

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

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1585f 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 43

History United Netherlands, 1585

Chapter VI., Part 2.

Sir John Norris sent to Holland—Parsimony of Elizabeth—Energy of Davison—Protracted Negotiations—Friendly Sentiments of Count Maurice—Letters from him and Louisa de Coligny—Davison vexed by the Queen's Caprice—Dissatisfaction of Leicester—His vehement Complaints—The Queen's Avarice—Perplexity of Davison—Manifesto of Elizabeth—Sir Philip Sidney—His Arrival at Flushing.

The envoys were then dismissed, and soon afterwards a portion of the deputation took their departure from the Netherlands with the proposed treaty. It was however, as we know, quite too late for Saguntum. Two days after the signing of the treaty, the remaining envoys were at the palace of Nonesuch, in conference with the Earl of

Leicester, when a gentleman rushed suddenly into the apartment, exclaiming with great manifestations of anger:

“Antwerp has fallen! A treaty has been signed with the Prince of Parma. Aldegonde is the author of it all. He is the culprit, who has betrayed us;” with many more expressions of vehement denunciation.

The Queen was disappointed, but stood firm. She had been slow in taking her resolution, but she was unflinching when her mind was made up. Instead of retreating from her position, now that it became doubly dangerous, she advanced several steps nearer towards her allies. For it was obvious, if more precious time should be lost, that Holland and Zeeland would share the fate of Antwerp. Already the belief, that, with the loss of that city, all had been lost, was spreading both in the Provinces and in England, and Elizabeth felt that the time had indeed come to confront the danger.

Meantime the intrigues of the enemy in the independent Provinces were rife. Blunt Roger Williams wrote in very plain language to Walsingham, a very few days after the capitulation of Antwerp:

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"If her Majesty means to have Holland and Zeeland," said he, "she must resolve presently. Aldegonde hath promised the enemy to bring them to compound. Here arrived already his ministers which knew all his dealings about Antwerp from first to last. Count Maurice is governed altogether by Villiers, and Villiers was never worse for the English than at this hour. To be short, the people say in general, they will accept a peace, unless her Majesty do sovereign them presently. All the men of war will be at her Highness' devotion, if they be in credit in time. What you do, it must be done presently, for I do assure your honour there is large offers presented unto them by the enemies. If her Majesty deals not roundly and resolutely with them now, it will be too late two months hence."

Her Majesty meant to deal roundly and resolutely. Her troops had already gone in considerable numbers. She wrote encouraging letters with her own hand to the States, imploring them not to falter now, even though the great city had fallen. She had long since promised never to desert them, and she was, if possible, more determined than ever to redeem her pledge. She especially recommended to their consideration General Norris, commander of the forces that had been despatched to the relief of Antwerp.

A most accomplished officer, sprung of a house renowned for its romantic valour, Sir John was the second of the six sons of Lord Norris of Rycot, all soldiers of high reputation, "chickens of Mars," as an old writer expressed himself. "Such a bunch of brethren for eminent achievement," said he, "was never seen. So great their states and stomachs that they often jostled with others." Elizabeth called their mother, "her own crow;" and the darkness of her hair and visage was thought not unbecoming to her martial issue, by whom it had been inherited. Daughter of Lord Williams of Tame, who had been keeper of the Tower in the time of Elizabeth's imprisonment, she had been affectionate and serviceable to the Princess in the hour of her distress, and had been rewarded with her favour in the days of her grandeur. We shall often meet this crow-black Norris, and his younger brother Sir Edward—the most daring soldiers of their time, posters of sea and land—wherever the buffeting was closest, or adventure the wildest on ship-board or shore, for they were men who combined much of the knight-errantry of a vanishing age with the more practical and expansive spirit of adventure that characterized the new epoch.

Nor was he a stranger in the Netherlands. "The gentleman to whom we have committed the government of the forces going to the relief of Antwerp," said Elizabeth, "has already given you such proofs of his affection by the good services he has rendered you, that without recommendation on our part, he should stand already recommended. Nevertheless, in respect for his quality, the house from which he is descended, and the valour which he has manifested in your own country, we desire to tell you that we hold him dear, and that he deserves also to be dear to you."

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When the fall of Antwerp was certain, the Queen sent Davison, who had been for a brief period in England, back again to his post. "We have learned," she said in the letter which she sent by that envoy; "with very great regret of the surrender of Antwerp. Fearing lest some apprehension should take possession of the people's mind in consequence, and that some dangerous change might ensue, we send you our faithful and well-beloved Davison to represent to you how much we have your affairs at heart, and to say that we are determined to forget nothing that may be necessary to your preservation. Assure yourselves that we shall never fail to accomplish all that he may promise you in our behalf."

Yet, notwithstanding the gravity of the situation, the thorough discussion that had taken place of the whole matter, and the enormous loss which had resulted from the money-saving insanity upon both sides, even then the busy devil of petty economy was not quite exorcised. Several precious weeks were wasted in renewed chafferings. The Queen was willing that the permanent force should now be raised to five thousand foot and one thousand horse—the additional sixteen, hundred men being taken from the Antwerp relieving-force—but she insisted that the garrisons for the cautionary towns should be squeezed out of this general contingent. The States, on the contrary, were determined to screw these garrisons out of her grip, as an additional subsidy. Each party complained with reason of the other's closeness. No doubt the states were shrewd bargainers, but it would have been difficult for the sharpest Hollander that ever sent a cargo of herrings to Cadiz, to force open Elizabeth's beautiful hand when she chose to shut it close. Walsingham and Leicester were alternately driven to despair by the covetousness of the one party or the other.

It was still uncertain what "personage of quality" was to go to the Netherlands in the Queen's name, to help govern the country. Leicester had professed his readiness to risk his life, estates, and reputation, in the cause, and the States particularly desired his appointment. "The name of your Excellency is so very agreeable to this people," said they in a letter to the Earl, "as to give promise of a brief and happy end to this grievous and almost immortal war." The Queen was, or affected to be, still undecided as to the appointment. While waiting week after week for the ratifications of the treaty from Holland, affairs were looking gloomy at home, and her Majesty was growing very uncertain in her temper.

"I see not her Majesty disposed to use the service of the Earl of Leicester," wrote Walsingham. "I suppose the lot of government will light on Lord Gray. I would to God the ability of his purse were answerable to his sufficiency otherwise." This was certainly a most essential deficiency on the part of Lord Gray, and it will soon be seen that the personage of quality to be selected as chief in

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the arduous and honourable enterprise now on foot, would be obliged to rely quite as much on that same ability of purse as upon the sufficiency of his brain or arm. The Queen did not mean to send her favourite forth to purchase anything but honour in the Netherlands; and it was not the Provinces only that were likely to struggle against her parsimony. Yet that parsimony sprang from a nobler motive than the mere love of pelf. Dangers encompassed her on every side, and while husbanding her own exchequer, she was saving her subjects' resources. "Here we are but book-worms," said Walsingham, "yet from sundry quarters we hear of great practices against this poor crown. The revolt in Scotland is greatly feared, and that out of hand."

