

History of the United Netherlands, 1587d eBook

History of the United Netherlands, 1587d by John Lothrop Motley

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Title: History of the United Netherlands, 1587

Author: John Lothrop Motley

Release Date: January, 2004 [EBook #4854] [Yes, we are more than one year ahead of schedule] [This file was first posted on April 5, 2002]

Edition: 10

Language: English

Character set encoding: ASCII

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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, Vol. 54

History of the United Netherlands, 1587

CHAPTER XVII.

Secret Treaty between Queen and Parma—Excitement and Alarm in the States—Religious Persecution in England—Queen's Sincerity toward Spain—Language and Letters of Parma—Negotiations of De Loo—English Commissioners appointed—Parma's affectionate Letter to the Queen—Philip at his Writing-Table—His Plots with Parma against England—Parma's secret Letters to the King—Philip's Letters to Parma Wonderful Duplicity of Philip—His sanguine Views as to England—He is reluctant to hear of the Obstacles—and imagines Parma in England—But Alexander's Difficulties are great—He denounces Philip's wild Schemes—Walsingham aware of the Spanish Plot—which the States well understand—Leicester's great Unpopularity—The Queen warned against Treating—Leicester's Schemes against Barneveld—Leicestrian



Conspiracy at Leyden—The Plot to seize the City discovered—Three Ringleaders sentenced to Death— Civil War in France—Victory gained by Navarre, and one by Guise— Queen recalls Leicester—Who retires on ill Terms with the States— Queen warned as to Spanish Designs—Result's of Leicester's Administration.

The course of Elizabeth towards the Provinces, in the matter of the peace, was certainly not ingenuous, but it was not absolutely deceitful. She concealed and denied the negotiations, when the Netherland statesmen were perfectly aware of their existence, if not of their tenour; but she was not prepared, as they suspected, to sacrifice their liberties and their religion, as the price of her own reconciliation with Spain. Her attitude towards the States was imperious, over-bearing, and abusive. She had allowed the Earl of Leicester to return, she said, because of her love for the poor and oppressed people, but in many of her official and in all her private communications, she denounced the men who governed that people as ungrateful wretches and impudent liars!

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These were the corrosives and vinegar which she thought suitable for the case; and the Earl was never weary in depicting the same statesmen as seditious, pestilent, self-seeking, mischief-making traitors. These secret, informal negotiations, had been carried on during most of the year 1587. It was the “comptroller’s peace;”, as Walsingham contemptuously designated the attempted treaty; for it will be recollected that Sir James Croft, a personage of very mediocre abilities, had always been more busy than any other English politician in these transactions. He acted; however, on the inspiration of Burghley, who drew his own from the fountainhead.

But it was in vain for the Queen to affect concealment. The States knew everything which was passing, before Leicester knew. His own secret instructions reached the Netherlands before he did. His secretary, Junius, was thrown into prison, and his master’s letter taken from him, before there had been any time to act upon its treacherous suggestions. When the Earl wrote letters with, his own hand to his sovereign, of so secret a nature that he did not even retain a single copy for himself, for fear of discovery, he found, to his infinite disgust, that the States were at once provided with an authentic transcript of every line that he had written. It was therefore useless, almost puerile, to deny facts which were quite as much within the knowledge of the Netherlanders as of himself. The worst consequence of the concealment was, that a deeper treachery was thought possible than actually existed. “The fellow they call Barneveld,” as Leicester was in the habit of designating one of the first statesmen in Europe, was perhaps justified, knowing what he did, in suspecting more. Being furnished with a list of commissioners, already secretly agreed upon between the English and Spanish governments, to treat for peace, while at the same time the Earl was beating his breast, and flatly denying that there was any intention of treating with Parma at all, it was not unnatural that he should imagine a still wider and deeper scheme than really existed, against the best interests of his country. He may have expressed, in private conversation, some suspicions of this nature, but there is direct evidence that he never stated in public anything which was not afterwards proved to be matter of fact, or of legitimate inference from the secret document which had come into his hands. The Queen exhausted herself in opprobrious language against those who dared to impute to her a design to obtain possession of the cities and strong places of the Netherlands, in order to secure a position in which to compel the Provinces into obedience to her policy. She urged, with much logic, that as she had refused the sovereignty of the whole country when offered to her, she was not likely to form surreptitious schemes to make herself mistress of a portion of it. On the other hand, it was very obvious, that to accept



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the sovereignty of Philip's rebellious Provinces, was to declare war upon Philip; whereas, had she been pacifically inclined towards that sovereign, and treacherously disposed towards the Netherlands, it would be a decided advantage to her to have those strong places in her power. But the suspicions as to her good faith were exaggerated. As to the intentions of Leicester, the States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust. It is very certain that both in 1586, and again, at this very moment, when Elizabeth was most vehement in denouncing such aspersions on her government, he had unequivocally declared to her his intention of getting possession, if possible, of several cities, and of the whole Island of Walcheren, which, together with the cautionary towns already in his power, would enable the Queen to make good terms for herself with Spain, "if the worst came to the, worst." It will also soon be shown that he did his best to carry these schemes into execution. There is no evidence, however, and no probability, that he had received the royal commands to perpetrate such a crime.

The States believed also, that in those secret negotiations with Parma the Queen was disposed to sacrifice the religious interests of the Netherlands. In this they were mistaken. But they had reason for their mistake, because the negotiator De Loo, had expressly said, that, in her overtures to Farnese, she had abandoned that point altogether. If this had been so, it would have simply been a consent on the part of Elizabeth, that the Catholic religion and the inquisition should be re-established in the Provinces, to the exclusion of every other form of worship or polity. In truth, however, the position taken by her Majesty on the subject was as fair as could be reasonably expected. Certainly she was no advocate for religious liberty. She chose that her own subjects should be Protestants, because she had chosen to be a Protestant herself, and because it was an incident of her supremacy, to dictate uniformity of creed to all beneath her sceptre. No more than her father, who sent to the stake or gallows heretics to transubstantiation as well as believers in the Pope, had Elizabeth the faintest idea of religious freedom. Heretics to the English Church were persecuted, fined, imprisoned, mutilated, and murdered, by sword, rope, and fire. In some respects, the practice towards those who dissented from Elizabeth was more immoral and illogical, even if less cruel, than that to which those were subjected who rebelled against Sixtus. The Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist at the Protestant worship, but wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine. The Roman excuse to destroy bodies in order to save souls, could scarcely be alleged by a Church which might be bribed into connivance at heresy, and which derived a revenue from the very nonconformity for which humbler victims were sent to the gallows. It would, however, be unjust in the extreme to overlook

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the enormous difference in the amount of persecution, exercised respectively by the Protestant and the Roman Church. It is probable that not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed as such, in Elizabeth's reign, and this was ten score too many. But what was this against eight hundred heretics burned, hanged, and drowned, in one Easter week by Alva, against the eighteen thousand two hundred went to stake and scaffold, as he boasted during his administration, against the vast numbers of Protestants, whether they be counted by tens or by hundreds of thousands, who perished by the edicts of Charles V., in the Netherlands, or in the single Saint Bartholomew Massacre in France? Moreover, it should never be forgotten—from undue anxiety for impartiality—that most of the Catholics who were executed in England, suffered as conspirators rather than as heretics. No foreign potentate, claiming to be vicegerent of Christ, had denounced Philip as a bastard and, usurper, or had, by means of a blasphemous fiction, which then was a terrible reality, severed the bonds of allegiance by which his subjects were held, cut him off from all communion with his fellow-creatures, and promised temporal rewards and a crown of glory in heaven to those who should succeed in depriving him of throne and life. Yet this was the position of Elizabeth. It was war to the knife between her and Rome, declared by Rome itself; nor was there any doubt whatever that the Seminary Priests—seedlings transplanted from foreign nurseries, which were as watered gardens for the growth of treason—were a perpetually organized band of conspirators and assassins, with whom it was hardly an act of excessive barbarity to deal in somewhat summary fashion. Doubtless it would have been a more lofty policy, and a far more intelligent one, to extend towards the Catholics of England, who as a body were loyal to their country, an ample toleration. But it could scarcely be expected that Elizabeth Tudor, as imperious and absolute by temperament as her father had ever been, would be capable of embodying that great principle.

When, in the preliminaries to the negotiations of 1587, therefore, it was urged on the part of Spain, that the Queen was demanding a concession of religious liberty from Philip to the Netherlanders which she refused to English heretics, and that he only claimed the same right of dictating a creed to his subjects which she exercised in regard to her own, Lord Burghley replied that the statement was correct. The Queen permitted—it was true—no man to profess any religion but the one which she professed. At the same time it was declared to be unjust, that those persons in the Netherlands who had been for years in the habit of practising Protestant rites, should be suddenly compelled, without instruction, to abandon that form of worship. It was well known that many would rather die than submit to such oppression, and it was affirmed that the exercise

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of this cruelty would be resisted by her to the uttermost. There was no hint of the propriety—on any logical basis— of leaving the question of creed as a matter between man and his Maker, with which any dictation on the part of crown or state was an act of odious tyranny. There was not even a suggestion that the Protestant doctrines were true, and the Catholic doctrines false. The matter was merely taken up on the ‘uti possidetis’ principle, that they who had acquired the fact of Protestant worship had a right to retain it, and could not justly be deprived of it, except by instruction and persuasion. It was also affirmed that it was not the English practice to inquire into men’s consciences. It would have been difficult, however, to make that very clear to Philip’s comprehension, because, if men, women, and children, were scourged with rods, imprisoned and hanged, if they refused to conform publicly to a ceremony at which their consciences revolted—unless they had money enough to purchase non-conformity—it seemed to be the practice to inquire very effectively into their consciences.

But if there was a certain degree of disingenuousness on the part of Elizabeth towards the States, her attitude towards Parma was one of perfect sincerity. A perusal of the secret correspondence leaves no doubt whatever on that point. She was seriously and fervently desirous of peace with Spain. On the part of Farnese and his master, there was the most unscrupulous mendacity, while the confiding simplicity and truthfulness of the Queen in these negotiations was almost pathetic. Especially she declared her trust in the loyal and upright character of Parma, in which she was sure of never being disappointed. It is only doing justice to Alexander to say that he was as much deceived by her frankness as she by his falsehood. It never entered his head that a royal personage and the trusted counsellors of a great kingdom could be telling the truth in a secret international transaction, and he justified the industry with which his master and himself piled fiction upon fiction, by their utter disbelief in every word which came to them from England.

The private negotiations had been commenced, or rather had been renewed, very early in February of this year. During the whole critical period which preceded and followed the execution of Mary, in the course of which the language of Elizabeth towards the States had been so shrewish, there had been the gentlest diplomatic cooing between Farnese and herself. It was—Dear Cousin, you know how truly I confide in your sincerity, how anxious I am that this most desirable peace should be arranged; and it was—Sacred Majesty, you know how much joy I feel in your desire for the repose of the world, and for a solid peace between your Highness and the King my master; how much I delight in concord—how incapable I am by ambiguous words of spinning out these transactions, or of deceiving your Majesty, and what a hatred I feel for steel, fire, and blood.’



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Four or five months rolled on, during which Leicester had been wasting time in England, Farnese wasting none before Sluys, and the States doing their best to counteract the schemes both of their enemy and of their ally. De Loo made a visit, in July, to the camp of the Duke of Parma, and received the warmest assurances of his pacific dispositions. "I am much pained," said Alexander, "with this procrastination. I am so full of sincerity myself, that it seems to me a very strange matter, this hostile descent by Drake upon the coasts of Spain. The result of such courses will be, that the King will end by being exasperated, and I shall be touched in my honour—so great is the hopes I have held out of being able to secure a peace. I have ever been and I still am most anxious for concord, from the affection I bear to her sacred Majesty. I have been obliged, much against my will, to take the field again. I could wish now that our negotiations might terminate before the arrival of my fresh troops, namely, 9000 Spaniards and 9000 Italians, which, with Walloons, Germans, and Lorrainers, will give me an effective total of 30,000 soldiers. Of this I give you my word as a gentleman. Go, then, Andrew de Loo," continued the Duke, "write to her sacred Majesty, that I desire to make peace; and to serve her faithfully; and that I shall not change my mind, even in case of any great success, for I like to proceed rather by the ways of love than of rigour and effusion of blood."

