

History of the United Netherlands, 1590-92 eBook

History of the United Netherlands, 1590-92 by John Lothrop Motley

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

By John Lothrop Motley

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 63

History of the United Netherlands, 1590-1592

CHAPTER XXIV.

Prince Maurice—State of the Republican army—Martial science of the period—Reformation of the military system by Prince Maurice—His military genius—Campaign in the Netherlands—The fort and town of Zutphen taken by the States' forces—Attack upon Deventer—Its capitulation—Advance on Groningen, Delfzyl, Opslag, Yementil, Steenwyk, and other places—Farnese besieges Fort Knodsenburg— Prince Maurice hastens to its relief—A skirmish ensues resulting in the discomfiture of the Spanish and Italian troops—Surrender of Hulst and Nymegen—Close of military operations of the year.

While the events revealed in the last chapter had been occupying the energies of Farnese and the resources of his sovereign, there had been ample room for Prince Maurice to mature his projects, and to make a satisfactory beginning in the field. Although Alexander had returned to the Netherlands before the end of the year 1590, and did not set forth on his second French campaign until late in the following year, yet the condition of his health, the exhaustion of his funds, and the dwindling of his army, made it impossible for him to render any effectual opposition to the projects of the youthful general.

For the first time Maurice was ready to put his theories and studies into practice on an extensive scale. Compared with modern armaments, the warlike machinery to be used for liberating the republic from its foreign oppressors would seem almost diminutive. But the science and skill of a commander are to be judged by the results he can work out with the materials within reach. His progress is to be measured by a comparison with the progress of his contemporaries—coheirs with him of what Time had thus far bequeathed.

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The regular army of the republic, as reconstructed, was but ten thousand foot and two thousand horse, but it was capable of being largely expanded by the trainbands of the cities, well disciplined and enured to hardship, and by the levies of German reiters and other, foreign auxiliaries in such numbers as could be paid for by the hard-pressed exchequer of the provinces.

To the state-council, according to its original constitution, belonged the levying and disbanding of troops, the conferring of military offices, and the supervision of military operations by sea and land. It was its duty to see that all officers made oath of allegiance to the United Provinces.

The course of Leicester's administration, and especially the fatal treason of Stanley and of York, made it seem important for the true lovers of their country to wrest from the state-council, where the English had two seats, all political and military power. And this, as has been seen, was practically but illegally accomplished. The silent revolution by which at this epoch all the main attributes of government passed into the hands of the States-General—acting as a league of sovereignties—has already been indicated. The period during which the council exercised functions conferred on it by the States-General themselves was brief and evanescent. The jealousy of the separate provinces soon prevented the state-council—a supreme executive body entrusted with the general defence of the commonwealth—from causing troops to pass into or out of one province or another without a patent from his Excellency the Prince, not as chief of the whole army, but as governor and captain-general of Holland, or Gelderland, or Utrecht, as the case might be.

The highest military office in the Netherlands was that of captain-general or supreme commander. This quality was from earliest times united to that of stadholder, who stood, as his title implied, in the place of the reigning sovereign, whether count, duke, king, or emperor. After the foundation of the Republic this dynastic form, like many others, remained, and thus Prince Maurice was at first only captain-general of Holland and Zeeland, and subsequently of Gelderland, Utrecht, and Overijssel, after he had been appointed stadholder of those three provinces in 1590 on the death of Count Nieuwenaar. However much in reality he was general-in-chief of the army, he never in all his life held the appointment of captain-general of the Union.

To obtain a captain's commission in the army, it was necessary to have served four years, while three years' service was the necessary preliminary to the post of lieutenant or ensign. Three candidates were presented by the province for each office, from whom the stadholder appointed one.—The commissions, except those of the highest commanders, were made out in the name of the States-General, by advice and consent of the council of state. The oath of allegiance, exacted from soldiers as well

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as officers; mentioned the name of the particular province to which they belonged, as well as that of the States-Generals. It thus appears that, especially after Maurice's first and successful campaigns; the supreme authority over the army really belonged to the States-General, and that the powers of the state-council in this regard fell, in the course of four years, more and more into the back-ground, and at last disappeared almost entirely. During the active period of the war, however; the effect of this revolution was in fact rather a greater concentration of military power than its dispersion, for the States-General meant simply the province of Holland. Holland was the republic.

The organisation of the infantry was very simple. The tactical unit was the company. A temporary combination of several companies—made a regiment, commanded by a colonel or lieutenant-colonel, but for such regiments there was no regular organisation. Sometimes six or seven companies were thus combined, sometimes three times that number, but the strength of a force, however large, was always estimated by the number of companies, not of regiments.

The normal strength of an infantry company, at the beginning of Maurice's career, may be stated at one hundred and thirteen, commanded by one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, and by the usual non-commissioned officers. Each company was composed of musketeers, harquebusseers, pikemen, halberdeers, and buckler-men. Long after, portable firearms had come into use, the greater portion of foot soldiers continued to be armed with pikes, until the introduction of the fixed bayonet enabled the musketeer to do likewise the duty of pikeman. Maurice was among the first to appreciate the advantage of portable firearms, and he accordingly increased the proportion of soldiers armed with the musket in his companies. In a company of a hundred and thirteen, including officers, he had sixty-four armed with firelocks to thirty carrying pikes and halberds. As before his time the proportion between the arms had been nearly even; he thus more than doubled the number of firearms.

Of these weapons there were two sorts, the musket and the harquebus. The musket was a long, heavy, unmanageable instrument. When fired it was placed upon an iron gaffle or fork, which: the soldier carried with him, and stuck before him into the ground. The bullets of the musket were twelve to the pound.

The harquebus—or hak-bus, hook-gun, so called because of the hook in the front part of the barrel to give steadiness in firing—was much lighter, was discharged from the hand; and carried bullets of twenty-four to the pound. Both weapons had matchlocks.

The pike was eighteen feet long at least, and pikemen as well as halberdsmen carried rapiers.

There were three buckler-men to each company, introduced by Maurice for the personal protection of the leader of the company. The prince was often attended by one himself, and, on at least one memorable occasion, was indebted to this shield for the preservation of his life.

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The cavalry was divided into lancers and carabineers. The unit was the squadron, varying in number from sixty to one hundred and fifty, until the year 1591, when the regular complement of the squadron was fixed at one hundred and twenty.

As the use of cavalry on the battle-field at that day, or at least in the Netherlands, was not in rapidity of motion, nor in severity of shock—the attack usually taking place on a trot—Maurice gradually displaced the lance in favour of the carbine. His troopers thus became rather mounted infantry than regular cavalry.

The carbine was at least three feet long, with wheel-locks, and carried bullets of thirty to the pound.

The artillery was a peculiar Organisation. It was a guild of citizens, rather than a strictly military force like the cavalry and infantry. The arm had but just begun to develop itself, and it was cultivated as a special trade by the guild of the holy Barbara existing in all the principal cities. Thus a municipal artillery gradually organised itself, under the direction of the gun-masters (bus-meesters), who in secret laboured at the perfection of their art, and who taught it to their apprentices and journeymen; as the principles of other crafts were conveyed by master to pupil. This system furnished a powerful element of defence at a period when every city had in great measure to provide for its own safety.

In the earlier campaigns of Maurice three kinds of artillery were used; the whole cannon (kartow) of forty-eight pounds; the half-cannon, or twenty-four pounder, and the field-piece carrying a ball of twelve pounds. The two first were called battering pieces or siege-guns. All the guns were of bronze.

The length of the whole cannon was about twelve feet; its weight one hundred and fifty times that of the ball, or about seven thousand pounds. It was reckoned that the whole kartow could fire from eighty to one hundred shots in an hour. Wet hair cloths were used to cool the piece after every, ten or twelve discharges. The usual charge was twenty pounds of powder.

The whole gun was drawn by thirty-one horses, the half-cannon by twenty-three.

The field-piece required eleven horses, but a regular field-artillery, as an integral part of the army, did not exist, and was introduced in much later times. In the greatest pitched battle ever fought by Maurice, that of Nieuport, he had but six field-pieces.

The prince also employed mortars in his sieges, from which were thrown grenades, hot shot, and stones; but no greater distance was reached than six hundred yards. Bomb-shells were not often used although they had been known for a century.

Before the days of Maurice a special education for engineers had never been contemplated. Persons who had privately acquired a knowledge of fortification and

similar branches of the science were employed, upon occasion, but regular corps of engineers there were none. The prince established a course of instruction in this profession at the University of Leyden, according to a system drawn up by the celebrated Stevinus.

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Doubtless the most important innovation of the prince, and the one which required the most energy to enforce, was the use of the spade. His soldiers were jeered at by the enemy as mere boors and day labourers who were dishonouring themselves and their profession by the use of that implement instead of the sword. Such a novelty was a shock to all the military ideas of the age, and it was only the determination and vigour of the prince and of his cousin Lewis William that ultimately triumphed over the universal prejudice.

The pay of the common soldier varied from ten to twenty florins the month, but every miner had eighteen florins, and, when actually working in the mines, thirty florins monthly. Soldiers used in digging trenches received, over and above their regular pay, a daily wage of from ten to fifteen styvers, or nearly a shilling sterling.

Another most wholesome improvement made by the prince was in the payment of his troops. The system prevailing in every European country at that day, by which Governments were defrauded and soldiers starved, was most infamous. The soldiers were paid through the captain, who received the wages of a full company, when perhaps not one-third of the names on the master-roll were living human beings. Accordingly two-thirds of all the money stuck to the officer's fingers, and it was not thought a disgrace to cheat the Government by dressing and equipping for the day a set of ragamuffins, caught up in the streets for the purpose, and made to pass muster as regular soldiers.

These parse-volants, or scarecrows, were passed freely about from one company to another, and the indecency of the fraud was never thought a disgrace to the colours of the company.

Thus, in the Armada year, the queen had demanded that a portion of her auxiliary force in the Netherlands should be sent to England. The States agreed that three thousand of these English troops, together with a few cavalry companies, should go, but stipulated that two thousand should remain in the provinces. The queen accepted the proposal, but when the two thousand had been counted out, it appeared that there was scarcely a man left for the voyage to England. Yet every one of the English captains had claimed full pay for his company from her Majesty's exchequer.

Against this tide of peculation and corruption the strenuous Maurice set himself with heart and soul, and there is no doubt that to his reformation in this vital matter much of his military success was owing. It was impossible that roguery and venality should ever furnish a solid foundation for the martial science.

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To the student of military history the campaigns and sieges of Maurice, and especially the earlier: ones, are of great importance. There is no doubt whatever, that the youth who now, after deep study and careful preparation, was measuring himself against the first captains of the age, was founding the great modern school of military science. It was in this Netherland academy, and under the tuition of its consummate professor, that the commanders of the seventeenth century not only acquired the rudiments, but perfected themselves in the higher walks of their art. Therefore the siege operations, in which all that had been invented by modern genius, or rescued from the oblivion which had gathered over ancient lore during the more vulgar and commonplace practice of the mercenary commanders of the day was brought into successful application, must always engage the special attention of the military student.

To the general reader, more interested in marking the progress of civilisation and the advance of the people in the path of development and true liberty, the spectacle of the young stadholder's triumphs has an interest of another kind. At the moment when a thorough practical soldier was most needed by the struggling little commonwealth, to enable it to preserve liberties partially secured by its unparalleled sacrifices of blood and treasure during a quarter of a century, and to expel the foreign invader from the soil which he had so long profaned, it was destined that a soldier should appear.

