

History of the United Netherlands, 1595 eBook

History of the United Netherlands, 1595 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. 67

History of the United Netherlands, 1595

CHAPTER XXXI.

Formal declaration of war against Spain—Marriage festivities—Death of Archduke Ernest—His year of government—Fuentes declared governor-general—Disaffection of the Duke of Arschot and Count Arenberg—Death of the Duke of Arschot—Fuentes besieges Le Catelet—The fortress of Ham, sold to the Spanish by De Gomeron, besieged and taken by the Duke of Bouillon—Execution of De Gomeron—Death of Colonel Verdugo—Siege of Dourlens by Fuentes—Death of La Motte—Death of Charles Mansfeld—Total defeat of the French—Murder of Admiral De Pillars—Dourlens captured, and the garrison and citizens put to the sword—Military operations in eastern Netherlands and on the Rhine—Maurice lays siege to Groento—Mondragon hastening to its relief, Prince Maurice raises the siege—Skirmish between Maurice and



Mondragon—Death of Philip of Nassau—Death of Mondragon—Bombardment and surrender of Weerd Castle—Maurice retires into winter quarters—Campaign of Henry Iv.- —He besieges Dijon—Surrender of Dijon—Absolution granted to Henry by the pope —Career of Balagny at Cambray—Progress of the siege— Capitulation of the town— Suicide of the Princess of Cambray, wife of Balagny

The year 1595 Opened with a formal declaration of war by the King of France against the King of Spain. It would be difficult to say for exactly how many years the war now declared had already been waged, but it was a considerable advantage to the United Netherlands that the manifesto had been at last regularly issued. And the manifesto was certainly not deficient in bitterness. Not often in Christian history has a monarch been solemnly and officially accused by a brother sovereign of suborning assassins against his



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life. Bribery, stratagem, and murder, were, however, so entirely the commonplace machinery of Philip's administration as to make an allusion to the late attempt of Chastel appear quite natural in Henry's declaration of war. The king further stigmatized in energetic language the long succession of intrigues by which the monarch of Spain, as chief of the Holy League, had been making war upon him by means of his own subjects, for the last half dozen years. Certainly there was hardly need of an elaborate statement of grievances. The deeds of Philip required no herald, unless Henry was prepared to abdicate his hardly-earned title to the throne of France.

Nevertheless the politic Gascon subsequently regretted the fierce style in which he had fulminated his challenge. He was accustomed to observe that no state paper required so much careful pondering as a declaration of war, and that it was scarcely possible to draw up such a document without committing many errors in the phraseology. The man who never knew fear, despondency, nor resentment, was already instinctively acting on the principle that a king should deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend, and with his friends as if they might easily change to foes.

The answer to the declaration was delayed for two months. When the reply came it of course breathed nothing but the most benignant sentiments in regard to France, while it expressed regret that it was necessary to carry fire and sword through that country in order to avert the unutterable woe which the crimes of the heretic Prince of Bearne were bringing upon all mankind.

It was a solace for Philip to call the legitimate king by the title borne by him when heir-presumptive, and to persist in denying to him that absolution which, as the whole world was aware, the Vicar of Christ was at that very moment in the most solemn manner about to bestow upon him.

More devoted to the welfare of France than were the French themselves, he was determined that a foreign prince himself, his daughter, or one of his nephews—should supplant the descendant of St. Louis on the French throne. More catholic than the pope he could not permit the heretic, whom his Holiness was just washing whiter than snow, to intrude himself into the society of Christian sovereigns.

The winter movements by Bouillon in Luxembourg, sustained by Philip Nassau campaigning with a meagre force on the French frontier, were not very brilliant. The Netherland regiments quartered at Yssoire, La Ferte, and in the neighbourhood accomplished very little, and their numbers were sadly thinned by dysentery. A sudden and successful stroke, too, by which that daring soldier Heraugiere, who had been the chief captor of Breda, obtained possession of the town, and castle of Huy, produced no permanent advantage. This place, belonging to the Bishop of Liege, with its stone bridge over the Meuse, was an advantageous position



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from which to aid the operations of Bouillon in Luxembourg. Heraugiere was, however, not sufficiently reinforced, and Huy was a month later recaptured by La Motte. The campaigning was languid during that winter in the United Netherlands, but the merry-making was energetic. The nuptials of Hohenlo with Mary, eldest daughter of William the Silent and own sister of the captive Philip William; of the Duke of Bouillon with Elizabeth, one of the daughters of the same illustrious prince by his third wife, Charlotte of Bourbon; and of Count Everard Solms, the famous general of the Zeeland troops, with Sabina, daughter of the unfortunate Lamoral Egmont, were celebrated with much pomp during the months of February and March. The States of Holland and of Zeeland made magnificent presents of diamonds to the brides; the Countess Hohenlo receiving besides a yearly income of three thousand florins for the lives of herself and her husband.

In the midst of these merry marriage bells at the Hague a funeral knell was sounding in Brussels. On the 20th February, the governor-general of the obedient Netherlands, Archduke Ernest, breathed his last. His career had not been so illustrious as the promises of the Spanish king and the allegories of schoolmaster Houwaerts had led him to expect. He had not espoused the Infanta nor been crowned King of France. He had not blasted the rebellious Netherlands with Cyclopean thunderbolts, nor unbound the Belgic Andromeda from the rock of doom. His brief year of government had really been as dismal as, according to the announcement of his sycophants, it should have been amazing. He had accomplished nothing, and all that was left him was to die at the age of forty-two, over head and ears in debt, a disappointed, melancholy man. He was very indolent, enormously fat, very chaste, very expensive, fond of fine liveries and fine clothes, so solemn and stately as never to be known to laugh, but utterly without capacity either as a statesman or a soldier. He would have shone as a portly abbot ruling over peaceful friars, but he was not born to ride a revolutionary whirlwind, nor to evoke order out of chaos. Past and Present were contending with each other in fierce elemental strife within his domain. A world was in dying agony, another world was coming, full-armed, into existence within the hand-breadth of time and of space where he played his little part, but he dreamed not of it. He passed away like a shadow, and was soon forgotten.

An effort was made, during the last illness of Ernest, to procure from him the appointment of the elector of Cologne as temporary successor to the government, but Count Fuentes was on the spot and was a man of action. He produced a power in the French language from Philip, with a blank for the name. This had been intended for the case of Peter Ernest Mansfeld's possible death during his provisional administration, and Fuentes now claimed the right of inserting his own name.



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The dying Ernest consented, and upon his death Fuentes was declared governor-general until the king's further pleasure should be known.