"I can assure you, oh, most serene Duke," replied Andrew, "that the most serene Queen is in the very same dispositions with yourself."

"Excellent well then," said the Duke, "we shall come to an agreement at once, and the sooner the deputies on both sides are appointed the better."

A feeble proposition was then made, on the part of the peace-loving Andrew, that the hostile operations against Sluy's should be at once terminated. But this did not seem so clear to the most serene Duke. He had gone to great expense in that business; and he had not built bridges, erected forts, and dug mines, only to abandon them for a few fine words. Fine words were plenty, but they raised no sieges. Meantime these pacific and gentle murmurings from Farnese's camp had lulled the Queen into forgetfulness of Roger Williams and Arnold Groenevelt and their men, fighting day and night in trench and mine during that critical midsummer. The wily tongue of the Duke had been more effective than his batteries in obtaining the much-coveted city. The Queen obstinately held back her men and money, confident of effecting a treaty, whether Sluys fell or not. Was it strange that the States should be distrustful of her intentions, and, in their turn, become neglectful of their duty?

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And thus summer wore into autumn, Sluys fell, the States and their governor-general were at daggers-drawn, the Netherlanders were full of distrust with regard to England, Alexander hinted doubts as to the Queen's sincerity; the secret negotiations, though fertile in suspicions, jealousies, delays, and such foul weeds, had produced no wholesome fruit, and the excellent De Loo became very much depressed. At last a letter from Burghley relieved his drooping spirits. From the most disturbed and melancholy man in the world, he protested, he had now become merry and quiet. He straightway went off to the Duke of Parma, with the letter in his pocket, and translated it to him by candlelight, as he was careful to state, as an important point in his narrative. And Farnese was fuller of fine phrases than ever.

"There is no cause whatever," said he, in a most loving manner, "to doubt my sincerity. Yet the Lord-Treasurer intimates that the most serene Queen is disposed so to do. But if I had not the very best intentions, and desires for peace, I should never have made the first overtures. If I did not wish a pacific solution, what in the world forced me to do what I have done? On the contrary, it is I that have reason to suspect the other parties with their long delays, by which they have made me lose the best part of the summer."

He then commented on the strong expressions in the English letters, as to the continuance of her Majesty in her pious resolutions; observed that he was thoroughly advised of the disputes between the Earl of Leicester and the States; and added that it was very important for the time indicated by the Queen.

"Whatever is to be done," said he, in conclusion, "let it be done quickly;" and with that he said he would go and eat a bit of supper.

"And may I communicate Lord Burghley's letter to any one else?" asked De Loo.

"Yes, yes, to the Seigneur de Champagny, and to my secretary Cosimo," answered his Highness.

So the merchant negotiator proceeded at once to the mansion of Champagny, in company with the secretary Cosimo. There was a long conference, in which De Loo was informed of many things which he thoroughly believed, and faithfully transmitted to the court of Elizabeth. Alexander had done his best, they said, to delay the arrival of his fresh troops. He had withdrawn from the field, on various pretexts, hoping, day after day, that the English commissioners would arrive, and that a firm and perpetual peace would succeed to the miseries of war. But as time wore away, and there came no commissioners, the Duke had come to the painful conclusion that he had been trifled with. His forces would now be sent into Holland to find something to eat; and this would ensure the total destruction of all that territory. He had also written to command all the officers of the coming troops to hasten their march, in order that he might avoid incurring still deeper censure.



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He was much ashamed, in truth, to have been wheedled into passing the whole fine season in idleness. He had been sacrificing himself for her sacred Majesty, and to, serve her best interests; and now he found himself the object of her mirth. Those who ought to be well informed had assured him that the Queen was only waiting to see how the King of Navarre was getting on with the auxiliary force just, going to him from Germany, that she had no intention whatever to make peace, and that, before long, he might expect all these German mercenaries upon his shoulders in the Netherlands. Nevertheless he was prepared to receive them with 40,000 good infantry, a splendid cavalry force, and plenty of money.'

All this and more did the credulous Andrew greedily devour; and he lost no time in communicating the important intelligence to her Majesty and the Lord-Treasurer. He implored her, he said, upon his bare knees, prostrate on the ground, and from the most profound and veritable centre of his heart and with all his soul and all his strength, to believe in the truth of the matters thus confided to him. He would pledge his immortal soul, which was of more value to him—as he correctly observed—than even the crown of Spain, that the King, the Duke, and his counsellors, were most sincerely desirous of peace, and actuated by the most loving and benevolent motives. Alexander Farnese was "the antidote to the Duke of Alva," kindly sent by heaven, 'ut contraria contrariis curenter,' and if the entire security of the sacred Queen were not now obtained, together with a perfect reintegration of love between her Majesty and the King of Spain, and with the assured tranquillity and perpetual prosperity of the Netherlands, it would be the fault of England; not of Spain.

And no doubt the merchant believed all that was told him, and—what was worse—that he fully impressed his own convictions upon her Majesty and Lord Burghley, to say nothing of the comptroller, who, poor man, had great facility in believing anything that came from the court of the most Catholic King: yet it is painful to reflect, that in all these communications of Alexander and his agents, there was not one single word of truth.—It was all false from beginning to end, as to the countermanding of the troops,—as to the pacific intentions of the King and Duke, and as to the proposed campaign in Friesland, in case of rupture; and all the rest. But this will be conclusively proved a little later.

Meantime the conference had been most amicable and satisfactory. And when business was over, Champagny—not a whit the worse for the severe jilting which he had so recently sustained from the widow De Bours, now Mrs. Aristotle Patton—invited De Loo and Secretary Cosimo to supper. And the three made a night of it, sitting up late, and draining such huge bumpers to the health of the Queen of England, that—as the excellent Andrew subsequently informed Lord Burghley—his head ached most bravely next morning.

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And so, amid the din of hostile preparation not only in Cadiz and Lisbon, but in Ghent and Sluys and Antwerp, the import of which it seemed difficult to mistake, the comedy of negotiation was still rehearsing, and the principal actors were already familiar with their respective parts. There were the Earl of Derby, knight of the garter, and my Lord Cobham; and puzzling James Croft, and other Englishmen, actually believing that the farce was a solemn reality. There was Alexander of Parma thoroughly aware of the contrary. There was Andrew de Loo, more talkative, more credulous, more busy than ever, and more fully impressed with the importance of his mission, and there was the white-bearded Lord-Treasurer turning complicated paragraphs; shaking his head and waving his wand across the water, as if, by such expedients, the storm about to burst over England could, be dispersed.

The commissioners should come, if only the Duke of Parma would declare on his word of honour, that these hostile preparations with which all Christendom was ringing; were not intended against England; or if that really were the case—if he would request his master to abandon all such schemes, and if Philip in consequence would promise on the honour of a prince, to make no hostile attempts against that country.

There would really seem an almost Arcadian simplicity in such demands, coming from so practised a statesman as the Lord-Treasurer, and from a woman of such brilliant intellect as Elizabeth unquestionably possessed. But we read the history of 1587, not only by the light of subsequent events, but by the almost microscopic revelations of sentiments and motives, which a full perusal of the secret documents in those ancient cabinets afford. At that moment it was not ignorance nor dulness which was leading England towards the pitfall so artfully dug by Spain. There was trust in the plighted word of a chivalrous soldier like Alexander Farnese, of a most religious and anointed monarch like Philip II. English frankness, playing cards upon the table, was no match for Italian and Spanish legerdemain, a system according to which, to defraud the antagonist by every kind of falsehood and trickery was the legitimate end of diplomacy and statesmanship. It was well known that there were great preparations in Spain, Portugal, and the obedient Netherlands, by land and sea. But Sir Robert Sidney was persuaded that the expedition was intended for Africa; even the Pope was completely mystified—to the intense delight of Philip—and Burghley, enlightened by the sagacious De Loo, was convinced, that even in case of a rupture, the whole strength of the Spanish arms was to be exerted in reducing Friesland and Overysse. But Walsingham was never deceived; for he had learned from Demosthenes a lesson with which William the Silent, in his famous Apology, had made the world familiar, that the only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust.

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Alexander, much grieved that doubts should still be felt as to his sincerity, renewed the most exuberant expressions of that sentiment, together with gentle complaints against the dilatoriness which had proceeded from the doubt. Her Majesty had long been aware, he said, of his anxiety to bring about a perfect reconciliation; but he had waited, month after month, for her commissioners, and had waited in vain. His hopes had been dashed to the ground. The affair had been indefinitely spun out, and he could not resist the conviction that her Majesty had changed her mind. Nevertheless, as Andrew de Loo was again proceeding to England, the Duke seized the opportunity once more to kiss her hand, and—although he had well nigh resolved to think no more on the subject—to renew his declarations, that, if the much-coveted peace were not concluded, the blame could not be imputed to him, and that he should stand guiltless before God and the world. He had done, and was still ready to do, all which became a Christian and a man desirous of the public welfare and tranquillity.

When Burghley read these fine phrases, he was much impressed; and they were pronounced at the English court to be “very princely and Christianly.” An elaborate comment too was drawn up by the comptroller on every line of the letter. “These be very good words,” said the comptroller.

But the Queen was even more pleased with the last proof of the Duke’s sincerity, than even Burghley and Croft had been. Disregarding all the warnings of Walsingham, she renewed her expressions of boundless confidence in the wily Italian. “We do assure you,” wrote the Lords, “and so you shall do well to avow it to the Duke upon our honours, that her Majesty saith she thinketh both their minds to accord upon one good and Christian meaning, though their ministers may perchance sound upon a discord.” And she repeated her resolution to send over her commissioners, so soon as the Duke had satisfied her as to the hostile preparations.

We have now seen the good faith of the English Queen towards the Spanish government. We have seen her boundless trust in the sincerity of Farnese and his master. We have heard the exuberant professions of an honest intention to bring about a firm and lasting peace, which fell from the lips of Farnese and of his confidential agents. It is now necessary to glide for a moment into the secret cabinet of Philip, in order to satisfy ourselves as to the value of all those professions. The attention of the reader is solicited to these investigations, because the year 1587 was a most critical period in the history of English, Dutch, and European liberty. The coming year 1588 had been long spoken of in prophecy, as the year of doom, perhaps of the destruction of the world, but it was in 1587, the year of expectation and preparation, that the materials were slowly combining out of which that year’s history was to be formed.



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And there sat the patient letter-writer in his cabinet, busy with his schemes. His grey head was whitening fast. He was sixty years of age. His frame was slight, his figure stooping, his digestion very weak, his manner more glacial and sepulchral than ever; but if there were a hard-working man in Europe, that man was Philip II. And there he sat at his table, scrawling his apostilles. The fine innumerable threads which stretched across the surface of Christendom, and covered it as with a net, all converged in that silent cheerless cell. France was kept in a state of perpetual civil war; the Netherlands had been converted into a shambles; Ireland was maintained in a state of chronic rebellion; Scotland was torn with internal feuds, regularly organized and paid for by Philip; and its young monarch—"that lying King of Scots," as Leicester called him—was kept in a leash ready to be slipped upon England, when his master should give the word; and England herself was palpitating with the daily expectation of seeing a disciplined horde of brigands let loose upon her shores; and all this misery, past, present, and future, was almost wholly due to the exertions of that grey-haired letter-writer at his peaceful library-table.

At the very beginning of the year the King of Denmark had made an offer to Philip of mediation. The letter, entrusted to a young Count de Rantzau, had been intercepted by the States—the envoy not having availed himself, in time, of his diplomatic capacity, and having in consequence been treated, for a moment, like a prisoner of war. The States had immediately addressed earnest letters of protest to Queen Elizabeth, declaring that nothing which the enemy could do in war was half so horrible to them as the mere mention of peace. Life, honour, religion, liberty, their all, were at stake, they said, and would go down in one universal shipwreck, if peace should be concluded; and they implored her Majesty to avert the proposed intercession of the Danish King. Wilkes wrote to Walsingham denouncing that monarch and his ministers as stipendiaries of Spain, while, on the other hand, the Duke of Parma, after courteously thanking the King for his offer of mediation, described him to Philip as such a dogged heretic, that no good was to be derived from him, except by meeting his fraudulent offers with an equally fraudulent response. There will be nothing lost, said Alexander, by affecting to listen to his proposals, and meantime your Majesty must proceed with the preparations against England. This was in the first week of the year 1587.