Spade in hand, with his head full of Roman castrametation and geometrical problems, a prince, scarce emerged from boyhood, presents himself on that stage where grizzled Mansfelds, drunken Hohenlos, and truculent Verdugos have been so long enacting, that artless military drama which consists of hard knocks and wholesale massacres. The novice is received with universal hilarity. But although the machinery of war varies so steadily from age to age that a commonplace commander of to-day, rich in the spoils of preceding time, might vanquish the Alexanders, and Caesars, and Frederics, with their antiquated enginery, yet the moral stuff out of which great captains, great armies, great victories are created, is the simple material it was in the days of Sesostris or Cyrus. The moral and physiological elements remain essentially the same as when man first began to walk up and down the earth and destroy his fellow-creatures.

To make an army a thorough mowing-machine, it then seemed necessary that it should be disciplined into complete mechanical obedience. To secure this, prompt payment of wages and inexorable punishment of delinquencies were indispensable. Long arrearages were now converting Farnese's veterans into systematic marauders; for unpaid soldiers in every age and country have usually degenerated into highwaymen, and it is an impossibility for a sovereign, with the strictest intentions, to persist in starving his soldiers and in killing them for feeding themselves. In Maurice's little army, on the contrary, there were no back-wages and no thieving. At the siege of Delfzyl Maurice hung two of his soldiers for stealing, the one a hat and the other a poniard, from the townsfolk, after the place had capitulated. At the siege of Hulst he ordered another to be shot, before the whole camp, for robbing a woman.

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This seems sufficiently harsh, but war is not a pastime nor a very humane occupation. The result was, that robbery disappeared, and it is better for all that enlisted men should be soldiers rather than thieves. To secure the ends which alone can justify war—and if the Netherlanders engaged in defending national existence and human freedom against foreign tyranny were not justifiable then a just war has never been waged— a disciplined army is vastly more humane in its operations than a band of brigands. Swift and condign punishments by the law-martial, for even trifling offences, is the best means of discipline yet devised.

To bring to utmost perfection the machinery already in existence, to encourage invention, to ponder the past with a practical application to the present, to court fatigue, to scorn pleasure, to concentrate the energies on the work in hand, to cultivate quickness of eye and calmness of nerve in the midst of danger, to accelerate movements, to economise blood even at the expense of time, to strive after ubiquity and omniscience in the details of person and place, these were the characteristics of Maurice, and they have been the prominent traits of all commanders who have stamped themselves upon their age. Although his method of war-making differed as far as possible from that quality in common, of the Bearnese, yet the two had one personal insensibility to fear. But in the case of Henry, to confront danger for its own sake was in itself a pleasure, while the calmer spirit of Maurice did not so much seek the joys of the combat as refuse to desist from scientific combinations in the interests of his personal safety. Very frequently, in the course of his early campaigns, the prince was formally and urgently requested by the States-General not to expose his life so recklessly, and before he had passed his twenty-fifth year he had received wounds which, but for fortunate circumstances, would have proved mortal, because he was unwilling to leave special operations on which much was depending to other eyes than his own. The details of his campaigns are, of necessity, the less interesting to a general reader from their very completeness. Desultory or semi-civilised warfare, where the play of the human passions is distinctly visible, where individual man, whether in buff jerkin or Milan coat of proof, meets his fellow man in close mortal combat, where men starve by thousands or are massacred by town-fulls, where hamlets or villages blaze throughout whole districts or are sunk beneath the ocean—scenes of rage, hatred, vengeance, self-sacrifice, patriotism, where all the virtues and vices of which humanity is capable stride to and fro in their most violent colours and most colossal shape where man in a moment rises almost to divinity, or sinks beneath the beasts of the field—such tragical records of which the sanguinary story of mankind is full—and no portion of them more so than the Netherland chronicles appeal more vividly

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to the imagination than the neatest solution of mathematical problems. Yet, if it be the legitimate end of military science to accomplish its largest purposes at the least expense of human suffering; if it be progress in civilisation to acquire by scientific combination what might be otherwise attempted, and perhaps vainly attempted, by infinite carnage, then is the professor with his diagrams, standing unmoved amid danger, a more truly heroic image than Coeur-de-Lion with his battle-axe or Alva with his truncheon.

The system—then a new one—which Maurice introduced to sustain that little commonwealth from sinking of which he had become at the age of seventeen the predestined chief, was the best under the circumstances that could have been devised. Patriotism the most passionate, the most sublime, had created the republic. To maintain its existence against perpetual menace required the exertion of perpetual skill.

Passionless as algebra, the genius of Maurice was ready for the task. Strategic points of immense value, important cities and fortresses, vital river-courses and communications—which foreign tyranny had acquired during the tragic past with a patient iniquity almost without a parallel, and which patriotism had for years vainly struggled to recover—were the earliest trophies and prizes of his art. But the details of his victories may be briefly indicated, for they have none of the picturesqueness of crime. The sieges of Naarden, Harlem, Leyden, were tragedies of maddening interest, but the recovery of Zutphen, Deventer, Nymegen, Groningen, and many other places—all important though they were—was accomplished with the calmness of a consummate player, who throws down on the table the best half dozen invincible cards which it thus becomes superfluous to play.

There were several courses open to the prince before taking the field. It was desirable to obtain control of the line of the Waal, by which that heart of the republic—Holland—would be made entirely secure. To this end, Gertruydenberg—lately surrendered to the enemy by the perfidy of the Englishman Wingfield, to whom it had been entrusted—Bois le Duc, and Nymegen were to be wrested from Spain.

It was also important to hold the Yssel, the course of which river led directly through the United Netherlands, quite to the Zuyder Zee, cutting off Friesland, Groningen, and Gelderland from their sister provinces of Holland and Zeeland. And here again the keys to this river had been lost by English treason. The fort of Zutphen and the city of Deventer had been transferred to the Spaniard by Roland York and Sir William Stanley, in whose honour the republic had so blindly confided, and those cities it was now necessary to reduce by regular siege before the communications between the eastern and western portions of the little commonwealth could ever be established.



Still farther in the ancient Frisian depths, the memorable treason of that native Netherlander, the high-born Renneberg, had opened the way for the Spaniard's foot into the city of Groningen. Thus this whole important province—with its capital—long subject to the foreign oppressor, was garrisoned with his troops.

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Verdugo, a veteran officer of Portuguese birth, who had risen from the position of hostler to that of colonel and royal stadholder, commanded in Friesland. He had in vain demanded reinforcements and supplies from Farnese, who most reluctantly was obliged to refuse them in order that he might obey his master's commands to neglect everything for the sake of the campaign in France.

And Verdugo, stripped of all adequate forces to protect his important province, was equally destitute of means for feeding the troops that were left to him. "I hope to God that I may do my duty to the king and your Highness," he cried, "but I find myself sold up and pledged to such an extent that I am poorer than when I was a soldier at four crowns a month. And everybody in the town is as desperate as myself."

Maurice, after making a feint of attacking Gertruydenberg and Bois le Duc, so that Farnese felt compelled, with considerable difficulty, to strengthen the garrison of those places, came unexpectedly to Arnhem with a force of nine thousand foot and sixteen hundred horse. He had previously and with great secrecy sent some companies of infantry under Sir Francis Vere to Doesburg.

On the 23rd May (1591) five peasants and six peasant women made their appearance at dawn of day before the chief guard-house of the great fort in the Badmeadow (Veluwe), opposite Zutphen, on the west side of the Yssel. It was not an unusual occurrence. These boors and their wives had brought baskets of eggs, butter, and cheese, for the garrison, and they now set themselves quietly down on the ground before the gate, waiting for the soldiers of the garrison to come out and traffic with them for their supplies. Very soon several of the guard made their appearance, and began to chaffer with the peasants, when suddenly one of the women plucked a pistol from under her petticoats and shot dead the soldier who was cheapening her eggs. The rest of the party, transformed in an instant from boors to soldiers, then sprang upon the rest of the guard, overpowered and bound them, and took possession of the gate. A considerable force, which had been placed in ambush by Prince Maurice near the spot, now rushed forward, and in a few minutes the great fort of Zutphen was mastered by the States' forces without loss of a man. It was a neat and perfectly successful stratagem.

Next day Maurice began the regular investment of the city. On the 26th, Count Lewis William arrived with some Frisian companies. On the 27th, Maurice threw a bridge of boats from the Badmeadow side, across the river to the Weert before the city. On the 28th he had got batteries, mounting thirty-two guns, into position, commanding the place at three points. On the 30th the town capitulated. Thus within exactly one week from the firing of the pistol shot by the supposed butterwoman, this fort and town, which had so long resisted the efforts of the States, and were such important possessions of the Spaniards,

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fell into the hands of Maurice. The terms of surrender were easy. The city being more important than its garrison, the soldiers were permitted to depart with bag and baggage. The citizens were allowed three days to decide whether to stay under loyal obedience to the States-General, or to take their departure. Those who chose to remain were to enjoy all the privileges of citizens of the United Provinces.

But very few substantial citizens were left, for such had been the tyranny, the misery, and the misrule during the long occupation by a foreign soldiery of what was once a thriving Dutch town, that scarcely anybody but paupers and vagabonds were left. One thousand houses were ruined and desolate. It is superfluous to add that the day of its restoration to the authority of the Union was the beginning of its renewed prosperity.

Maurice, having placed a national garrison in the place, marched the same evening straight upon Deventer, seven miles farther down the river, without pausing to sleep upon his victory. His artillery and munitions were sent rapidly down the Yssel.

Within five days he had thoroughly invested the city, and brought twenty-eight guns to bear upon the weakest part of its defences.

It was a large, populous, well-built town, once a wealthy member of the Hanseatic League, full of fine buildings, both public and private, the capital of the rich and fertile province of Overijssel, and protected by a strong wall and moat—as well-fortified a place as could be found in the Netherlands. The garrison consisted of fourteen hundred Spaniards and Walloons, under the command of Count Herman van den Berg, first cousin of Prince Maurice.

No sooner had the States army come before the city than a Spanish captain observed —“We shall now have a droll siege—cousins on the outside, cousins on the inside. There will be a sham fight or two, and then the cousins will make it up, and arrange matters to suit themselves.”

Such hints had deeply wounded Van den Berg, who was a fervent Catholic, and as loyal a servant to Philip II. as he could have been, had that monarch deserved, by the laws of nature and by his personal services and virtues, to govern all the swamps of Friesland. He slept on the gibe, having ordered all the colonels and captains of the garrison to attend at solemn mass in the great church the next morning. He there declared to them all publicly that he felt outraged at the suspicions concerning his fidelity, and after mass he took the sacrament, solemnly swearing never to give up the city or even to speak of it until he had made such resistance that he must be carried from the breach. So long as he could stand or sit he would defend the city entrusted to his care.



The whole council who had come from Zutphen to Maurice's camp were allowed to deliberate concerning the siege. The, enemy had been seen hovering about the neighbourhood in considerable numbers, but had not ventured an attempt to throw reinforcements into the place. Many of the counsellors argued against the siege. It was urged that the resistance would be determined and protracted, and that the Duke of Parma was sure to take the field in person to relieve so important a city, before its reduction could be effected.

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But Maurice had thrown a bridge across the Yssel above, and another below the town, had carefully and rapidly taken measures in the success of which he felt confident, and now declared that it would be cowardly and shameful to abandon an enterprise so well begun.

The city had been formally summoned to surrender, and a calm but most decided refusal had been returned.

On the 9th June the batteries began playing, and after four thousand six hundred shots a good breach had been effected in the defences along the Kaye—an earthen work lying between two strong walls of masonry.