Pedro de Guzman, Count of Fuentes, a Spaniard of the hard and antique type, was now in his sixty-fourth year. The pupil and near relative of the Duke of Alva, he was already as odious to the Netherlanders as might have been inferred from such education and such kin. A dark, grizzled, baldish man, with high steep forehead, long, haggard, leathern visage, sweeping beard, and large, stern, commanding, menacing eyes, with his Brussels ruff of point lace and his Milan coat of proof, he was in personal appearance not unlike the terrible duke whom men never named without a shudder, although a quarter of a century had passed since he had ceased to curse the Netherlands with his presence. Elizabeth of England was accustomed to sneer at Fuentes because he had retreated before Essex in that daring commander's famous foray into Portugal. The queen called the Spanish general a timid old woman. If her gibe were true, it was fortunate for her, for Henry of France, and for the republic, that there were not many more such old women to come from Spain to take the place of the veteran chieftains who were destined to disappear so rapidly during this year in Flanders. He was a soldier of fortune, loved fighting, not only for the fighting's sake, but for the prize-money which was to be accumulated by campaigning, and he was wont to say that he meant to enter Paradise sword in hand.

Meantime his appointment excited the wrath of the provincial magnates. The Duke of Arschot was beside himself with frenzy, and swore that he would never serve under Fuentes nor sit at his council-board. The duke's brother, Marquis Havre, and his son-in-law, Count Arenberg, shared in the hatred, although they tried to mitigate the vehemence of its expression. But Arschot swore that no man had the right to take precedence of him in the council of state, and that the appointment of this or any Spaniard was a violation of the charters of the provinces and of the promises of his Majesty. As if it were for the nobles of the obedient provinces to prate of charters and of oaths! Their brethren under the banner of the republic had been teaching Philip for a whole generation how they could deal with the privileges of freemen and with the perjury of tyrants. It was late in the day for the obedient Netherlanders to remember their rights. Havre and Arenberg, dissembling their own wrath, were abused and insulted by the duke when they tried to pacify him. They proposed a compromise, according to which Arschot should be allowed to preside in the council of state while Fuentes should content himself with the absolute control of the army. This would be putting a bit of fat in the duke's mouth, they said. Fuentes would hear of no such arrangement. After much talk and daily attempts to pacify this great Netherlander, his relatives at last persuaded him to go home to

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his country place. He even promised Arenberg and his wife that he would go to Italy, in pursuance of a vow made to our lady of Loretto. Arenberg privately intimated to Stephen Ybarra that there was a certain oil, very apt to be efficacious in similar cases of irritation, which might be applied with prospect of success. If his father-in-law could only receive some ten thousand florins which he claimed as due to him from Government, this would do more to quiet him than a regiment of soldiers could. He also suggested that Fuentes should call upon the duke, while Secretary Ybarra should excuse himself by sickness for not having already paid his respects. This was done. Fuentes called. The duke returned the call, and the two conversed amicably about the death of the archduke, but entered into no political discussion.

Arschot then invited the whole council of state, except John Baptist Tassis, to a great dinner. He had prepared a paper to read to them in which he represented the great dangers likely to ensue from such an appointment as this of Fuentes, but declared that he washed his hands of the consequences, and that he had determined to leave a country where he was of so little account. He would then close his eyes and ears to everything that might occur, and thus escape the infamy of remaining in a country where so little account was made of him. He was urged to refrain from reading this paper and to invite Tassis. After a time he consented to suppress the document, but he manfully refused to bid the objectionable diplomatist to his banquet.

The dinner took place and passed off pleasantly enough. Arschot did not read his manifesto, but, as he warmed with wine, he talked a great deal of nonsense which, according to Stephen Ybarra, much resembled it, and he vowed that thenceforth he would be blind and dumb to all that might occur. A few days later, he paid a visit to the new governor-general, and took a peaceful farewell of him. "Your Majesty knows very well what he is," wrote Fuentes: "he is nothing but talk." Before leaving the country he sent a bitter complaint to Ybarra, to the effect that the king had entirely forgotten him, and imploring that financier's influence to procure for him some gratuity from his Majesty. He was in such necessity, he said, that it was no longer possible for him to maintain his household.

And with this petition the grandee of the obedient provinces shook the dust from his shoes, and left his natal soil for ever. He died on the 11th December of the same year in Venice.

His son the Prince of Chimay, his brother, and son-in-law, and the other obedient nobles, soon accommodated themselves to the new administration, much as they had been inclined to bluster at first about their privileges. The governor soon reported that matters were proceeding very, smoothly. There was a general return to the former docility now that such a disciplinarian as Fuentes held the reins.

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The opening scenes of the campaign between the Spanish governor and France were, as usual, in Picardy. The Marquis of Varambon made a demonstration in the neighbourhood of Dourlens—a fortified town on the river Authie, lying in an open plain, very deep in that province—while Fuentes took the field with eight thousand men, and laid siege to Le Catelet. He had his eye, however, upon Ham. That important stronghold was in the hands of a certain nobleman called De Gomeron, who had been an energetic Leaguer, and was now disposed, for a handsome consideration, to sell himself to the King of Spain. In the auction of governors and generals then going on in every part of France it had been generally found that Henry's money was more to be depended upon in the long run, although Philip's bids were often very high, and, for a considerable period, the payments regular. Gomeron's upset price for himself was twenty-five thousand crowns in cash, and a pension of eight thousand a year. Upon these terms he agreed to receive a Spanish garrison into the town, and to cause the French in the citadel to be sworn into the service of the Spanish king. Fuentes agreed to the bargain and paid the adroit tradesman, who knew so well how to turn a penny for himself, a large portion of the twenty-five thousand crowns upon the nail.

De Gomeron was to proceed to Brussels to receive the residue. His brother-in-law, M. d'Orville, commanded in the citadel, and so soon as the Spanish troops had taken possession of the town its governor claimed full payment of his services.

But difficulties awaited him in Brussels. He was informed that a French garrison could not be depended upon for securing the fortress, but that town and citadel must both be placed in Spanish hands. De Gomeron loudly protesting that this was not according to contract, was calmly assured, by command of Fuentes, that unless the citadel were at once evacuated and surrendered, he would not receive the balance of his twenty-five thousand crowns, and that he should instantly lose his head. Here was more than De Gomeron had bargained for; but this particular branch of commerce in revolutionary times, although lucrative, has always its risks. De Gomeron, thus driven to the wall, sent a letter by a Spanish messenger to his brother-in-law, ordering him to surrender the fortress. D'Orville—who meantime had been making his little arrangements with the other party—protested that the note had been written under duress, and refused to comply with its directions.

Time was pressing, for the Duke of Bouillon and the Count of St. Pol lay with a considerable force in the neighbourhood, obviously menacing Ham.



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Fuentes accordingly sent that distinguished soldier and historian, Don Carlos Coloma, with a detachment of soldiers to Brussels, with orders to bring Gomeron into camp. He was found seated at supper with his two young brothers, aged respectively sixteen and eighteen years, and was just putting a cherry into his mouth as Coloma entered the room. He remained absorbed in thought, trifling with the cherry without eating it, which Don Carlos set down as a proof of guilt: The three brothers were at once put in a coach, together with their sister, a nun of the age of twenty, and conveyed to the headquarters of Fuentes, who lay before Le Catelet, but six leagues from Ham.