Scotland, France, Spain, these were dangerous enemies and neighbours to a maiden Queen, who had a rebellious Ireland to deal with on one side the channel, and Alexander of Parma on the other.

Davison experienced great inconvenience and annoyance before the definite arrangements could be made. There is no doubt that the Spanish party had made great progress since the fall of Antwerp. Roger Williams was right in advising the Queen to deal "roundly and resolutely" with the States, and to "sovereign them presently."

They had need of being sovereign, for it must be confessed that the self-government which prevailed at that moment was very like no government. The death of Orange, the treachery of Henry III., the triumphs of Parma, disastrous facts, treading rapidly upon each other, had produced a not very unnatural effect. The peace-at-any-price party was struggling hard for the ascendancy, and the Spanish partizans were doing their best to hold up to suspicion the sharp practice of the English Queen. She was even accused of underhand dealing with Spain, to the disadvantage of the Provinces; so much had slander, anarchy, and despair, been able to effect. The States were reluctant to sign those articles with Elizabeth which were absolutely necessary to their salvation.

"In how doubtful and uncertain terms I found things at my coming hither," wrote Davison to Burghley, "how thwarted and delayed since for a resolution, and with what conditions, and for what reasons I have been finally drawn to conclude with them as I have done, your Lordship may perceive by that I have written to Mr. Secretary. The chief difficulty has rested upon the point of entertaining the garrisons within the towns of assurance, over and besides the five thousand footmen and one thousand horse."

This, as Davison proceeded to observe, was considered a 'sine qua non' by the States, so that, under the perilous circumstances in which both countries were placed, he had felt it his duty to go forward as far as possible to meet their demands. Davison always did his work veraciously, thoroughly, and resolutely; and it was seldom that his advice, in all matters pertaining to Netherland matters, did not prove the very best that could be offered. No man knew better than he the interests and the temper of both countries.

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The imperious Elizabeth was not fond of being thwarted, least of all by any thing savouring of the democratic principle, and already there was much friction between the Tudor spirit of absolutism and the rough “mechanical” nature with which it was to ally itself in the Netherlands. The economical Elizabeth was not pleased at being overreached in a bargain; and, at a moment when she thought herself doing a magnanimous act, she was vexed at the cavilling with which her generosity was received. “’Tis a manner of proceeding,” said Walsingham, “not to be allowed of, and may very well be termed mechanical, considering that her Majesty seeketh no interest in that country—as Monsieur and the French King did—but only their good and benefit, without regard had of the expenses of her treasure and the hazard of her subjects’ lives; besides throwing herself into a present war for their sakes with the greatest prince and potentate in Europe. But seeing the government of those countries resteth in the hands of merchants and advocates—the one regarding profit, the other standing upon vantage of quirks—there is no better fruit to be looked to from them.”

Yet it was, after all, no quirk in those merchants and advocates to urge that the Queen was not going to war with the great potentate for their sakes alone. To Elizabeth’s honour, she did thoroughly comprehend that the war of the Netherlands was the war of England, of Protestantism, and of European liberty, and that she could no longer, without courting her own destruction, defer taking a part in active military operations. It was no quirk, then, but solid reasoning, for the States to regard the subject in the same light. Holland and England were embarked in one boat, and were to sink or swim together. It was waste of time to wrangle so fiercely over pounds and shillings, but the fault was not to be exclusively imputed to the one side or the other. There were bitter recriminations, particularly on the part of Elizabeth, for it was not safe to touch too closely either the pride or the pocket of that frugal and despotic heroine. “The two thousand pounds promised by the States to Norris upon the muster of the two thousand volunteers,” said Walsingham, “were not paid. Her Majesty is not a little offended therewith, seeing how little care they have to yield her satisfaction, which she imputeth to proceed rather from contempt, than from necessity. If it should fall out, however, to be such as by them is pretended, then doth she conceive her bargain to be very ill made, to join her fortune with so weak and broken an estate.” Already there were indications that the innocent might be made to suffer for the short-comings of the real culprits; nor would it be, the first time, or by any means the last, for Davison to appear in the character of a scape-goat.

“Surely, sir,” continued Mr. Secretary, “it is a thing greatly to be feared that the contributions they will yield will fall not more true in paper than in payment; which if it should so happen, it would turn some to blame, whereof you among others are to bear your part.”

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And thus the months of September and of October wore away, and the ratifications of the treaty had not arrived from the Netherlands. Elizabeth became furious, and those of the Netherland deputation who had remained in England were at their wits' end to appease her choler. No news arrived for many weeks. Those were not the days of steam and magnetic telegraphs—inventions by which the nature of man and the aspect of history seem altered—and the Queen had nothing for it but to fret, and the envoys to concert with her ministers expedients to mitigate her spleen. Towards the end of the month, the commissioners chartered a vessel which they despatched for news to Holland. On his way across the sea the captain was hailed on the 28th October by a boat, in which one Hans Wyghans was leisurely proceeding to England with Netherland despatches dated on the 5th of the same month. This was the freshest intelligence that had yet been received.

So soon as the envoys were put in possession of the documents, they obtained an audience of the Queen. This was the last day of October. Elizabeth read her letters, and listened to the apologies made by the deputies for the delay with anything but a benignant countenance. Then, with much vehemence of language, and manifestations of ill-temper, she expressed her displeasure at the dilatoriness of the States. Having sent so many troops, and so many gentlemen of quality, she had considered the whole affair concluded.

“I have been unhandsomely treated,” she said, “and not as comports with a prince of my quality. My inclination for your support—because you show yourselves unworthy of so great benefits—will be entirely destroyed, unless you deal with me and mine more worthily for the future than you have done in the past. Through my great and especial affection for your welfare, I had ordered the Earl of Leicester to proceed to the Netherlands, and conduct your affairs; a man of such quality as all the world knows, and one whom I love, as if he were my own brother. He was getting himself ready in all diligence, putting himself in many perils through the practices of the enemy, and if I should have reason to believe that he would not be respected there according to his due, I should be indeed offended. He and many others are not going thither to advance their own affairs, to make themselves rich, or because they have not means enough to live magnificently at home. They proceed to the Netherlands from pure affection for your cause. This is the case, too, with many other of my subjects, all dear to me, and of much worth. For I have sent a fine heap of folk thither—in all, with those his Excellency is taking with him, not under ten thousand soldiers of the English nation. This is no small succour, and no little unbarring of this realm of mine, threatened as it is with war from many quarters. Yet I am seeking no sovereignty, nor anything else prejudicial to the freedom of your country. I wish only, in your utmost need, to help you out of this lamentable war, to maintain for you liberty of conscience, and to see that law and justice are preserved.”