In February, and almost on the very day when Parma was writing those affectionate letters to Elizabeth, breathing nothing but peace, he was carefully conning Philip's directions in regard to the all-important business of the invasion. He was informed by his master, that one hundred vessels, forty of them of largest size, were quite ready, together with 12,000 Spanish infantry, including 3000 of the old legion,

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and that there were volunteers more than enough. Philip had also taken note, he said, of Alexander's advice as to choosing the season when the crops in England had just been got in, as the harvest of so fertile a country would easily support an invading force; but he advised nevertheless that the army should be thoroughly victualled at starting. Finding that Alexander did not quite approve of the Irish part of the plan, he would reconsider the point, and think more of the Isle of Wight; but perhaps still some other place might be discovered, a descent upon which might inspire that enemy with still greater terror and confusion. It would be difficult for him, he said, to grant the 6000 men asked for by the Scotch malcontents, without seriously weakening his armada; but there must be no positive refusal, for a concerted action with the Scotch lords and their adherents was indispensable. The secret, said the King, had been profoundly kept, and neither in Spain nor in Rome had anything been allowed to transpire. Alexander was warned therefore to do his best to maintain the mystery, for the enemy was trying very hard to penetrate their actions and their thoughts.

And certainly Alexander did his best. He replied to his master, by transmitting copies of the letters he had been writing with his own hand to the Queen, and of the, pacific messages he had sent her through Champagny. and De Loo. She is just now somewhat confused, said he, and those of her counsellors who desire peace, are more eager, than ever for negotiation. She is very much afflicted with the loss of Deventer, and is quarrelling with the French ambassador about the new conspiracy for her assassination. The opportunity is a good one, and if she writes an answer to my letter, said Alexander, we can keep the negotiation, alive, while, if she does not, 'twill be a proof that she has contracted leagues with other parties. But, in any event, the Duke fervently implored Philip not to pause in his preparations for the great enterprise which he had conceived in his royal breast. So urgent for the invasion was the peace-loving general.

He alluded also to the supposition that the quarrel between her Majesty and the French envoy was a mere fetch, and only one of the results of Bellievre's mission. Whether that diplomatist had been sent to censure, or in reality to approve, in the name of his master, of the Scottish Queen's execution, Alexander would leave to be discussed by Don Bernardino de Mendoza, the Spanish ambassador in Paris; but he was of opinion that the anger of the Queen with France was a fiction, and her supposed league with France and Germany against Spain a fact. Upon this point, as it appears from Secretary Walsingham's lamentations, the astute Farnese was mistaken.

In truth he was frequently, led into error to the English policy the same serpentine movement and venomous purpose which characterized his own; and we have already seen; that Elizabeth was ready, on the contrary, to quarrel with the States, with France, with all the world, if she could only secure the good-will of Philip.



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The French-matter, indissolubly connected in that monarch's schemes, with his designs upon England and Holland, was causing Alexander much anxiety. He foresaw great difficulty in maintaining that, indispensable civil war in France, and thought that a peace might, some fine day, be declared between Henry III. and the Huguenots, when least expected. In consequence, the Duke of Guise was becoming very importunate for Philip's subsidies. "Mucio comes begging to me," said Parma, "with the very greatest earnestness, and utters nothing but lamentations and cries of misery. He asked for 25,000 of the 150,000 ducats promised him. I gave them. Soon afterwards he writes, with just as much anxiety, for 25,000 more. These I did not give; firstly, because I had them not," (which would seem a sufficient reason) "and secondly, because I wished to protract matters as much as possible. He is constantly reminding me of your Majesty's promise of 300,000 ducats, in case he comes to a rupture with the King of France, and I always assure him that your Majesty will keep all promises."

Philip, on his part, through the months of spring, continued to assure his generalissimo of his steady preparations—by sea and land. He had ordered Mendoza to pay the Scotch lords the sum demanded by them, but not till after they had done the deed as agreed upon; and as to the 6000 men, he felt obliged, he said, to defer that matter for the moment; and to leave the decision upon it to the Duke. Farnese kept his sovereign minutely informed of the negotiations carried on through Champagne and De Loo, and expressed his constant opinion that the Queen was influenced by motives as hypocritical as his own. She was only seeking, he said, to deceive, to defraud, to put him to sleep, by those feigned negotiations, while, she was making her combinations with France and Germany, for the ruin of Spain. There was no virtue to be expected from her, except she was compelled thereto by pure necessity. The English, he said, were hated and abhorred by the natives of Holland and Zeeland, and it behoved Philip to seize so favourable an opportunity for urging on his great plan with all the speed in the world. It might be that the Queen, seeing these mighty preparations, even although not suspecting that she herself was to be invaded, would tremble for her safety, if the Netherlands should be crushed. But if she succeeded in deceiving Spain, and putting Philip and Parma to sleep, she might well boast of having made fools of them all. The negotiations for peace and the preparations for the invasion should go simultaneously forward therefore, and the money would, in consequence, come more sparingly to the Provinces from the English coffers, and the disputes between England and the States would be multiplied. The Duke also begged to be informed whether any terms could be laid down, upon which the King really would conclude peace; in order that he might make no mistake

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for want of instructions or requisite powers. The condition of France was becoming more alarming every day, he said. In other words, there was an ever-growing chance of peace for that distracted country. The Queen of England was cementing a strong league between herself, the French King, and the Huguenots; and matters were looking very serious. The impending peace in France would never do, and Philip should prevent it in time, by giving Mucio his money. Unless the French are entangled and at war among themselves, it is quite clear, said Alexander, that we can never think of carrying out our great scheme of invading England.

The King thoroughly concurred in all that was said and done by his faithful governor and general. He had no intention of concluding a peace on any terms whatever, and therefore could name no conditions; but he quite approved of a continuance of the negotiations. The English, he was convinced, were utterly false on their part, and the King of Denmark's proposition to-mediate was part and parcel of the same general fiction. He was quite sensible of the necessity of giving Mucio the money to prevent a pacification in France, and would send letters of exchange on Agostino Spinola for the 300,000 ducats. Meantime Farnese was to go on steadily with his preparations for the invasion.

The secretary-of-state, Don Juan de Idiaquez, also wrote most earnestly on the great subject to the Duke. "It is not to be exaggerated", he said, "how set his Majesty is in the all-important business. If you wish to manifest towards him the most flattering obedience on earth, and to oblige him as much as you could wish, give him this great satisfaction this year. Since you have money, prepare everything out there, conquer all difficulties, and do the deed so soon as the forces of Spain and Italy arrive, according to the plan laid down by your Excellency last year. Make use of the negotiations for peace for this one purpose, and no more, and do the business like the man you are. Attribute the liberty of this advice to my desire to serve you more than any other, to my knowledge of how much you will thereby gratify his Majesty, and to my fear of his resentment towards you, in the contrary case."

And, on the same day, in order that there might be no doubt of the royal sentiments, Philip expressed himself at length on the whole subject. The dealings of Farnese with the English, and his feeding them with hopes of peace, would have given him more satisfaction, he observed, if it had caused their preparations to slacken; but, on the contrary, their boldness had increased. They had perpetrated the inhuman murder of the Queen of Scots, and moreover, not content with their piracies at sea and in the Indies, they had dared to invade the ports of Spain, as would appear in the narrative transmitted to Farnese of the late events at Cadiz. And although that damage was small, said Philip; there resulted a very



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great obligation to take them 'seriously in hand.' He declined sending full powers for treating; but in order to make use of the same arts employed by the English, he preferred that Alexander should not undeceive them, but desired him to express, as out of his own head; to the negotiators, his astonishment that while they were holding such language they should commit such actions. Even their want of prudence in thus provoking the King; when their strength was compared to his, should be spoken of by Farnese as—wonderful, and he was to express the opinion that his Majesty would think him much wanting in circumspection, should he go on negotiating while they were playing such tricks. "You must show yourself very sensitive, about this event," continued Philip, "and you must give them to understand that I am quite as angry as you. You must try to draw from them some offer of satisfaction—however false it will be in reality—such as a proposal to recall the fleet, or an, assertion that the deeds of Drake in Cadiz were without the knowledge and contrary to the will of the Queen, and that she very much regrets them, or something of that sort."

It has already been shown that Farnese was very successful in eliciting from the Queen, through the mouth of Lord' Burghley, as ample a disavowal and repudiation of Sir Francis Drake as the King could possibly desire. Whether it would have the desired effect—of allaying the wrath of Philip; might have been better foretold, could the letter, with which we are now occupied, have been laid upon the Greenwich council-board.

"When you have got, such a disavowal," continued his Majesty, "you are to act as if entirely taken in and imposed upon by them, and, pretending to believe everything they tell you, you must renew the negotiations, proceed to name commissioners, and propose a meeting upon neutral territory. As for powers; say that you, as my governor-general, will entrust them to your deputies, in regard to the Netherlands. For all other matters, say that you have had full powers for many months, but that you cannot exhibit them until conditions worthy of my acceptance have been offered.—Say this only for the sake of appearance. This is the true way to take them in, and so the peace-commissioners may meet. But to you only do I declare that my intention is that this shall never lead to any result, whatever conditions maybe offered by them. On the contrary, all this is done—just as they do—to deceive them, and to cool them in their preparations for defence, by inducing them to believe that such preparations will be unnecessary. You are well aware that the reverse of all this is the truth, and that on our part there is to be no slackness, but the greatest diligence in our efforts for the invasion of England, for which we have already made the most abundant provision in men, ships, and money, of which you are well aware."

Is it strange that the Queen of England was deceived? Is it matter of surprise, censure, or shame, that no English statesman was astute enough or base enough to contend with such diplomacy, which seemed inspired only by the very father of lies?



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“Although we thus enter into negotiations,” continued the King—unveiling himself, with a solemn indecency, not agreeable to contemplate—“without any intention of concluding them, you can always get out of them with great honour, by taking umbrage about the point of religion and about some other of the outrageous propositions which they are like to propose, and of which there are plenty, in the letters of Andrew de Loo. Your commissioners must be instructed; to refer all important matters to your personal decision. The English will be asking for damages for money, spent in assisting my rebels; your commissioners will contend that damages are rather due to me. Thus, and in other ways, time will be agent. Your own envoys are not to know the secret any more than the English themselves. I tell it to you only. Thus you will proceed with the negotiations, now, yielding on one point, and now insisting on another, but directing all to the same object—to gain time while proceeding with the preparation for the invasion, according to the plan already agreed upon.”

Certainly the most Catholic King seemed, in this remarkable letter to have outdone himself; and Farnese—that sincere Farnese, in whose loyal, truth-telling, chivalrous character, the Queen and her counsellors placed such implicit reliance—could thenceforward no longer be embarrassed as to the course he was to adopt. To lie daily, through, thick, and thin, and with every variety of circumstance and detail which; a genius fertile in fiction could suggest, such was the simple rule prescribed by his sovereign. And the rule was implicitly obeyed, and the English sovereign thoroughly deceived. The secret confided only, to the faithful breast of Alexander was religiously kept. Even the Pope was outwitted. His Holiness proposed to, Philip the invasion of England, and offered a million to further the plan. He was most desirous to be informed if the project was, resolved upon, and, if so, when it was to be accomplished. The King took the Pope’s million, but refused the desired information. He answered evasively. He had a very good will to invade the country, he said, but there were great difficulties in the way. After a time, the Pope again tried to pry into the matter, and again offered the million which Philip had only accepted for the time when it might be wanted; giving him at the same time, to understand that it was not necessary at that time, because there were then great impediments. “Thus he is pledged to give me the subsidy, and I am not pledged for the time,” said Philip, “and I keep my secret, which is the most important of all.”