Meantime D'Orville had completed his negotiations with Bouillon, and had agreed to surrender the fortress so soon as the Spanish troops should be driven from the town. The duke knowing that there was no time to lose, came with three thousand men before the place. His summons to surrender was answered by a volley of cannon-shot from the town defences. An assault was made and repulsed, D'Humieres, a most gallant officer and a favourite of King Henry, being killed, besides at least two hundred soldiers. The next attack was successful, the town was carried, and the Spanish garrison put to the sword.

D'Orville then, before giving up the citadel, demanded three hostages for the lives of his three brothers-in-law.

The hostages availed him little. Fuentes had already sent word to Gomeron's mother, that if the bargain were not fulfilled he would send her the heads of her three sons on three separate dishes. The distracted woman made her way, to D'Orville, and fell at his feet with tears and entreaties. It was too late, and D'Orville, unable to bear her lamentations, suddenly rushed from the castle, and nearly fell into the hands of the Spaniards as he fled from the scene. Two of the four cuirassiers, who alone of the whole garrison accompanied him, were taken prisoners. The governor escaped to unknown regions. Madame de Gomeron then appeared before Fuentes, and tried in vain to soften him. De Gomeron was at once beheaded in the sight of the whole camp. The two younger sons were retained in prison, but ultimately set at liberty. The town and citadel were thus permanently acquired by their lawful king, who was said to be more afflicted at the death of D'Humieres than rejoiced at the capture of Ham.

Meantime Colonel Verdugo, royal governor of Friesland, whose occupation in those provinces, now so nearly recovered by the republic, was gone, had led a force of six thousand foot, and twelve hundred horse across the French border, and was besieging La Ferte on the Cher. The siege was relieved by Bouillon on the 26th May, and the Spanish veteran was then ordered to take command in Burgundy. But his days were numbered. He had been sick of dysentery at Luxembourg during the summer, but after apparent recovery died suddenly on the 2nd September, and of course was supposed

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to have been poisoned. He was identified with the whole history of the Netherland wars. Born at Talavera de la Reyna, of noble parentage, as he asserted—although his mother was said to have sold dogs' meat, and he himself when a youth was a private soldier—he rose by steady conduct and hard fighting to considerable eminence in his profession. He was governor of Harlem after the famous siege, and exerted himself with some success to mitigate the ferocity of the Spaniards towards the Netherlanders at that epoch. He was marshal-general of the camp under Don John of Austria, and distinguished himself at the battle of Gemblours. He succeeded Count Renneberg as governor of Friesland and Groningen, and bore a manful part in most of the rough business that had been going on for a generation of mankind among those blood-stained wolds and morasses. He was often victorious, and quite as often soundly defeated; but he enjoyed campaigning, and was a glutton of work. He cared little for parade and ceremony, but was fond of recalling with pleasure the days when he was a soldier at four crowns a month, with an undivided fourth of one cloak, which he and three companions wore by turns on holidays. Although accused of having attempted to procure the assassination of William Lewis Nassau, he was not considered ill-natured, and he possessed much admiration for Prince Maurice. An iron-clad man, who had scarcely taken harness from his back all his life, he was a type of the Spanish commanders who had implanted international hatred deeply in the Netherland soul, and who, now that this result and no other had been accomplished, were rapidly passing away. He had been baptised Franco, and his family appellation of Verdugo meant executioner. Punning on these names he was wont to say, that he was frank for all good people, but a hangman for heretics; and he acted up to his gibe.

Foiled at Ham, Fuentes had returned to the siege of Catelet, and had soon reduced the place. He then turned his attention again to Dourlens, and invested that city. During the preliminary operations, another veteran commander in these wars, Valentin Pardieu de la Motte, recently created Count of Everbecque by Philip, who had been for a long time general-in-chief of the artillery, and was one of the most famous and experienced officers in the Spanish service, went out one fine moonlight night to reconnoitre the enemy, and to superintend the erection of batteries. As he was usually rather careless of his personal safety, and rarely known to put on his armour when going for such purposes into the trenches, it was remarked with some surprise, on this occasion, that he ordered his page to bring his accoutrements, and that he armed himself cap-a-pie before leaving his quarters. Nevertheless, before he had reached the redoubt, a bullet from the town struck him between the fold of his morion and the edge of his buckler and he fell dead without uttering a sound.



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Here again was a great loss to the king's service. La Motte, of a noble family in Burgundy, had been educated in the old fierce traditions of the Spanish system of warfare in the Netherlands, and had been one of the very hardest instruments that the despot could use for his bloody work. He had commanded a company of horse at the famous battle of St. Quintin, and since that opening event in Philip's reign he had been unceasingly—engaged in the Flemish wars. Alva made him a colonel of a Walloon regiment; the grand commander Requesena appointed him governor of Gravelines. On the whole he had been tolerably faithful to his colours; having changed sides but twice. After the pacification of Ghent he swore allegiance to the States-General, and assisted in the bombardment of the citadel of that place. Soon afterwards he went over to Don John of Austria, and surrendered to him the town and fortress of Gravelines, of which he then continued governor in the name of the king. He was fortunate in the accumulation of office and of money; rather unlucky in his campaigning. He was often wounded in action, and usually defeated when commanding in chief. He lost an arm at the siege of Sluy's, and had now lost his life almost by an accident. Although twice married he left no children to inherit his great estates, while the civil and military offices left vacant by his death were sufficient to satisfy the claims of five aspiring individuals. The Count of Varax succeeded him as general of artillery; but it was difficult to find a man to replace La Motte, possessing exactly the qualities which had made that warrior so valuable to his king. The type was rapidly disappearing, and most fortunately for humanity, if half the stories told of him by grave chroniclers, accustomed to discriminate between history and gossip, are to be believed. He had committed more than one cool homicide. Although not rejoicing in the same patronymic as his Spanish colleague of Friesland, he too was ready on occasion to perform hangman's work. When sergeant-major in Flanders, he had himself volunteered—so ran the chronicle—to do execution on a poor wretch found guilty of professing the faith of Calvin; and, with his own hands, had prepared a fire of straw, tied his victim to the stake, and burned him to cinders. Another Netherlander for the name crime of heresy had been condemned to be torn to death by horses. No one could be found to carry out the sentence. The soldiers under La Motte's command broke into mutiny rather than permit themselves to be used for such foul purposes; but the ardent young sergeant-major came forward, tied the culprit by the arms and legs to two horses, and himself whipped them to their work till it was duly accomplished. Was it strange that in Philip's reign such energy should be rewarded by wealth, rank, and honour? Was not such a labourer in the vineyard worthy of his hire?



