the good intentions of the English government were likely to be frustrated, and the Provinces to be reduced to direful extremity.

“What can we possibly advise her Majesty to do?” asked Walsingham, “since you are not willing to put confidence in her intentions. You are trying to bring her into a public war, in which she is to risk her treasure and the blood of her subjects against the greatest potentates of the world, and you hesitate meantime at giving her such security as is required for the very defence of the Provinces themselves. The deputies are coming hither to offer the sovereignty to her Majesty, as was recently done in France, or, if that should not

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prove acceptable, they are to ask assistance in men and money upon a mere 'taliter qualiter' guaranty. That's not the way. And there are plenty of ill-disposed persons here to take advantage of this position of affairs to ruin the interest of the Provinces now placed on so good a footing. Moreover, in this perpetual sending of despatches back and forth, much precious time is consumed; and this is exactly what our enemies most desire."

In accordance with Walsingham's urgent suggestions, Ortel wrote at once to his constituents, imploring them to remedy this matter. Do not allow," he said, any, more time to be wasted. Let us not painfully, build a wall only to knock our own heads against it, to the dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies."

It was at last arranged that an important blank should be left in the articles to be brought by the deputies, upon which vacant place the names of certain cautionary towns, afterwards to be agreed upon, were to be inscribed by common consent.

Meantime the English ministers were busy in preparing to receive the commissioners, and to bring the Netherland matter handsomely before the legislature.

The integrity, the caution, the thrift, the hesitation, which characterized Elizabeth's government, were well portrayed in the habitual language of the Lord Treasurer, chief minister of a third-rate kingdom now called on to play a first-rate part, thoroughly acquainted with the moral and intellectual power of the nation whose policy he directed, and prophetically conscious of the great destinies which were opening upon her horizon. Lord Burghley could hardly be censured—least of all ridiculed—for the patient and somewhat timid attributes of his nature: The ineffable ponderings, which might now be ludicrous, on the part of a minister of the British Empire, with two hundred millions of subjects and near a hundred millions of revenue, were almost inevitable in a man guiding a realm of four millions of people with half a million of income.

It was, on the whole, a strange negotiation, this between England and Holland. A commonwealth had arisen, but was unconscious of the strength which it was to find in the principle of states' union, and of religious equality. It sought, on the contrary, to exchange its federal sovereignty for provincial dependence, and to imitate, to a certain extent, the very intolerance by which it had been driven into revolt. It was not unnatural that the Netherlanders should hate the Roman Catholic religion, in the name of which they had endured such infinite tortures, but it is, nevertheless, painful to observe that they requested Queen Elizabeth, whom they styled defender, not of "the faith" but of the "reformed religion," to exclude from the Provinces, in case she accepted the sovereignty, the exercise of all religious rites except those belonging to the reformed church. They, however, expressly provided

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against inquisition into conscience. Private houses were to be sacred, the, papists free within their own walls, but the churches were to be closed to those of the ancient faith. This was not so bad as to hang, burn, drown, and bury alive nonconformists, as had been done by Philip and the holy inquisition in the name of the church of Rome; nor is it very surprising that the horrible past should have caused that church to be regarded with sentiments of such deep-rooted hostility as to make the Hollanders shudder at the idea of its re-establishment. Yet, no doubt, it was idle for either Holland or England, at that day, to talk of a reconciliation with Rome. A step had separated them, but it was a step from a precipice. No human power could bridge the chasm. The steep contrast between the league and the counter-league, between the systems of Philip and Mucio, and that of Elizabeth and Olden-Barneveld, ran through the whole world of thought, action, and life.

But still the negociation between Holland and England was a strange one. Holland wished to give herself entirely, and England feared to accept. Elizabeth, in place of sovereignty, wanted mortgages; while Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole. There was no great inequality between the two countries. Both were instinctively conscious, perhaps, of standing on the edge of a vast expansion. Both felt that they were about to stretch their wings suddenly for a flight over the whole earth. Yet each was a very inferior power, in comparison with the great empires of the past or those which then existed.

It is difficult, without a strong effort of the imagination, to reduce the English empire to the slender proportions which belonged to her in the days of Elizabeth. That epoch was full of light and life. The constellations which have for centuries been shining in the English firmament were then human creatures walking English earth. The captains, statesmen, corsairs, merchant-adventurers, poets, dramatists, the great Queen herself, the Cecils, Raleigh, Walsingham, Drake, Hawkins, Gilbert, Howard, Willoughby, the Norrises, Essex, Leicester, Sidney, Spenser, Shakspeare and the lesser but brilliant lights which surrounded him; such were the men who lifted England upon an elevation to which she was not yet entitled by her material grandeur. At last she had done with Rome, and her expansion dated from that moment.

Holland and England, by the very condition of their existence, were sworn foes to Philip. Elizabeth stood excommunicated of the Pope. There was hardly a month in which intelligence was not sent by English agents out of the Netherlands and France, that assassins, hired by Philip, were making their way to England to attempt the life of the Queen. The Netherlands were rebels to the Spanish monarch, and they stood, one and all, under death-sentence by Rome. The alliance was inevitable and wholesome. Elizabeth was, however, consistently opposed to the

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acceptance of a new sovereignty. England was a weak power. Ireland was at her side in a state of chronic rebellion—a stepping-stone for Spain in its already foreshadowed invasion. Scotland was at her back with a strong party of Catholics, stipendiaries of Philip, encouraged by the Guises and periodically inflamed to enthusiasm by the hope of rescuing Mary Stuart from her imprisonment, bringing her rival's head to the block, and elevating the long-suffering martyr upon the throne of all the British Islands. And in the midst of England itself, conspiracies were weaving every day. The mortal duel between the two queens was slowly approaching its termination. In the fatal form of Mary was embodied everything most perilous to England's glory and to England's Queen. Mary Stuart meant absolutism at home, subjection to Rome and Spain abroad. The uncle Guises were stipendiaries of Philip, Philip was the slave of the Pope. Mucio had frightened the unlucky Henry III. into submission, and there was no health nor hope in France. For England, Mary Stuart embodied the possible relapse into sloth, dependence, barbarism. For Elizabeth, Mary Stuart embodied sedition, conspiracy, rebellion, battle, murder, and sudden death.