The breach being deemed practicable, a storm was ordered. To reach the Kaye it was necessary to cross a piece of water called the Haven, over which a pontoon bridge was hastily thrown. There was now a dispute among the English, Scotch, and Netherlanders for precedence in the assault. It was ultimately given to the English, in order that the bravery of that nation might now on the same spot wipe out the disgrace inflicted upon its name by the treason of Sir William Stanley. The English did their duty well and rushed forward merrily, but the bridge proved too short. Some sprang over and pushed boldly for the breach. Some fell into the moat and were drowned. Others, sustained by the Netherlanders under Solms, Meetkerke, and Brederode, effected their passage by swimming, leaping, or wading, so that a resolute attack was made. Herman van den Berg met them in the breach at the head of seven companies. The defenders were most ferocious in their resistance. They were also very drunk. The count had placed many casks of Rhenish and of strong beer within reach, and ordered his soldiers to drink their fill as they fought. He was himself as vigorous in his potations as he was chivalrous with sword and buckler. Two pages and two lieutenants fell at his side, but still he fought at the head of his men with a desperation worthy of his vow, until he fell wounded in the eye and was carried from the place. Notwithstanding this disaster to the commander of the town, the assailants were repulsed, losing two hundred-and-twenty-five in killed and wounded—Colonel Meetkerke and his brother, two most valuable Dutch officers, among them.

During the whole of the assault, a vigorous cannonade had been kept up upon other parts of the town, and houses and church-towers were toppling down in all directions. Meanwhile the inhabitants—for it was Sunday—instead of going to service were driven towards the breach by the serjeant-major, a truculent Spaniard, next in command to Van den Berg, who ran about the place with a great stick, summoning the Dutch burghers to assist the Spanish garrison on the wall. It was thought afterwards that this warrior would have been better occupied among the soldiers, at the side of his commander.

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A chivalrous incident in the open field occurred during the assault. A gigantic Albanian cavalry officer came prancing out of Deventer into the spaces between the trenches, defying any officer in the States' army to break a lance with him. Prince Maurice forbade any acceptance of the challenge, but Lewis van der Cathulle, son of the famous Ryhove of Ghent, unable to endure the taunts and bravado of this champion, at last obtained permission to encounter him in single combat. They met accordingly with much ceremony, tilted against each other, and shivered their lances in good style, but without much effect. The Albanian then drew a pistol. Cathulle had no weapon save a cutlass, but with this weapon he succeeded in nearly cutting off the hand which held the pistol. He then took his enemy prisoner, the vain-glorious challenger throwing his gold chain around his conqueror's neck in token of his victory. Prince Maurice caused his wound to be bound up and then liberated him, sending him into the city with a message to the governor.

During the following night the bridge, over which the assailants had nearly forced their way into the town, was vigorously attacked by the garrison, but Count Lewis William, in person, with a chosen band defended it stoutly till morning, beating back the Spaniards with heavy loss in a sanguinary midnight contest.

Next morning there was a unanimous outcry on the part of the besieged for a capitulation. It was obvious that, with the walls shot to ruins as they had been, the place was no longer tenable against Maurice's superior forces. A trumpet was sent to the prince before the dawn of day, and on the 10th of June, accordingly, the place capitulated.

It was arranged that the garrison should retire with arms and baggage whithersoever they chose. Van den Berg stipulated nothing in favour of the citizens, whether through forgetfulness or spite does not distinctly appear. But the burghers were received like brothers. No plunder was permitted, no ransom demanded, and the city took its place among its sisterhood of the United Provinces.

Van den Berg himself was received at the prince's head, quarters with much cordiality. He was quite blind; but his wound seemed to be the effect of exterior contusions, and he ultimately recovered the sight of one eye. There was much free conversation between himself and his cousins during the brief interval in which he was their guest.

"I've often told Verdugo," said he, "that the States had no power to make a regular siege, nor to come with proper artillery into the field, and he agreed with me. But we were both wrong, for I now see the contrary."

To which Count Lewis William replied with a laugh: "My dear cousin, I've observed that in all your actions you were in the habit of despising us Beggars, and I have said that you would one day draw the shortest straw in consequence. I'm glad to hear this

avowal from your own lips.” Herman attempted no reply but let the subject drop, seeming to regret having said so much.

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Soon afterwards he was forwarded by Maurice in his own coach to Ulff, where he was attended by the prince's body physician till he was re-established in health.

Thus within ten days of his first appearance before its walls, the city of Deventer, and with it a whole province, had fallen into the hands of Maurice. It began to be understood that the young pedant knew something about his profession, and that he had not been fagging so hard at the science of war for nothing.

The city was in a sorry plight when the States took possession of it. As at Zutphen, the substantial burghers had wandered away, and the foreign soldiers bivouacking there so long had turned the stately old Hanseatic city into a brick and mortar wilderness. Hundreds of houses had been demolished by the garrison, that the iron might be sold and the woodwork burned for fuel; for the enemy had conducted himself as if feeling in his heart that the occupation could not be a permanent one, and as if desirous to make the place as desolate as possible for the Beggars when they should return.

The dead body of the traitor York, who had died and been buried in Deventer, was taken from the tomb, after the capture of the city, and with the vulgar ferocity so characteristic of the times, was hung, coffin and all, on the gibbet for the delectation of the States' soldiery.

Maurice, having thus in less than three weeks recovered two most important cities, paused not an instant in his career but moved at once on Groningen. There was a strong pressure put upon him to attempt the capture of Nymegen, but the understanding with the Frisian stadholders and his troops had been that the enterprise upon Groningen should follow the reduction of Deventer.

On the 26th June Maurice appeared before Groningen. Next day, as a precautionary step, he moved to the right and attacked the strong city of Delfzyl. This place capitulated to him on the 2nd July. The fort of Opslag surrendered on the 7th July. He then moved to the west of Groningen, and attacked the forts of Yementil and Lettebaest, which fell into his hands on the 11th July. He then moved along the Nyenoort through the Seven Wolds and Drenthe to Steenwyk, before which strongly fortified city he arrived on the 15th July.

Meantime, he received intercepted letters from Verdugo to the Duke of Parma, dated 19th June from Groningen. In these, the Spanish stadholder informed Farnese that the enemy was hovering about his neighbourhood, and that it would be necessary for the duke to take the field in person in considerable force, or that Groningen would be lost, and with it the Spanish forces in the province. He enclosed a memorial of the course proper to be adopted by the duke for his relief.

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Notwithstanding the strictness by which Philip had tied his great general's hands, Farnese felt the urgency of the situation. By the end of June, accordingly, although full of his measures for marching to the relief of the Leaguers in Normandy, he moved into Gelderland, coming by way of Xanten, Rees, and neighbouring places. Here he paused for a moment perplexed, doubting whether to take the aggressive in Gelderland or to march straight to the relief of Groningen. He decided that it was better for the moment to protect the line of the Waal. Shipping his army accordingly into the Batavian Island or Good-meadow (Bet-uwe), which lies between the two great horns of the Rhine, he laid siege to Fort Knodsenburg, which Maurice had built the year before, on the right bank of the Waal for the purpose of attacking Nymegen. Farnese, knowing that the general of the States was occupied with his whole army far away to the north, and separated from him by two great rivers, wide and deep, and by the whole breadth of that dangerous district called the Foul-meadow (Vel-uwe), and by the vast quagmire known as the Rouvenian morass, which no artillery nor even any organised forces had ever traversed since the beginning of the world, had felt no hesitation in throwing his army in boats across the Waal. He had no doubt of reducing a not very powerful fortress long before relief could be brought to it, and at the same time of disturbing by his presence in Batavia the combinations of his young antagonist in Friesland and Groningen.

So with six thousand foot and one thousand horse, Alexander came before Knodsenburg. The news reached Maurice at Steenwyk on the 15th July. Instantly changing his plans, the prince decided that Farnese must be faced at once, and, if possible, driven from the ground, thinking it more important to maintain, by concentration, that which had already been gained, than to weaken and diffuse his forces in insufficient attempts to acquire more. Before two days had passed, he was on the march southward, having left Lewis William with a sufficient force to threaten Groningen. Coming by way of Hasselt Zwol to Deventer, he crossed the Yssel on a bridge of boats on the 18th of July, 1591 and proceeded to Arnhem. His army, although excessively fatigued by forced marches in very hot weather, over nearly impassable roads, was full of courage and cheerfulness, having learned implicit confidence in their commander. On the 20th he was at Arnhem. On the 22nd his bridge of boats was made, and he had thrown his little army across the Rhine into Batavia, and entrenched himself with his six thousand foot and fourteen hundred horse in the immediate neighbourhood of Farnese—Foul-meadow and Good-meadow, dyke, bog, wold, and quagmire, had been successfully traversed, and within one week of his learning that the great viceroy of Philip had reached the Batavian island, Maurice stood confronting that famous chieftain in battle-array.

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On the 22nd July, Farnese, after firing two hundred and eighty-five shots at Fort Knodsenburg, ordered an assault, expecting that so trifling a work could hardly withstand a determined onslaught by his veterans. To his surprise they were so warmly received that two hundred of the assailants fell at the first onset, and the attack was most conclusively repulsed.

And now Maurice had appeared upon the scene, determined to relieve a place so important for his ulterior designs. On the 24th July he sent out a small but picked force of cavalry to reconnoitre the enemy. They were attacked by a considerable body of Italian and Spanish horse from the camp before Knodsenburg, including Alexander's own company of lancers under Nicelli. The States troops fled before them in apparent dismay for a little distance, hotly pursued by the royalists, until, making a sudden halt, they turned to the attack, accompanied by five fresh companies of cavalry and a thousand musketeers, who fell upon the foe from all directions. It was an ambush, which had been neatly prepared by Maurice in person, assisted by Sir Francis Vere. Sixty of the Spaniards and Italians were killed and one hundred and fifty prisoners, including Captain Nicelli, taken, while the rest of the party sought safety in ignominious flight. This little skirmish, in which ten companies of the picked veterans of Alexander Farnese had thus been utterly routed before his eyes, did much to inspire the States troops with confidence in themselves and their leader.

Parma was too experienced a campaigner, and had too quick an eye, not to recognise the error which he had committed in placing the dangerous river Waal, without a bridge, between himself and his supplies. He had not dreamed that his antagonist would be capable of such celerity of movement as he had thus displayed, and his first business now was to extricate himself from a position which might soon become fatal. Without hesitation, he did his best to amuse the enemy in front of the fort, and then passed the night in planting batteries upon the banks of the river, under cover of which he succeeded next day in transporting in ferry-boats his whole force, artillery and: baggage, to the opposite shore, without loss, and with his usual skill.

He remained but a short time in Nymegen, but he was hampered by the express commands of the king. Moreover, his broken health imperatively required that he should once more seek the healing influence of the waters of Spa, before setting forth on his new French expedition. Meanwhile, although he had for a time protected the Spanish possessions in the north by his demonstration in Gelderland, it must be confessed that the diversion thus given to the plans of Maurice was but a feeble one.

Having assured the inhabitants of Nymegen that he would watch over the city like the apple of, his eye, he took his departure on the 4th of August for Spa. He was accompanied on his journey by his son, Prince Ranuccio, just arrived from Italy.

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After the retreat of Farnese, Maurice mustered his forces at Arnhem, and found himself at the head of seven thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse. It was expected by all the world that, being thus on the very spot, he would forthwith proceed to reduce the ancient, wealthy, imperial city of Nynegen. The garrison and burghers accordingly made every preparation to resist the attack, disconcerted as they were, however, by the departure of Parma, and by the apparent incapacity of Verdugo to bring them effectual relief.

But to the surprise of all men, the States forces suddenly disappeared from the scene, having been, as it were, spirited away by night-time, along those silent watery highways and crossways of canal, river, and estuary—the military advantages of which to the Netherlands, Maurice was the first thoroughly to demonstrate. Having previously made great preparations of munitions and provisions in Zeeland, the young general, who was thought hard at work in Gelderland, suddenly presented himself on the 19th September, before the gates of Hulst, on the border of Zeeland and Brabant.