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Yet after all, Farnese did not see his way clear towards the consummation of the plan. His army had wofully dwindled, and before he could seriously set about ulterior matters, it would be necessary to take the city of Sluys. This was to prove—as already seen—a most arduous enterprise. He complained to Philip' of his inadequate supplies both in men and money. The project conceived in the royal breast was worth spending millions for, he said, and although by zeal and devotion he could accomplish something, yet after all he was no more than a man, and without the necessary means the scheme could not succeed. But Philip, on the contrary, was in the highest possible spirits. He had collected more money, he declared than had ever been seen before in the world. He had two million ducats in reserve, besides the Pope's million; the French were in a most excellent state of division, and the invasion should be made this year without fail. The fleet would arrive in the English channel by the end of the summer; which would be exactly in conformity with Alexander's ideas. The invasion was to be threefold: from Scotland, under the Scotch earls and their followers, with the money and troops furnished by Philip; from the Netherlands, under Parma; and by the great Spanish armada itself, upon the Isle of Wight. Alexander must recommend himself to God, in whose cause he was acting, and then do his duty; which lay very plain before him. If he ever wished to give his sovereign satisfaction in his life; he was to do the deed that year, whatever might betide. Never could there be so fortunate a conjunction of circumstances again. France was in a state of revolution, the German levies were weak, the Turk was fully occupied in Persia, an enormous mass of money, over and above the Pope's million, had been got together, and although the season was somewhat advanced, it was certain that the Duke would conquer all impediments, and be the instrument by which his royal master might render to God that service which he was so anxious to perform. Enthusiastic, though gouty, Philip grasped the pen in order to scrawl a few words with his own royal hand. "This business is of such importance," he said, "and it is so necessary that it should not be delayed, that I cannot refrain from urging it upon you as much as I can. I should do it even more amply; if this hand would allow me, which has been crippled with gout these several days, and my feet as well, and although it is unattended with pain, yet it is an impediment to writing."

Struggling thus against his own difficulties, and triumphantly, accomplishing a whole paragraph with disabled hand, it was natural that the King should expect Alexander, then deep in the siege of Sluy's, to vanquish all his obstacles as successfully; and to effect the conquest of England so soon as the harvests of that kingdom should be garnered.



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Sluy's was surrendered at last, and the great enterprise seemed opening from hour to hour. During the months of autumn; upon the very days when those loving messages, mixed with gentle reproaches, were sent by Alexander to Elizabeth, and almost at the self-same hours in which honest Andrew de Loo was getting such head-aches by drinking the Queen's health with Cosimo, and Champagne, the Duke and Philip were interchanging detailed information as to the progress of the invasion. The King calculated that by the middle of September Alexander would have 30,000 men in the Netherlands ready for embarkation.—Marquis Santa Cruz was announced as nearly ready to, sail for the English channel with 22,000 more, among whom were to be 16,000 seasoned Spanish infantry. The Marquis was then to extend the hand to Parma, and protect that passage to England which the Duke was at once to effect. The danger might be great for so large a fleet to navigate the seas at so late a season of the year; but Philip was sure that God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather. The Duke was to send, with infinite precautions of secrecy, information which the Marquis would expect off Ushant, and be quite ready to act so soon as Santa Cruz should arrive. Most earnestly and anxiously did the King deprecate any, thought of deferring the expedition to another year. If delayed, the obstacles of the following summer—a peace in France, a peace between the Turk and Persia, and other contingencies—would cause the whole project to fail, and Philip declared, with much iteration, that money; reputation, honour, his own character and that of Farnese, and God's service, were all at stake. He was impatient at suggestions of difficulties occasionally, ventured by the Duke, who was reminded that he had been appointed chief of the great enterprise by the spontaneous choice of his master, and that all his plans had been minutely followed. "You are the author of the whole scheme," said Philip, "and if it, is all to vanish into space, what kind of a figure shall we cut the coming year?" Again and again he referred to the immense sum collected—such as never before had been seen since the world was made—4,800,000 ducats with 2,000,000 in reserve, of which he was authorized to draw for 500,000 in advance, to say nothing of the Pope's million.

But Alexander, while straining every nerve to obey his master's wishes about the invasion, and to blind the English by the fictitious negotiations, was not so sanguine as his sovereign. In truth, there was something puerile in the eagerness which Philip manifested. He had made up his mind that England was to be conquered that autumn, and had endeavoured—as well as he could—to comprehend, the plans which his illustrious general had laid down for accomplishing that purpose. Of, course; to any man of average intellect, or, in truth, to any man outside a madhouse; it would seem an essential part of the conquest that



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the Armada should arrive. Yet—wonderful to relate-Philip, in his impatience, absolutely suggested that the Duke might take possession of England without waiting for Santa Cruz and his Armada. As the autumn had been wearing away, and there had been unavoidable delays about the shipping in Spanish ports, the King thought it best not to defer matters till, the winter. “You are, doubtless, ready,” he said to Farnese. “If you think you can make the passage to England before the fleet from Spain arrives, go at once. You maybe sure that it will come ere long to support, you. But if, you prefer, to wait, wait. The dangers of winter, to the fleet and to your own person are to be regretted; but God, whose cause it is; will protect you.”

It was, easy to sit quite out of harm's way, and to make such excellent, arrangements for smooth weather in the wintry channel, and for the. conquest of a maritime and martial kingdom by a few flat bottoms. Philip had little difficulty on that score, but the affairs of France were not quite to his mind. The battle of Coutras, and the entrance of the German and Swiss mercenaries into that country, were somewhat perplexing. Either those auxiliaries of the Huguenots would be defeated, or they would be victorious, or both parties would come to an agreement. In the first event, the Duke, after sending a little assistance to Mucio, was to effect his passage to England at once. In the second case, those troops, even though successful, would doubtless be so much disorganized that it might be still safe for Farnese to go on. In the third contingency—that of an accord—it would be necessary for him to wait till the foreign troops had disbanded and left France. He was to maintain all his forces in perfect readiness, on pretext of the threatening aspect of French matters and, so soon as the Swiss and Germane were dispersed, he was to proceed to business without delay. The fleet would be ready in Spain in all November, but as sea-affairs were so doubtful, particularly in winter, and as the Armada could not reach the channel till mid-winter; the Duke was not to wait for its arrival. “Whenever you see a favourable opportunity,” said Philip, “you must take care not to lose it, even if the fleet has not made its appearance. For you may be sure that it will soon come to give you assistance, in one way or another.”

Farnese had also been strictly enjoined to deal gently with the English, after the conquest, so that they would have cause to love their new master. His troops were not to forget discipline after victory. There was to be no pillage or rapine. The Catholics were to be handsomely rewarded and all the inhabitants were to be treated with so much indulgence that, instead of abhorring Parma and his soldiers, they would conceive a strong affection for them all, as the source of so many benefits. Again the Duke was warmly commended for the skill with which he had handled the peace



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negotiation. It was quite right to appoint commissioners, but it was never for an instant to be forgotten that the sole object of treating was to take the English unawares. "And therefore do you guide them to this end," said the King with pious unction, "which is what you owe to God, in whose service I have engaged in this enterprise, and to whom I have dedicated the whole." The King of France, too—that unfortunate Henry III., against whose throne and life Philip maintained in constant pay an organized band of conspirators—was affectionately adjured, through the Spanish envoy in Paris, Mendoza,—to reflect upon the advantages to France of a Catholic king and kingdom of England, in place of the heretics now in power.

But Philip, growing more and more sanguine, as those visions of fresh crowns and conquered kingdoms rose before him in his solitary cell, had even persuaded himself that the deed was already done. In the early days of December, he expressed a doubt whether his 14th November letter had reached the Duke, who by that time was probably in England. One would have thought the King addressing a tourist just starting on a little pleasure-excursion. And this was precisely the moment when Alexander had been writing those affectionate phrases to the Queen which had been considered by the counsellors at Greenwich so "princely and Christianly," and which Croft had pronounced such "very good words."

If there had been no hostile fleet to prevent, it was to be hoped, said Philip, that, in the name of God, the passage had been made. "Once landed there," continued the King, "I am persuaded that you will give me a good account of yourself, and, with the help of our Lord, that you will do that service which I desire to render to Him, and that He will guide our cause, which is His own, and of such great importance to His Church." A part of the fleet would soon after arrive and bring six thousand Spaniards, the Pope's million, and other good things, which might prove useful to Parma, presupposing that they would find him established on the enemy's territory.

This conviction that the enterprise had been already accomplished grew stronger in the King's breast every day. He was only a little disturbed lest Farnese should have misunderstood that 14th November letter. Philip—as his wont was—had gone into so many petty and puzzling details, and had laid down rules of action suitable for various contingencies, so easy to put comfortably upon paper, but which might become perplexing in action, that it was no wonder he should be a little anxious. The third contingency suggested by him had really occurred. There had been a composition between the foreign mercenaries and the French King. Nevertheless they had also been once or twice defeated, and this was contingency number two. Now which of the events would the Duke consider as having really occurred. It was to be hoped that he would have not seen cause for delay, for in truth number three

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was not exactly the contingency which existed. France was still in a very satisfactory state of discord and rebellion. The civil war was by no means over. There was small fear of peace that winter. Give Mucio his pittance with frugal hand, and that dangerous personage would ensure tranquillity for Philip's project, and misery for Henry III. and his subjects for an indefinite period longer. The King thought it improbable that Farnese could have made any mistake. He expressed therefore a little anxiety at having received no intelligence from him, but had great confidence that, with the aid of the Lord and of with his own courage he had accomplished the great exploit. Philip had only, recommended delay in event of a general peace in France—Huguenots, Royalists, Leaguers, and all. This had not happened. "Therefore, I trust," said the King; "that you — perceiving that this is not contingency number three which was to justify a pause— will have already executed the enterprise, and fulfilled my desire. I am confident that the deed is done, and that God has blessed it, and I am now expecting the news from hour to hour."

But Alexander had not yet arrived in England. The preliminaries for the conquest caused him more perplexity than the whole enterprise occasioned to Philip. He was very short of funds. The five millions were not to be touched, except for the expenses of the invasion. But as England was to be subjugated, in order that rebellious Holland might be recovered, it was hardly reasonable to go away leaving such inadequate forces in the Netherlands as to ensure not only independence to the new republic, but to hold out temptation for revolt to the obedient Provinces. Yet this was the dilemma in which the Duke was placed. So much money had been set aside for the grand project that there was scarcely anything for the regular military business. The customary supplies had not been sent. Parma had leave to draw for six hundred thousand ducats, and he was able to get that draft discounted on the Antwerp Exchange by consenting to receive five hundred thousand, or sacrificing sixteen per cent. of the sum. A good number of transports, and scows had been collected, but there had been a deficiency of money for their proper equipment, as the five millions had been very slow in coming, and were still upon the road. The whole enterprise was on the point of being sacrificed, according to Farnese, for want of funds. The time for doing the deed had arrived, and he declared himself incapacitated by poverty. He expressed his disgust and resentment in language more energetic than courtly; and protested that he was not to blame. "I always thought," said he bitterly, "that your Majesty would provide all that was necessary even in superfluity, and not limit me beneath the ordinary. I did not suppose, when it was most important to have ready money, that I should be kept short, and not allowed to draw certain sums by anticipation, which I should have done had you not forbidden."

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This was, through life, a striking characteristic of Philip. Enormous schemes were laid out with utterly inadequate provision for their accomplishment, and a confident expectation entertained that wild, visions were; in some indefinite way, to be converted into substantial realities, without fatigue or personal exertion on his part, and with a very trifling outlay of ready money.

Meantime the faithful Farnese did his best. He was indefatigable night and day in getting his boats together and providing his munitions of war. He dug a canal from Sas de Gand—which was one of his principal depots— all the way to Sluys, because the water-communication between those two points was entirely in the hands of the Hollanders and Zeelanders. The rebel cruisers swarmed in the Scheldt, from, Flushing almost to Antwerp, so that it was quite impossible for Parma's forces to venture forth at all; and it also seemed hopeless to hazard putting to sea from Sluys. At the same, time he had appointed his, commissioners to treat with the English envoys already named by the Queen. There had been much delay in the arrival of those deputies, on account of the noise raised by Barneveld and his followers; but Burghley was now sanguine that the exposure of what he called the Advocate's seditious, false, and perverse proceedings, would enable Leicester to procure the consent of the States to a universal peace.