It was not to be wondered at that the Queen thus situated should be cautious, when about throwing down the gauntlet to the greatest powers of the earth. Yet the commissioners from the United States were now on their way to England to propose the throwing of that gauntlet. What now was that England?

Its population was, perhaps, not greater than the numbers which dwell to-day within its capital and immediate suburbs. Its revenue was perhaps equal to the sixtieth part of the annual interest on the present national debt. Single, highly-favoured individuals, not only in England but in other countries cis- and trans-Atlantic, enjoy incomes equal to more than half the amount of Elizabeth's annual budget. London, then containing perhaps one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, was hardly so imposing a town as Antwerp, and was inferior in most material respects to Paris and Lisbon. Forty-two hundred children were born every year within its precincts, and the deaths were nearly as many. In plague years, which were only too frequent, as many as twenty and even thirty thousand people had been annually swept away.

At the present epoch there are seventeen hundred births every week, and about one thousand deaths.

It is instructive to throw a glance at the character of the English people as it appeared to intelligent foreigners at that day; for the various parts of the world were not then so closely blended, nor did national colours and characteristics flow so liquidly into each other, as is the case in these days of intimate juxta-position.

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“The English are a very clever, handsome, and well-made people,” says a learned Antwerp historian and merchant, who had resided a long time in London, “but, like all islanders, by nature weak and tender. They are generally fair, particularly the women, who all—even to the peasant women—protect their complexions from the sun with fans and veils, as only the stately gentlewomen do in Germany and the Netherlands. As a people they are stout-hearted, vehement, eager, cruel in war, zealous in attack, little fearing: death; not revengeful, but fickle, presumptuous, rash, boastful, deceitful, very suspicious, especially of strangers, whom they despise. They are full of courteous and hypocritical gestures and words, which they consider to imply good manners, civility, and wisdom. They are well spoken, and very hospitable. They feed well, eating much meat, which—owing to the rainy climate and the ranker character of the grass—is not so firm and succulent as the meat of France and the Netherlands. The people are not so laborious as the French and Hollanders, preferring to lead an indolent life, like the Spaniards. The most difficult and ingenious of the handicrafts are in the hands of foreigners, as is the case with the lazy inhabitants of Spain. They feed many sheep, with fine wool, from which, two hundred years ago, they learned to make cloth. They keep many idle servants, and many wild animals for their pleasure, instead of cultivating the soil. They have many ships, but they do not even catch fish enough for their own consumption, but purchase of their neighbours. They dress very elegantly. Their costume is light and costly, but they are very changeable and capricious, altering their fashions every year, both the men and the women. When they go away from home, riding or travelling, they always wear their best clothes, contrary to the habit of other nations. The English language is broken Dutch, mixed with French and British terms and words, but with a lighter pronunciation. They do not speak from the chest, like the Germans, but prattle only with the tongue.”

Here are few statistical facts, but certainly it is curious to see how many national traits thus photographed by a contemporary, have quite vanished, and have been exchanged for their very opposites. Certainly the last physiological criticism of all would indicate as great a national metamorphosis, during the last three centuries, as is offered by many other of the writer’s observations.

“With regard to the women,” continues the same authority, “they are entirely in the power of the men, except in matters of life and death, yet they are not kept so closely and strictly as in Spain and elsewhere. They are not locked up, but have free management of their household, like the Netherlands and their other neighbours. They are gay in their clothing, taking well their ease, leaving house-work to the servant-maids, and are fond of sitting, finely-dressed, before their doors to see the passers-by and to be seen of them. In all banquets and dinner-parties they have the most honour, sitting at the upper end of the board, and being served first.

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"Their time is spent in riding, lounging, card-playing, and making merry with their gossips at child-bearings, christenings, churchings, and burials; and all this conduct the men wink at, because such are the customs of the land. They much commend however the industry and careful habits of the German and Netherland women, who do the work which in England devolves upon the men. Hence, England is called the paradise of married women, for the unmarried girls are kept much more strictly than upon the continent. The women are, handsome, white, dressy, modest; although they go freely about the streets without bonnet, hood, or veil; but lately learned to cover their faces with a silken mask or vizard with a plumage of feathers, for they change their fashions every year, to the astonishment of many."

Paul Hentzner, a tourist from Germany at precisely the same epoch, touches with equal minuteness on English characteristics. It may be observed, that, with some discrepancies, there is also much similarity, in the views of the two critics.

"The English," says the whimsical Paul, are serious, like the Germans, lovers of show, liking to be followed, wherever they go, by troops of servants, who wear their master's arms, in silver, fastened to their left sleeves, and are justly ridiculed for wearing tails hanging down their backs. They excel in dancing and music, for they are active and lively, although they are of thicker build than the Germans. They cut their hair close on the forehead, letting it hang down on either side. They are good sailors, and better pirates, cunning, treacherous, thievish. Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London. Hawking is the favourite sport of the nobility. The English are more polite in eating than the French, devouring less bread, but more meat, which they roast in perfection. They put a great deal of sugar in their drink. Their beds are covered with tapestry, even those of farmers. They are powerful in the field, successful against their enemies, impatient of anything like slavery, vastly fond of great ear-filling noises, such as cannon-firing, drum-beating, and bell-ringing; so that it is very common for a number of them, when they have got a cup too much in their heads, to go up to some belfry, and ring the bells for an hour together, for the sake of the amusement. If they see a foreigner very well made or particularly handsome, they will say "'tis pity he is not an Englishman."