It was a place of importance from its situation, its possession by the enemy being a perpetual thorn in the side of the States, and a constant obstacle to the plans of Maurice. His arrangements having been made with the customary, neatness, celerity, and completeness, he received the surrender of the city on the fifth day after his arrival.

Its commander, Castillo, could offer no resistance; and was subsequently, it is said, beheaded by order of the Duke of Parma for his negligence. The place is but a dozen miles from Antwerp, which city was at the very, moment keeping great holiday and outdoing itself in magnificent festivals in honour of young Ranuccio. The capture of Hulst before his eyes was a demonstration quite unexpected by the prince, and great was the wrath of old Mondragon, governor of Antwerp, thus bearded in his den. The veteran made immediate preparations for chastising the audacious Beggars of Zeeland and their, pedantic young commander, but no sooner had the Spaniards taken the field than the wily foe had disappeared as magically as he had come.

The Flemish earth seemed to have bubbles as the water hath, and while Mondragon was beating the air in vain on the margin of the Scheld, Maurice was back again upon the Waal, horse, foot, and artillery, bag, baggage, and munition, and had fairly set himself down in earnest to besiege Nymegen, before the honest burghers and the garrison had finished drawing long breaths at their recent escape. Between the 14th and 16th October he had bridged the deep, wide, and rapid river, had transported eight thousand five hundred infantry and, sixteen companies of cavalry to the southern side, had entrenched his camp and made his approaches, and had got sixty-eight pieces of artillery into three positions commanding the weakest part of the defences of the city between the Falcon Tower and the Hoender gate. The fort of Knodsenburg was also ready to throw hot shot across the river into the town. Not a detail in all these preparations escaped the vigilant eye of the Commander-in-Chief, and again and again was he implored not so recklessly to expose a life already become precious to his

country. On the 20th October, Maurice sent to demand the surrender of the city. The reply was facetious but decisive.

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The prince was but a young suitor, it was said, and the city a spinster not so lightly to be won. A longer courtship and more trouble would be necessary.

Whereupon the suitor opened all his batteries without further delay, and the spinster gave a fresh example of the inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies.

Nymegen, despite her saucy answer on the 20th, surrendered on the 21st. Relief was impossible. Neither Parma, now on his way to France, nor Verdugo, shut up in Friesland, could come to the rescue of the place, and the combinations of Maurice were an inexorable demonstration.

The terms of the surrender were similar to those accorded to Zutphen and Deventer. In regard to the religious point it was expressly laid down by Maurice that the demand for permission to exercise publicly the Roman Catholic religion should be left to the decision of the States-General.

And thus another most important city had been added to the domains of the republic. Another triumph was inscribed on the record of the young commander. The exultation was very great throughout the United Netherlands, and heartfelt was the homage rendered by all classes of his countrymen to the son of William the Silent.

Queen Elizabeth wrote to congratulate him in warmest terms on his great successes, and even the Spaniards began to recognise the merits of the new chieftain. An intercepted letter from Verdugo, who had been foiled in his efforts to arrest the career of Maurice, indicated great respect for his prowess. "I have been informed," said the veteran, "that Count Maurice of Nassau wishes to fight me. Had I the opportunity I assure you that I should not fail him, for even if ill luck were my portion, I should at least not escape the honour of being beaten by such a personage. I beg you to tell him so with my affectionate compliments. Yours, *Francis Verdugo*."

These chivalrous sentiments towards Prince Maurice had not however prevented Verdugo from doing his best to assassinate Count Lewis William. Two Spaniards had been arrested in the States camp this summer, who came in as deserters, but who confessed "with little, or mostly without torture," that they had been sent by their governor and colonel with instructions to seize a favourable opportunity to shoot Lewis William and set fire to his camp. But such practices were so common on the part of the Spanish commanders as to occasion no surprise whatever.

It will be remembered that two years before, the famous Martin Schenk had come to a tragic end at Nymegen. He had been drowned, fished up, hanged, drawn, and quartered; after which his scattered fragments, having been exposed on all the principal towers of the city, had been put in pickle and deposited in a chest. They were now collected and buried triumphantly in the tomb of the Dukes of Gelderland. Thus the shade of the grim freebooter was at last appeased.

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The government of the city was conferred upon Count Lewis William, with Gerard de Jonge as his lieutenant. A substantial garrison was placed in the city, and, the season now far advanced Maurice brought the military operations of the year, saving a slight preliminary demonstration against Gertruydenberg, to a close. He had deserved and attained—considerable renown. He had astonished the leisurely war-makers and phlegmatic veterans of the time, both among friends and foes, by the unexampled rapidity of his movements and the concentration of his attacks. He had carried great waggon trains and whole parks of siege artillery—the heaviest then known—over roads and swamps which had been deemed impassable even for infantry. He had traversed the length and breadth of the republic in a single campaign, taken two great cities in Overijssel, picked up cities and fortresses in the province of Groningen, and threatened its capital, menaced Steenwyk, relieved Knodsenburg though besieged in person by the greatest commander of the age, beaten the most famous cavalry of Spain and Italy under the eyes of their chieftain, swooped as it were through the air upon Brabant, and carried off an important city almost in the sight of Antwerp, and sped back again in the freezing weather of early autumn, with his splendidly served and invincible artillery, to the imperial city of Nymegen, which Farnese had sworn to guard like the apple of his eye, and which, with consummate skill, was forced out of his grasp in five days.

“Some might attribute these things to blind fortune,” says an honest chronicler who had occupied important posts in the service of the prince and of his cousin Lewis William, “but they who knew the prince’s constant study and laborious attention to detail, who were aware that he never committed to another what he could do himself, who saw his sobriety, vigilance, his perpetual study and holding of council with Count Lewis William (himself possessed of all these good gifts, perhaps even in greater degree), and who never found him seeking, like so many other commanders, his own ease and comfort, would think differently.”

CHAPTER XXV

War in Brittany and Normandy—Death of La Noue—Religious and political persecution in Paris—Murder of President Brisson, Larcher, and Tardif—The sceptre of France offered to Philip—The Duke of Mayenne punishes the murderers of the magistrates—Speech of Henry’s envoy to the States-General—Letter of Queen Elizabeth to Henry—Siege of Rouen—Farnese leads an army to its relief—The king is wounded in a skirmish—Siege of Rue by Farnese—Henry raises the siege of Rouen—Siege of Caudebec—Critical position of Farnese and his army—Victory of the Duke of Mercoeur in Brittany.

Again the central point towards which the complicated events to be described in this history gravitate is found on the soil of France. Movements apparently

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desultory and disconnected—as they may have seemed to the contemporaneous observer, necessarily occupied with the local and daily details which make up individual human life—are found to be necessary parts of a whole, when regarded with that breadth and clearness of vision which is permitted to human beings only when they can look backward upon that long sequence of events which make up the life of nations and which we call the Past. It is only by the anatomical study of what has ceased to exist that we can come thoroughly to comprehend the framework and the vital conditions of that which lives. It is only by patiently lifting the shroud from the Past that we can enable ourselves to make even wide guesses at the meaning of the dim Present and the veiled Future. It is only thus that the continuity of human history reveals itself to us as the most important of scientific facts.

If ever commonwealth was apparently doomed to lose that national existence which it had maintained for a brief period at the expense of infinite sacrifice of blood and treasure, it was the republic of the United Netherlands in the period immediately succeeding the death of William the Silent. Domestic treason, secession of important provinces, religious-hatred, foreign intrigue, and foreign invasion—in such a sea of troubles was the republic destined generations long to struggle. Who but the fanatical, the shallow-minded, or the corrupt could doubt the inevitable issue of the conflict? Did not great sages and statesmen whose teachings seemed so much wiser in their generation than the untaught impulses of the great popular heart, condemn over and over again the hopeless struggles and the atrocious bloodshed which were thought to disgrace the age, and by which it was held impossible that the cause of human liberty should ever be advanced?

To us who look back from the vantage summit which humanity has reached— thanks to the toil and sacrifices of those who have preceded us—it may seem doubtful whether premature peace in the Netherlands, France, and England would have been an unmitigated blessing, however easily it might have been purchased by the establishment all over Europe of that holy institution called the Inquisition, and by the tranquil acceptance of the foreign domination of Spain.

If, too; ever country seemed destined to the painful process of national vivisection and final dismemberment, it was France: Its natural guardians and masters, save one, were in secret negotiation with foreign powers to obtain with their assistance a portion of the national territory under acknowledgment of foreign supremacy. There was hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors. In Burgundy Baron Biron was battling against the Viscount Tavannes; in the Lyones and Dauphiny Marshal des Diguieres was fighting with the Dukes of Savoy and Nemours; in Provence, Epernon was resisting Savoy; in Languedoc, Constable Montmorency contended with the Duke of Joyeuse; in Brittany, the Prince of Dombes was struggling with the Duke of Mercoeur.

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But there was one adventurer who thought he could show a better legal title to the throne of France than all the doctors of the Sorbonne could furnish to Philip II. and his daughter, and who still trusted, through all the disasters which pursued him, and despite the machinations of venal warriors and mendicant princes, to his good right and his good sword, and to something more potent than both, the cause of national unity. His rebuke to the intriguing priests at the interview of St. Denis, and his reference to the judgment of Solomon, formed the text to his whole career.

The brunt of the war now fell upon Brittany and Normandy. Three thousand Spaniards under Don John de Aquila had landed in the port of Blavet which they had fortified, as a stronghold on the coast. And thither, to defend the integrity of that portion of France, which, in Spanish hands, was a perpetual menace to her realm, her crown, even to her life, Queen Elizabeth had sent some three thousand Englishmen, under commanders well known to France and the Netherlands. There was black Norris again dealing death among the Spaniards and renewing his perpetual squabbles with Sir Roger Williams. There was that doughty Welshman himself, truculent and caustic as ever—and as ready with sword or pen, foremost in every mad adventure or every forlorn hope, criticising with sharpest tongue the blunders and shortcomings of friend and foe, and devoting the last drop in his veins with chivalrous devotion to his Queen. “The world cannot deny,” said he, “that any carcase living ventured himself freer and oftener for his prince, state, and friends than I did mine. There is no more to be had of a poor beast than his skin, and for want of other means I never respected mine in the least respect towards my sovereign’s service, or country.” And so passing his life in the saddle and under fire, yet finding leisure to collect the materials for, and to complete the execution of, one of the most valuable and attractive histories of the age, the bold Welshman again and again appears, wearing the same humorous but truculent aspect that belonged to him when he was wont to run up and down in a great morion and feathers on Flemish battlefields, a mark for the Spanish sharpshooters.

There, too, under the banner of the Bearnese, that other historian of those sanguinary times, who had fought on almost every battle-field where tyranny and liberty had sought to smite each other dead, on French or Flemish soil, and who had prepared his famous political and military discourses in a foul dungeon swarming with toads and rats and other villainous reptiles to which the worse than infernal tyranny of Philip II. had consigned him for seven years long as a prisoner of war—the brave and good La Noue, with the iron arm, hero of a hundred combats, was fighting his last fight. At the siege of Lamballe in Brittany, he had taken off his calque and climbed a ladder to examine the breach effected

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by the batteries. An arquebus shot from the town grazed his forehead, and, without inflicting a severe wound, stunned him so much that he lost his balance and fell head foremost towards the ground; his leg, which had been wounded at the midnight assault upon Paris, where he stood at the side of King Henry, caught in the ladder and held him suspended. His head was severely bruised, and the contusions and shock to his war-worn frame were so great that he died after lingering eighteen days.