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Still another eminent chieftain in the king's service disappeared at this time—one who, although unscrupulous and mischievous enough in his day, was however not stained by any suspicion of crimes like these. Count Charles Mansfeld, tired of governing his decrepit parent Peter Ernest, who, since the appointment of Fuentes, had lost all further chance of governing the Netherlands, had now left Philip's service and gone to the Turkish wars. For Amurath III., who had died in the early days of the year, had been succeeded by a sultan as warlike as himself. Mahomet III., having strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession, handsomely buried them in cypress coffins by the side of their father, and having subsequently sacked and drowned ten infant princes posthumously born to Amurath, was at leisure to carry the war through Transylvania and Hungary, up to the gates of Vienna, with renewed energy. The Turk, who could enforce the strenuous rules of despotism by which all secundogenitures and collateral claimants in the Ottoman family were thus provided for, was a foe to be dealt with seriously. The power of the Moslems at that day was a full match for the holy Roman Empire. The days were far distant when the grim Turk's head was to become a mockery and a show; and when a pagan empire, born of carnage and barbarism, was to be kept alive in Europe when it was ready to die, by the collective efforts of Christian princes. Charles Mansfeld had been received with great enthusiasm at the court of Rudolph, where he was created a prince of the Empire, and appointed to the chief command of the Imperial armies under the Archduke Matthias. But his warfare was over. At the siege of Gran he was stricken with sickness and removed to Comorn, where he lingered some weeks. There, on the 24th August, as he lay half-dozing on his couch, he was told that the siege was at last successful; upon which he called for a goblet of wine, drained it eagerly, and then lay resting his head on his hand, like one absorbed in thought. When they came to arouse him from his reverie they found that he was dead. His father still remained superfluous in the Netherlands, hating and hated by Fuentes; but no longer able to give that governor so much annoyance as during his son's life-time the two had been able to create for Alexander Farnese. The octogenarian was past work and past mischief now; but there was one older soldier than he still left upon the stage, the grandest veteran in Philip's service, and now the last survivor, except the decrepit Peter Ernest, of the grim commanders of Alva's school. Christopher Mondragon—that miracle of human endurance, who had been an old man when the great duke arrived in the Netherlands—was still governor of Antwerp citadel, and men were to speak of him yet once more before he passed from the stage.



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I return from this digression to the siege of Dourlens. The death of La Motte made no difference in the plans of Fuentes. He was determined to reduce the place preparatively to more important operations. Bouillon was disposed to relieve it, and to that end had assembled a force of eight thousand men within the city of Amiens. By midsummer the Spaniards had advanced with their mines and galleries close to the walls of the city. Meantime Admiral Villars, who had gained so much renown by defending Rouen against Henry *IV.*, and who had subsequently made such an excellent bargain with that monarch before entering his service, arrived at Amiens. On the 24th July an expedition was sent from that city towards Dourlens. Bouillon and St. Pol commanded in person a force of six hundred picked cavalry. Villars and Sanseval each led half as many, and there was a supporting body of twelve hundred musketeers. This little army convoyed a train of wagons, containing ammunition and other supplies for the beleaguered town. But Fuentes, having sufficiently strengthened his works, sallied forth with two thousand infantry, and a flying squadron of Spanish horse, to intercept them. It was the eve of St. James, the patron saint of Spain, at the sound, of whose name as a war-cry so many battle-fields had been won in the Netherlands, so many cities sacked, so many wholesale massacres perpetrated. Fuentes rode in the midst of his troops with the royal standard of Spain floating above him. On the other hand Villars, glittering in magnificent armour and mounted on a superbly caparisoned charger came on, with his three hundred troopers, as if about to ride a course in a tournament. The battle which ensued was one of the most bloody for the numbers engaged, and the victory one of the most decisive recorded in this war. Villars charged prematurely, furiously, foolishly. He seemed jealous of Bouillon, and disposed to show the sovereign to whom he had so recently given his allegiance that an ancient Leaguer and Papist was a better soldier for his purpose than the most grizzled Huguenot in his army. On the other hand the friends of Villars accused the duke of faintheartedness, or at least of an excessive desire to save himself and his own command. The first impetuous onset of the admiral was successful, and he drove half-a-dozen companies of Spaniards before him. But he had ventured too far from his supports. Bouillon had only intended a feint, instead of a desperate charge; the Spaniards were rallied, and the day was saved by that cool and ready soldier, Carlos Coloma. In less than an hour the French were utterly defeated and cut to pieces. Bouillon escaped to Amiens with five hundred men; this was all that was left of the expedition. The horse of Villars was shot under him and the admiral's leg was broken as he fell. He was then taken prisoner by two lieutenants of Carlos Coloma; but while these warriors were enjoying, by anticipation, the enormous ransom they should derive

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from so illustrious a captive, two other lieutenants in the service of Marshal de Rosnes came up and claimed their share in the prize. While the four were wrangling, the admiral called out to them in excellent Spanish not to dispute, for he had money enough to satisfy them all. Meantime the Spanish commissary—general of cavalry, Contreras, came up, rebuked this unseemly dispute before the enemy had been fairly routed, and, in order to arrange the quarrel impartially, ordered his page to despatch De Villars on the spot. The page, without a word, placed his arquebus to the admiral's forehead and shot him dead.

So perished a bold and brilliant soldier, and a most unscrupulous politician. Whether the cause of his murder was mere envy on the part of the commissary at having lost a splendid opportunity for prize-money, or hatred to an ancient Leaguer thus turned renegade, it is fruitless now to enquire.

Villars would have paid two hundred thousand crowns for his ransom, so that the assassination was bad as a mercantile speculation; but it was pretended by the friends of Contreras that rescue was at hand. It is certain, however, that nothing was attempted by the French to redeem their total overthrow. Count Belin was wounded and fell into the hands of Coloma. Sanseval was killed; and a long list of some of the most brilliant nobles in France was published by the Spaniards as having perished on that bloody field. This did not prevent a large number of these victims, however, from enjoying excellent health for many long years afterwards, although their deaths have been duly recorded in chronicle from that day to our own times.

But Villars and Sanseval were certainly slain, and Fuentes sent their bodies, with a courteous letter, to the Duke of Nevers, at Amiens, who honoured them with a stately funeral.

There was much censure cast on both Bouillon and Villars respectively by the antagonists of each chieftain; and the contest as to the cause of the defeat was almost as animated as the skirmish itself. Bouillon was censured for grudging a victory to the Catholics, and thus leaving the admiral to his fate. Yet it is certain that the Huguenot duke himself commanded a squadron composed almost entirely of papists. Villars, on the other hand, was censured for rashness, obstinacy, and greediness for distinction; yet it is probable that Fuentes might have been defeated had the charges of Bouillon been as determined and frequent as were those of his colleague. Savigny de Rosnes, too, the ancient Leaguer, who commanded under Fuentes, was accused of not having sufficiently followed up the victory, because unwilling that his Spanish friends should entirely trample upon his own countrymen. Yet there is no doubt whatever that De Rosnes was as bitter an enemy to his own country as the most ferocious Spaniard of them all. It has rarely been found in civil war that the man who draws his sword against his fatherland, under the banner of the foreigner, is actuated by any lingering

tenderness for the nation he betrays; and the renegade Frenchman was in truth the animating spirit of Fuentes during the whole of his brilliant campaign. The Spaniard's victories were, indeed, mainly attributable to the experience, the genius, and the rancour of De Rosnes.