It is also somewhat amusing, at the present day, to find a German elaborately explaining to his countrymen the mysteries of tobacco-smoking, as they appeared to his unsophisticated eyes in England. "At the theatres and everywhere else," says the traveller, "the English are constantly smoking tobacco in the following manner. They have pipes, made on purpose, of clay. At the further end of these is a bowl. Into the bowl they put the herb, and then setting fire to it, they draw the smoke into their mouths, which they puff out again through their nostrils, like funnels," and so on; conscientious explanations which a German tourist of our own times might think it superfluous to offer to his compatriots.

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It is also instructive to read that the light-fingered gentry of the metropolis were nearly as adroit in their calling as they are at present, after three additional centuries of development for their delicate craft; for the learned Tobias Salander, the travelling companion of Paul Hentzner, finding himself at a Lord Mayor's Show, was eased of his purse, containing nine crowns, as skilfully as the feat could have been done by the best pickpocket of the nineteenth century, much to that learned person's discomfiture.

Into such an England and among such English the Netherland envoys had now been despatched on their most important errand.

After twice putting back, through stress of weather, the commissioners, early in July, arrived at London, and were "lodged and very worshipfully appointed at charges of her Majesty in the Clothworkers' Hall in Pynchon-lane, near Tower-street." About the Tower and its faubourgs the buildings were stated to be as elegant as they were in the city itself, although this was hardly very extravagant commendation. From this district a single street led along the river's strand to Westminster, where were the old and new palaces, the famous hall and abbey, the Parliament chambers, and the bridge to Southwark, built of stone, with twenty arches, sixty feet high, and with rows of shops and dwelling-houses on both its sides. Thence, along the broad and beautiful river, were dotted here and there many stately mansions and villas, residences of bishops and nobles, extending farther and farther west as the city melted rapidly into the country. London itself was a town lying high upon a hill—the hill of Lud—and consisted of a coil of narrow, tortuous, unseemly streets, each with a black, noisome rivulet running through its centre, and with rows of three-storied, leaden-roofed houses, built of timber-work filled in with lime, with many gables, and with the upper stories overhanging and darkening the basements. There were one hundred and twenty-one churches, small and large, the most conspicuous of which was the Cathedral. Old Saint Paul's was not a very magnificent edifice—but it was an extremely large one, for it was seven hundred and twenty feet long, one hundred and thirty broad, and had a massive quadrangular tower, two hundred and sixty feet high. Upon this tower had stood a timber-steeple, rising, to a height of five hundred and thirty-four feet from the ground, but it had been struck by lightning in the year 1561, and consumed to the stone-work.

The Queen's favourite residence was Greenwich Palace, the place of her birth, and to this mansion, on the 9th of July, the Netherland envoys were conveyed, in royal barges, from the neighbourhood of Pynchon-lane, for their first audience.

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The deputation was a strong one. There was Falck of Zeeland, a man of consummate adroitness, perhaps not of as satisfactory integrity; “a shrewd fellow and a fine,” as Lord Leicester soon afterwards characterised him. There was Menin, pensionary of Dort, an eloquent and accomplished orator, and employed on this occasion as chief spokesman of the legation—“a deeper man, and, I think, an honester,” said the same personage, adding, with an eye to business, “and he is but poor, which you must consider, but with great secrecy.” There was Paul Buys, whom we have met with before; keen, subtle, somewhat loose of life, very passionate, a most most energetic and valuable friend to England, a determined foe to France, who had resigned the important post of Holland’s Advocate, when the mission offering sovereignty to Henry III. had been resolved upon, and who had since that period been most influential in procuring the present triumph of the English policy. Through his exertions the Province of Holland had been induced at an early moment to furnish the most ample instructions to the commissioners for the satisfaction of Queen Elizabeth in the great matter of the mortgages. “Judge if this Paul Buys has done his work well,” said a French agent in the Netherlands, who, despite the infamous conduct of his government towards the Provinces, was doing his best to frustrate the subsequent negotiation with England, “and whether or no he has Holland under his thumb.” The same individual had conceived hopes from Falck of Zeeland. That Province, in which lay the great bone of contention between the Queen and the States—the important town of Flushing—was much slower than Holland to agree to the English policy. It is to be feared that Falck was not the most ingenuous and disinterested politician that could be found even in an age not distinguished for frankness or purity; for even while setting forth upon the mission to Elizabeth, he was still clingihg, or affecting to cling, to the wretched delusion of French assistance. “I regret infinitely,” said Falck to the French agent just mentioned, “that I am employed in this affair, and that it is necessary in our present straits to have recourse to England. There is— so to speak—not a person in our Province that is inclined that way, all recognizing very well that France is much more salutary for us, besides that we all bear her a certain affection. Indeed, if I were assured that the King still felt any goodwill towards us, I would so manage matters that neither the Queen of England, nor any other prince whatever except his most Christian-Majesty should take a bite at this country, at least at this Province, and with that view, while waiting for news from France, I will keep things in suspense, and spin them out as long as it is possible to do.”

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The news from France happened soon to be very conclusive, and it then became difficult even for Falck to believe—after intelligence received of the accord between Henry III. and the Guises—that his Christian Majesty, would be inclined for a bite at the Netherlands. This duplicity on the part of so leading a personage furnishes a key to much of the apparent dilatoriness on the part of the English government: It has been seen that Elizabeth, up to the last moment, could not fairly comprehend the ineffable meanness of the French monarch. She told Ortel that she saw no reason to believe in that great Catholic conspiracy against herself and against all Protestantism which was so soon to be made public by the King's edict of July, promulgated at the very instant of the arrival in England of the Netherland envoys. Then that dread fiat had gone forth, the most determined favourer of the French alliance could no longer admit its possibility, and Falck became the more open to that peculiar line of argument which Leicester had suggested with regard to one of the other deputies. "I will do my best," wrote Walsingham, "to procure that Paul Buys and Falck shall receive underhand some reward."