His son de Teligny; who in his turn had just been exchanged and released from the prison where he had lain since his capture before Antwerp, had hastened with joy to join his father in the camp, but came to close his eyes. The veteran caused the chapter in Job on the resurrection of the body to be read to him on his death-bed, and died expressing his firm faith in a hereafter. Thus passed away, at the age of sixty, on the 4th August, 1591, one of the most heroic spirits of France. Prudence, courage, experience, military knowledge both theoretic and practical, made him one of the first captains of the age, and he was not more distinguished for his valour than for the purity of his life, and the moderation, temperance, and justice of his character. The Prince of Dombes, in despair at his death, raised the siege of Lamballe.

There was yet another chronicler, fighting among the Spaniards, now in Brittany, now in Normandy, and now in Flanders, and doing his work as thoroughly with his sword as afterwards with his pen, Don Carlos Coloma, captain of cavalry, afterwards financier, envoy, and historian. For it was thus that those writers prepared themselves for their work. They were all actors in the great epic, the episodes of which they have preserved. They lived and fought, and wrought and suffered and wrote. Rude in tongue; aflame with passion, twisted all awry by prejudice, violent in love and hate, they have left us narratives which are at least full of colour and thrilling with life.

Thus Netherlanders, Englishmen, and Frenchmen were again mingling their blood and exhausting their energies on a hundred petty battle-fields of Brittany and Normandy; but perhaps to few of those hard fighters was it given to discern the great work which they were slowly and painfully achieving.

In Paris the League still maintained its ascendancy. Henry, having again withdrawn from his attempts to reduce the capital, had left the sixteen tyrants who governed it more leisure to occupy themselves with internal politics. A network of intrigue was spread through the whole atmosphere of the place. The Sixteen, sustained by the power of Spain and Rome, and fearing nothing so much as the return of peace, by which their system of plunder would come to an end, proceeded with their persecution of all heretics, real or supposed, who were rich enough to offer a reasonable chance of spoil. The soul of all these intrigues was the new legate, Sego, bishop of Piacenza.

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Letters from him to Alexander Farnese, intercepted by Henry, showed a determination to ruin the Duke of Mayenne and Count Belin governor of Paris, whom he designated as Colossus and Renard, to extirpate the magistrates, and to put Spanish partizans in their places, and in general to perfect the machinery by which the authority of Philip was to be established in France. He was perpetually urging upon that monarch the necessity of spending more money among his creatures in order to carry out these projects.

Accordingly the attention of the Sixteen had been directed to President Brisson, who had already made himself so dangerously conspicuous by his resistance to the insolent assumption of the cardinal-legate. This eminent juris-consult had succeeded Pomponne de Bellievre as first president of the Parliament of Paris. He had been distinguished for talent, learning, and eloquence as an advocate; and was the author of several important legal works. His ambition to fill the place of first president had caused him to remain in Paris after its revolt against Henry III. He was no Leaguer; and, since his open defiance of the ultra-Catholic party, he had been a marked man—doomed secretly by the confederates who ruled the capital. He had fondly imagined that he could govern the Parisian populace as easily as he had been in the habit of influencing the Parliament or directing his clients. He expected to restore the city to its obedience to the constituted authorities. He hoped to be himself the means of bringing Henry IV. in triumph to the throne of his ancestors. He found, however, that a revolution was more difficult to manage than a law case; and that the confederates of the Holy League were less tractable than his clients had usually been found.

On the night of the 14th November; 1591; he was seized on the bridge St. Michel, while on his way to parliament, and was told that he was expected at the Hotel de Ville. He was then brought to the prison of the little Chatelet.

Hardly had he been made secure in the dimly-lighted dungeon, when Crome, a leader among the Parisian populacey made his appearance, accompanied by some of his confederates, and dressed in a complete suit of mail. He ordered the magistrate to take off his hat and to kneel. He then read a sentence condemning him to death. Profoundly astonished, Brisson demanded to know of what crime he was accused; and under what authority. The answer was a laugh; and an assurance that he had no time to lose. He then begged that at least he might be imprisoned long enough to enable him to complete a legal work on which he was engaged, and which, by his premature death, would be lost to the commonwealth. This request produced no doubt more merriment than his previous demands. His judges were inflexible; and allowed him hardly time to confess himself. He was then hanged in his dungeon.

Two other magistrates, Larcher and Tardif, were executed in the same way, in the same place, and on the same night. The crime charged against them was having spoken in a public assembly somewhat freely against the Sixteen, and having aided in the

circulation in Paris of a paper drawn up by the Duke of Nevers, filled with bitterness against the Lorraine princes and the League, and addressed to the late Pope Sixtus.

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The three bodies were afterwards gibbeted on the Greve in front of the Hotel de Ville, and exposed for two days to the insults and fury of the populace.

This was the culminating point of the reign of terror in Paris. Never had the sixteen tyrants; lords of the market halls, who governed the capital by favour of and in the name of the populace, seemed more omnipotent. As representatives or plenipotentiaries of Madam League they had laid the crown. at the feet of the King of Spain, hoping by still further drafts on his exchequer and his credulity to prolong indefinitely their own ignoble reign. The extreme democratic party, which had hitherto supported the House of Lorraine and had seemed to idolize that family in the person of the great Balafre, now believed themselves possessed of sufficient power to control the Duke of Mayenne and all his adherents. They sent the Jesuit Claude Mathieu with a special memorial to Philip II. That monarch was implored to take, the sceptre of France, and to reign over them, inasmuch as they most willingly threw themselves into his arms? They assured him that all reasonable people, and especially the Holy League, wished him to take the reins of Government, on condition of exterminating heresy throughout the kingdom by force of arms, of publishing the Council of Trent, and of establishing everywhere the Holy inquisition—an institution formidable only to the wicked and desirable for the good. It was suggested that Philip should not call himself any longer King of Spain nor adopt the title of King of France, but that he should proclaim himself the Great King, or make use of some similar designation, not indicating any specialty but importing universal dominion.

Should Philip, however, be disinclined himself to accept the monarchy, it was suggested that the young Duke of Guise, son of the first martyr of France, would be the most appropriate personage to be honoured with the hand of the legitimate Queen of France, the Infanta Clara Isabella.

But the Sixteen were reckoning without the Duke of Mayenne. That great personage, although an indifferent warrior and an utterly unprincipled and venal statesman, was by no means despicable as a fisherman in the troubled waters of revolution. He knew how to manage intrigues with both sides for his own benefit. Had he been a bachelor he might have obtained the Infanta and shared her prospective throne. Being encumbered with a wife he had no hope of becoming the son-in-law of Philip, and was determined that his nephew Guise should not enjoy a piece of good fortune denied to himself. The escape of the young duke from prison had been the signal for the outbreak of jealousies between uncle and nephew, which Parma and other agents had been instructed by their master to foster to the utmost. "They must be maintained in such disposition in regard to me," he said, "that the one being ignorant of my relations to the other, both may without knowing it do my will."

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But Mayenne, in this grovelling career of self-seeking, in this perpetual loading of dice and marking of cards, which formed the main occupation of so many kings and princes of the period, and which passed for Machiavellian politics, was a fair match for the Spanish king and his Italian viceroy. He sent President Jeannin on special mission to Philip, asking for two armies, one to be under his command, the other under that of Farnese, and assured him that he should be king himself, or appoint any man he liked to the vacant throne. Thus he had secured one hundred thousand crowns a month to carry on his own game withal. "The maintenance of these two armies costs me 261,000 crowns a month," said Philip to his envoy Ybarra.

And what was the result of all this expenditure of money, of all this lying and counter-lying, of all this frantic effort on the part of the most powerful monarch of the age to obtain property which did not belong to him—the sovereignty of a great kingdom, stocked with a dozen millions of human beings—of all this endless bloodshed of the people in the interests of a high-born family or two, of all this infamous brokerage charged by great nobles for their attempts to transfer kingdoms like private farms from one owner to another? Time was to show. Meanwhile men trembled at the name of Philip II., and grovelled before him as the incarnation of sagacity, high policy, and kingcraft.

But Mayenne, while taking the brokerage, was less anxious about the transfer. He had fine instinct enough to suspect that the Bearnese, outcast though he seemed, might after all not be playing so desperate a game against the League as it was the fashion to suppose. He knew whether or not Henry was likely to prove a more fanatical Huguenot in 1592 than he had shown himself twenty years before at the Bartholomew festival. And he had wit enough to foresee that the "instruction" which the gay free-thinker held so cautiously in his fingers might perhaps turn out the trump card. A bold, valorous Frenchman with a flawless title, and washed whiter than snow by the freshet of holy water, might prove a more formidable claimant to the allegiance of Frenchmen than a foreign potentate, even though backed by all the doctors of the Sorbonne.

The murder of President Brisson and his colleagues by the confederates of the sixteen quarters, was in truth the beginning of the end. What seemed a proof of supreme power was the precursor of a counter-revolution, destined ere long to lead farther than men dreamed. The Sixteen believed themselves omnipotent. Mayenne being in their power, it was for them to bestow the crown at their will, or to hold it suspended in air as long as seemed best to them. They felt no doubt that all the other great cities in the kingdom would follow the example of Paris.

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But the lieutenant-general of the realm felt it time for him to show that his authority was not a shadow—that he was not a pasteboard functionary like the deceased cardinal-king, Charles X. The letters entrusted by the Sixteen to Claude Mathieu were intercepted by Henry, and, very probably, an intimation of their contents was furnished to Mayenne. At any rate, the duke, who lacked not courage nor promptness when his own interests were concerned, who felt his authority slipping away from him, now that it seemed the object of the Spaniards to bind the democratic party to themselves by a complicity in crime, hastened at once to Paris, determined to crush these intrigues and to punish the murderers of the judges. The Spanish envoy Ybarra, proud, excitable, violent, who had been privy to the assassinations, and was astonished that the deeds had excited indignation and fury instead of the terror counted upon, remonstrated with Mayenne, intimating that in times of civil commotion it was often necessary to be blind and deaf.

In vain. The duke carried it with a high and firm hand. He arrested the ringleaders, and hanged four of them in the basement of the Louvre within twenty days after the commission of their crime. The energy was well-timed and perfectly successful. The power of the Sixteen was struck to the earth at a blow. The ignoble tyrants became in a moment as despicable as they had been formidable and insolent. Crome, more fortunate than many of his fellows, contrived to make his escape out of the kingdom.

Thus Mayenne had formally broken with the democratic party, so called—with the market-halls oligarchy. In thus doing, his ultimate rupture with the Spaniards was foreshadowed. The next combination for him to strive for would be one to unite the moderate Catholics and the Bearnese. Ah! if Henry would but “instruct” himself out of hand, what a game the duke might play!

The burgess-party, the mild royalists, the disgusted portion of the Leaguers, coalescing with those of the Huguenots whose fidelity might prove stanch even against the religious apostasy contemplated by their chief—this combination might prove an overmatch for the ultra-leaguers, the democrats, and the Spaniards. The king’s name would be a tower of strength for that “third party,” which began to rear its head very boldly and to call itself “Politica.” Madam League might succumb to this new rival in the fickle hearts of the French.