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But debates over a lost battle are apt to be barren. Meantime Fuentes, losing no time in controversy, advanced upon the city of Dourlens, was repulsed twice, and carried it on the third assault, exactly one week after the action just recounted. The Spaniards and Leaguers, howling "Remember Ham!" butchered without mercy the garrison and all the citizens, save a small number of prisoners likely to be lucrative. Six hundred of the townspeople and two thousand five hundred French soldiers were killed within a few hours. Well had Fuentes profited by the relationship and tuition of Alva!

The Count of Dinant and his brother De Ronsoy were both slain, and two or three hundred thousand florins were paid in ransom by those who escaped with life. The victims were all buried outside of the town in one vast trench, and the effluvia bred a fever which carried off most of the surviving inhabitants. Dourlens became for the time a desert.

Fuentes now received deputies with congratulations from the obedient provinces, especially from Hainault, Artois, and Lille. He was also strongly urged to attempt the immediate reduction of Cambray, to which end those envoys were empowered to offer contributions of four hundred and fifty thousand florins and a contingent of seven thousand infantry. Berlaymont, too, bishop of Tournay and archbishop of Cambray, was ready to advance forty thousand florins in the same cause.

Fuentes, in the highest possible spirits at his success, and having just been reinforced by Count Bucquoy with a fresh Walloon regiment of fifteen hundred foot and with eight hundred and fifty of the mutineers from Tirlemont and Chapelle, who were among the choicest of Spanish veterans, was not disposed to let the grass grow under his feet. Within four days after the sack of Dourlens he broke up his camp, and came before Cambray with an army of twelve thousand foot and nearly four thousand horse. But before narrating the further movements of the vigorous new governor-general, it is necessary to glance at the military operations in the eastern part of the Netherlands and upon the Rhine.

The States-General had reclaimed to their authority nearly all that important region lying beyond the Yssel—the solid Frisian bulwark of the republic—but there were certain points nearer the line where Upper and Nether Germany almost blend into one, which yet acknowledged the name of the king. The city of Groenlo, or Grol, not a place of much interest or importance in itself, but close to the frontier, and to that destined land of debate, the duchies of Cleves, Juliers, and Berg, still retained its Spanish garrison. On the 14th July Prince Maurice of Nassau came before the city with six thousand infantry, some companies of cavalry, and sixteen pieces of artillery. He made his approaches in form, and after a week's operations he fired three volleys, according to his custom, and summoned the place to capitulate. Governor Jan van Stirum replied stoutly that he would hold the place for God and the king to the last drop of his blood. Meantime there was hope of help from the outside.



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Maurice was a vigorous young commander, but there was a man to be dealt with who had been called the “good old Mondragon” when the prince was in his cradle; and who still governed the citadel of Antwerp, and was still ready for an active campaign.

Christopher Mondragon was now ninety-two years old. Not often in the world’s history has a man of that age been capable of personal, participation in the joys of the battlefield, whatever natural reluctance veterans are apt to manifest at relinquishing high military control.

But Mondragon looked not with envy but with admiration on the growing fame of the Nassau chieftain, and was disposed, before he himself left the stage, to match himself with the young champion.

So soon as he heard of the intended demonstration of Maurice against Grol, the ancient governor of Antwerp collected a little army by throwing together all the troops that could be spared from the various garrisons within his command. With two Spanish regiments, two thousand Swiss, the Walloon troops of De Grisons, and the Irish regiment of Stanley—in all seven thousand foot and thirteen hundred horse—Mondragon marched straight across Brabant and Gelderland to the Rhine. At Kaiserworth he reviewed his forces, and announced his intention of immediately crossing the river. There was a murmur of disapprobation among officers and men at what they considered the foolhardy scheme of mad old Mondragon. But the general had not campaigned a generation before, at the age of sixty-nine, in the bottom of the sea, and waded chin-deep for six hours long of an October night, in the face of a rising tide from the German Ocean and of an army of Zeelanders, to be frightened now at the summer aspect of the peaceful Rhine.

The wizened little old man, walking with difficulty by the aid of a staff, but armed in proof, with plumes waving gallantly from his iron headpiece, and with his rapier at his side, ordered a chair to be brought to the river’s edge. Then calmly seating himself in the presence of his host, he stated that he should not rise from that chair until the last man had crossed the river. Furthermore, he observed that it was not only his purpose to relieve the city of Grol, but to bring Maurice to an action, and to defeat him, unless he retired. The soldiers ceased to murmur, the pontoons were laid, the river was passed, and on the 25th July, Maurice, hearing of the veteran’s approach, and not feeling safe in his position, raised the siege of the city. Burning his camp and everything that could not be taken with him on his march, the prince came in perfect order to Borkelo, two Dutch miles from Grol. Here he occupied himself for some time in clearing the country of brigands who in the guise of soldiers infested that region and made the little cities of Deutecom, Anholt, and Heerenberg unsafe. He ordered the inhabitants of these places to send out detachments to beat the bushes for his cavalry, while Hohenlo was ordered to hunt the heaths and wolds thoroughly with packs of bloodhounds until every man and beast to be found lurking in those wild regions should be extirpated. By these vigorous

and cruel, but perhaps necessary, measures the brigands were at last extirpated, and honest people began to sleep in their beds.



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On the 18th August Maurice took up a strong position at Bislich, not far from Wesel, where the River Lippe empties itself into the Rhine. Mondragon, with his army strengthened by reinforcements from garrisons in Gelderland, and by four hundred men brought by Frederic, van den Berg from Grol, had advanced to a place called Walston in den Ham, in the neighbourhood of Wesel. The Lippe flowed between the two hostile forces. Although he had broken up his siege, the prince was not disposed to renounce his whole campaign before trying conclusions with his veteran antagonist. He accordingly arranged an ambush with much skill, by means of which he hoped to bring on a general engagement and destroy Mondragon and his little army.

His cousin and favourite lieutenant, Philip Nassau, was entrusted with the preliminaries. That adventurous commander, with a picked force of seven hundred cavalry, moved quietly from the camp on the evening of the 1st September. He took with him his two younger brothers, Ernest and Lewis Gunther, who, as has been seen, had received the promise of the eldest brother of the family, William Lewis, that they should be employed from time to time in any practical work that might be going forward. Besides these young gentlemen, several of the most famous English and Dutch commanders were on the expedition; the brothers Paul and Marcellus Bax, Captains Parker, Cutler, and Robert Vere, brother of Sir Francis, among the number.

Early in the morning of the 2nd September the force crossed the Lippe, according to orders, keeping a pontoon across the stream to secure their retreat.

They had instructions thus to feel the enemy at early dawn, and, as he was known to have foraging parties out every morning along the margin of the river, to make a sudden descent upon their pickets, and to capture those companies before they could effect their escape or be reinforced. Afterwards they were to retreat across the Lippe, followed, as it was hoped would be the case, by the troops: of Mondragon, anxious to punish this piece of audacity. Meantime Maurice with five thousand infantry, the rest of his cavalry, and several pieces of artillery, awaited their coming, posted behind some hills in the neighbourhood of Wesel.