And thus, with these parallel schemes of invasion and negotiation, spring; summer, and autumn, had worn away. Santa Cruz was still with his fleet in Lisbon, Cadiz, and the Azores; and Parma was in Brussels, when Philip fondly imagined him established in Greenwich Palace. When made aware of his master's preposterous expectations, Alexander would have been perhaps amused, had he not been half beside himself with indignation. Such folly seemed incredible. There was not the slightest appearance of a possibility of making a passage without the protection of the Spanish fleet, he observed. His vessels were mere transport-boats, without the least power of resisting an enemy. The Hollanders and Zeelanders, with one hundred and forty cruisers, had shut him up in all directions. He could neither get out from Antwerp nor from Sluys. There were large English ships, too, cruising in the channel, and they were getting ready in the Netherlands and in England "most furiously." The delays had been so great, that their secret had been poorly kept, and the enemy was on his guard. If Santa Cruz had come, Alexander declared that he should have already been in England. When he did come he should still be prepared to make the passage; but to talk of such an attempt without the Armada was senseless, and he denounced the madness of that proposition to his Majesty in vehement and unmeasured terms. His army, by sickness and other causes, had been reduced to one-half the number considered necessary for the invasion, and the rebels had established regular squadrons in the Scheldt,



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in the very teeth of the forts, at Lillo, Liefkenshoek, Saftingen, and other points close to Antwerp. There were so many of these war-vessels, and all in such excellent order, that they were a most notable embarrassment to him, he observed, and his own flotilla would run great risk of being utterly destroyed. Alexander had been personally superintending matters at Sluys, Ghent, and Antwerp, and had strengthened with artillery the canal which he had constructed between Sas and Sluys. Meantime his fresh troops had been slowly arriving, but much sickness prevailed among them. The Italians were dying fast, almost all the Spaniards were in hospital, and the others were so crippled and worn out that it was most pitiable to behold them; yet it was absolutely necessary that those who were in health should accompany him to England, since otherwise his Spanish force would be altogether too weak to do the service expected. He had got together a good number of transports. Not counting his Antwerp fleet—which could not stir from port, as he bitterly complained, nor be of any use, on account of the rebel blockade—he had between Dunkerk and Newport seventy-four vessels of various kinds fit for sea-service, one hundred and fifty flat-bottoms (pleytas), and seventy riverhoys, all which were to be assembled at Sluys, whence they would—so soon as Santa Cruz should make his appearance—set forth for England. This force of transports he pronounced sufficient, when properly protected by the Spanish Armada, to carry himself and his troops across the channel. If, therefore, the matter did not become publicly known, and if the weather proved favourable, it was probable that his Majesty's desire would soon be fulfilled according to the plan proposed. The companies of light horse and of arquebusmen, with which he meant to make his entrance into London, had been clothed, armed, and mounted, he said, in a manner delightful to contemplate, and those soldiers at least might be trusted—if they could only effect their passage—to do good service, and make matters quite secure.

But craftily as the King and Duke had been dealing, it had been found impossible to keep such vast preparations entirely secret. Walsingham was in full possession of their plans down to the most minute details. The misfortune was that he was unable to persuade his sovereign, Lord Burghley, and others of the peace-party, as to the accuracy of his information. Not only was he thoroughly instructed in regard to the number of men, vessels, horses, mules, saddles, spurs, lances, barrels of beer and tons of biscuit, and other particulars of the contemplated invasion, but he had even received curious intelligence as to the gorgeous equipment of those very troops, with which the Duke was just secretly announcing to the King his intention of making his triumphal entrance into the English capital. Sir Francis knew how many thousand yards of cramoisy velvet, how many hundredweight of gold and silver embroidery, how much satin and feathers, and what quantity of pearls and diamonds; Farnese had been providing himself withal. He knew the tailors, jewellers, silversmiths, and haberdashers, with whom the great Alexander—as he now began to be called—had been dealing;



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["There is provided for lights a great number of torches, and so tempered that no water can put them out. A great number of little mills for grinding corn, great store of biscuit baked and oxen salted, great number of saddles and boots also there is made 500 pair of velvet shoes—red, crimson velvet, and in every cloister throughout the country great quantity of roses made of silk, white and red, which are to be badges for divers of his gentlemen. By reason of these roses it is expected he is going for England. There is sold to the Prince by John Angel, pergaman, ten hundred-weight of velvet, gold and silver to embroider his apparel withal. The covering to his mules is most gorgeously embroidered with gold and silver, which carry his baggage. There is also sold to him by the Italian merchants at least 670 pieces of velvet to apparel him and his train. Every captain has received a gift from the Prince to make himself brave, and for Captain Corralini, an Italian, who hath one cornet of horse, I have seen with my eyes a saddle with the trappings of his horse, his coat and rapier and dagger, which cost 3,500 French crowns. (!!) All their lances are painted of divers colours, blue and white, green and White, and most part blood-red— so there is as great preparation for a triumph as for war. A great number of English priests come to Antwerp from all places. The commandment is given to all the churches to read the Litany daily for the prosperity of the Prince in his enterprise." John Giles to Walsingham, 4 Dec. 1587.(S. P. Office Ms.)

The same letter conveyed also very detailed information concerning the naval preparations by the Duke, besides accurate intelligence in regard to the progress of the armada in Cadiz and Lisbon.

Sir William Russet wrote also from Flushing concerning these preparations in much the same strain; but it is worthy of note that he considered Farnese to be rather intending a movement against France. "The Prince of Parma," he said, "is making great preparations for war, and with all expedition means to march a great army, and for a triumph, the coats and costly, apparel for his own body doth exceed for embroidery, and beset with jewels; for all the embroiderers and diamond-cutters work both night and day, such haste is made. Five hundred velvet coats of one sort for lances, and a great number of brave new coats made for horsemen; 30,000 men are ready, and gather in Brabant and Flanders. It is said that there shall be in two days 10,000 to do some great exploit in these parts, and 20,000 to march with the Prince into France, and for certain it is not known what way or how they shall march, but all are ready at an hour's warning —4,000 saddles, 4000 lances. 6,000 pairs of boots, 2,000 barrels of beer, biscuit sufficient for a camp of 20,000 men, &c. The Prince hath received a marvellous costly garland or crown from the Pope, and is chosen chief of

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the holy league...”]

but when he spoke at the council-board, it was to ears wilfully deaf. Nor was much concealed from the Argus-eyed politicians in the republic. The States were more and more intractable. They knew nearly all the truth with regard to the intercourse between the Queen’s government and Farnese, and they suspected more than the truth. The list of English commissioners privately agreed upon between Burghley and De Loo was known to Barneveld, Maurice, and Hohenlo, before it came to the ears of Leicester. In June, Buckhurst had been censured by Elizabeth for opening the peace matter to members of the States, according to her bidding, and in July Leicester was rebuked for exactly the opposite delinquency. She was very angry that he had delayed the communication of her policy so long, but she expressed her anger only when that policy had proved so transparent as to make concealment hopeless. Leicester, as well as Buckhurst, knew that it was idle to talk to the Netherlanders of peace, because of their profound distrust in every word that came from Spanish or Italian lips; but Leicester, less frank than Buckhurst, preferred to flatter his sovereign, rather than to tell her unwelcome truths. More fortunate than Buckhurst, he was rewarded for his flattery by boundless affection, and promotion to the very highest post in England when the hour of England’s greatest peril had arrived, while the truth-telling counsellor was consigned to imprisonment and disgrace. When the Queen complained sharply that the States were mocking her, and that she was touched in honour at the prospect of not keeping her plighted word to Farnese, the Earl assured her that the Netherlanders were fast changing their views; that although the very name of peace had till then been odious and loathsome, yet now, as coming from her Majesty, they would accept it with thankful hearts.

The States, or the leading members of that assembly, factious fellows, pestilent and seditious knaves, were doing their utmost, and were singing sirens’ songs’ to enchant and delude the people, but they were fast losing their influence—so warmly did the country desire to conform to her Majesty’s pleasure. He expatiated, however, upon the difficulties in his path. The knowledge possessed by the pestilent fellows as to the actual position of affairs, was very mischievous. It was honey to Maurice and Hohenlo, he said, that the Queen’s secret practices with Farnese had thus been discovered. Nothing could be more marked than the jollity with which the ringleaders hailed these preparations for peace-making, for they now felt certain that the government of their country had been fixed securely in their own hands. They were canonized, said the Earl, for their hostility to peace.



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Should not this conviction, on the part of men who had so many means of feeling the popular pulse, have given the Queen's government pause? To serve his sovereign in truth, Leicester might have admitted a possibility at least of honesty on the part of men who were so ready to offer up their lives for their country. For in a very few weeks he was obliged to confess that the people were no longer so well disposed to acquiesce in her Majesty's policy. The great majority, both of the States and the people, were in favour, he agreed, of continuing the war. The inhabitants of the little Province of Holland alone, he said, had avowed their determination to maintain their rights—even if obliged to fight single-handed—and to shed the last drop in their veins, rather than to submit again to Spanish tyranny. This seemed a heroic resolution, worthy the sympathy of a brave Englishman, but the Earl's only comment upon it was, that it proved the ringleaders "either to be traitors or else the most blindest asses in the world." He never scrupled, on repeated occasions, to insinuate that Barneveld, Hohenlo, Buys, Roorda, Sainte Aldegonde, and the Nassaus, had organized a plot to sell their country to Spain. Of this there was not the faintest evidence, but it was the only way in which he chose to account for their persistent opposition to the peace-negotiations, and to their reluctance to confer absolute power on himself. "'Tis a crabbed, sullen, proud kind of people," said he, "and bent on establishing a popular government,"—a purpose which seemed somewhat inconsistent with the plot for selling their country to Spain, which he charged in the same breath on the same persons.

Early in August, by the Queen's command, he had sent a formal communication respecting the private negotiations to the States, but he could tell them no secret. The names of the commissioners, and even the supposed articles of a treaty already concluded, were flying from town to town, from mouth to mouth, so that the Earl pronounced it impossible for one, not on the spot, to imagine the excitement which existed.

He had sent a state-counsellor, one Bardesius, to the Hague, to open the matter; but that personage had only ventured to whisper a word to one or two members of the States, and was assured that the proposition, if made, would raise such a tumult of fury, that he might fear for his life. So poor Bardesius came back to Leicester, fell on his knees, and implored him; at least to pause in these fatal proceedings. After an interval, he sent two eminent statesmen, Valk and Menin, to lay the subject before the assembly. They did so, and it was met by fierce denunciation. On their return, the Earl, finding that so much violence had been excited, pretended that they had misunderstood his meaning, and that he had never meant to propose peace-negotiations. But Valk and Menin were too old politicians to be caught in such a trap, and they produced a brief, drawn up in Italian—the foreign language best understood by the Earl—with his own corrections and interlineations, so that he was forced to admit that there had been no misconception.



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Leicester at last could no longer doubt that he was universally odious in the Provinces. Hohenlo, Barneveld, and the rest, who had “championed the country against the peace,” were carrying all before them. They had persuaded the people, that the “Queen was but a tickle stay for them,” and had inflated young Maurice with vast ideas of his importance, telling him that he was “a natural patriot, the image of his noble father, whose memory was yet great among them, as good reason, dying in their cause, as he had done.” The country was bent on a popular government, and on maintaining the war. There was no possibility, he confessed, that they would ever confer the authority on him which they had formerly bestowed. The Queen had promised, when he left England the second time, that his absence should be for but three months, and he now most anxiously claimed permission to depart. Above all things, he deprecated being employed as a peace-commissioner. He was, of all men, the most unfit for such a post. At the same time he implored the statesmen at home to be wary in selecting the wisest persons for that arduous duty, in order that the peace might be made for Queen Elizabeth, as well as for King Philip. He strongly recommended, for that duty, Beale, the councillor, who with Killigrew had replaced the hated Wilkes and the pacific Bartholomew Clerk. “Mr. Beale, brother-in-law to Walsingham, is in my books a prince,” said the Earl. “He was drowned in England, but most useful in the Netherlands. Without him I am naked.”