Besides Menin, Falck, and Buys, were Noel de Caron, an experienced diplomatist; the poet-soldier, Van der Does; heroic defender of Leyden; De Gryze, Hersolte, Francis Maalzoom, and three legal Frisians of pith and substance, Feitsma, Aisma, and Jongema; a dozen Dutchmen together— as muscular champions as ever little republic sent forth to wrestle with all comers in the slippery ring of diplomacy. For it was instinctively felt that here were conclusions to be tried with a nation of deep, solid thinkers, who were aware that a great crisis in the world's history had occurred, and would put forth their most substantial men to deal with it: Burghley and Walsingham, the great Queen herself, were no feather-weights like the frivolous Henry III., and his minions. It was pity, however, that the discussions about to ensue presented from the outset rather the aspect of a hard hitting encounter of antagonists than that of a frank and friendly congress between two great parties whose interests were identical.

Since the death of William the Silent, there was no one individual in the Netherlands to impersonate the great struggle of the Provinces with Spain and Rome, and to concentrate upon his own head a poetical, dramatic, and yet most legitimate interest. The great purpose of the present history must be found in its illustration of the creative power of civil and religious freedom. Here was a little republic, just born into the world, suddenly bereft of its tutelary saint, left to its own resources, yet already instinct with healthy vigorous life, and playing its difficult part among friends and enemies with audacity, self-reliance, and success. To a certain extent its achievements were anonymous, but a great principle manifested itself

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through a series of noble deeds. Statesmen, soldiers, patriots, came forward on all sides to do the work which was to be done, and those who were brought into closest contact with the commonwealth acknowledged in strongest language the signal ability with which, self-guided, she steered her course. Nevertheless, there was at this moment one Netherlander, the chief of the present mission to England, already the foremost statesman of his country, whose name will not soon be effaced from the record of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. That man was John of Olden-Barneveld.

He was now in his thirty-eighth year, having been born at Amersfoot on the 14th of September, 1547. He bore an imposing name, for the Olden-Barnevelds of Gelderland were a race of unquestionable and antique nobility. His enemies, however, questioned his right to the descent which he claimed. They did not dispute that the great grandfather, Class van Olden-Barneveld, was of distinguished lineage and allied to many illustrious houses, but they denied that Class was really the great grandfather of John. John's father, Gerritt, they said, was a nameless outcast, a felon, a murderer, who had escaped the punishment due to his crimes, but had dragged out a miserable existence in the downs, burrowing like a rabbit in the sand. They had also much to say in disparagement of all John's connections. Not only was his father a murderer, but his wife, whom he had married for money, was the child of a most horrible incest, his sisters were prostitutes, his sons and brothers were debauchees and drunkards, and, in short, never had a distinguished man a more uncomfortable and discreditable family-circle than that which surrounded Barneveld, if the report of his enemies was to be believed. Yet it is agreeable to reflect that, with all the venom which they had such power of secreting, these malignant tongues had been unable to destroy the reputation of the man himself. John's character was honourable and upright, his intellectual power not disputed even by those who at a later period hated him the most bitterly. He had been a profound and indefatigable student from his earliest youth. He had read law at Leyden, in France, at Heidelberg. Here, in the head-quarters of German Calvinism, his youthful mind had long pondered the dread themes of foreknowledge, judgment absolute, free will, and predestination: To believe it worth the while of a rational and intelligent Deity to create annually several millions of thinking beings, who were to struggle for a brief period on earth, and to consume in perpetual brimstone afterwards, while others were predestined to endless enjoyment, seemed to him an indifferent exchange for a faith in the purgatory and paradise of Rome. Perplexed in the extreme, the youthful John bethought himself of an inscription over the gateway of his famous but questionable great grandfather's house at Amersfort—'nil scire tutissima fides.' He resolved thenceforth

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to adopt a system of ignorance upon matters beyond the flaming walls of the world; to do the work before him manfully and faithfully while he walked the earth, and to trust that a benevolent Creator would devote neither him nor any other man to eternal hellfire. For this most offensive doctrine he was howled at by the strictly pious, while he earned still deeper opprobrium by daring to advocate religious toleration: In face of the endless horrors inflicted by the Spanish Inquisition upon his native land, he had the hardihood—although a determined Protestant himself—to claim for Roman Catholics the right to exercise their religion in the free States on equal terms with those of the reformed faith. “Anyone,” said his enemies, “could smell what that meant who had not a wooden nose.” In brief, he was a liberal Christian, both in theory and practice, and he nobly confronted in consequence the wrath of bigots on both sides. At a later period the most zealous Calvinists called him Pope John, and the opinions to which he was to owe such appellations had already been formed in his mind.

After completing his very thorough legal studies, he had practised as an advocate in Holland and Zeeland. An early defender of civil and religious freedom, he had been brought at an early day into contact with William the Silent, who recognized his ability. He had borne a snap-hance on his shoulder as a volunteer in the memorable attempt to relieve Haarlem, and was one of the few survivors of that bloody night. He had stood outside the walls of Leyden in company of the Prince of Orange when that magnificent destruction of the dykes had taken place by which the city had been saved from the fate impending over it. At a still more recent period we have seen him landing from the gun-boats upon the Kowenstyn, on the fatal 26th May. These military adventures were, however, but brief and accidental episodes in his career, which was that of a statesman and diplomatist. As pensionary of Rotterdam, he was constantly a member of the General Assembly, and had already begun to guide the policy of the new commonwealth. His experience was considerable, and he was now in the high noon of his vigour and his usefulness.