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All this, and more, with great eagerness of expression and gesture, was urged by the Queen, much to the discomfiture of the envoys. In vain they attempted to modify and to explain. Their faltering excuses were swept rapidly away upon the current of royal wrath; until at last Elizabeth stormed herself into exhaustion and comparative tranquillity. She then dismissed them with an assurance that her goodwill towards the States was not diminished, as would be found to be the case, did they not continue to prove themselves unworthy of her favour that a permanent force of five thousand foot and one thousand horse should serve in the Provinces at the Queen's expense; and that the cities of Flushing and Brill should be placed in her Majesty's hands until the entire reimbursement of the debt thus incurred by the States. Elizabeth also—at last overcoming her reluctance—agreed that the force necessary to garrison these towns should form an additional contingent, instead of being deducted from the general auxiliary force.

Count Maurice of Nassau had been confirmed by the States of Holland and Zeeland as permanent stadholder of those provinces. This measure excited some suspicion on the part of Leicester, who, as it was now understood, was the “personage of quality” to be sent to the Netherlands as representative of the Queen's authority. “Touching the election of Count Maurice,” said the Earl, “I hope it will be no impairing of the authority heretofore allotted to me, for if it will be, I shall tarry but awhile.”

Nothing, however, could be more frank or chivalrously devoted than the language of Maurice to the Queen. “Madam, if I have ever had occasion,” he wrote, “to thank God for his benefits, I confess that it was when, receiving in all humility the letters with which it pleased your Majesty to honour me, I learned that the great disaster of my lord and father's death had not diminished the debonaire affection and favour which it has always pleased your Majesty to manifest to my father's house. It has been likewise grateful to me to learn that your Majesty, surrounded by so many great and important affairs, had been pleased to approve the command which the States-General have conferred upon me. I am indeed grieved that my actions cannot correspond with the ardent desire which I feel to serve your Majesty and these Provinces, for which I hope that my extreme youth will be accepted as an excuse. And although I find myself feeble enough for the charge thus imposed upon me, yet God will assist my efforts to supply by diligence and sincere intention the defect of the other qualities requisite for my thorough discharge of my duty to the contentment of your Majesty. To fulfil these obligations, which are growing greater day by day, I trust to prove by my actions that I will never spare either my labour or life.”

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When it was found that the important town of Flushing was required as part of the guaranty to the Queen, Maurice, as hereditary seignor and proprietor of the place—during the captivity of his elder brother in Spain—signified his concurrence in the transfer, together with the most friendly feelings towards the Earl of Leicester, and to Sir Philip Sidney, appointed English governor of the town. He wrote to Davison, whom he called “one of the best and most certain friends that the house of Nassau possessed in England,” begging that he would recommend the interests of the family to the Queen, “whose favour could do more than anything else in the world towards maintaining what remained of the dignity of their house.” After solemn deliberation with his step-mother, Louisa de Coligny, and the other members of his family, he made a formal announcement of adhesion on the part of the House of Nassau to the arrangements concluded with the English government, and asked the benediction of God upon the treaty. While renouncing, for the moment, any compensation for his consent to the pledging of Flushing his “patrimonial property, and a place of such great importance”—he expressed a confidence that the long services of his father, as well as those which he himself hoped to render, would meet in time with “condign recognition.” He requested the Earl of Leicester to consider the friendship which had existed between himself and the late Prince of Orange, as an hereditary affection to be continued to the children, and he entreated the Earl to do him the honour in future to hold him as a son, and to extend to him counsel and authority; declaring, on his part, that he should ever deem it an honour to be allowed to call him father. And in order still more strongly to confirm his friendship, he begged Sir Philip Sidney to consider him as his brother, and as his companion in arms, promising upon his own part the most faithful friendship. In the name of Louisa de Coligny, and of his whole family, he also particularly recommended to the Queen the interests of the eldest brother of the house, Philip William, “who had been so long and so iniquitously detained captive in Spain,” and begged that, in case prisoners of war of high rank should fall into the hands of the English commanders, they might be employed as a means of effecting the liberation of that much-injured Prince. He likewise desired the friendly offices of the Queen to protect the principality of Orange against the possible designs of the French monarch, and intimated that occasions might arise in which the confiscated estates of the family in Burgundy might be recovered through the influence of the Swiss cantons, particularly those of the Grisons and of Berne.

And, in conclusion, in case the Queen should please—as both Count Maurice and the Princess of Orange desired with all their hearts—to assume the sovereignty of these Provinces, she was especially entreated graciously to observe those suggestions regarding the interests of the House of Nassau, which had been made in the articles of the treaty.

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Thus the path had been smoothed, mainly through the indefatigable energy of Davison. Yet that envoy was not able to give satisfaction to his imperious and somewhat whimsical mistress, whose zeal seemed to cool in proportion to the readiness with which the obstacles to her wishes were removed. Davison was, with reason, discontented. He had done more than any other man either in England or the Provinces, to bring about a hearty cooperation in the common cause, and to allay mutual heart-burnings and suspicions. He had also, owing to the negligence of the English treasurer for the Netherlands, and the niggardliness of Elizabeth, been placed in a position, of great financial embarrassment. His situation was very irksome.

"I mused at the sentence you sent me," he wrote, "for I know no cause her Majesty hath to shrink at her charges hitherto. The treasure she hath yet disbursed here is not above five or six thousand pounds, besides that which I have been obliged to take up for the saving of her honour, and necessity of her service, in danger otherwise of some notable disgrace. I will not, for shame, say how I have been left here to myself."

The delay in the formal appointment of Leicester, and, more particularly, of the governors for the cautionary towns, was the cause of great confusion and anarchy in the transitional condition of the country. "The burden I am driven to sustain," said Davison, "doth utterly weary me. If Sir Philip Sidney were here, and if my Lord of Leicester follow not all the sooner, I would use her Majesty's liberty to return home. If her Majesty think me worthy the reputation of a poor, honest, and loyal servant, I have that contents me. For the rest, I wish

*'Vivere sine invidia, mollesque inglorius annos
Egigere, amicitias et mihi jungere pares.'*"

There was something almost prophetic in the tone which this faithful public servant—to whom, on more than one occasion, such hard measure was to be dealt—habitually adopted in his private letters and conversation. He did his work, but he had not his reward; and he was already weary of place without power, and industry without recognition.