And at last the governor told the Queen what Buckhurst and Walsingham had been perpetually telling her, that the Duke of Parma meant mischief; and he sent the same information as to hundreds of boats preparing, with six thousand shirts for camisados, 7000 pairs of wading boots, and saddles, stirrups, and spurs, enough for a choice band of 3000 men. A shrewd troop, said the Earl, of the first soldiers in Christendom, to be landed some fine morning in England. And he too had heard of the jewelled suits of cramoisy velvet, and all the rest of the finery with which the triumphant Alexander was intending to astonish London. “Get horses enough, and muskets enough in England,” exclaimed Leicester, “and then our people will not be beaten, I warrant you, if well led.”

And now, the governor—who, in order to soothe his sovereign and comply with her vehement wishes, had so long misrepresented the state of public feeling—not only confessed that Papists and Protestants, gentle and simple, the States and the people, throughout the republic, were all opposed to any negotiation with the enemy, but lifted up his own voice, and in earnest language expressed his opinion of the Queen’s infatuation.



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“Oh, my Lord, what a treaty is this for peace,” said he to Burghley, “that we must treat, altogether disarmed and weakened, and the King having made his forces stronger than ever he had known in these parts, besides what is coming out, of Spain, and yet we will presume of good conditions. It grieveth me to the heart. But I fear you will all smart for it, and I pray God her Majesty feel it not, if it be His blessed will. She meaneth well and sincerely to have peace, but God knows that this is not the way. Well, God Almighty defend us and the realm, and especially her Majesty. But look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace, to undo others and ourselves after.”

Walsingham, too, was determined not to act as a commissioner. If his failing health did not serve as an excuse, he should be obliged to refuse, he said, and so forfeit her Majesty's favour, rather than be instrumental in bringing about her ruin, and that of his country. Never for an instant had the Secretary of State faltered in his opposition to the timid policy of Burghley. Again and again he had detected the intrigues of the Lord-Treasurer and Sir James Croft, and ridiculed the “comptroller's peace.”

And especially did Walsingham bewail the implicit confidence which the Queen placed in the sugary words of Alexander, and the fatal parsimony which caused her to neglect defending herself against Scotland; for he was as well informed as was Farnese himself of Philip's arrangements with the Scotch lords, and of the subsidies in men and money by which their invasion of England was to be made part of the great scheme. “No one thing,” sighed Walsingham, “doth more prognosticate an alteration of this estate, than that a prince of her Majesty's judgment should neglect, in respect of a little charges, the stopping of so dangerous a gap The manner of our cold and careless proceeding here, in this time of peril, maketh me to take no comfort of my recovery of health, for that I see, unless it shall please God in mercy and miraculously to preserve us, we cannot long stand.”

Leicester, finding himself unable to counteract the policy of Barneveld and his party, by expostulation or argument, conceived a very dangerous and criminal project before he left the country. The facts are somewhat veiled in mystery; but he was suspected, on weighty evidence, of a design to kidnap both Maurice and Barneveld, and carry them off to England. Of this intention, which was foiled at any rate, before it could be carried into execution, there is perhaps not conclusive proof, but it has already been shown, from a deciphered letter, that the Queen had once given Buckhurst and Wilkes peremptory orders to seize the person of Hohenlo, and it is quite possible that similar orders may have been received at a later moment with regard to the young Count and the Advocate. At any rate, it is certain that late in the autumn, some friends of Barneveld entered his bedroom, at the Hague, in the dead of night, and informed him that a plot was on foot to lay violent hands upon him, and that an armed force was already on its way to execute this purpose of Leicester, before the dawn of day. The Advocate, without loss of time, took his departure for Delft, a step which was followed, shortly afterwards, by Maurice.



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Nor was this the only daring—stroke which the Earl had meditated. During the progress of the secret negotiations with Parma, he had not neglected those still more secret schemes to which he had occasionally made allusion. He had determined, if possible, to obtain possession of the most important cities in Holland and Zeeland. It was very plain to him, that he could no longer hope, by fair means, for the great authority once conferred upon him by the free will of the States. It was his purpose, therefore, by force and stratagem to recover his lost power. We have heard the violent terms in which both the Queen and the Earl denounced the men who accused the English government of any such intention. It had been formally denied by the States-General that Barneveld had ever used the language in that assembly with which he had been charged. He had only revealed to them the exact purport of the letter to Junius, and of the Queen's secret instructions to Leicester. Whatever he may have said in private conversation, and whatever deductions he may have made among his intimate friends, from the admitted facts in the case, could hardly be made matters of record. It does not appear that he, or the statesmen who acted with him, considered the Earl capable of a deliberate design to sell the cities, thus to be acquired, to Spain, as the price of peace for England. Certainly Elizabeth would have scorned such a crime, and was justly indignant at rumours prevalent to that effect; but the wrath of the Queen and of her favourite were, perhaps, somewhat simulated, in order to cover their real mortification at the discovery of designs on the part of the Earl which could not be denied. Not only had they been at last compelled to confess these negotiations, which for several months had been concealed and stubbornly denied, but the still graver plots of the Earl to regain his much-coveted authority had been, in a startling manner, revealed. The leaders of the States-General had a right to suspect the English Earl of a design to reenact the part of the Duke of Anjou, and were justified in taking stringent measures to prevent a calamity, which, as they believed, was impending over their little commonwealth. The high-handed dealings of Leicester in the city of Utrecht have been already described. The most respectable and influential burghers of the place had been imprisoned and banished, the municipal government wrested from the hands to which it legitimately belonged, and confided to adventurers, who wore the cloak of Calvinism to conceal their designs, and a successful effort had been made, in the name of democracy, to eradicate from one ancient province the liberty on which it prided itself.

In the course of the autumn, an attempt was made to play the same game at Amsterdam. A plot was discovered, before it was fairly matured, to seize the magistrates of that important city, to gain possession of the arsenals, and to place the government in the hands of well-known Leicestrians. A list of fourteen influential citizens, drawn up in the writing of Burgrave, the Earl's confidential secretary, was found, all of whom, it was asserted, had been doomed to the scaffold.



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The plot to secure Amsterdam had failed, but, in North Holland, Medenblik was held firmly for Leicester, by Diedrich Sonoy, in the very teeth of the States. The important city of Enkhuyzen, too, was very near being secured for the Earl, but a still more significant movement was made at Leyden. That heroic city, ever since the famous siege of 1574, in which the Spaniard had been so signally foiled, had distinguished itself by great liberality of sentiment in religious matters. The burghers were inspired by a love of country, and a hatred of oppression, both civil and, ecclesiastical; and Papists and Protestants, who had fought side by side against the common foe, were not disposed to tear each other to pieces, now that he had been excluded from their gates. Meanwhile, however, refugee Flemings and Brabantines had sought an asylum in the city, and being, as usual, of the strictest sect of the Calvinists were shocked at the latitudinarianism which prevailed. To the honour of the city—as it seems to us now—but, to their horror, it was even found that one or two Papists had seats in the magistracy. More than all this, there was a school in the town kept by a Catholic, and Adrian van der Werff himself—the renowned burgomaster, who had sustained the city during the dreadful leaguer of 1574, and who had told the famishing burghers that they might eat him if they liked, but that they should never surrender to the Spaniards while he remained alive—even Adrian van der Werff had sent his son to this very school? To the clamour made by the refugees against this spirit of toleration, one of the favourite preachers in the town, of Arminian tendencies, had declared in the pulpit, that he would as lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition established over his country; using an expression, in regard to the church of Geneva, more energetic than decorous.

It was from Leyden that the chief opposition came to a synod, by which a great attempt was to be made towards subjecting the new commonwealth to a masked theocracy; a scheme which the States of Holland had resisted with might and main. The Calvinistic party, waxing stronger in Leyden, although still in a minority, at last resolved upon a strong effort to place the city in the hands of that great representative of Calvinism, the Earl of Leicester. Jacques Volmar, a deacon of the church, Cosmo de Pescarengis, a Genoese captain of much experience in the service of the republic, Adolphus de Meetkerke, former president of Flanders, who had been, by the States, deprived of the seat in the great council to which the Earl had appointed him; Doctor Saravia, professor of theology in the university, with other deacons, preachers, and captains, went at different times from Leyden to Utrecht, and had secret interviews with Leicester.



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A plan was at last agreed upon, according to which, about the middle of October, a revolution should be effected in Leyden. Captain Nicholas de Maulde, who had recently so much distinguished himself in the defence of Sluys, was stationed with two companies of States' troops in the city. He had been much disgusted—not without reason—at the culpable negligence through which the courageous efforts of the Sluys garrison had been set at nought, and the place sacrificed, when it might so easily have been relieved; and he ascribed the whole of the guilt to Maurice, Hohenlo, and the States, although it could hardly be denied that at least an equal portion belonged to Leicester and his party. The young captain listened, therefore, to a scheme propounded to him by Colonel Cosine, and Deacon Volmar, in the name of Leicester. He agreed, on a certain day, to muster his company, to leave the city by the Delft gate—as if by command of superior authority—to effect a junction with Captain Heraugiere, another of the distinguished malcontent defenders of Sluys, who was stationed, with his command, at Delft, and then to re-enter Leyden, take possession of the town-hall, arrest all the magistrates, together with Adrian van der Werff, ex-burgomaster, and proclaim Lord Leicester, in the name of Queen Elizabeth, legitimate master of the city. A list of burghers, who were to be executed, was likewise agreed upon, at a final meeting of the conspirators in a hostelry, which bore the ominous name of 'The Thunderbolt.' A desire had been signified by Leicester, in the preliminary interviews at Utrecht, that all bloodshed, if possible, should be spared, but it was certainly an extravagant expectation, considering the temper, the political convictions, and the known courage of the Leyden burghers, that the city would submit, without a struggle, to this invasion of all their rights. It could hardly be doubted that the streets would run red with blood, as those of Antwerp had done, when a similar attempt, on the part of Anjou, had been foiled.

Unfortunately for the scheme, a day or two before the great stroke was to be hazarded, Cosmo de Pescarengis had been accidentally arrested for debt. A subordinate accomplice, taking alarm, had then gone before the magistrate and revealed the plot. Volmar and de Maulde fled at once, but were soon arrested in the neighbourhood. President de Meetkerke, Professor Saravia, the preacher Van der Wauw, and others most compromised, effected their escape. The matter was instantly laid before the States of Holland by the magistracy of Leyden, and seemed of the gravest moment. In the beginning of the year, the fatal treason of York and Stanley had implanted a deep suspicion of Leicester in the hearts of almost all the Netherlanders, which could not be eradicated. The painful rumours concerning the secret negotiations with Spain, and the design falsely attributed to the English Queen, of selling the chief cities of the republic to Philip as the price of peace, and of reimbursement for expenses incurred by her, increased the general excitement to fever. It was felt by the leaders of the States that as mortal a combat lay before them with the Earl of Leicester, as with the King of Spain, and that it was necessary to strike a severe blow, in order to vindicate their imperilled authority.



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A commission was appointed by the high court of Holland, acting in conjunction with the States of the Provinces, to try the offenders. Among the commissioners were Adrian van der Werff, John van der Does, who had been military commandant of Leyden during the siege, Barneveld, and other distinguished personages, over whom Count Maurice presided. The accused were subjected to an impartial trial. Without torture, they confessed their guilt. It is true, however, that Cosmo was placed within sight of the rack. He avowed that his object had been to place the city under the authority of Leicester, and to effect this purpose, if possible, without bloodshed. He declared that the attempt was to be made with the full knowledge and approbation of the Earl, who had promised him the command of a regiment of twelve companies, as a recompense for his services, if they proved successful. Leicester, said Cosmo, had also pledged himself, in case the men, thus executing his plans, should be discovered and endangered, to protect and rescue them, even at the sacrifice of all his fortune, and of the office he held. When asked if he had any written statement from his Excellency to that effect, Cosmo replied, no, nothing but his princely word which he had voluntarily given.