The plot of the young commander was an excellent one, but the ancient campaigner on the other side of the river had not come all the way from his comfortable quarters in Antwerp to be caught napping on that September morning. Mondragon had received accurate information from his scouts as to what was going on in the enemy's camp; and as to the exact position of Maurice. He was up long before daybreak—"the good old Christopher"—and himself personally arranged a counter-ambush. In the fields lying a little back from the immediate neighbourhood of, the Lippe he posted the mass of his cavalry, supported by a well-concealed force of infantry. The pickets on the stream and the foraging companies were left to do their usual work as if nothing were likely to happen.



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Philip Nassau galloped cheerfully forward; according to the well-concerted plan, sending Cutler and Marcellus Bax with a handful of troopers to pounce upon the enemy's pickets. When those officers got to the usual foraging ground they, came upon a much larger cavalry force than they had looked for; and, suspecting something wrong; dashed back— again to give information to Count Philip. That impatient commander, feeling sure of his game unless this foolish delay should give the foraging companies time to, escape; ordered an immediate advance with his whole cavalry force: The sheriff of Zallant was ordered to lead the way. He objected that the pass, leading through a narrow lane and opening by a gate into an open field, was impassable for more than two troopers abreast; and that the enemy was in force beyond. Philips scorning these words of caution, and exclaiming that seventy-five lancers were enough to put fifty carabineers to rout; put on his casque, drew his sword; and sending his brother Lewis to summon Kinski and Donck; dashed into the pass, accompanied by the two counts and, a couple of other nobles. The sheriff, seeing this, followed him at full gallop; and after him came the troopers of Barchon, of Du Bois, and of Paul Bax; riding single file but in much disorder. When they had all entered inextricably into the lane, with the foremost of the lancers already passing through the gate, they discovered the enemy's cavalry and infantry drawn up in force upon the watery, heathery pastures beyond. There was at once a scene of confusion. To use lances was impossible, while they were all struggling together through the narrow passage offering themselves an easy prey to the enemy as they slowly emerged into the gelds. The foremost defended themselves with sabre and pistol as well as they could. The hindmost did their best to escape, and rode for their lives to the other side of the river. All trampled upon each other and impeded each other's movements. There was a brief engagement, bloody, desperate, hand to hand, and many Spaniards fell before the entrapped Netherlanders. But there could not be a moment's doubt as to the issue. Count Philip went down in the beginning of the action, shot through the body by an arquebus, discharged so close to him that his clothes were set on fire. As there was no water within reach the flames could be extinguished at last only by rolling him over, and over, wounded as he was, among the sand and heather. Count Ernest Solms was desperately wounded at the same time. For a moment both gentlemen attempted to effect their escape by mounting on one horse, but both fell to the ground exhausted and were taken prisoners. Ernest Nassau was also captured. His young brother, Lewis Gunther, saved himself by swimming the river. Count Kinski was mortally wounded. Robert Vere, too, fell into the enemy's hands, and was afterwards murdered in cold blood. Marcellus Bax, who had returned to the field by a circuitous

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path, still under the delusion that he was about handsomely to cut off the retreat of the foraging companies, saved himself and a handful of cavalry by a rapid flight, so soon as he discovered the enemy drawn up in line of battle. Cutler and Parker were equally fortunate. There was less than a hundred of the States' troops killed, and it is probable that a larger number of the Spaniards fell. But the loss of Philip Nassau, despite the debauched life and somewhat reckless valour of that soldier, was a very severe one to the army and to his family. He was conveyed to Rheinberg, where his wounds were dressed. As he lay dying he was courteously visited by Mondragon, and by many other Spanish officers, anxious to pay their respects to so distinguished and warlike a member of an illustrious house. He received them with dignity, and concealed his physical agony so as to respond to their conversation as became a Nassau. His cousin, Frederic van den Berg, who was among the visitors, indecently taunted him with his position; asking him what he had expected by serving the cause of the Beggars. Philip turned from him with impatience and bade him hold his peace. At midnight he died.

William of Orange and his three brethren had already laid down their lives for the republic, and now his eldest brother's son had died in the same cause. "He has carried the name of Nassau with honour into the grave," said his brother Lewis William, to their father. Ten others of the house, besides many collateral relations, were still in arms for their adopted country. Rarely in history has a single noble race so entirely identified itself with a nation's record in its most heroic epoch as did that of Orange-Nassau with the liberation of Holland.

Young Ernest Solms, brother of Count Everard, lay in the same chamber with Philip Nassau, and died on the following day. Their bodies were sent by Mondragon with a courteous letter to Maurice at Bisslich. Ernest Nassau was subsequently ransomed for ten thousand florins.

This skirmish on the Lippe has no special significance in a military point of view, but it derives more than a passing interest, not only from the death of many a brave and distinguished soldier, but for the illustration of human vigour triumphing, both physically and mentally, over the infirmities of old age, given by the achievement of Christopher Mondragon. Alone he had planned his expedition across the country from Antwerp, alone he had insisted on crossing the Rhine, while younger soldiers hesitated; alone, with his own active brain and busy hands, he had outwitted the famous young chieftain of the Netherlands, counteracted his subtle policy, and set the counter-ambush by which his choicest cavalry were cut to pieces, and one of his bravest generals slain. So far could the icy blood of ninety-two prevail against the vigour of twenty-eight.

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The two armies lay over against each other, with the river between them, for some days longer, but it was obvious that nothing further would be attempted on either side. Mondragon had accomplished the object for which he had marched from Brabant. He had, spoiled the autumn campaign of Maurice, and, was, now disposed to return before winter to, his own quarters. He sent a trumpet accordingly to his antagonist, begging him, half in jest, to have more consideration for his infirmities than to keep him out in his old age in such foul weather, but to allow him the military honour of being last to break up camp. Should Maurice consent to move away, Mondragon was ready to pledge himself not to pursue him, and within three days to leave his own entrenchments.

The proposition was not granted, and very soon afterwards the Spaniard, deciding to retire, crossed the Rhine on the 11th October. Maurice made a slight attempt at pursuit, sending Count William Lewis with some cavalry, who succeeded in cutting off a few wagons. The army, however, returned safely, to be dispersed into various garrisons.

This was Mondragon's last feat of arms. Less than three months afterwards, in Antwerp citadel, as the veteran was washing his hands previously to going to the dinner-table, he sat down and died. Strange to say, this man—who had spent almost a century on the battlefield, who had been a soldier in nearly every war that had been waged in any part of Europe during that most belligerent age, who had come an old man to the Netherlands before Alva's arrival, and had ever since been constantly and personally engaged in the vast Flemish tragedy which had now lasted well nigh thirty years—had never himself lost a drop of blood. His battle-fields had been on land and water, on ice, in fire, and at the bottom of the sea, but he had never received a wound. Nay, more; he had been blown up in a fortress—the castle of Danvilliers in Luxembourg, of which he was governor—where all perished save his wife and himself, and, when they came to dig among the ruins, they excavated at last the ancient couple, protected by the framework of a window in the embrasure of which they had been seated, without a scratch or a bruise. He was a Biscayan by descent, but born in Medina del Campo. A strict disciplinarian, very resolute and pertinacious, he had the good fortune to be beloved by his inferiors, his equals, and his superiors. He was called the father of his soldiers, the good Mondragon, and his name was unstained by any of those deeds of ferocity which make the chronicles of the time resemble rather the history of wolves than of men. To a married daughter, mother of several children, he left a considerable fortune.