At the beginning of the year 1591; Buzanval had presented his credentials to the States-General at the Hague as envoy of Henry IV. In the speech which he made on this occasion he expressed the hope that the mission of the Viscount Turenne, his Majesty’s envoy to England and to the Netherlands, had made known the royal sentiments towards the States and the great satisfaction of the king with their energetic sympathy and assistance. It was notorious, said Buzanval, that the King of Spain for many years had

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been governed by no other motive than to bring all the rest of Christendom under his dominion, while at the same time he forced upon those already placed under his sceptre a violent tyranny, passing beyond all the bounds that God, nature, and reason had set to lawful forms of government. In regard to nations born under other laws than his, he had used the pretext of religion for reducing them to servitude. The wars stirred up by his family in Germany, and his recent invasion of England, were proofs of this intention, still fresh in the memory of all men. Still more flagrant were his machinations in the present troubles of France. Of his dealings with his hereditary realms, the condition of the noble provinces of the Netherlands, once so blooming under reasonable laws, furnished, a sufficient illustration. You see, my masters, continued the envoy, the subtle plans of the Spanish king and his counsellors to reach with certainty the object of their ambition. They have reflected that Spain, which is the outermost corner of Europe, cannot conveniently make war upon other Christian realms. They have seen that a central position is necessary to enable them to stretch their arms to every side. They have remembered that princes who in earlier days were able to spread their wings over all Christendom had their throne in France, like Charles the Great and his descendants. Therefore the king is now earnestly bent on seizing this occasion to make himself master of France. The death of the late king (Henry III.) had no sooner occurred, than—as the blood through great terror rushes from the extremities and overflows the heart—they here also, fearing to lose their opportunity and astonished at the valour of our present king, abandoned all their other enterprises in order to pour themselves upon France.

Buzanval further reminded the States that Henry had received the most encouraging promises from the protestant princes of Germany, and that so great a personage as the Viscount Turenne, who had now gone thither to reap the fruit of those promises, would not have been sent on such a mission except that its result was certain. The Queen of England, too, had promised his Majesty most liberal assistance.

It was not necessary to argue as to the close connection between the cause of the Netherlands and that of France. The king had beaten down the mutiny of his own subjects, and repulsed the invasion of the Dukes of Savoy and of Lorraine. In consideration of the assistance promised by Germany and England—for a powerful army would be at the command of Henry in the spring—it might be said that the Netherlands might repose for a time and recruit their exhausted energies, under the shadow of these mighty preparations.

“I do not believe, however,” said the minister, “that you will all answer me thus. The faint-hearted and the inexperienced might flatter themselves with such thoughts, and seek thus to cover their cowardice, but the zealous and the courageous will see that it is time to set sail on the ship, now that the wind is rising so freshly and favourably.

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“For there are many occasions when an army might be ruined for want of twenty thousand crowns. What a pity if a noble edifice, furnished to the roof-tree, should fall to decay for want of a few tiles. No doubt your own interests are deeply connected with our own. Men may say that our proposals should be rejected on the principle that the shirt is nearer to the skin than the coat, but it can be easily proved that our cause is one. The mere rumour of this army will prevent the Duke of Parma from attacking you. His forces will be drawn to France. He will be obliged to intercept the crash of this thunderbolt. The assistance of this army is worth millions to you, and has cost you nothing. To bring France into hostility with Spain is the very policy that you have always pursued and always should pursue in order to protect your freedom. You have always desired a war between France and Spain, and here is a fierce and cruel one in which you have hazarded nothing. It cannot come to an end without bringing signal advantages to yourselves.

“You have always desired an alliance with a French sovereign, and here is a firm friendship offered you by our king, a natural alliance.

“You know how unstable are most treaties that are founded on shifting interests, and do not concern the freedom of bodies and souls. The first are written with pen upon paper, and are generally as light as paper. They have no roots in the heart. Those founded on mutual assistance on trying occasions have the perpetual strength of nature. They bring always good and enduring fruit in a rich soil like the heart of our king; that heart which is as beautiful and as pure from all untruth as the lily upon his shield.

“You will derive the first profits from the army thus raised. From the moment of its mustering under a chief of such experience as Turenne, it will absorb the whole attention of Spain, and will draw her thoughts from the Netherlands to France.”

All this and more in the same earnest manner did the envoy urge upon the consideration of the States-General, concluding with a demand of 100,000 florins as their contribution towards the French campaign.

His eloquence did not fall upon unwilling ears; for the States-General, after taking time to deliberate, replied to the propositions by an expression of the strongest sympathy with, and admiration for, the heroic efforts of the King of France. Accordingly, notwithstanding their own enormous expenses, past and present, and their strenuous exertions at that very moment to form an army of foot and horse for the campaign, the brilliant results of which have already been narrated, they agreed to furnish the required loan of 100,000 florins to be repaid in a year, besides six or seven good ships of war to co-operate with the fleets of England and France upon the coasts of Normandy. And the States were even better than their word.

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Before the end of autumn of the year 1591, Henry had laid siege to Rouen, then the second city of the kingdom. To leave much longer so important a place—dominating, as it did, not only Normandy but a principal portion of the maritime borders of France—under the control of the League and of Spain was likely to be fatal to Henry's success. It was perfectly sound in Queen Elizabeth to insist as she did, with more than her usual imperiousness towards her excellent brother, that he should lose no more time before reducing that city. It was obvious that Rouen in the hands of her arch-enemy was a perpetual menace to the safety of her own kingdom. It was therefore with correct judgment, as well as with that high-flown gallantry so dear to the heart of Elizabeth, that her royal champion and devoted slave assured her of his determination no longer to defer obeying her commands in this respect.

The queen had repeatedly warned him of the necessity of defending the maritime frontier of his kingdom, and she was not sparing of her reproaches that the large sums which she expended in his cause had been often ill bestowed. Her criticisms on what she considered his military mistakes were not few, her threats to withdraw her subsidies frequent. "Owning neither the East nor the West Indies," she said, "we are unable to supply the constant demands upon us; and although we have the reputation of being a good housewife, it does not follow that we can be a housewife for all the world." She was persistently warning the king of an attack upon Dieppe, and rebuking him for occupying himself with petty enterprises to the neglect of vital points. She expressed her surprise that after the departure of Parma, he had not driven the Spaniards out of Brittany, without allowing them to fortify themselves in that country. "I am astonished," she said to him, "that your eyes are so blinded as not to see this danger. Remember, my dear brother," she frankly added, "that it is not only France that I am aiding, nor are my own natural realms of little consequence to me. Believe me, if I see that you have no more regard to the ports and maritime places nearest to us, it will be necessary that my prayers should serve you in place of any other assistance, because it does not please me to send my people to the shambles where they may perish before having rendered you any assistance. I am sure the Spaniards will soon besiege Dieppe. Beware of it, and excuse my bluntness, for if in the beginning you had taken the maritime forts, which are the very gates of your kingdom, Paris would not have been so well furnished, and other places nearer the heart of the kingdom would not have received so much foreign assistance, without which the others would have soon been vanquished. Pardon my simplicity as belonging to my own sex wishing to give a lesson to one who knows better, but my experience in government makes me a little obstinate in believing that I am not ignorant of that which belongs to a king, and I persuade myself that in following my advice you will not fail to conquer your assailants."

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Before the end of the year Henry had obtained control of the, Seine, both above and below the city, holding Pont de l'Arche on the north—where was the last bridge across the river; that of Rouen, built by the English when they governed Normandy, being now in ruins—and Caudebec on the south in an iron grasp. Several war-vessels sent by the Hollanders, according to the agreement with Buzanval, cruised in the north of the river below Caudebec, and rendered much service to the king in cutting off supplies from the beleaguered place, while the investing army of Henry, numbering twenty-five thousand foot—inclusive of the English contingent, and three thousand Netherlanders—and ten thousand cavalry, nearly all French, was fast reducing the place to extremities.

Parma, as usual, in obedience to his master's orders, but entirely against his own judgment, had again left the rising young general of the Netherlands to proceed from one triumph to another, while he transferred beyond the borders of that land which it was his first business to protect, the whole weight of his military genius and the better portion of his well disciplined forces.

Most bitterly and indignantly did he express himself, both at the outset and during the whole progress of the expedition, concerning the utter disproportions between the king's means and aims. The want of money was the cause of wholesale disease, desertion, mutiny, and death in his slender army.

Such great schemes as his master's required, as he perpetually urged, liberality of expenditure and measures of breadth. He protested that he was not to blame for the ruin likely to come upon the whole enterprise. He had besought, remonstrated, reasoned with the king in vain. He had seen his beard first grow, he said, in the king's service, and he had grown gray in that service, but rather than be kept longer in such a position, without money, men, or means to accomplish the great purposes on which he was sent, he protested that he would "abandon his office and retire into the woods to feed on roots." Repeatedly did he implore his master for a large and powerful army; for money and again money. The royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely. To spend money in small sums, as heretofore, was only throwing it into the sea.

It was deep in the winter however before he could fairly come to the rescue of the besieged city. Towards the end of January, 1592, he moved out of Hainault, and once more made his junction at Guise with the Duke of Mayenne. At a review of his forces on 16th January, 1592, Alexander found himself at the head of thirteen thousand five hundred and sixteen infantry and four thousand and sixty-one cavalry. The Duke of Mayenne's army, for payment of which that personage received from Philip 100,000 dollars a month, besides 10,000 dollars a month for his own pocket, ought to have numbered ten thousand foot and three thousand horse, according to contract, but was in reality much less.

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The Duke of Montemarciano, nephew of Gregory XIV., had brought two thousand Swiss, furnished by the pontiff to the cause of the League, and the Duke of Lorraine had sent his kinsmen, the Counts Chaligny and Vaudemont, with a force of seven hundred lancers and cuirassiers.

The town of Fere was assigned in pledge to Farnese to hold as a convenient: mustering-place and station in proximity to his own borders, and, as usual, the chief command over the united armies was placed in his hands. These arrangements concluded, the allies moved slowly forward much in the same order as in the previous year. The young Duke of Guise, who had just made his escape from the prison of Tours, where he had been held in durance since the famous assassination of his father and uncle, and had now come to join his uncle Mayenne, led the vanguard. Ranuccio, son of the duke, rode also in the advance, while two experienced commanders, Vitry and De la Chatre, as well as the famous Marquis del Vasto, formerly general of cavalry in the Netherlands, who had been transferred to Italy but was now serving in the League's army as a volunteer, were associated with the young princes. Parma, Mayenne, and Montemarciano rode in the battalia, the rear being under command of the Duke of Aumale and the Count Chaligny. Wings of cavalry protected the long trains of wagons which were arranged on each flank of the invading army. The march was very slow, a Farnese's uniform practice to guard himself scrupulously against any possibility of surprise and to entrench himself thoroughly at nightfall.

By the middle of February they reached the vicinity of Aumale in Picardy. Meantime Henry, on the news of the advance of the relieving army, had again the same problem to solve that had been presented to him before Paris in the summer of 1590. Should he continue in the trenches, pressing more and more closely the city already reduced to great straits? Should he take the open field against the invaders and once more attempt to crush the League and its most redoubtable commander in a general engagement? Biron strenuously advised the continuance of the siege. Turenne, now, through his recent marriage with the heiress, called Duc de Bouillon, great head of the Huguenot party in France, counselled as warmly the open attack. Henry, hesitating more than was customary with him, at last decided on a middle course. The resolution did not seem a very wise one, but the king, who had been so signally out-generalled in the preceding campaign by the great Italian, was anxious to avoid his former errors, and might perhaps fall into as great ones by attempting two inconsistent lines of action. Leaving Biron in command of the infantry and a portion of the horse to continue the siege, he took the field himself with the greater part of the cavalry, intending to intercept and harass the enemy and to prevent his manifest purpose of throwing reinforcements and supplies into the invested city.