He was a man of noble and imposing presence, with thick hair pushed from a broad forehead rising dome-like above a square and massive face; a strong deeply-coloured physiognomy, with shaggy brow, a chill blue eye, not winning but commanding, high cheek bones, a solid, somewhat scornful nose, a firm mouth and chin, enveloped in a copious brown beard; the whole head not unfitly framed in the stiff formal ruff of the period; and the tall stately figure well draped in magisterial robes of velvet and sable—such was John of Olden-Barneveld.

The Commissioners thus described arrived at Greenwich Stairs, and were at once ushered into the palace, a residence which had been much enlarged and decorated by Henry VIII.

They were received with stately ceremony. The presence-chamber was hung with Gobelin tapestry, its floor strewn with rushes. Fifty-gentlemen pensioners, with gilt battle-ages, and a throng of 'buffetiers', or beef-eaters, in that quaint old-world garb which has survived so many centuries, were in attendance, while the counsellors of the Queen, in their robes of state, waited around the throne.

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There, in close skull-cap and dark flowing gown, was the subtle, monastic-looking Walsingham, with long, grave, melancholy face and Spanish eyes. There too, white staff in hand, was Lord High Treasurer Burghley, then sixty-five years of age, with serene blue eye, large, smooth, pale, scarce-wrinkled face and forehead; seeming, with his placid, symmetrical features, and great velvet bonnet, under which such silver hairs as remained were soberly tucked away, and with his long dark robes which swept the ground, more like a dignified gentlewoman than a statesman, but for the wintry beard which lay like a snow-drift on his ancient breast.

The Queen was then in the fifty-third year of her age, and considered herself in the full bloom of her beauty. Her garments were of satin and velvet, with fringes of pearl as big as beans. A small gold crown was upon her head, and her red hair, throughout its multiplicity of curls, blazed with diamonds and emeralds. Her forehead was tall, her face long, her complexion fair, her eyes small, dark, and glittering, her nose high and hooked, her lips thin, her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed. As she passed through the ante-chamber to the presence-hall, supplicants presented petitions upon their knees. Wherever she glanced, all prostrated themselves on the ground. The cry of "Long live Queen Elizabeth" was spontaneous and perpetual; the reply, "I thank you, my good people," was constant and cordial. She spoke to various foreigners in their respective languages, being mistress, besides the Latin and Greek, of French, Spanish, Italian, and German. As the Commissioners were presented to her by Lord Buckhurst it was observed that she was perpetually gloving and ungloving, as if to attract attention to her hand, which was esteemed a wonder of beauty. She spoke French with purity and elegance, but with a drawling, somewhat affected accent, saying "Paar maa foi; paar le Dieeu vivaant," and so forth, in a style which was ridiculed by Parisians, as she sometimes, to her extreme annoyance, discovered.

Joos de Menin, pensionary of Dort, in the name of all the envoys, made an elaborate address. He expressed the gratitude which the States entertained for her past kindness, and particularly for the good offices rendered by Ambassador Davison after the death of the Prince of Orange, and for the deep regret expressed by her Majesty for their disappointment in the hopes they had founded upon France.

"Since the death of the Prince of Orange," he said, "the States have lost many important cities, and now, for the preservation of their existence, they have need of a prince and sovereign lord to defend them against the tyranny and iniquitous oppression of the Spaniards and their adherents, who are more and more determined utterly to destroy their country, and reduce the poor people to a perpetual slavery worse than that of Indians, under the insupportable and detestable yoke of the Spanish Inquisition.

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We have felt a confidence that your Majesty will not choose to see us perish at the hands of the enemy against whom we have been obliged to sustain this long and cruel war. That war we have undertaken in order to preserve for the poor people their liberty, laws, and franchises, together with the exercise of the true Christian religion, of which your Majesty bears rightfully the title of defender, and against which the enemy and his allies have made so many leagues and devised so many ambushes and stratagems, besides organizing every day so many plots against the life of your Majesty and the safety of your realms—schemes which thus far the good God has averted for the good of Christianity and the maintenance of His churches. For these reasons, Madam, the States have taken a firm resolution to have recourse to your Majesty, seeing that it is an ordinary thing for all oppressed nations to apply in their calamity to neighbouring princes, and especially to such as are endowed with piety, justice, magnanimity, and other kingly virtues. For this reason we have been deputed to offer to your Majesty the sovereignty over these Provinces, under certain good and equitable conditions, having reference chiefly to the maintenance of the reformed religion and of our ancient liberties and customs. And although, in the course of these long and continued wars, the enemy has obtained possession of many cities and strong places within our country, nevertheless the Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland, are, thank God, still entire. And in those lands are many large and stately cities, beautiful and deep rivers, admirable seaports, from which your Majesty and your successors can derive much good fruit and commodity, of which it is scarcely necessary to make a long recital. This point, however, beyond the rest, merits a special consideration; namely, that the conjunction of those Provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, and Friesland, together with the cities of Sluys and Ostend, with the kingdoms of your Majesty, carries with it the absolute empire of the great ocean, and consequently an assurance of perpetual felicity for your subjects. We therefore humbly entreat you to agree to our conditions, to accept the sovereign seignory of these Provinces, and consequently to receive the people of the same as your very humble and obedient subjects, under the perpetual safeguard of your crown—a people certainly as faithful and loving towards their princes and sovereign lords, to speak without boasting, as any in all Christendom.

“So doing, Madam, you will preserve many beautiful churches which it has pleased God to raise up in these lands, now much afflicted and shaken, and you will deliver this country and people—before the iniquitous invasion of the Spaniards, so rich and flourishing by the great Commodity of the sea, their ports and rivers, their commerce and manufactures, for all which they have such natural advantages—from ruin and perpetual slavery of body and soul. This will be a truly excellent work, agreeable to God, profitable to Christianity, worthy of immortal praise, and comporting with the heroic virtues of your Majesty, and ensuring the prosperity of your country and people. With this we present to your Majesty our articles and conditions, and pray that the King of Kings may preserve you from all your enemies and ever have you in His holy keeping.”