"For mine own particular," he said, "I will say with the poet,

*'Crede mihi, bene qui latuit bene vixit,
Et intra fortunam debet quisque manere suam.'*"

For, notwithstanding the avidity with which Elizabeth had sought the cautionary towns, and the fierceness with which she had censured the tardiness of the States, she seemed now half inclined to drop the prize which she had so much coveted, and to imitate the very languor which she had so lately rebuked. "She hath what she desired," said Davison, "and might yet have more, if this content her not. Howsoever you value the places at home, they are esteemed here, by such as know them best, no little

increase to her Majesty's honour, surety, and greatness, if she be as careful to keep them as happy in getting them. Of this, our cold beginning doth already make me jealous."

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Sagacious and resolute Princess as she was, she showed something of feminine caprice upon this grave occasion. Not Davison alone, but her most confidential ministers and favourites at home, were perplexed and provoked by her misplaced political coquetries. But while the alternation of her hot and cold fits drove her most devoted courtiers out of patience, there was one symptom that remained invariable throughout all her paroxysms, the rigidity with which her hand was locked. Walsingham, stealthy enough when an advantage was to be gained by subtlety, was manful and determined in his dealings with his friends; and he had more than once been offended with Elizabeth's want of frankness in these transactions.

"I find you grieved, and not without cause," he wrote to Davison, "in respect to the overthwart proceedings as well there as here. The disorders in those countries would be easily redressed if we could take a thoroughly resolute course here—a matter that men may rather pray for than hope for. It is very doubtful whether the action now in hand will be accompanied by very hard success, unless they of the country there may be drawn to bear the greatest part of the burden of the wars."

And now the great favourite of all had received the appointment which he coveted. The Earl of Leicester was to be Commander-in-Chief of her Majesty's forces in the Netherlands, and representative of her authority in those countries, whatever that office might prove to be. The nature of his post was anomalous from the beginning. It was environed with difficulties, not the least irritating of which proceeded from the captious spirit of the Queen. The Earl was to proceed in great pomp to Holland, but the pomp was to be prepared mainly at his own expense. Besides the auxiliary forces that had been shipped during the latter period of the year, Leicester was raising a force of lancers, from four to eight hundred in number; but to pay for that levy he was forced to mortgage his own property, while the Queen not only refused to advance ready money, but declined endorsing his bills.

It must be confessed that the Earl's courtship of Elizabeth was anything at that moment but a gentle dalliance. In those thorny regions of finance were no beds of asphodel or amaranthine bowers. There was no talk but of troopers, saltpetre, and sulphur, of books of assurance, and bills of exchange; and the aspect of Elizabeth, when the budget was under discussion, must effectually have neutralized for the time any very tender sentiment. The sharpness with which she clipped Leicester's authority, when authority was indispensable to his dignity, and the heavy demands upon his resources that were the result of her avarice, were obstacles more than enough to the calm fruition of his triumphs. He had succeeded, in appearance at least, in the great object of his ambition, this appointment to the Netherlands; but the appointment was no sinecure, and least of all a promising pecuniary speculation. Elizabeth had told the envoys, with reason, that she was not sending forth that man—whom she loved as a brother—in order that he might make himself rich. On the contrary, the Earl seemed likely to make himself comparatively poor before he got to the Provinces, while his political power, at the moment, did not seem of more hopeful growth.

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Leicester had been determined and consistent in this great enterprize from the beginning. He felt intensely the importance of the crisis. He saw that the time had come for swift and uncompromising action, and the impatience with which he bore the fetters imposed upon him may be easily conceived.

“The cause is such,” he wrote to Walsingham, “that I had as lief be dead as be in the case I shall be in if this restraint hold for taking the oath there, or if some more authority be not granted than I see her Majesty would I should have. I trust you all will hold hard for this, or else banish me England withal. I have sent you the books to be signed by her Majesty. I beseech you return them with all haste, for I get no money till they be under seal.”

But her Majesty would not put them under her seal, much to the favourite’s discomfiture.

“Your letter yieldeth but cold answer,” he wrote, two days afterwards. “Above all things yet that her Majesty doth stick at, I marvel most at her refusal to sign my book of assurance; for there passeth nothing in the earth against her profit by that act, nor any good to me but to satisfy the creditors, who were more scrupulous than needs. I did complain to her of those who did refuse to lend me money, and she was greatly offended with them. But if her Majesty were to stay this, if I were half seas over, I must of necessity come back again, for I may not go without money. I beseech, if the matter be refused by her, bestow a post on me to Harwich. I lie this night at Sir John Peters’, and but for this doubt I had been to-morrow at Harwich. I pray God make you all that be counsellors plain and direct to the furtherance of all good service for her Majesty and the realm; and if it be the will of God to plague us that go, and you that tarry, for our sins, yet let us not be negligent to seek to please the Lord.”

The Earl was not negligent at any rate in seeking to please the Queen, but she was singularly hard to please. She had never been so uncertain in her humours as at this important crisis. She knew, and had publicly stated as much, that she was “embarking in a war with the greatest potentate in Europe;” yet now that the voyage had fairly commenced, and the waves were rolling around her, she seemed anxious to put back to the shore. For there was even a whisper of peace-negotiations, than which nothing could have been more ill-timed. “I perceive by your message,” said Leicester to Walsingham, “that your peace with Spain will go fast on, but this is not the way.” Unquestionably it was not the way, and the whisper was, for the moment at least, suppressed. Meanwhile Leicester had reached Harwich, but the post “bestowed on him,” contained, as usual, but cold comfort. He was resolved, however, to go manfully forward, and do the work before him, until the enterprise should prove wholly impracticable. It is by the light afforded by the secret never-published correspondence of the

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period with which we are now occupied, that the true characteristics of Elizabeth, the Earl of Leicester, and other prominent personages, must be scanned, and the study is most important, for it was by those characteristics, in combination with other human elements embodied in distant parts of Christendom, that the destiny of the world was determined. In that age, more than in our own perhaps, the influence of the individual was widely and intensely felt. Historical chymistry is only rendered possible by a detection of the subtle emanations, which it was supposed would for ever elude analysis, but which survive in those secret, frequently ciphered intercommunications. Philip II., William of Orange, Queen Elizabeth, Alexander Farnese, Robert Dudley, never dreamed—when disclosing their inmost thoughts to their trusted friends at momentous epochs—that the day would come on earth when those secrets would be no longer hid from the patient enquirer after truth. Well for those whose reputations before the judgment-seat of history appear even comparatively pure, after impartial comparison of their motives with their deeds.