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Maurice broke up his camp soon after the departure of his antagonist, and paused for a few days at Arnheim to give honourable burial to his cousin Philip and Count Solms. Meantime Sir Francis Vere was detached, with three regiments, which were to winter in Overijssel, towards Weerd castle, situate at a league's distance from Ysselsburg, and defended by a garrison of twenty-six men under Captain Pruys. That doughty commandant, on being summoned to surrender, obstinately refused. Vere, according to Maurice's orders, then opened with his artillery against the place, which soon capitulated in great panic and confusion. The captain demanded the honours of war. Vere told him in reply that the honours of war were halts for the garrison who had dared to defend such a hovel against artillery. The twenty-six were accordingly ordered to draw black and white straws. This was done, and the twelve drawing white straws were immediately hanged; the thirteenth receiving his life on consenting to act as executioner for his comrades. The commandant was despatched first of all. The rope broke, but the English soldiers held him under the water of the ditch until he was drowned. The castle was then thoroughly sacked, the women being sent unharmed to Ysselsburg.

Maurice then shipped the remainder of his troops along the Rhine and Waal to their winter quarters and returned to the Hague. It was the feeblest year's work yet done by the stadholder.

Meantime his great ally, the Huguenot-Catholic Prince of Bearne, was making a dashing, and, on the whole, successful campaign in the heart of his own kingdom. The constable of Castile, Don Ferdinando de Velasco, one of Spain's richest grandees and poorest generals, had been sent with an army of ten thousand men to take the field in Burgundy against the man with whom the great Farnese had been measuring swords so lately, and with not unmingled success, in Picardy. Biron, with a sudden sweep, took possession of Aussone, Autun, and Beaune, but on one adventurous day found himself so deeply engaged with a superior force of the enemy in the neighbourhood of Fontaine Francaise, or St. Seine, where France's great river takes its rise, as to be nearly cut off and captured. But Henry himself was already in the field, and by one of those mad, reckless impulses which made him so adorable as a soldier and yet so profoundly censurable as a commander-in-chief, he flung himself, like a young lieutenant, with a mere handful of cavalry, into the midst of the fight, and at the imminent peril of his own life succeeded in rescuing the marshal and getting off again unscathed. On other occasions Henry said he had fought for victory, but on that for dear life; and, even as in the famous and foolish skirmish at Aumale three years before, it was absence of enterprise or lack of cordiality on the part of his antagonists, that alone prevented a captive king from being exhibited as a trophy of triumph for the expiring League.



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But the constable of Castile was not born to cheer the heart of his prudent master with such a magnificent spectacle. Velasco fell back to Gray and obstinately refused to stir from his entrenchments, while Henry before his eyes laid siege to Dijon. On the 28th June the capital of Burgundy surrendered to its sovereign, but no temptations could induce the constable to try the chance of a battle. Henry's movements in the interior were more successful than were the operations nearer the frontier, but while the monarch was thus cheerfully fighting for his crown in France, his envoys were winning a still more decisive campaign for him in Rome.

D'Ossat and Perron had accomplished their diplomatic task with consummate ability, and, notwithstanding the efforts and the threats of the Spanish ambassador and the intrigues of his master, the absolution was granted. The pope arose early on the morning of the 5th August, and walked barefoot from his palace of Mount Cavallo to the church of Maria Maggiore, with his eyes fixed on the ground, weeping loudly and praying fervently. He celebrated mass in the church, and then returned as he went, saluting no one on the road and shutting himself up in his palace afterwards. The same ceremony was performed ten days later on the festival of our Lady's Ascension. In vain, however, had been the struggle on the part of his Holiness to procure from the ambassador the deposition of the crown of France in his hands, in order that the king might receive it back again as a free gift and concession from the chief pontiff. Such a triumph was not for Rome, nor could even the publication of the Council of Trent in France be conceded except with a saving clause "as to matters which could not be put into operation without troubling the repose of the kingdom." And to obtain this clause the envoys declared "that they had been obliged to sweat blood and water."

On the 17th day of September the absolution was proclaimed with great pomp and circumstance from the gallery of St. Peter's, the holy father seated on the highest throne of majesty, with his triple crown on his head, and all his cardinals and bishops about him in their most effulgent robes.

The silver trumpets were blown, while artillery roared from the castle of St. Angelo, and for two successive nights Rome was in a blaze of bonfires and illumination, in a whirl of bell-ringing, feasting, and singing of hosannaha. There had not been such a merry-making in the eternal city since the pope had celebrated solemn thanksgiving for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The king was almost beside himself with rapture when the great news reached him, and he straightway wrote letters, overflowing with gratitude and religious enthusiasm, to the pontiff and expressed his regret that military operations did not allow him to proceed at once to Rome in person to kiss the holy father's feet.

The narrative returns to Fuentes, who was left before the walls of Cambray.



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That venerable ecclesiastical city; pleasantly seated amid gardens, orchards, and green pastures, watered, by the winding Scheld, was well fortified after the old manner, but it was especially defended and dominated by a splendid pentagonal citadel built by Charles V. It was filled with fine churches, among which the magnificent cathedral was pre-eminent, and with many other stately edifices. The population was thrifty, active, and turbulent, like that of all those Flemish and Walloon cities which the spirit of mediaeval industry had warmed for a time into vehement little republics.

But, as has already been depicted in these pages, the Celtic element had been more apt to receive than consistent to retain the generous impress which had once been stamped on all the Netherlands. The Walloon provinces had fallen away from their Flemish sisters and seemed likely to accept a permanent yoke, while in the territory of the united States, as John Baptist Tassis was at that very moment pathetically observing in a private letter to Philip, “with the coming up of a new generation educated as heretics from childhood, who had never heard what the word king means, it was likely to happen at last that the king’s memory, being wholly forgotten nothing would remain in the land but heresy alone.” From this sad fate Cambray had been saved. Gavre d’Inchy had seventeen years before surrendered the city to the Duke of Alencon during that unlucky personage’s brief and base career in the Netherlands, all, that was left of his visit being the semi-sovereignty which the notorious Balagny had since that time enjoyed, in the archiepiscopal city. This personage, a natural son of Monluc, Bishop of Valence, and nephew of the, distinguished Marshal Monluc was one of the most fortunate and the most ignoble of all the soldiers of fortune who had played their part at this epoch in the Netherlands. A poor creature himself, he had a heroine for a wife. Renee, the sister of Bussy d’Amboise, had vowed to unite herself to a man who would avenge the assassination of her brother by the Count Montsoreau? Balagny readily agreed to perform the deed, and accordingly espoused the high-born dame, but it does not appear that he ever wreaked her vengeance on the murderer. He had now governed Cambray until the citizens and the whole countryside were galled and exhausted by his grinding tyranny, his inordinate pride, and his infamous extortions. His latest achievement had been to force upon his subjects a copper currency bearing the nominal value of silver, with the same blasting effects which such experiments in political economy are apt to produce on princes and peoples. He had been a Royalist, a Guisist, a Leaguer, a Dutch republican, by turns, and had betrayed all the parties, at whose expense he had alternately filled his coffers. During the past year he had made up his mind—like most of the conspicuous politicians and campaigners of France—that the moribund League was only fit to be trampled upon by its recent worshippers, and he had made accordingly one of the very best bargains with Henry *iv.* that had yet been made, even at that epoch of self-vending grandees.