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The Queen listened intently and very courteously to the delivery of this address, and then made answer in French to this effect:—"Gentlemen,—Had I a thousand tongues I should not be able to express my obligation to you for the great and handsome offers which you have just made. I firmly believe that this proceeds from the true zeal, devotion, and affection, which you have always borne me, and I am certain that you have ever preferred me to all the princes and potentates in the world. Even when you selected the late Duke of Anjou, who was so dear to me, and to whose soul I hope that God has been merciful, I know that you would sooner have offered your country to me if I had desired that you should do so. Certainly I esteem it a great thing that you wish to be governed by me, and I feel so much obliged to you in consequence that I will never abandon you, but, on the contrary, assist you till the last sigh of my life. I know very well that your princes have treated you ill, and that the Spaniards are endeavouring to ruin you entirely; but I will come to your aid, and I will consider what I can do, consistently with my honour, in regard to the articles which you have brought me. They shall be examined by the members of my council, and I promise that I will not keep you three or four months, for I know very well that your affairs require haste, and that they will become ruinous if you are not assisted. It is not my custom to procrastinate, and upon this occasion I shall not dally, as others have done, but let you have my answer very soon."

Certainly, if the Provinces needed a king, which they had most unequivocally declared to be the case, they might have wandered the whole earth over, and, had it been possible, searched through the whole range of history, before finding a monarch with a more kingly spirit than the great Queen to whom they had at last had recourse.

Unfortunately, she was resolute in her refusal to accept the offered sovereignty. The first interview terminated with this exchange of addresses, and the deputies departed in their barges for their lodgings in Pynchon-lane.

The next two days were past in perpetual conferences, generally at Lord Burghley's house, between the envoys and the lords of the council, in which the acceptance of the sovereignty was vehemently urged on the part of the Netherlanders, and steadily declined in the name of her Majesty.

"Her Highness," said Burghley, "cannot be induced, by any writing or harangue that you can make, to accept the principality or proprietorship as sovereign, and it will therefore be labour lost for you to exhibit any writing for the purpose of changing her intention. It will be better to content yourselves with her Majesty's consent to assist you, and to take you under her protection."

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Nevertheless, two days afterwards, a writing was exhibited, drawn up by Menin, in which another elaborate effort was made to alter the Queen's determination. This anxiety, on the part of men already the principal personages in a republic, to merge the independent existence of their commonwealth in another and a foreign political organism, proved, at any rate; that they were influenced by patriotic motives alone. It is also instructive to observe the intense language with which the necessity of a central paramount sovereignty for all the Provinces, and the inconveniences of the separate States' right principle were urged by a deputation, at the head of which stood Olden-Barneveld. "Although it is not becoming in us," said they, "to enquire into your Majesty's motives for refusing the sovereignty of our country, nevertheless, we cannot help observing that your consent would be most profitable, as well to your Majesty, and your successors, as to the Provinces themselves. By your acceptance of the sovereignty the two peoples would be, as it were, united in one body. This would cause a fraternal benevolence between them, and a single reverence, love, and obedience to your Majesty.—The two peoples being thus under the government of the same sovereign prince, the intrigues and practices which the enemy could attempt with persons under a separate subjection, would of necessity surcease. Moreover, those Provinces are all distinct duchies, counties, seignories, governed by their own magistrates, laws, and ordinances; each by itself, without any authority or command to be exercised by one Province over another. To this end they have need of a supreme power and of one sovereign prince or seignor, who may command all equally, having a constant regard to the public weal—considered as a generality, and not with regard to the profit of the one or the other individual Province—and, causing promptly and universally to be executed such ordinances as may be made in the matter of war or police, according to various emergencies. Each Province, on the contrary, retaining its sovereignty over its own inhabitants, obedience will not be so promptly and completely rendered to the commands of the lieutenant-general of your Majesty, and many, a good enterprise and opportunity, will be lost. Where there is not a single authority it is always found that one party endeavours to usurp power over another, or to escape doing his duty so thoroughly as the others. And this has notoriously been the case in the matter of contributions, imposts, and similar matters."

Thus much, and more of similar argument, logically urged, made it sufficiently evident that twenty years of revolt and of hard fighting against one king, had not destroyed in the minds of the leading Netherlanders their conviction of the necessity of kingship. If the new commonwealth was likely to remain a republic, it was, at that moment at any rate, because they could not find a king. Certainly they did their best

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to annex themselves to England, and to become loyal subjects of England's Elizabeth. But the Queen, besides other objections to the course proposed by the Provinces, thought that she could do a better thing in the way of mortgages. In this, perhaps, there was something of the penny-wise policy, which sprang from one great defect in her character. At any rate much mischief was done by the mercantile spirit which dictated the hard chaffering on both sides the Channel at this important juncture; for during this tedious flint-paring, Antwerp, which might have been saved, was falling into the hands of Philip. It should never be forgotten, however, that the Queen had no standing army, and but a small revenue. The men to be sent from England to the Netherland wars were first to be levied wherever it was possible to find them. In truth, many were pressed in the various wards of London, furnished with red coats and matchlocks at the expense of the citizens, and so despatched, helter-skelter, in small squads as opportunity offered. General Sir John Norris was already superintending these operations, by command of the Queen, before the present formal negotiation with the States had begun.

Subsequently to the 11th July, on which day the second address had been made to Elizabeth, the envoys had many conferences with Leicester, Burghley, Walsingham, and other councillors, without making much progress. There was perpetual wrangling about figures and securities.

"What terms will you pledge for the repayment of the monies to be advanced?" asked Burghley and Walsingham.

"But if her Majesty takes the sovereignty," answered the deputies, "there will be no question of guarantees. The Queen will possess our whole land, and there will be no need of any repayment."