“For mine own part, Mr. Secretary,” wrote Leicester, “I am resolved to do that which shall be fit for a poor man’s honour, and honestly to obey her Majesty’s commandment. Let the rest fall out to others, it shall not concern me. I mean to assemble myself to the camp, where my authority must wholly lie, and will there do that which in good reason and duty I shall be bound to do. I am sorry that her Majesty doth deal in this sort, and if content to overthrow so willingly her own cause. If there can be means to salve this sore, I will. If not,—I tell you what shall become of me, as truly as God lives.”

Yet it is remarkable, that, in spite of this dark intimation, the Earl, after all, did not state what was to become of him if the sore was not salved. He was, however, explicit enough as to the causes of his grief, and very vehement in its manifestations. “Another matter which shall concern me deeply,” he said, “and all the subjects there, is now by you to be carefully considered, which is—money. I find that the money is already gone, and this now given to the treasurer will do no more than pay to the end of the month. I beseech you look to it, for by the Lord! I will bear no more so miserable burdens; for if I have no money to pay them, let them come home, or what else. I will not starve them, nor stay them. There was never gentleman nor general so sent out as I am; and if neither Queen nor council care to help it, but leave men desperate, as I see men shall be, that inconvenience will follow which I trust in the Lord I shall be free of.”

He then used language about himself, singularly resembling the phraseology employed by Elizabeth concerning him, when she was scolding the Netherland commissioners for the dilatoriness and parsimony of the States.

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“For mine own part,” he said, “I have taken upon me this voyage, not as a desperate nor forlorn man, but as one as well contented with his place and calling at home as any subject was ever. My cause was not, nor is, any other than the Lord’s and the Queen’s. If the Queen fail, yet must I trust in the Lord, and on Him, I see, I am wholly to depend. I can say no more, but pray to God that her Majesty never send General again as I am sent. And yet I will do what I can for her and my country.”

The Earl had raised a choice body of lancers to accompany him to the Netherlands, but the expense of the levy had come mainly upon his own purse. The Queen had advanced five thousand pounds, which was much less than the requisite amount, while for the balance required, as well as for other necessary expenses, she obstinately declined to furnish Leicester with funds, even refusing him, at last, a temporary loan. She violently accused him of cheating her, reclaimed money which he had wrung from her on good security, and when he had repaid the sum, objected to give him a discharge. As for receiving anything by way of salary, that was quite out of the question. At that moment he would have been only too happy to be reimbursed for what he was already out of pocket. Whether Elizabeth loved Leicester as a brother, or better than a brother, may be a historical question, but it is no question at all that she loved money better than she did Leicester. Unhappy the man, whether foe or favourite, who had pecuniary transactions with her Highness.

“I am sorry,” said the Earl, “that her Majesty hath so hard a conceit of me, that I should go about to cozen her, as though I had got a fee simple from her, and had it not before, or that I had not had her full release for payment of the money I borrowed. I pray God, any that did put such scruple in her, have not deceived her more than I have done. I thank God I have a clear conscience for deceiving her, and for money matters. I think I may justly say I have been the only cause of more gain to her coffers than all her chequer-men have been. But so is the hap of some, that all they do is nothing, and others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks. But I would this were all the grief I carry with me; but God is my comfort, and on Him I cast all, for there is no surety in this world beside. What hope of help can I have, finding her Majesty so strait with myself as she is? I did trust that—the cause being hers and this realm’s—if I could have gotten no money of her merchants, she would not have refused to have lent money on so easy prized land as mine, to have been gainer and no loser by it. Her Majesty, I see, will make trial of me how I love her, and what will discourage me from her service. But resolved am I that no worldly respect shall draw me back from my faithful discharge of my duty towards her, though she shall show to hate me, as it goeth very near; for I find no love or favour

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at all. And I pray you to remember that I have not had one penny of her Majesty towards all these charges of mine—not one penny-and, by all truth, I have already laid out above five thousand pounds. Her Majesty appointed eight thousand pounds for the levy, which was after the rate of four hundred horse, and, upon my fidelity, there is shipped, of horse of service, eight hundred, so that there ought eight thousand more to have been paid me. No general that ever went that was not paid to the uttermost of these things before he went, but had cash for his provision, which her Majesty would not allow me—not one groat. Well, let all this go, it is like I shall be the last shall bear this, and some must suffer for the people. Good Mr. Secretary, let her Majesty know this, for I deserve God-a-mercy, at the least.”

Leicester, to do him justice, was thoroughly alive to the importance of the Crisis. On political principle, at any rate, he was a firm supporter of Protestantism, and even of Puritanism; a form of religion which Elizabeth detested, and in which, with keen instinct, she detected a mutinous element against the divine right of kings. The Earl was quite convinced of the absolute necessity that England should take up the Netherland matter most vigorously, on pain of being herself destroyed. All the most sagacious counsellors of Elizabeth were day by day more and more confirmed in this opinion, and were inclined heartily to support the new Lieutenant-General. As for Leicester himself, while fully conscious of his own merits, and of his firm intent to do his duty, he was also grateful to those who were willing to befriend him in his arduous enterprise.

“I have received a letter from my Lord Willoughby,” he said, “to my seeming, as wise a letter as I have read a great while, and not unfit for her Majesty’s sight. I pray God open her eyes, that they may behold her present estate indeed, and the wonderful means that God doth offer unto her. If she lose these opportunities, who can look for other but dishonour and destruction? My Lord Treasurer hath also written me a most hearty and comfortable letter touching this voyage, not only in showing the importance of it, both for her Majesty’s own safety and the realm’s, but that the whole state of religion doth depend thereon, and therefore doth faithfully promise his whole and best assistance for the supply of all wants. I was not a little glad to receive such a letter from him at this time.”

And from on board the ‘Amity,’ ready to set sail, he expressed his thanks to Burghley, at finding him so “earnestly bent for the good supply and maintenance of us poor men sent in her Majesty’s service and our country’s.”

As for Walsingham, earnestly a defender of the Netherland cause from the beginning, he was wearied and disgusted with fighting against the Queen’s parsimony and caprice. “He is utterly discouraged,” said Leicester to Burghley, “to deal any more in these causes. I pray God your Lordship grow not so too; for then all will to the ground; on my poor side especially.”