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Proceeding to Neufchatel and Aumale, he soon found himself in the neighbourhood of the Leaguers, and it was not long before skirmishing began. At this time, on a memorable occasion, Henry, forgetting as usual, in his eagerness for the joys of the combat that he was not a young captain of cavalry with his spurs to win by dashing into every mad adventure that might present itself, but a king fighting for his crown, with the welfare of a whole people depending on his fortunes, thought proper to place himself at the head of a handful of troopers to reconnoitre in person the camp of the Leaguers. Starting with five hundred horse, and ordering Lavardin and Givry to follow with a larger body, while the Dukes of Nevers and Longueville were to move out, should it prove necessary, in force, the king rode forth as merrily as to a hunting party, drove in the scouts and pickets of the confederated armies, and, advancing still farther in his investigations, soon found himself attacked by a cavalry force of the enemy much superior to his own. A skirmish began, and it was necessary for the little troop to beat a hasty retreat, fighting as it ran. It was not long before Henry was recognised by the enemy, and the chase became all the more lively; George Basti, the famous Albanian trooper, commanding the force which pressed most closely upon the king. The news spread to the camp of the League that the Bearnese was the leader of the skirmishers. Mayenne believed it, and urged the instant advance of the flying squadron and of the whole vanguard. Farnese refused. It was impossible that the king should be there, he said, doing picket duty at the head of a company. It was a clumsy ambush to bring on a general engagement in the open field, and he was not to be drawn out of his trenches into a trap by such a shallow device. A French captain, who by command of Henry had purposely allowed himself to be taken, informed his captors that the skirmishers were in reality supported by a heavy force of infantry. This suggestion of the ready Bearnese confirmed the doubts of Alexander. Meantime the skirmishing steeplechase went on before his eyes. The king dashing down a hill received an arquebus shot in his side, but still rode for his life. Lavardin and Givry came to the rescue, but a panic seized their followers as the rumour flew that the king was mortally wounded—was already dead—so that they hardly brought a sufficient force to beat back the Leaguers. Givry's horse was soon killed under him, and his own thigh crushed; Lavardin was himself dangerously wounded. The king was more hard pressed than ever, men were falling on every side of him, when four hundred French dragoons—as a kind of musketeers who rode on hacks to the scene of action but did their work on foot, were called at that day—now dismounted and threw themselves between Henry and his pursuers. Nearly every man of them laid down his life, but they saved the king's. Their vigorous hand to hand fighting kept off the assailants until Nevers and Longueville received the king at the gates of Aumale with a force before which the Leaguers were fain to retreat as rapidly as they had come.

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In this remarkable skirmish of Aumale the opposite qualities of Alexander and of Henry were signally illustrated. The king, by his constitutional temerity, by his almost puerile love of confronting danger for the danger's sake, was on the verge of sacrificing himself with all the hopes of his house and of the nobler portion of his people for an absolute nothing; while the duke, out of his superabundant caution, peremptorily refused to stretch out his hand and seize the person of his great enemy when directly within his grasp. Dead or alive, the Bearnese was unquestionably on that day in the power of Farnese, and with him the whole issue of the campaign and of the war. Never were the narrow limits that separate valour on the one side and discretion on the other from unpardonable lunacy more nearly effaced than on that occasion.'

When would such an opportunity occur again?

The king's wound proved not very dangerous, although for many days troublesome, and it required, on account of his general state of health, a thorough cure. Meantime the royalists fell back from Aumale and Neufchatel, both of which places were at once occupied by the Leaguers: In pursuance of his original plan, the Duke of Parma advanced with his customary steadiness and deliberation towards Rouen. It was his intention to assault the king's army in its entrenchments in combination with a determined sortie to be made by the besieged garrison. His preparations for the attack were ready on the 26th February, when he suddenly received a communication from De Villars, who had thus far most ably and gallantly conducted the defence of the place, informing him that it was no longer necessary to make a general attack. On the day before he had made a sally from the four gates of the city, had fallen upon the besiegers in great force, had wounded Biron and killed six hundred of his soldiers, had spiked several pieces of artillery and captured others which he had successfully brought into the town, and had in short so damaged the enemy's works and disconcerted him in all his plans, that he was confident of holding the place longer than the king could afford to stay in front of him. All he wished was a moderate reinforcement of men and munitions. Farnese by no means sympathized with the confident tone of Villars nor approved of his proposition. He had come to relieve Rouen and to raise the siege, and he preferred to do his work thoroughly. Mayenne was however most heartily in favour of taking the advice of Villars. He urged that it was difficult for the Bearnese to keep an army long in the field, still more so in the trenches. Let them provide for the immediate wants of the city; then the usual process of decomposition would soon be witnessed in the ill-paid, ill-fed, desultory forces of the heretic pretender.

Alexander deferred to the wishes of Mayenne, although against his better judgment. Eight hundred infantry, were successfully sent into Rouen. The army of the League then countermarched into Picardy near the confines of Artois.

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They were closely followed by Henry at the head of his cavalry, and lively skirmishes were of frequent occurrence. In a military point of view none of these affairs were of consequence, but there was one which partook at once of the comic and the pathetic. For it chanced that in a cavalry action of more than common vivacity the Count Chaligny found himself engaged in a hand to hand conflict with a very dashing swordsman, who, after dealing and receiving many severe blows, at last succeeded in disarming the count and taking him prisoner. It was the fortune of war, and, but a few days before, might have been the fate of the great Henry himself. But Chaligny's mortification at his captivity became intense when he discovered that the knight to whom he had surrendered was no other than the king's jester. That he, a chieftain of the Holy League, the long-descended scion of the illustrious house of Lorraine, brother of the great Duke of Mercoeur, should become the captive of a Huguenot buffoon seemed the most stinging jest yet perpetrated since fools had come in fashion. The famous Chicot—who was as fond of a battle as of a gibe, and who was almost as reckless a rider as his master—proved on this occasion that the cap and bells could cover as much magnanimity as did the most chivalrous crest. Although desperately wounded in the struggle which had resulted in his triumph, he generously granted to the Count his freedom without ransom. The proud Lorrainer returned to his Leaguers and the poor fool died afterwards of his wounds.

The army of the allies moved through Picardy towards the confines of Artois, and sat down leisurely to beleague Rue, a low-lying place on the banks and near the mouth of the Somme, the only town in the province which still held for the king. It was sufficiently fortified to withstand a good deal of battering, and it certainly seemed mere trifling for the great Duke of Parma to leave the Netherlands in such confusion, with young Maurice of Nassau carrying everything before him, and to come all the way into Normandy in order, with the united armies of Spain and the League, to besiege the insignificant town of Rue.

And this was the opinion of Farnese, but he had chosen throughout the campaign to show great deference to the judgment of Mayenne. Meantime the month of March wore away, and what had been predicted came to pass. Henry's forces dwindled away as usual. His cavaliers rode off to forage for themselves, when their battles were denied them, and the king was now at the head of not more than sixteen thousand foot and five thousand horse. On the other hand the Leaguers' army had been melting quite as rapidly. With the death of Pope Sfondrato, his nephew Montemarciano had disappeared with his two thousand Swiss; while the French cavalry and infantry, ill-fed and uncomfortable, were diminishing daily. Especially the Walloons, Flemings, and other Netherlanders of Parma's army, took advantage of their proximity

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to the borders and escaped in large numbers to their own homes. It was but meagre and profitless campaigning on both sides during those wretched months of winter and early spring, although there was again an opportunity for Sir Roger Williams, at the head of two hundred musketeers and one hundred and fifty pikemen, to make one of his brilliant skirmishes under the eye of the Bearnese. Surprised and without armour, he jumped, in doublet and hose, on horseback, and led his men merrily against five squadrons of Spanish and Italian horse, and six companies of Spanish infantry; singled out and unhorsed the leader of the Spanish troopers, and nearly cut off the head, of the famous Albanian chief George Basti with one swinging blow of his sword. Then, being reinforced by some other English companies, he succeeded in driving the whole body of Italians and Spaniards, with great loss, quite into their entrenchments. "The king doth commend him very highly," said Umton, "and doth more than wonder at the valour of our nation. I never heard him give more honour to any service nor to any man than he doth to Sir Roger Williams and the rest, whom he held as lost men, and for which he has caused public thanks to be given to God."

At last Villars, who had so peremptorily rejected assistance at the end of February, sent to say that if he were not relieved by the middle of April he should be obliged to surrender the city. If the siege were not raised by the twentieth of the month he informed Parma, to his profound astonishment, that Rouen would be in Henry's hands.

In effecting this result the strict blockade maintained by the Dutch squadron at the mouth of the river, and the resolute manner in which those cruisers dashed at every vessel attempting to bring relief to Rouen, were mainly instrumental. As usual with the stern Hollanders and Zeelanders when engaged at sea with the Spaniards, it was war to the knife. Early in April twelve large vessels, well armed and manned, attempted to break the blockade. A combat ensued, at the end of which eight of the Spanish ships were captured, two were sunk, and two were set on fire in token of victory, every man on board of all being killed and thrown into the sea. Queen Elizabeth herself gave the first news of this achievement to the Dutch envoy in London. "And in truth," said he, "her Majesty expressed herself, in communicating these tidings, with such affection and extravagant joy to the glory and honour of our nation and men-of-war's-men, that it wonderfully delighted me, and did me good into my very heart to hear it from her."

Instantly Farnese set himself to the work which, had he followed his own judgment, would already have been accomplished. Henry with his cavalry had established himself at Dieppe and Arques, within a distance of five or six leagues from the infantry engaged in the siege of Rouen. Alexander saw the profit to be derived from the separation between the different portions of the enemy's forces, and marched straight upon the enemy's entrenchments. He knew the disadvantage of assailing a strongly fortified camp, but believed that by a well-concerted, simultaneous assault by Villars from within

and the Leaguers from without, the king's forces would be compelled to raise the siege or be cut up in their trenches.

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But Henry did not wait for the attack. He had changed his plan, and, for once in his life, substituted extreme caution for his constitutional temerity. Neither awaiting the assault upon his entrenchments nor seeking his enemy in the open field, he ordered the whole camp to be broken up, and on the 20th of April raised the siege.

Farnese marched into Rouen, where the Leaguers were received with tumultuous joy, and this city, most important for the purposes of the League and for Philip's ulterior designs, was thus wrested from the grasp just closing upon it. Henry's main army now concentrated itself in the neighbourhood of Dieppe, but the cavalry under his immediate superintendence continued to harass the Leaguers. It was now determined to lay siege to Caudebec, on the right bank of the Seine, three leagues below Rouen; the possession of this place by the enemy being a constant danger and difficulty to Rouen, whose supplies by the Seine were thus cut off.

Alexander, as usual, superintended the planting of the batteries against the place. He had been suffering during the whole campaign with those dropsical ailments which were making life a torture to him; yet his indomitable spirit rose superior to his physical disorders, and he wrought all day long on foot or on horseback, when he seemed only fit to be placed on his bed as a rapid passage to his grave. On this occasion, in company with the Italian engineer Properzio, he had been for some time examining with critical nicety the preliminaries, for the siege, when it was suddenly observed by those around him that he was growing pale. It then appeared that he had received a musket-ball between the wrist and the elbow, and had been bleeding profusely; but had not indicated by a word or the movement of a muscle that he had been wounded, so intent was he upon carrying out the immediate task to which he had set himself. It was indispensable, however, that he should now take to his couch. The wound was not trifling, and to one in his damaged and dropsical condition it was dangerous. Fever set in, with symptoms of gangrene, and it became necessary to entrust the command of the League to Mayenne. But it was hardly concealed from Parma that the duke was playing a double game. Prince Ranuccio, according to his father's express wish, was placed provisionally at the head of the Flemish forces. This was conceded; however, with much heart-burning, and with consequences easily to be imagined.

Meantime Caudebec fell at once. Henry did nothing to relieve it, and the place could offer but slight resistance to the force arrayed against it. The bulk of the king's army was in the neighbourhood of Dieppe, where they had been recently strengthened by twenty companies of Netherlanders and Scotchmen brought by Count Philip Nassau. The League's headquarters were in the village of Yvetot, capital of the realm of the whimsical little potentate so long renowned under that name.