"And we have told you over and over again," said the Lord Treasurer, "that her Majesty will never think of accepting the sovereignty. She will assist you in money and men, and must be repaid to the last farthing when the war is over; and, until that period, must have solid pledges in the shape of a town in each Province."

Then came interrogatories as to the amount of troops and funds to be raised respectively by the Queen and the States for the common cause. The Provinces wished her Majesty to pay one-third of the whole expense, while her Majesty was reluctant to pay one-quarter. The States wished a permanent force to be kept on foot in the Netherlands of thirteen thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry for the field, and twenty-three thousand for garrisons. The councillors thought the last item too much. Then there were queries as to the expense of maintaining a force in the Provinces. The envoys reckoned one pound sterling, or ten florins, a month for the pay of each foot soldier, including officers; and for the cavalry, three times as much. This seemed

reasonable, and the answers to the inquiries touching the expense of the war-vessels and sailors

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were equally satisfactory. Nevertheless it was difficult to bring the Queen up to the line to which the envoys had been limited by their instructions. Five thousand foot and one thousand horse serving at the Queen's expense till the war should be concluded, over and above the garrisons for such cautionary towns as should be agreed upon; this was considered, by the States, the minimum. The Queen held out for giving only four thousand foot and four hundred horse, and for deducting the garrisons even from this slender force. As guarantee for the expense thus to be incurred, she required that Flushing and Brill should be placed in her hands. Moreover the position of Antwerp complicated the negotiation. Elizabeth, fully sensible of the importance of preserving that great capital, offered four thousand soldiers to serve until that city should be relieved, requiring repayment within three months after the object should have been accomplished. As special guarantee for such repayment she required Sluys and Ostend. This was sharp bargaining, but, at any rate, the envoys knew that the Queen, though cavilling to the ninth-part of a hair, was no trifler, and that she meant to perform whatever she should promise.

There was another exchange of speeches at the Palace of Nonesuch, on the 5th August; and the position of affairs and the respective attitudes of the Queen and envoys were plainly characterized by the language then employed.

After an exordium about the cruelty of the Spanish tyranny and the enormous expense entailed by the war upon the Netherlands, Menin, who, as usual, was the spokesman, alluded to the difficulty which the States at last felt in maintaining themselves.

"Five thousand foot and one thousand horse," he said, "over and above the maintenance of garrisons in the towns to be pledged as security to your Majesty, seemed the very least amount of succour that would be probably obtained from your royal bounty. Considering the great demonstrations of affection and promises of support, made as well by your Majesty's own letters as by the mouth of your ambassador Davison, and by our envoys De Gryse and Ortel, who have all declared publicly that your Majesty would never forsake us, the States sent us their deputies to this country in full confidence that such reasonable demands as we had been authorized to make would be satisfied."

The speaker then proceeded to declare that the offer made by the royal councillors of four thousand foot and four hundred horse, to serve during the war, together with a special force of four thousand for the relief of Antwerp, to be paid for within three months after the siege should be raised, against a concession of the cities of Flushing, Brill, Sluys, and Ostend, did not come within the limitations of the States-General. They therefore begged the Queen to enlarge her offer to the number of five thousand foot and one thousand horse, or at least to allow the envoys to conclude the treaty provisionally, and subject to approval of their constituents.

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So soon as Menin had concluded his address, her Majesty instantly replied, with much earnestness and fluency of language.

“Gentlemen,” she said, “I will answer you upon the first point, because it touches my honour. You say that I promised you, both by letters and through my agent Davison, and also by my own lips, to assist you and never to abandon you, and that this had moved you to come to me at present. Very well, masters, do you not think I am assisting you when I am sending you four thousand foot and four hundred horse to serve during the war? Certainly, I think yes; and I say frankly that I have never been wanting to my word. No man shall ever say, with truth, that the Queen of England had at any time and ever so slightly failed in her promises, whether to the mightiest monarch, to republics, to gentlemen, or even to private persons of the humblest condition. Am I, then, in your opinion, forsaking you when I send you English blood, which I love, and which is my own blood, and which I am bound to defend? It seems to me, no. For my part I tell you again that I will never forsake you.

“‘Sed de modo?’ That is matter for agreement. You are aware, gentlemen, that I have storms to fear from many quarters—from France, Scotland, Ireland, and within my own kingdom. What would be said if I looked only on one side, and if on that side I employed all my resources. No, I will give my subjects no cause for murmuring. I know that my counsellors desire to manage matters with prudence; ‘sed aetatem habeo’, and you are to believe, that, of my own motion, I have resolved not to extend my offer of assistance, at present, beyond the amount already stated. But I don’t say that at another time I may not be able to do more for you. For my intention is never to abandon your cause, always to assist you, and never more to suffer any foreign nation to have dominion over you.

“It is true that you present me with two places in each of your Provinces. I thank you for them infinitely, and certainly it is a great offer. But it will be said instantly, the Queen of England wishes to embrace and devour everything; while, on the contrary, I only wish to render you assistance. I believe, in truth, that if other monarchs should have this offer, they would not allow such an opportunity to escape. I do not let it slip because of fears that I entertain for any prince whatever. For to think that I am not aware—doing what I am doing—that I am embarking in a war against the King of Spain, is a great mistake. I know very well that the succour which I am affording you will offend him as much as if I should do a great deal more. But what care I? Let him begin, I will answer him. For my part, I say again, that never did fear enter my heart. We must all die once. I know very well that many princes are my enemies, and are seeking my ruin; and that where malice is joined with force, malice often arrives at its ends. But I am not so feeble a princess that I have not the means and the will to defend myself against them all. They are seeking to take my life, but it troubles me not. He who is on high has defended me until this hour, and will keep me still, for in Him do I trust.