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And to Sir Francis himself, he wrote, even as his vessel was casting off her moorings: —“I am sorry, Mr. Secretary,” he said, “to find you so discouraged, and that her Majesty doth deem you so partial. And yet my suits to her Majesty have not of late been so many nor great, while the greatest, I am sure, are for her Majesty’s own service. For my part, I will discharge my duty as far as my poor ability and capacity shall serve, and if I shall not have her gracious and princely support and supply, the lack will be to us, for the present, but the shame and dishonour will be hers.”

And with these parting words the Earl committed himself to the December seas.

Davison had been meantime doing his best to prepare the way in the Netherlands for the reception of the English administration. What man could do, without money and without authority, he had done. The governors for Flushing and the Brill, Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Thomas Cecil, eldest son of Lord Burghley, had been appointed, but had not arrived. Their coming was anxiously looked for, as during the interval the condition of the garrisons was deplorable. The English treasurer— by some unaccountable and unpardonable negligence, for which it is to be feared the Queen was herself to blame— was not upon the spot, and Davison was driven out of his wits to devise expedients to save the soldiers from starving.

“Your Lordship has seen by my former letters,” wrote the Ambassador to Burghley from Flushing, “what shift I have been driven to for the relief of this garrison here, left ‘a l’abandon;’ without which mean they had all fallen into wild and shameful disorder, to her Majesty’s great disgrace and overthrow of her service. I am compelled, unless I would see the poor men famish, and her Majesty aishonournd, to try my poor credit for them.”

General Sir John Norris was in the Betuwe, threatening Nvymegen, a town which he found “not so flexible as he had hoped;” and, as he had but two thousand men, while Alexander Farnese was thought to be marching upon him with ten thousand, his position caused great anxiety. Meantime, his brother, Sir Edward, a hot-headed and somewhat wilful young man, who “thought that all was too little for him,” was giving the sober Davison a good deal of trouble. He had got himself into a quarrel, both with that envoy and with Roger Williams, by claiming the right to control military matters in Flushing until the arrival of Sidney. “If Sir Thomas and Sir Philip,” said Davison, “do not make choice of more discreet, staid, and expert commanders than those thrust into these places by Mr. Norris, they will do themselves a great deal of worry, and her Majesty a great deal of hurt.”

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As might naturally be expected, the lamentable condition of the English soldiers, unpaid and starving—according to the report of the Queen’s envoy himself—exercised anything but a salutary influence upon the minds of the Netherlanders and perpetually fed the hopes of the Spanish partizans that a composition with Philip and Parma would yet take place. On the other hand, the States had been far more liberal in raising funds than the Queen had shown herself to be, and were somewhat indignant at being perpetually taunted with parsimony by her agents. Davison was offended by the injustice of Norris in this regard. “The complaints which the General hath made of the States to her Majesty,” said he, “are without cause, and I think, when your Lordship shall examine it well, you will find it no little sum they have already disbursed unto him for their part. Wherein, nevertheless, if they had been looked into, they were somewhat the more excusable, considering how ill our people at her Majesty’s entertainment were satisfied hitherto—a thing that doth much prejudice her reputation, and hurt her service.”

At last, however, the die had been cast. The Queen, although rejecting the proposed sovereignty of the Netherlands, had espoused their cause, by solemn treaty of alliance, and thereby had thrown down the gauntlet to Spain. She deemed it necessary, therefore, out of respect for the opinions of mankind, to issue a manifesto of her motives to the world. The document was published, simultaneously in Dutch, French, English, and Italian.

In this solemn state-paper she spoke of the responsibility of princes to the Almighty, of the ancient friendship between England and the Netherlands, of the cruelty and tyranny of the Spaniards, of their violation of the liberties of the Provinces, of their hanging, beheading, banishing without law and against justice, in the space of a few months, so many of the highest nobles in the land. Although in the beginning of the cruel persecution, the pretext had been the maintenance of the Catholic religion, yet it was affirmed they had not failed to exercise their barbarity upon Catholics also, and even upon ecclesiastics. Of the principal persons put to death, no one, it was asserted, had been more devoted to the ancient church than was the brave Count Egmont, who, for his famous victories in the service of Spain, could never be forgotten in veracious history any more than could be the cruelty of his execution.

The land had been made desolate, continued the Queen, with fire, sword, famine, and murder. These misfortunes had ever been bitterly deplored by friendly nations, and none could more truly regret such sufferings than did the English, the oldest allies, and familiar neighbours of the Provinces, who had been as close to them in the olden time by community of connexion and language, as man and wife. She declared that she had frequently, by amicable embassies, warned her brother of Spain—speaking to him like

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a good, dear sister and neighbour—that unless he restrained the cruelty of his governors and their soldiers, he was sure to force his Provinces into allegiance to some other power. She expressed the danger in which she should be placed if the Spaniards succeeded in establishing their absolute government in the Netherlands, from which position their attacks upon England would be incessant. She spoke of the enterprise favoured and set on foot by the Pope and by Spain, against the kingdom of Ireland. She alluded to the dismissal of the Spanish envoy, Don Bernardino de Mendoza, who had been treated by her with great regard for a long time, but who had been afterwards discovered in league with certain ill-disposed and seditious subjects of hers, and with publicly condemned traitors. That envoy had arranged a plot according to which, as appeared by his secret despatches, an invasion of England by a force of men, coming partly from Spain, and partly from the Netherlands, might be successfully managed, and he had even noted down the necessary number of ships and men, with various other details. Some of the conspirators had fled, she observed, and were now consorting with Mendoza, who, after his expulsion from England, had been appointed ambassador in Paris; while some had been arrested, and had confessed the plot. So soon as this envoy had been discovered to be the chief of a rebellion and projected invasion, the Queen had requested him, she said, to leave the kingdom within a reasonable time, as one who was the object of deadly hatred to the English people. She had then sent an agent to Spain, in order to explain the whole transaction. That agent had not been allowed even to deliver despatches to the King.

When the French had sought, at a previous period, to establish their authority in Scotland, even as the Spaniards had attempted to do in the Netherlands, and through the enormous ambition of the House of Guise, to undertake the invasion of her kingdom, she had frustrated their plots, even as she meant to suppress these Spanish conspiracies. She spoke of the Prince of Parma as more disposed by nature to mercy and humanity, than preceding governors had been, but as unable to restrain the blood-thirstiness of Spaniards, increased by long indulgence. She avowed, in assuming the protection of the Netherlands, and in sending her troops to those countries, but three objects: peace, founded upon the recognition of religious freedom in the Provinces, restoration of their ancient political liberties, and security for England. Never could there be tranquillity, for her own realm until these neighbouring countries were tranquil. These were her ends and aims, despite all that slanderous tongues might invent. The world, she observed, was overflowing with blasphemous libels, calumnies, scandalous pamphlets; for never had the Devil been so busy in supplying evil tongues with venom against the professors of the Christian religion.

