

History of the United Netherlands, 1595-96 eBook

History of the United Netherlands, 1595-96 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. 68

History of the United Netherlands, 1595-1596

CHAPTER XXXII.

Archduke Cardinal Albert appointed governor of the Netherlands— Return of Philip William from captivity—His adherence to the King of Spain—Notice of the Marquis of Varambon, Count Varax, and other new officers—Henry's communications with Queen Elizabeth—Madame de Monceaux—Conversation of Henry with the English ambassador— Marseilles secured by the Duke of Guise—The fort of Rysbank taken by De Roane Calais in the hands of the Spanish—Assistance from England solicited by Henry—Unhandsome conditions proposed by Elizabeth—Annexation of Calais to the obedient provinces—Pirates of Dunkirk—Uneasiness of the Netherlanders with regard to the designs of Elizabeth—Her protestations of sincerity—Expedition of Dutch and English forces to Spain—Attack on the Spanish war-ships— Victory of the allies—Flag



of the Republic planted on the fortress of Cadiz—Capitulation of the city—Letter of Elizabeth to the Dutch Admirals—State of affairs in France—Proposition of the Duke of Montpensier for the division of the kingdom—Successes of the Cardinal Archduke in Normandy—He proceeds to Flanders—Siege and capture of Hulst—Projected alliance against Spain—Interview of De Sancy with Lord Burghley—Diplomatic conference at Greenwich—Formation of a league against Spain—Duplicity of the treaty—Affairs in Germany—Battle between the Emperor and the Grand Turk—Endeavours of Philip to counteract the influence of the league—His interference in the affairs of Germany—Secret intrigue of Henry with Spain—Philip's second attempt at the conquest of England.

Another governor-general arrived in the early days of the year 1596, to take charge of the obedient provinces.

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It had been rumoured for many months that Philip's choice was at last fixed upon the Archduke Cardinal Albert, Archbishop of Toledo, youngest of the three surviving brothers, of the Emperor Rudolph, as the candidate for many honours. He was to espouse the Infanta, he was to govern the Netherlands, and, as it was supposed, there were wider and wilder schemes for the aggrandizement of this fortunate ecclesiastic brooding in the mind of Philip than yet had seen the light.

Meantime the cardinal's first care was to unfrock himself. He had also been obliged to lay down the most lucrative episcopate in Christendom, that of Toledo, the revenues of which amounted to the enormous sum of three hundred thousand dollars a year. Of this annual income, however, he prudently reserved to himself fifty thousand dollars, by contract with his destined successor.

The cardinal reached the Netherlands before the end of January. He brought with him three thousand Spanish infantry, and some companies of cavalry, while his personal baggage was transported on three hundred and fifty mules. Of course there was a triumphal procession when, on the 11th February, the new satrap entered the obedient Netherlands, and there was the usual amount of bell-ringing, cannon-firing, trumpet-blowing, with torch-light processions, blazing tar-barrels, and bedizened platforms, where Allegory, in an advanced state of lunacy, performed its wonderful antics. It was scarcely possible for human creatures to bestow more adulation, or to abase themselves more thoroughly, than the honest citizens of Brussels had so recently done in honour of the gentle, gouty Ernest, but they did their best. That mythological conqueror and demigod had sunk into an unhonoured grave, despite the loud hosannaha sung to him on his arrival in Belgica, and the same nobles, pedants, and burghers were now ready and happy to grovel at the feet of Albert. But as it proved as impossible to surpass the glories of the holiday which had been culled out for his brother, so it would be superfluous now to recall the pageant which thus again delighted the capital.

But there was one personage who graced this joyous entrance whose presence excited perhaps more interest than did that of the archduke himself. The procession was headed by three grandees riding abreast. There was the Duke of Aumale, pensionary of Philip, and one of the last of the Leaguers, who had just been condemned to death and executed in effigy at Paris, as a traitor to his king and country; there was the Prince of Chimay, now since the recent death of his father at Venice become Duke of Arschoot; and between the two rode a gentleman forty-two years of age, whose grave; melancholy features—although wearing a painful expression of habitual restraint and distrust suggested, more than did those of the rest of his family, the physiognomy of William the Silent to all who remembered that illustrious rebel.