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“As to the other point, you say that your powers are not extensive enough to allow your acceptance of the offer I make you. Nevertheless, if I am not mistaken, I have remarked in passing—for princes look very close to words—that you would be content if I would give you money in place of men, and that your powers speak only of demanding a certain proportion of infantry and another of cavalry. I believe this would be, as you say, an equivalent, ‘secundum quod’. But I say this only because you govern yourselves so precisely by the measure of your instructions. Nevertheless I don’t wish to contest these points with you. For very often ‘dum Romae disputatur Saguntum perit.’ Nevertheless, it would be well for you to decide; and, in any event, I do not think it good that you should all take your departure, but that, on the contrary, you should leave some of your number here. Otherwise it would at once be said that all was broken off, and that I had chosen to nothing for you; and with this the bad would comfort themselves, and the good would be much discouraged.

“Touching the last point of your demand—according to which you desire a personage of quality—I know, gentlemen, that you do not always agree very well among yourselves, and that it would be good for you to have some one to effect such agreement. For this reason I have always intended, so soon as we should have made our treaty, to send a lord of name and authority to reside with you, to assist you in governing, and to aid, with his advice, in the better direction of your affairs.

“Would to God that Antwerp were relieved! Certainly I should be very glad, and very well content to lose all that I am now expending if that city could be saved. I hope, nevertheless, if it can hold out six weeks longer, that we shall see something good. Already the two thousand men of General Norris have crossed, or are crossing, every day by companies. I will hasten the rest as much as possible; and I assure you, gentlemen, that I will spare no diligence. Nevertheless you may, if you choose, retire with my council, and see if together you can come to some good conclusion.”

Thus spoke Elizabeth, like the wise, courageous, and very parsimonious princess that she was. Alas, it was too true, that Saguntum was perishing while the higgling went on at Rome. Had those two thousand under Sir John Norris and the rest of the four thousand but gone a few weeks earlier, how much happier might have been the result!

Nevertheless, it was thought in England that Antwerp would still hold out; and, meantime, a treaty for its relief, in combination with another for permanent assistance to the Provinces, was agreed upon between the envoys and the lords of council.

On the 12th August, Menin presented himself at Nonesuch at the head of his colleagues, and, in a formal speech, announced the arrangement which had thus been entered into, subject to the approval of the States. Again Elizabeth, whose “tongue,” in the homely phrase of the Netherlanders, “was wonderfully well hung,” replied with energy and ready eloquence.

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“You see, gentlemen,” she said, “that I have opened the door; that I am embarking once for all with you in a war against the King of Spain. Very well, I am not anxious about the matter. I hope that God will aid us, and that we shall strike a good blow in your cause. Nevertheless, I pray you, with all my heart, and by the affection you bear me, to treat my soldiers well; for they are my own Englishmen, whom I love as I do myself. Certainly it would be a great cruelty, if you should treat them ill, since they are about to hazard their lives so freely in your defence, and I am sure that my request in this regard will be received by you as it deserves.

“In the next place, as you know that I am sending, as commander of these English troops, an honest gentleman, who deserves most highly for his experience in arms, so I am also informed that you have on your side a gentleman of great valour. I pray you, therefore, that good care be taken lest there be misunderstanding between these two, which might prevent them from agreeing well together, when great exploits of war are to be taken in hand. For if that should happen—which God forbid— my succour would be rendered quite useless to you. I name Count Hohenlo, because him alone have I heard mentioned. But I pray you to make the same recommendation to all the colonels and gentlemen in your army; for I should be infinitely sad, if misadventures should arise from such a cause, for your interest and my honour are both at stake.

“In the third place, I beg you, at your return, to make a favourable report of me, and to thank the States, in my behalf, for their great offers, which I esteem so highly as to be unable to express my thanks. Tell them that I shall remember them for ever. I consider it a great honour, that from the commencement, you have ever been so faithful to me, and that with such great constancy you have preferred me to all other princes, and have chosen me for your Queen. And chiefly do I thank the gentlemen of Holland and Zeeland, who, as I have been informed, were the first who so singularly loved me. And so on my own part I will have a special care of them, and will do my best to uphold them by every possible means, as I will do all the rest who have put their trust in me. But I name Holland and Zeeland more especially, because they have been so constant and faithful in their efforts to assist the rest in shaking off the yoke of the enemy.

“Finally, gentlemen, I beg you to assure the States that I do not decline the sovereignty of your country from any dread of the King of Spain. For I take God to witness that I fear him not; and I hope, with the blessing of God, to make such demonstrations against him, that men shall say the Queen of England does not fear the Spaniards.”

Elizabeth then smote herself upon the breast, and cried, with great energy, “*‘Illa que virgo viri;’* and is it not quite the same to you, even if I do not assume the sovereignty, since I intend to protect you, and since therefore the effects will be the same? It is true that the sovereignty would serve to enhance my grandeur, but I am content to do without it, if you, upon your own part, will only do your duty.

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“For myself, I promise you, in truth, that so long as I live, and even to my last sigh, I will never forsake you. Go home and tell this boldly to the States which sent you hither.”

Menin then replied with fresh expressions of thanks and compliments, and requested, in conclusion, that her Majesty would be pleased to send, as soon as possible, a personage of quality to the Netherlands.

“Gentlemen,” replied Elizabeth, “I intend to do this, so soon as our treaty shall be ratified, for, in contrary case, the King of Spain, seeing your government continue on its present footing, would do nothing but laugh at us. Certainly I do not mean this year to provide him with so fine a banquet.”

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Anarchy which was deemed inseparable from a non-regal form
Dismay of our friends and the gratification of our enemies
Her teeth black, her bosom white and liberally exposed (Eliz.)
Holland was afraid to give a part, although offering the whole
Resolved thenceforth to adopt a system of ignorance
Say "'tis pity he is not an Englishman
Seeking protection for and against the people
Three hundred and upwards are hanged annually in London
We must all die once
Wrath of bigots on both sides

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