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She added that in a pamphlet, ascribed to the Archbishop of Milan, just published, she had been accused of ingratitude to the King of Spain, and of plots to take the life of Alexander Farnese. In answer to the first charge, she willingly acknowledged her obligations to the King of Spain during the reign of her sister. She pronounced it, however, an absolute falsehood that he had ever saved her life, as if she had ever been condemned to death. She likewise denied earnestly the charge regarding the Prince of Parma. She protested herself incapable of such a crime, besides declaring that he had never given her offence. On the contrary, he was a man whom she had ever honoured for the rare qualities that she had noted in him, and for which he had deservedly acquired a high reputation.

Such, in brief analysis, was the memorable Declaration of Elizabeth in favour of the Netherlands—a document which was a hardly disguised proclamation of war against Philip. In no age of the world could an unequivocal agreement to assist rebellious subjects, with men and money, against their sovereign, be considered otherwise than as a hostile demonstration. The King of Spain so regarded the movement, and forthwith issued a decree, ordering the seizure of all English as well as all Netherland vessels within his ports, together with the arrest of persons, and confiscation of property.

Subsequently to the publication of the Queen's memorial, and before the departure of the Earl of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney, having received his appointment, together with the rank of general of cavalry, arrived in the Isle of Walcheren, as governor of Flushing, at the head of a portion of the English contingent.

It is impossible not to contemplate with affection so radiant a figure, shining through the cold mists of that Zeeland winter, and that distant and disastrous epoch. There is hardly a character in history upon which the imagination can dwell with more unalloyed delight. Not in romantic fiction was there ever created a more attractive incarnation of martial valour, poetic genius, and purity of heart. If the mocking spirit of the soldier of Lepanto could “smile chivalry away,” the name alone of his English contemporary is potent enough to conjure it back again, so long as humanity is alive to the nobler impulses.

“I cannot pass him over in silence,” says a dusty chronicler, “that glorious star, that lively pattern of virtue, and the lovely joy of all the learned sort. It was God's will that he should be born into the world, even to show unto our age a sample of ancient virtue.” The descendant of an ancient Norman race, and allied to many of the proudest nobles in England, Sidney himself was but a commoner, a private individual, a soldier of fortune. He was now in his thirty second year, and should have been foremost among the states men of Elizabeth, had it not been, according to Lord Bacon, a maxim of the Cecils, that “able men should

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be by design and of purpose suppressed.” Whatever of truth there may have been in the bitter remark, it is certainly strange that a man so gifted as Sidney—of whom his father-in-law Walsingham had declared, that “although he had influence in all countries, and a hand upon all affairs, his Philip did far overshoot him with his own bow”—should have passed so much of his life in retirement, or in comparatively insignificant employments. The Queen, as he himself observed, was most apt to interpret everything to his disadvantage. Among those who knew him well, there seems never to have been a dissenting voice. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, lord-deputy of Ireland, and president of Wales, a statesman of accomplishments and experience, called him “*lumen familiae suae*,” and said of him, with pardonable pride, “that he had the most virtues which he had ever found in any man; that he was the very formular that all well-disposed young gentlemen do form their manners and life by.”

The learned Hubert Languet, companion of Melancthon, tried friend of William the Silent, was his fervent admirer and correspondent. The great Prince of Orange held him in high esteem, and sent word to Queen Elizabeth, that having himself been an actor in the most important affairs of Europe, and acquainted with her foremost men, he could “pledge his credit that her Majesty had one of the ripest and greatest councillors of state in Sir Philip Sidney that lived in Europe.”

The incidents of his brief and brilliant life, up to his arrival upon the fatal soil of the Netherlands, are too well known to need recalling. Adorned with the best culture that, in a learned age, could be obtained in the best seminaries of his native country, where, during childhood and youth, he had been distinguished for a “lovely and familiar gravity beyond his years,” he rapidly acquired the admiration of his comrades and the esteem of all his teachers.

Travelling for three years, he made the acquaintance and gained the personal regard of such opposite characters as Charles IX. of France, Henry of Navarre, Don John of Austria, and William of Orange, and perfected his accomplishments by residence and study, alternately, in courts, camps, and learned universities. He was in Paris during the memorable days of August, 1572, and narrowly escaped perishing in the St. Bartholomew Massacre. On his return, he was, for a brief period, the idol of the English court, which, it was said, “was maimed without his company.” At the age of twenty-one he was appointed special envoy to Vienna, ostensibly for the purpose of congratulating the Emperor Rudolph upon his accession, but in reality that he might take the opportunity of sounding the secret purposes of the Protestant princes of Germany, in regard to the great contest of the age. In this mission, young as he was, he acquitted himself, not only to the satisfaction, but to the admiration of Walsingham, certainly a master himself in that occult science, the diplomacy of the sixteenth century. “There hath not been,” said he, “any gentleman, I am sure, that hath gone through so honourable a charge with as great commendations as he.”

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When the memorable marriage-project of Queen Elizabeth with Anjou seemed about to take effect, he denounced the scheme in a most spirited and candid letter, addressed to her Majesty; nor is it recorded that the Queen was offended with his frankness. Indeed we are informed that “although he found a sweet stream of sovereign humours in that well-tempered lady to run against him, yet found he safety in herself against that selfness which appeared to threaten him in her.” Whatever this might mean, translated out of euphuism into English, it is certain that his conduct was regarded with small favour by the court-grandeers, by whom “worth, duty, and justice, were looked upon with no other eyes than Lamia’s.”

The difficulty of swimming against that sweet stream of sovereign humours in the well-tempered Elizabeth, was aggravated by his quarrel, at this period, with the magnificent Oxford. A dispute at a tennis-court, where many courtiers and foreigners were looking on, proceeded rapidly from one extremity to another. The Earl commanded Sir Philip to leave the place. Sir Philip responded, that if he were of a mind that he should go, he himself was of a mind that he should remain; adding that if he had entreated, where he had no right to command, he might have done more than “with the scourge of fury.”—“This answer,” says Fulke Greville, in a style worthy of Don Adriano de Armado, “did, like a bellows, blowing up the sparks of excess already kindled, make my lord scornfully call Sir Philip by the name of puppy. In which progress of heat, as the tempest grew more and more vehement within, so did their hearts breathe out their perturbations in a more loud and shrill accent;” and so on; but the impending duel was the next day forbidden by express command of her Majesty. Sidney, not feeling the full force of the royal homily upon the necessity of great deference from gentlemen to their superiors in rank, in order to protect all orders from the insults of plebeians, soon afterwards retired from the court. To his sylvan seclusion the world owes the pastoral and chivalrous romance of the ‘Arcadia’ and to the pompous Earl, in consequence, an emotion of gratitude. Nevertheless, it was in him to do, rather than to write, and humanity seems defrauded, when forced to accept the ‘Arcadia,’ the ‘Defence of Poesy,’ and the ‘Astrophel and Stella,’ in discharge of its claims upon so great and pure a soul.