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The king, in pursuance of the plan he had marked out for himself, restrained his skirmishing more than was his wont. Nevertheless he lay close to Yvetot. His cavalry, swelling and falling as usual like an Alpine torrent, had now filled up its old channels again, for once more the mountain chivalry had poured themselves around their king. With ten thousand horsemen he was now pressing the Leaguers, from time to time, very hard, and on one occasion the skirmishing became so close and so lively that a general engagement seemed imminent. Young Ranuccio had a horse shot under him, and his father—suffering as he was—had himself dragged out of bed and brought on a litter into the field, where he was set on horseback, trampling on wounds and disease, and, as it were, on death itself, that he might by his own unsurpassed keenness of eye and quickness of resource protect the army which had been entrusted to his care. The action continued all day; young Bentivoglio, nephew of the famous cardinal, historian and diplomatist, receiving a bad wound in the leg, as he fought gallantly at the side of Ranuccio. Carlo Coloma also distinguished himself in the engagement. Night separated the combatants before either side had gained a manifest advantage, and on the morrow it seemed for the interest of neither to resume the struggle.

The field where this campaign was to be fought was a narrow peninsula enclosed between the sea and the rivers Seine and Dieppe. In this peninsula, called the Land of Caux, it was Henry's intention to shut up his enemy. Farnese had finished the work that he had been sent to do, and was anxious, as Henry was aware, to return to the Netherlands. Rouen was relieved, Caudebec had fallen. There was not food or forage enough in the little peninsula to feed both the city and the whole army of the League. Shut up in this narrow area, Alexander must starve or surrender. His only egress was into Picardy and so home to Artois, through the base of the isosceles triangle between the two rivers and on the borders of Picardy. On this base Henry had posted his whole army. Should Farnese assail him, thus provided with a strong position and superiority of force, defeat was certain. Should he remain where he was, he must inevitably starve. He had no communications with the outside. The Hollanders lay with their ships below Caudebec, blockading the river's mouth and the coast. His only chance of extrication lay across the Seine. But Alexander was neither a bird nor a fish, and it was necessary, so Henry thought, to be either the one or the other to cross that broad, deep, and rapid river, where there were no bridges, and where the constant ebb and flow of the tide made transportation almost impossible in face of a powerful army in rear and flank. Farnese's situation seemed, desperate; while the shrewd Bearnese sat smiling serenely, carefully watching at the mouth of the trap into which he had at last inveigled his mighty adversary. Secure of his triumph, he seemed to have changed his nature, and to have become as sedate and wary as, by habit, he was impetuous and hot.

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And in truth Farnese found himself in very narrow quarters. There was no hay for his horses, no bread for his men. A penny loaf was sold for two shillings. A jug of water was worth a crown. As for meat or wine, they were hardly to be dreamed of. His men were becoming furious at their position. They had enlisted to fight, not to starve, and they murmured that it was better for an army to fall with weapons in its hands than to drop to pieces hourly with the enemy looking on and enjoying their agony.

It was obvious to Farnese that there were but two ways out of his dilemma. He might throw himself upon Henry—strongly entrenched as he was, and with much superior forces to his own, upon ground deliberately chosen for himself—defeat him utterly, and march over him back to the Netherlands. This would be an agreeable result; but the undertaking seemed difficult, to say the least. Or he might throw his army across the Seine and make his escape through the isle of France and Southern Picardy back to the so-called obedient provinces. But it seemed, hopeless without bridges or pontoons to attempt the passage of the Seine.

There was; however, no time left, for hesitation. Secretly he took his resolution and communicated it in strict confidence to Mayenne, to Ranuccio, and to one or two other chiefs. He came to Caudebec, and there, close to the margin of the river, he threw up a redoubt. On the opposite bank, he constructed another. On both he planted artillery, placing a force of eight hundred Netherlands under Count Bossu in the one, and an equal number of the same nation, Walloons chiefly, under Barlotte in the other. He collected all the vessels, flatboats,— wherries,—and rafts that could be found or put together at Rouen, and then under cover of his forts he transported all the Flemish infantry, and the Spanish, French, and Italian cavalry, during the night of 22nd May to the 22 May, opposite bank of the Seine. Next morning he sent up all the artillery together with the Flemish cavalry to Rouen, where, making what use he could by temporary contrivances of the broken arches of the broken bridge, in order to shorten the distance from shore to shore, he managed to convey his whole army with all its trains across the river.

A force was left behind, up to the last moment, to engage in the customary skirmishes, and to display themselves as largely as possible for the purpose of imposing upon the enemy. The young Prince of Parma had command of this rearguard. The device was perfectly successful. The news of the movement was not brought to the ears of Henry until after it had been accomplished. When the king reached the shore of the Seine, he saw to his infinite chagrin and indignation that the last stragglers of the army, including the garrison of the fort on the right bank, were just ferrying themselves across under command of Ranuccio.

Furious with disappointment, he brought some pieces of artillery to bear upon the triumphant fugitives. Not a shot told, and the Leaguers had the satisfaction of making a bonfire in the king's face of the boats which had brought them over. Then, taking up

their line of march rapidly inland, they placed themselves completely out of the reach of the Huguenot guns.

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Henry had a bridge at Pont de l'Arche, and his first impulse was to pursue with his cavalry, but it was obvious that his infantry could never march by so circuitous a route fast enough to come up with the enemy, who had already so prodigious a stride in advance.

There was no need to disguise it to himself. Henry saw himself for the second time out-generalled by the consummate Farnese. The trap was broken, the game had given him the slip. The manner in which the duke had thus extricated himself from a profound dilemma; in which his fortunes seemed hopelessly sunk, has usually been considered one of the most extraordinary exploits of his life.

Precisely at this time, too, ill news reached Henry from Brittany and the neighbouring country. The Princes Conti and Dombes had been obliged, on the 13th May, 1592, to raise the siege of Craon, in consequence of the advance of the Duke of Mercoeur, with a force of seven thousand men.

They numbered, including lanzknechts and the English contingent, about half as many, and before they could effect their retreat, were attacked by Mercoeur, and utterly routed. The English, who alone stood to their colours, were nearly all cut to pieces. The rest made a disorderly retreat, but were ultimately, with few exceptions, captured or slain. The duke, following up his victory, seized Chateau Gontier and La Val, important crossing places on the river Mayenne, and laid siege to Mayenne, capital city of that region. The panic, spreading through Brittany and Maine, threatened the king's cause there with complete overthrow, hampered his operations in Normandy, and vastly encouraged the Leaguers. It became necessary for Henry to renounce his designs upon Rouen, and the pursuit of Parma, and to retire to Vernon, there to occupy himself with plans for the relief of Brittany. In vain had the Earl of Essex, whose brother had already been killed in the campaign, manifested such headlong gallantry in that country as to call forth the sharpest rebukes from the admiring but anxious Elizabeth. The handful of brave Englishmen who had been withdrawn from the Netherlands, much to the dissatisfaction of the States-General, in order to defend the coasts of Brittany, would have been better employed under Maurice of Nassau. So soon as the heavy news reached the king, the faithful Umton was sent for. "He imparted the same unto me," said the envoy, "with extraordinary passion and discontent. He discoursed at large of his miserable estate, of the factions of his servants, and of their ill-dispositions, and then required my opinion touching his course for Brittan, as also what further aid he might expect from her Majesty; alleging that unless he were presently strengthened by England it was impossible for him, longer to resist the greatness of the King of Spain, who assailed his country by Brittany, Languedoc, the Low Countries by the Duke of Saxony and the Duke of Lorraine, and so ended his

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speech passionately.” Thus adjured, Sir Henry spoke to the king firmly but courteously, reminding him how, contrary to English advice, he had followed other counsellors to the neglect of Brittany, and had broken his promises to the queen. He concluded by urging him to advance into that country in person, but did not pledge himself on behalf of her Majesty to any further assistance. “To this,” said Umton, “the king gave a willing ear, and replied, with many thanks, and without disallowing of anything that I alleged, yielding many excuses of his want of means, not of disposition, to provide a remedy, not forgetting to acknowledge her Majesty’s care of him and his country, and especially of Brittany, excusing much the bad disposition of his counsellors, and inclining much to my motion to go in person thither, especially because he might thereby give her Majesty better satisfaction; . . . and protesting that he would either immediately himself make war there in those parts or send an army thither. I do not doubt,” added the ambassador, “but with good handling her Majesty may now obtain any reasonable matter for the conservation of Brittany, as also for a place of retreat for the English, and I urge continually the yielding of Brest into her Majesty’s hands, whereunto I find the king well inclined, if he might bring it to pass.”

Alexander passed a few days in Paris, where he was welcomed with much cordiality, recruiting his army for a brief period in the land of Brie, and then—broken in health but entirely successful—he dragged himself once more to Spa to drink the waters. He left an auxiliary force with Mayenne, and promised—infinitely against his own wishes—to obey his master’s commands and return again before the winter to do the League’s work.

And thus Alexander had again solved a difficult problem. He had saved for his master and for the League the second city of France and the whole coast of Normandy. Rouen had been relieved in masterly manner even as Paris had been succoured the year before. He had done this, although opposed by the sleepless energy and the exuberant valour of the quick-witted Navarre, and although encumbered by the assistance of the ponderous Duke of Mayenne. His military reputation, through these two famous reliefs and retreats, grew greater than ever.

No commander of the age was thought capable of doing what he had thus done. Yet, after all, what had he accomplished? Did he not feel in his heart of hearts that he was but a strong and most skilful swimmer struggling for a little while against an ocean-tide which was steadily sweeping him and his master and all their fortunes far out into the infinite depths?

Something of this breathed ever in his most secret utterances. But, so long as life was in him, his sword and his genius were at the disposal of his sovereign, to carry out a series of schemes as futile as they were nefarious.

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For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future, it is easy to see how remorselessly the great current of events was washing away the system and the personages seeking to resist its power and to oppose the great moral principles by which human affairs in the long run are invariably governed. Spain and Rome were endeavouring to obliterate the landmarks of race, nationality, historical institutions, and the tendencies of awakened popular conscience, throughout Christendom, and to substitute for them a dead level of conformity to one regal and sacerdotal despotism.

England, Holland, the Navarre party in France, and a considerable part of Germany were contending for national unity and independence, for vested and recorded rights. Much farther than they themselves or their chieftains dreamed those millions of men were fighting for a system of temperate human freedom; for that emancipation under just laws from arbitrary human control, which is the right—however frequently trampled upon—of all classes, conditions, and races of men; and for which it is the instinct of the human race to continue to struggle under every disadvantage, and often against all hope, throughout the ages, so long as the very principle of humanity shall not be extinguished in those who have been created after their Maker's image.

It may safely be doubted whether the great Queen, the Bearnese, Alexander Farnese, or his master, with many of their respective adherents, differed very essentially from each other in their notions of the right divine and the right of the people. But history has shown us which of them best understood the spirit of the age, and had the keenest instinct to keep themselves in the advance by moving fastest in the direction whither it was marshalling all men. There were many, earnest, hard-toiling men in those days, men who believed in the work to which they devoted their lives. Perhaps, too, the devil-worshippers did their master's work as strenuously and heartily as any, and got fame and pelf for their pains. Fortunately, a good portion of what they so laboriously wrought for has vanished into air; while humanity has at least gained something from those who deliberately or instinctively conformed themselves to her eternal laws.

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Artillery
Bomb-shells were not often used although known for a century
Court fatigue, to scorn pleasure
For us, looking back upon the Past, which was then the Future
Hardly an inch of French soil that had not two possessors
Holy institution called the Inquisition
Inevitable fate of talking castles and listening ladies
Life of nations and which we call the Past
Often necessary to be blind and deaf
Picturesqueness of crime



Royal plans should be enforced adequately or abandoned entirely
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Use of the spade
Utter disproportions between the king's means and aims
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Weapons

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