Volmar made a similar confession. He, too, declared that he had acted throughout the affair by express command of the Earl of Leicester. Being asked if he had any written evidence of the fact, he, likewise, replied in the negative. "Then his Excellency will unquestionably deny your assertion," said the judges. "Alas, then am I a dead man," replied Volmar, and the unfortunate deacon never spoke truer words. Captain de Maulde also confessed his crime. He did not pretend, however, to have had any personal communication with Leicester, but said that the affair had been confided to him by Colonel Cosmo, on the express authority of the Earl, and that he had believed himself to be acting in obedience to his Excellency's commands.

On the 26th October, after a thorough investigation, followed by a full confession on the part of the culprits, the three were sentenced to death. The decree was surely a most severe one. They had been guilty of no actual crime, and only in case of high treason could an intention to commit a crime be considered, by the laws of the state, an offence punishable with death. But it was exactly because it was important to make the crime high treason that the prisoners were condemned. The offence was considered as a crime not against Leyden, but as an attempt to levy war upon a city which was a member of the States of Holland and of the United States. If the States were sovereign, then this was a lesion of their sovereignty. Moreover, the offence had been aggravated by the employment of United States' troops against the commonwealth of the United States itself. To cut off the heads of these prisoners was a sharp practical answer to the claims of sovereignty by Leicester, as representing the people, and a terrible warning to all who might, in future; be disposed to revive the theories of Deventer and Burgrave.



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In the case of De Maulde the punishment seemed especially severe. His fate excited universal sympathy, and great efforts were made to obtain his pardon. He was a universal favourite; he was young; he was very handsome; his manners were attractive; he belonged to an ancient and honourable race. His father, the Seigneur de Mansart, had done great services in the war of independence, had been an intimate friend of the great Prince of Orange, and had even advanced large sums of money to assist his noble efforts to liberate the country. Two brothers of the young captain had fallen in the service of the republic. He, too, had distinguished himself at Ostend, and his gallantry during the recent siege of Sluys had been in every mouth, and had excited the warm applause of so good a judge of soldiership as the veteran Roger Williams. The scars of the wounds received in the desperate conflicts of that siege were fresh upon his breast. He had not intended to commit treason, but, convinced by the sophistry of older soldiers than himself, as well as by learned deacons and theologians, he had imagined himself doing his duty, while obeying the Earl of Leicester. If there were ever a time for mercy, this seemed one, and young Maurice of Nassau might have remembered, that even in the case of the assassins who had attempted the life of his father, that great-hearted man had lifted up his voice—which seemed his dying one—in favour of those who had sought his life.

But the authorities were inexorable. There was no hope of a mitigation of punishment, but a last effort was made, under favour of a singular ancient custom, to save the life of De Maulde. A young lady of noble family in Leyden—Uytenbroek by name—claimed the right of rescuing the condemned malefactor, from the axe, by appearing upon the scaffold, and offering to take him for her husband.

Intelligence was brought to the prisoner in his dungeon, that the young lady had made the proposition, and he was told to be of good cheer: But he refused to be comforted. He was slightly acquainted with the gentle-woman, he observed; and doubted much whether her request would be granted. Moreover if contemporary chronicle can be trusted he even expressed a preference for the scaffold, as the milder fate of the two. The lady, however, not being aware of those uncomplimentary sentiments, made her proposal to the magistrates, but was dismissed with harsh rebukes. She had need be ashamed, they said; of her willingness to take a condemned traitor for her husband. It was urged, in her behalf, that even in the cruel Alva's time, the ancient custom had been respected, and that victims had been saved from the executioners, on a demand in marriage made even by women of abandoned character. But all was of no avail. The prisoners were executed on the 26th October, the same day on which the sentence had been pronounced. The heads of Volmar and Cosmo were exposed on one of the turrets of the city. That of Maulde was interred with his body.



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The Earl was indignant when he heard of the event. As there had been no written proof of his complicity in the conspiracy, the judges had thought it improper to mention his name in the sentences. He, of course, denied any knowledge of the plot, and its proof rested therefore only on the assertion of the prisoners themselves, which, however, was circumstantial, voluntary, and generally believed!

France, during the whole of this year of expectation, was ploughed throughout its whole surface by perpetual civil war. The fatal edict of June, 1585, had drowned the unhappy land in blood. Foreign armies, called in by the various contending factions, ravaged its fair territory, butchered its peasantry, and changed its fertile plains to a wilderness. The unhappy creature who wore the crown of Charlemagne and of Hugh Capet, was but the tool in the hands of the most profligate and designing of his own subjects, and of foreigners. Slowly and surely the net, spread by the hands of his own mother, of his own prime minister, of the Duke of Guise, all obeying the command and receiving the stipend of Philip, seemed closing over him. He was without friends, without power to know his friends, if he had them. In his hatred to the Reformation, he had allowed himself to be made the enemy of the only man who could be his friend, or the friend of France. Allied with his mortal foe, whose armies were strengthened by contingents from Parma's forces, and paid for by Spanish gold, he was forced to a mock triumph over the foreign mercenaries who came to save his crown, and to submit to the defeat of the flower of his chivalry, by the only man who could rescue France from ruin, and whom France could look up to with respect.

For, on the 20th October, Henry of Navarre had at last gained a victory. After twenty-seven years of perpetual defeat, during which they had been growing stronger and stronger, the Protestants had met the picked troops of Henry III., under the Due de Joyeuse, near the burgh of Contras. His cousins Conde and Soissons each commanded a wing in the army of the Warnese. "You are both of my family," said Henry, before the engagement, "and the Lord so help me, but I will show you that I am the eldest born." And during that bloody day the white plume was ever tossing where the battle, was fiercest. "I choose to show myself. They shall see the Bearnese," was his reply to those who implored him to have a care for his personal safety. And at last, when the day was done, the victory gained, and more French nobles lay dead on the field, as Catharine de' Medici bitterly declared, than had fallen in a battle for twenty years; when two thousand of the King's best troops had been slain, and when the bodies of Joyeuse and his brother had been laid out in the very room where the conqueror's supper, after the battle, was served, but where he refused, with a shudder, to eat, he was still as eager as before—had the wretched Valois been possessed of a spark of manhood, or of intelligence—to shield him and his kingdom from the common enemy.'



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For it could hardly be doubtful, even to Henry III., at that moment, that Philip II. and his jackal, the Duke of Guise, were pursuing him to the death, and that, in his breathless doublings to escape, he had been forced to turn upon his natural protector. And now Joyeuse was defeated and slain. Had it been my brother's son," exclaimed Cardinal de Bourbon, weeping and wailing, "how much better it would have been." It was not easy to slay the champion of French Protestantism; yet, to one less buoyant, the game, even after the brilliant but fruitless victory of Contras, might have seemed desperate. Beggared and outcast, with literally scarce a shirt to his back, without money to pay a corporal's guard, how was he to maintain an army?

But 'Mucio' was more successful than Joyeuse had been, and the German and Swiss mercenaries who had come across the border to assist the Bearnese, were adroitly handled by Philip's great stipendiary. Henry of Valois, whose troops had just been defeated at Contras, was now compelled to participate in a more fatal series of triumphs. For alas, the victim had tied himself to the apron-string of "Madam League," and was paraded by her, in triumph, before the eyes of his own subjects and of the world. The passage of the Loire by the auxiliaries was resisted; a series of petty victories was gained by Guise, and, at last, after it was obvious that the leaders of the legions had been corrupted with Spanish ducats, Henry allowed them to depart, rather than give the Balafre opportunity for still farther successes.

Then came the triumph in Paris—hosannahs in the churches, huzzas in the public places—not for the King, but for Guise. Paris, more madly in love with her champion than ever, prostrated herself at his feet. For him paeans as to a deliverer. Without him the ark would have fallen into the hands of the Philistines. For the Valois, shouts of scorn from the populace, thunders from the pulpit, anathemas from monk and priest, elaborate invectives from all the pedants of the Sorbonne, distant mutterings of excommunication from Rome—not the toothless beldame of modern days, but the avenging divinity of priest-rid monarchs. Such were the results of the edicts of June. Spain and the Pope had trampled upon France, and the populace in her capital clapped their hands and jumped for joy. "Miserable country miserable King," sighed an illustrious patriot, "whom his own countrymen wish rather to survive, than to die to defend him! Let the name of Huguenot and of Papist be never heard of more. Let us think only of the counter-league. Is France to be saved by opening all its gates to Spain? Is France to be turned out of France, to make a lodging for the Lorrainer and the Spaniard?" Pregnant questions, which could not yet be answered, for the end was not yet. France was to become still more and more a wilderness. And well did that same brave and thoughtful lover, of his: country declare, that he who should suddenly awake from a sleep of twenty-five years, and revisit that once beautiful land, would deem himself transplanted to a barbarous island of cannibals.—[Duplessis Mornay, 'Mem.' iv. 1-34.]

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It had now become quite obvious that the game of Leicester was played out. His career—as it has now been fully exhibited—could have but one termination. He had made himself thoroughly odious to the nation whom he came to govern. He had lost for ever the authority once spontaneously bestowed; and he had attempted in vain, both by fair means and foul, to recover that power. There was nothing left him but retreat. Of this he was thoroughly convinced. He was anxious to be gone, the republic most desirous to be rid of him, her Majesty impatient to have her favourite back again. The indulgent Queen, seeing nothing to blame in his conduct, while her indignation, at the attitude maintained by the Provinces was boundless, permitted him, accordingly, to return; and in her letter to the States, announcing this decision, she took a fresh opportunity of emptying her wrath upon their heads.

She told them, that, notwithstanding her frequent messages to them, signifying her evil contentment with their unthankfulness for her exceeding great benefits, and with their gross violations of their contract with herself and with Leicester, whom they had, of their own accord, made absolute governor without her instigation; she had never received any good answer to move, her to commit their sins to oblivion, nor had she remarked, any amendment in their conduct. On the contrary, she complained: that they daily increased their offences, most notoriously in the sight of—the world and in so many points that she lacked words to express them in one letter. She however thought it worth while to allude to some of their transgressions. She, declared that their sinister, or rather barbarous interpretation of her conduct had been notorious in perverting and falsifying her princely and Christian intentions; when she imparted to them the overtures that had been made to her for a treaty of peace for herself and for them with the King of Spain. Yet although she had required their allowance, before she would give her assent, she had been grieved that the world should see what impudent untruths had been forged upon her, not only by their sufferance; but by their special permission for her Christian good meaning towards them. She denounced the statements as to her having concluded a treaty, not only without their knowledge; but with the sacrifice of their liberty and religion, as utterly false, either for anything done in act, or intended in thought, by her. She complained that upon this most false ground had been heaped a number of like untruths and malicious slanders against her cousin Leicester, who had hazarded his life, spend his substance, left his native country, absented himself from her, and lost his time, only for their service. It had been falsely stated among them, she said, that the Earl had come over the last time, knowing that peace had been secretly concluded. It was false that he had intended to surprise divers of their towns, and deliver them to the King of Spain.



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All such untruths contained matter so improbable, that it was most, strange that any person; having any sense, could imagine them correct. Having thus slightly animadverted upon their wilfulness, unthankfulness, and bad government, and having, in very plain English, given them the lie, eight distinct and separate times upon a single page, she proceeded to inform them that she had recalled her cousin Leicester, having great cause to use his services in England, and not seeing how, by his tarrying there, he could either profit them or herself. Nevertheless she protested herself not void of compassion for their estate, and for the pitiful condition of the great multitude of kind and godly people, subject to the miseries which, by the States government, were like to fall upon them, unless God should specially interpose; and she had therefore determined, for the time, to continue her subsidies, according to the covenant between them. If, meantime, she should conclude a peace with Spain, she promised to them the same care for their country as for her own.