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Henry, by treaty ratified in August, 1594, had created him Prince of Cambray and Marshal of France, so that the man who had been receiving up to that very moment a monthly subsidy of seven thousand two hundred dollars from the King of Spain was now gratified with a pension to about the same yearly amount by the King of France. During the autumn Henry had visited Cambray, and the new prince had made wondrous exhibitions of loyalty to the sovereign whom he had done his best all his life to exclude from his kingdom. There had been a ceaseless round of tournaments, festivals, and masquerades in the city in honour of the Huguenot chieftain, now changed into the most orthodox and most legitimate of monarchs, but it was not until midsummer of the present year that Balagny was called on to defend his old possessions and his new principality against a well-seasoned army and a vigorous commander. Meanwhile his new patron was so warmly occupied in other directions that it might be difficult for him to send assistance to the beleaguered city.

On the 14th August Fuentes began his siege operations. Before the investment had been completed the young Prince of Rhetelois, only fifteen years of age, son of the Duke of Nevers, made his entrance into the city attended by thirty of his father's archers. De Vich, too, an experienced and faithful commander, succeeded in bringing four or five hundred dragoons through the enemy's lines. These meagre reinforcements were all that reached the place; for, although the States-General sent two or three thousand Scotchmen and Zeelanders, under Justinus of Nassau, to Henry, that he might be the better enabled to relieve this important frontier city, the king's movements were not sufficiently prompt to turn the force to good account Balagny was left with a garrison of three thousand French and Walloons in the city, besides five hundred French in the fortress.

After six weeks steady drawing of parallels and digging of mines Fuentes was ready to open his batteries. On the 26th September, the news, very much exaggerated, of Mondragon's brilliant victory near Wessel, and of the deaths of Philip Nassau and Ernest Solms, reached the Spanish camp. Immense was the rejoicing. Triumphant salutes from eighty-seven cannon and many thousand muskets shook the earth and excited bewilderment and anxiety within the walls of the city. Almost immediately afterwards a tremendous cannonade was begun and so vigorously sustained that the burghers, and part of the garrison, already half rebellious with hatred to Balagny, began loudly to murmur as the balls came flying into their streets. A few days later an insurrection broke out. Three thousand citizens, with red flags flying, and armed to the teeth were discovered at daylight drawn up in the market place. Balagny came down from the citadel and endeavoured to calm the tumult, but was received with execrations. They had been promised, shouted the insurgents, that



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every road about Cambray was to swarm with French soldiers under their formidable king, kicking the heads of the Spaniards in all directions. And what had they got? a child with thirty archers, sent by his father, and half a man at the head of four hundred dragoons. To stand a siege under such circumstances against an army of fifteen thousand Spaniards, and to take Balagny's copper as if it were gold, was more than could be asked of respectable burghers.

The allusion to the young prince Rhetelois and to De Vich, who had lost a leg in the wars, was received with much enthusiasm. Balagny, appalled at the fury of the people, whom he had so long been trampling upon while their docility lasted, shrank back before their scornful denunciations into the citadel.

But his wife was not appalled. This princess had from the beginning of the siege showed a courage and an energy worthy of her race. Night and day she had gone the rounds of the ramparts, encouraging and directing the efforts of the garrison. She had pointed batteries against the enemy's works, and, with her own hands, had fired the cannon. She now made her appearance in the market-place, after her husband had fled, and did her best to assuage the tumult, and to arouse the mutineers to a sense of duty or of shame. She plucked from her bosom whole handfuls of gold which she threw among the bystanders, and she was followed by a number of carts filled with sacks of coin ready to be exchanged for the debased currency.

Expressing contempt for the progress made by the besieging army, and for the, slight impression so far produced upon the defences of the city, she snatched a pike from a soldier and offered in person to lead the garrison to the breach. Her audience knew full well that this was no theatrical display, but that the princess was ready as the boldest warrior to lead a forlorn hope or to repel the bloodiest assault. Nor, from a military point of view, was their situation desperate. But their hatred and scorn for Balagny could not be overcome by any passing sentiment of admiration for his valiant though imperious wife. No one followed her to the breach. Exclaiming that she at least would never surrender, and that she would die a sovereign princess rather than live a subject, Renee de Balagny retained to the citadel.

The town soon afterwards capitulated, and as the Spanish soldiers, on entering, observed the slight damage that had been caused by their batteries, they were most grateful to the faint-hearted or mutinous condition by which they had been spared the expense of an assault.

The citadel was now summoned to surrender; and Balagny agreed, in case he should not be relieved within six days, to accept what was considered honourable terms. It proved too late to expect succour from Henry, and Balagny, but lately a reigning prince, was fain to go forth on the appointed day and salute his conqueror. But the princess



kept her vow. She had done her best to defend her dominions and to live a sovereign, and now there was nothing left her but to die. With bitter reproaches on her husband's pusillanimity, with tears and sobs of rage and shame, she refused food, spurned the idea of capitulation, and expired before the 9th of October.

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On that day a procession moved out of the citadel gates. Balagny, with a son of eleven years of age, the Prince of Rhetelois, the Commander De Vich; and many other distinguished personages, all magnificently attired, came forth at the head of what remained of the garrison. The soldiers, numbering thirteen hundred foot and two hundred and forty horse, marched with colours flying, drums beating, bullet in mouth, and all the other recognised palliatives of military disaster. Last of all came a hearse, bearing the coffin of the Princess of Cambray. Fuentes saluted the living leaders of the procession, and the dead heroine; with stately courtesy, and ordered an escort as far as Peronne.

Balagny met with a cool reception from Henry at St. Quintin, but subsequently made his peace, and espoused the sister of the king's mistress, Gabrielle d'Estrees. The body of Gavre d'Inchy, which had been buried for years, was dug up and thrown into a gutter.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Deal with his enemy as if sure to become his friend
Mondragon was now ninety-two years old
More catholic than the pope
Octogenarian was past work and past mischief
Sacked and drowned ten infant princes
Strangled his nineteen brothers on his accession

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