Notwithstanding this disagreeable affair, and despite the memorable letter against Anjou, Sir Philip suddenly flashes upon us again, as one of the four challengers in a tournament to honour the Duke’s presence in England. A vision of him in blue gilded armour—with horses caparisoned in cloth of gold, pearl-embroidered, attended by pages in cloth of silver, Venetian hose, laced hats, and by gentlemen, yeomen, and trumpeters, in yellow velvet cassocks, buskins, and feathers—as one of “the four fostered children of virtuous desire” (to wit, Anjou) storming “the castle of perfect Beauty” (to wit, Queen Elizabeth, aetatis 47) rises out of the cloud-dusts of ancient chronicle for a moment, and then vanishes into air again.

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"Having that day his hand, his horse, his lance,
Guided so well that they attained the prize
Both in the judgment of our English eyes,
But of some sent by that sweet enemy, France,"

as he chivalrously sings, he soon afterwards felt inclined for wider fields of honourable adventure. It was impossible that knight-errant so true should not feel keenest sympathy with an oppressed people struggling against such odds, as the Netherlanders were doing in their contest with Spain. So soon as the treaty with England was arranged, it was his ambition to take part in the dark and dangerous enterprise, and, being son-in-law to Walsingham and nephew to Leicester, he had a right to believe that his talents and character would, on this occasion, be recognised. But, like his "very friend," Lord Willoughby, he was "not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch," and he failed, as usual, to win his way to the Queen's favour. The governorship of Flushing was denied him, and, stung to the heart by such neglect, he determined to seek his fortune beyond the seas.

"Sir Philip hath taken a very hard resolution," wrote Walsingham to Davison, "to accompany Sir Francis Drake in this voyage, moved thereto for that he saw her Majesty disposed to commit the charge of Flushing unto some other; which he reputed would fall out greatly to his disgrace, to see another preferred before him, both for birth and judgment inferior unto him. The despair thereof and the disgrace that he doubted he should receive have carried him into a different course."

The Queen, however, relenting at last, interfered to frustrate his design. Having thus balked his ambition in the Indian seas, she felt pledged to offer him the employment which he had originally solicited, and she accordingly conferred upon him the governorship of Flushing, with the rank of general of horse, under the Earl of Leicester. In the latter part of November, he cast anchor, in the midst of a violent storm, at Rammekins, and thence came to the city of his government. Young, and looking even younger than his years—"not only of an excellent wit, but extremely beautiful of face"—with delicately chiselled Anglo-Norman features, smooth fair cheek, a faint moustache, blue eyes, and a mass of amber-coloured hair; such was the author of 'Arcadia' and the governor of Flushing.

And thus an Anglo-Norman representative of ancient race had come back to the home of his ancestors. Scholar, poet, knight-errant, finished gentleman, he aptly typified the result of seven centuries of civilization upon the wild Danish pirate. For among those very quicksands of storm-beaten Walachria that wondrous Normandy first came into existence whose wings were to sweep over all the high places of Christendom. Out of these creeks, lagunes, and almost inaccessible sandbanks, those bold freebooters sailed forth on their forays against England, France, and other adjacent

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countries, and here they brought and buried the booty of many a wild adventure. Here, at a later day, Rollo the Dane had that memorable dream of leprosy, the cure of which was the conversion of North Gaul into Normandy, of Pagans into Christians, and the subsequent conquest of every throne in Christendom from Ultima Thule to Byzantium. And now the descendant of those early freebooters had come back to the spot, at a moment when a wider and even more imperial swoop was to be made by their modern representatives. For the sea-kings of the sixteenth century—the Drakes, Hawkinses, Frobishers, Raleighs, Cavendishes—the De Moors, Heemskerks, Barendts—all sprung of the old pirate-lineage, whether called Englanders or Hollanders, and instinct with the same hereditary love of adventure, were about to wrestle with ancient tyrannies, to explore the most inaccessible regions, and to establish new commonwealths in worlds undreamed of by their ancestors—to accomplish, in short, more wondrous feats than had been attempted by the Knuts, and Rollos, Rurics, Ropers, and Tancreds, of an earlier age.

The place which Sidney was appointed to govern was one of great military and commercial importance. Flushing was the key to the navigation of the North Seas, ever since the disastrous storm of a century before, in which a great trading city on the outermost verge of the island had been swallowed bodily by the ocean. The Emperor had so thoroughly recognized its value, as to make special mention of the necessity for its preservation, in his private instructions to Philip, and now the Queen of England had confided it to one who was competent to appreciate and to defend the prize. “How great a jewel this place (Flushing) is to the crown of England,” wrote Sidney to his Uncle Leicester, “and to the Queen’s safety, I need not now write it to your lordship, who knows it so well. Yet I must needs say, the better I know it, the more I find the preciousness of it.”

He did not enter into his government, however, with much pomp and circumstance, but came afoot into Flushing in the midst of winter and foul weather. “Driven to land at Rammekins,” said he, “because the wind began to rise in such sort as from thence our mariners durst not enter the town, I came with as dirty a walk as ever poor governor entered his charge withal.” But he was cordially welcomed, nor did he arrive by any means too soon.

“I find the people very glad of our coming,” he said, “and promise myself as much surety in keeping this town, as popular good-will, gotten by light hopes, and by as slight conceits, may breed; for indeed the garrison is far too weak to command by authority, which is pity . . . I think, truly, that if my coming had been longer delayed, some alteration would have followed; for the truth is, this people is weary of war, and if they do not see such a course taken as may be likely to defend them, they will in a sudden give over the cause. . . . All will be lost if government be not presently used.”

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He expressed much anxiety for the arrival of his uncle, with which sentiments he assured the Earl that the Netherlands fully sympathized. "Your Lordship's coming," he said, "is as much longed for as Messiah is of the Jews. It is indeed most necessary that your Lordship make great speed to reform both the Dutch and English abuses."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Able men should be by design and of purpose suppressed
He did his work, but he had not his reward
Matter that men may rather pray for than hope for
Not of the genus Reptilia, and could neither creep nor crouch
Others that do nothing, do all, and have all the thanks
Peace-at-any-price party
The busy devil of petty economy
Thought that all was too little for him
Weary of place without power

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