Accordingly the Earl, after despatching an equally ill-tempered letter to the States, in which he alluded, at unmerciful length, to all the old grievances, blamed them for the loss of Sluys, for which place he protested that they had manifested no more interest than if it had been San Domingo in Hispaniola, took his departure for Flushing. After remaining there, in a very moody frame of mind, for several days, expecting that the States would, at least, send a committee to wait upon him and receive his farewells, he took leave of them by letter. "God send me shortly a wind to blow me from them all," he exclaimed—a prayer which was soon granted—and before the end of the year he was safely landed in England. "These legs of mine," said he, clapping his hands upon them as he sat in his chamber at Margate, "shall never go again into Holland. Let the States get others to serve their mercenary turn, for me they shall not have." Upon giving up the government, he caused a medal to be struck in his own honour. The device was a flock of sheep watched by an English mastiff. Two mottoes—"non gregem aed ingratos," and "invitus desero"—expressed his opinion of Dutch ingratitude and his own fidelity. The Hollanders, on their part, struck several medals to commemorate the same event, some of which were not destitute of invention. Upon one of them, for instance, was represented an ape smothering her young ones to death in her embrace, with the device, "Libertas ne its chara ut simiae catuli;" while upon the reverse was a man avoiding smoke and falling into the fire, with the inscription, "Fugiens fumum, incidit in ignem."

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Leicester found the usual sunshine at Greenwich. All the efforts of Norris, Wilkes, and Buckhurst, had been insufficient to raise even a doubt in Elizabeth's mind as to the wisdom and integrity by which his administration of the Provinces had been characterised from beginning to end. Those who had appealed from his hatred to the justice of their sovereign, had met with disgrace and chastisement. But for the great Earl; the Queen's favour was a rock of adamant. At a private interview he threw himself at her feet, and with tears and sobs implored her not to receive him in disgrace whom she had sent forth in honour. His blandishments prevailed, as they had always done. Instead, therefore, of appearing before the council, kneeling, to answer such inquiries as ought surely to have been instituted, he took his seat boldly among his colleagues, replying haughtily to all murmurs by a reference to her Majesty's secret instructions.

The unhappy English soldiers, who had gone forth under his banner in midsummer, had been returning, as they best might, in winter, starving, half-naked wretches, to beg a morsel of bread at the gates of Greenwich palace, and to be driven away as vagabonds, with threats of the stock. This was not the fault of the Earl, for he had fed them with his own generous hand in the Netherlands, week after week, when no money for their necessities could be obtained from the paymasters. Two thousand pounds had been sent by Elizabeth to her soldiers when sixty-four thousand pounds arrearage were due, and no language could exaggerate the misery to which these outcasts, according to eye-witnesses of their own nation, were reduced.

Lord Willoughby was appointed to the command, of what remained of these unfortunate troops, upon—the Earl's departure. The sovereignty of the Netherlands remained undisputed with the States. Leicester resigned his, commission by an instrument dated 17/27 December, which, however, never reached the Netherlands till April of the following year. From that time forth the government of the republic maintained the same forms which the assembly had claimed for it in the long controversy with the governor-general, and which have been sufficiently described.

Meantime the negotiations for a treaty, no longer secret, continued. The Queen; infatuated as ever, still believed in the sincerity of Farnese, while that astute personage and his master were steadily maturing their schemes. A matrimonial alliance was secretly projected between the King of Scots and Philip's daughter, the Infants Isabella, with the consent of the Pope and the whole college of cardinals; and James, by the whole force of the Holy League, was to be placed upon the throne of Elizabeth. In the case of his death, without issue, Philip was to succeed quietly to the crowns of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Nothing could be simpler or more rational, and accordingly these arrangements were the table-talk at Rome, and met with general approbation.



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Communications to this effect; coming straight from the Colonna palace, were thought sufficiently circumstantial to be transmitted to the English government. Maurice of Nassau wrote with his own hand to Walsingham, professing a warm attachment to the cause in which Holland and England were united, and perfect personal devotion to the English Queen.

His language, was not that of a youth, who, according to Leicester's repeated insinuations, was leagued with the most distinguished soldiers and statesmen of the Netherlands to sell their country to Spain.

But Elizabeth was not to be convinced. She thought it extremely probable that the Provinces would be invaded, and doubtless felt some anxiety for England. It was unfortunate that the possession of Sluys had given Alexander such a point of vantage; and there was moreover, a fear that he might take possession of Ostend. She had, therefore, already recommended that her own troops should be removed from that city, that its walls should be razed; its marine bulwarks destroyed, and that the ocean should be let in to swallow the devoted city forever—the inhabitants having been previously allowed to take their departure. For it was assumed by her Majesty that to attempt resistance would be idle, and that Ostend could never stand a siege.

The advice was not taken; and before the end of her reign Elizabeth was destined to see this indefensible city—only fit, in her judgment, to be abandoned to the waves—become memorable; throughout all time, for the longest; and, in many respects, the most remarkable siege which modern history has recorded, the famous leaguer, in which the first European captains of the coming age were to take their lessons, year after year, in the school of the great Dutch soldier, who was now but a “solemn, sly youth,” just turned of twenty.

The only military achievement which characterized the close of the year, to the great satisfaction of the Provinces and the annoyance of Parma, was the surprise of the city of Bonn. The indefatigable Martin Schenk— in fulfilment of his great contract with the States-General, by which the war on the Rhine had been farmed out to him on such profitable terms:— had led his mercenaries against this important town. He had found one of its gates somewhat insecurely guarded, placed a mortar under it at night, and occupied a neighbouring pig-stye with a number of his men, who by chasing, maltreating, and slaughtering the swine, had raised an unearthly din, sufficient to drown the martial operations at the gate. In brief, the place was easily mastered, and taken possession of by Martin, in the name of the deposed elector, Gebhard Truchsess—the first stroke of good fortune which had for a long time befallen that melancholy prelate.



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The administration of Leicester has been so minutely pictured, that it would be superfluous to indulge in many concluding reflections. His acts and words have been made to speak for themselves. His career in the country has been described with much detail, because the period was a great epoch of transition. The republic of the Netherlands, during those years, acquired consistency and permanent form. It seemed possible, on the Earl's first advent, that the Provinces might become part and parcel of the English realm. Whether such a consummation would have been desirable or not, is a fruitless enquiry. But it is certain that the selection of such a man as Leicester made that result impossible. Doubtless there were many errors committed by all parties. The Queen was supposed by the Netherlands to be secretly desirous of accepting the sovereignty of the Provinces, provided she were made sure, by the Earl's experience, that they were competent to protect themselves. But this suspicion was unfounded. The result of every investigation showed the country so full of resources, of wealth, and of military and naval capabilities, that, united with England, it would have been a source of great revenue and power, not a burthen and an expense. Yet, when convinced of such facts, by the statistics which were liberally laid before her by her confidential agents, she never manifested, either in public or private, any intention of accepting the sovereignty. This being her avowed determination, it was an error on the part of the States, before becoming thoroughly acquainted with the man's character, to confer upon Leicester the almost boundless authority which they granted on, his first arrival. It was a still graver mistake, on the part of Elizabeth, to give way to such explosions of fury, both against the governor and the States, when informed of the offer and acceptance of that authority. The Earl, elevated by the adulation of others, and by his own vanity, into an almost sovereign attitude, saw himself chastised before the world, like an aspiring lackey, by her in whose favour he had felt most secure. He found, himself, in an instant, humbled and ridiculous. Between himself and the Queen it was, something of a lovers' quarrel, and he soon found balsam in the hand that smote him. But though reinstated in authority, he was never again the object of reverence in the land he was attempting to rule. As he came to know the Netherlanders better, he recognized the great capacity which their statesmen concealed under a plain and sometimes a plebeian exterior, and the splendid grandee hated, where at first he had only despised. The Netherlanders, too, who had been used to look up almost with worship to a plain man of kindly manners, in felt hat and bargeman's woollen jacket, whom they called "Father William," did not appreciate, as they ought, the magnificence of the stranger who had been sent to govern them. The Earl was handsome, quick-witted, brave; but he

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was, neither wise in council nor capable in the field. He was intolerably arrogant, passionate, and revengeful. He hated easily, and he hated for life. It was soon obvious that no cordiality of feeling or of action could exist between him and the plain, stubborn Hollanders. He had the fatal characteristic of loving only the persons who flattered him. With much perception of character, sense of humour, and appreciation of intellect, he recognized the power of the leading men in the nation, and sought to gain them. So long as he hoped success, he was loud in their praises. They were all wise, substantial, well-languaged, big fellows, such as were not to be found in England or anywhere else. When they refused to be made his tools, they became tinkers, boors, devils, and atheists. He covered them with curses and devoted them to the gibbet. He began by warmly commending Buys and Barneveld, Hohenlo and Maurice, and endowing them with every virtue. Before he left the country he had accused them of every crime, and would cheerfully, if he could, have taken the life of every one of them. And it was quite the same with nearly every Englishman who served with or under him. Wilkes and Buckhurst, however much the objects of his previous esteem; so soon as they ventured to censure or even to criticise his proceedings, were at once devoted to perdition. Yet, after minute examination of the record, public and private, neither Wilkes nor Buckhurst can be found guilty of treachery or animosity towards him, but are proved to have been governed, in all their conduct, by a strong sense of duty to their sovereign, the Netherlands, and Leicester himself.

To Sir John Norris, it must be allowed, that he was never fickle, for he had always entertained for that distinguished general an honest, unswerving, and infinite hatred, which was not susceptible of increase or diminution by any act or word. Pelham, too, whose days were numbered, and who was dying bankrupt and broken-hearted, at the close of the Earl's administration, had always been regarded by him with tenderness and affection. But Pelham had never thwarted him, had exposed his life for him, and was always proud of being his faithful, unquestioning, humble adherent. With perhaps this single exception, Leicester found himself at the end of his second term in the Provinces, without a single friend and with few respectable partisans. Subordinate mischievous intriguers like Deventer, Junius, and Otheman, were his chief advisers and the instruments of his schemes.

With such qualifications it was hardly possible—even if the current of affairs had been flowing smoothly—that he should prove a successful governor of the new republic. But when the numerous errors and adventitious circumstances are considered—for some of which he was responsible, while of others he was the victim—it must be esteemed fortunate that no great catastrophe occurred. His immoderate elevation; his sudden



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degradation, his controversy in regard to the sovereignty, his abrupt departure for England, his protracted absence, his mistimed return, the secret instructions for his second administration, the obstinate parsimony and persistent ill-temper of the Queen—who, from the beginning to the end of the Earl's government, never addressed a kindly word to the Netherlanders, but was ever censuring and brow beating them in public state-papers and private epistles—the treason of York and Stanley, above all, the disastrous and concealed negotiations with Parma, and the desperate attempts upon Amsterdam and Leyden—all placed him in a most unfortunate position from first to last. But he was not competent for his post under any circumstances. He was not the statesman to deal in policy with Buys, Barneveld, Ortel, Sainte Aldegonde; nor the soldier to measure himself against Alexander Farnese. His administration was a failure; and although he repeatedly hazarded his life, and poured out his wealth in their behalf with an almost unequalled liberality, he could never gain the hearts of the Netherlanders. English valour, English intelligence, English truthfulness, English generosity, were endearing England more and more to Holland. The statesmen of both countries were brought into closest union, and learned to appreciate and to respect each other, while they recognized that the fate of their respective commonwealths was indissolubly united. But it was to the efforts of Walsingham, Drake, Raleigh, Wilkes, Buckburst, Norris, Willoughby, Williams, Vere, Russell, and the brave men who fought under their banners or their counsels, on every battle-field, and in every beleaguered town in the Netherlands, and to the universal spirit and sagacity of the English nation, in this grand crisis of its fate, that these fortunate results were owing; not to the Earl of Leicester, nor—during the term of his administration—to Queen Elizabeth herself.

In brief, the proper sphere of this remarkable personage, and the one in which he passed the greater portion of his existence, was that of a magnificent court favourite, the spoiled darling, from youth to his death-bed, of the great English Queen; whether to the advantage or not of his country and the true interests of his sovereign, there can hardly be at this day any difference of opinion.

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Act of Uniformity required Papists to assist
As lieve see the Spanish as the Calvinistic inquisition
Elizabeth (had not) the faintest idea of religious freedom
God, whose cause it was, would be pleased to give good weather
Heretics to the English Church were persecuted
Look for a sharp war, or a miserable peace
Loving only the persons who flattered him
Not many more than two hundred Catholics were executed
Only citadel against a tyrant and a conqueror was distrust



Stake or gallows (for) heretics to transubstantiation
States were justified in their almost unlimited distrust
Undue anxiety for impartiality
Wealthy Papists could obtain immunity by an enormous fine

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