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It was the eldest son of the great founder of the Dutch republic. Philip William, Prince of Orange, had at last, after twenty-eight years of captivity in Spain, returned to the Netherlands, whence he had been kidnapped while a school boy at Louvain, by order of the Duke of Alva. Rarely has there been a more dreary fate, a more broken existence than his. His almost life-long confinement, not close nor cruel, but strict and inexorable, together with the devilish arts of the Jesuits, had produced nearly as blighting an effect upon his moral nature as a closer dungeon might have done on his physical constitution. Although under perpetual arrest in Madrid, he had been allowed to ride and to hunt, to go to mass, and to enjoy many of the pleasures of youth. But he had been always a prisoner, and his soul—a hopeless captive—could no longer be liberated now that the tyrant, in order to further his own secret purposes; had at last released his body from gaol. Although the eldest-born of his father, and the inheritor of the great estates of Orange and of Buren, he was no longer a Nassau except in name. The change wrought by the pressure of the Spanish atmosphere was complete. All that was left of his youthful self was a passionate reverence for his father's memory, strangely combined with a total indifference to all that his father held dear, all for which his father had laboured his whole lifetime, and for which his heart's blood had been shed. On being at last set free from bondage he had been taken to the Escorial, and permitted to kiss the hand of the king—that hand still reeking with his father's murder. He had been well received by the Infante and the Infanta, and by the empress-mother, daughter of Charles V., while the artistic treasures of the palace and cloister were benignantly pointed out to him. It was also signified to him that he was to receive the order of the Golden Fleece, and to enter into possession of his paternal and maternal estates. And Philip William had accepted these conditions as if a born loyal subject of his Most Catholic Majesty.

Could better proof be wanting that in that age religion was the only fatherland, and that a true papist could sustain no injury at the hands of his Most Catholic Majesty. If to be kidnapped in boyhood, to be imprisoned during a whole generation of mankind, to be deprived of vast estates, and to be made orphan by the foulest of assassinations, could not engender resentment against, the royal, perpetrator of these crimes in the bosom of his victim, was it strange that Philip should deem himself, something far, more than man, and should placidly accept the worship rendered to him by inferior beings, as to the holy impersonation of Almighty Wrath?

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Yet there is no doubt that the prince had a sincere respect for his father, and had bitterly sorrowed at his death. When a Spanish officer, playing chess with him, in prison, had ventured to speak lightly of that father, Philip William had seized him bodily, thrown him from the window, and thus killed him on the spot. And when on his arrival in Brussels it was suggested to him by President Riehardat that it was the king's intention to reinstate him in the possession of his estates, but that a rent-charge of eighteen thousand florins a year was still to be paid from them; to the heirs of Balthazar Gerard, his father's assassin, he flamed into a violent rage, drew his poniard, and would have stabbed the president; had not the bystanders forcibly interferred. In consequence of this refusal—called magnanimous by contemporary writers—to accept his property under such conditions, the estates were detained from him for a considerable time longer. During the period of his captivity he had been allowed an income of fifteen thousand livres; but after his restoration his household, gentlemen, and servants alone cost him eighty thousand livres annually. It was supposed that the name of Orange-Nassau might now be of service to the king's designs in the Netherlands. Philip William had come by way of Rome, where he had been allowed to kiss the pope's feet and had received many demonstrations of favour, and it was fondly thought that he would now prove an instrument with which king and pontiff might pipe back the rebellious republic to its ancient allegiance. But the Dutchmen and Frisians were deaf. They had tasted liberty too long, they had dealt too many hard blows on the head of regal and sacerdotal despotism, to be deceived by coarse artifices. Especially the king thought that something might be done with Count Hohenlo. That turbulent personage having recently married the full sister of Philip William, and being already at variance with Count Maurice, both for military and political causes, and on account of family and pecuniary disputes, might, it was thought, be purchased by the king, and perhaps a few towns and castles in the united Netherlands might be thrown into the bargain. In that huckstering age, when the loftiest and most valiant nobles of Europe were the most shameless sellers of themselves, the most cynical mendicants for alms and the most infinite absorbers of bribes in exchange for their temporary fealty; when Mayenne, Mercoeur, Guise, Pillars, Egmont, and innumerable other possessors of ancient and illustrious names alternately and even simultaneously drew pensions from both sides in the great European conflict, it was not wonderful that Philip should think that the boisterous Hohenlo might be bought as well as another. The prudent king, however, gave his usual order that nothing was to be paid beforehand, but that the service was to be rendered first; and the price received afterwards.

The cardinal applied himself to the task on his first arrival, but was soon obliged to report that he could make but little progress in the negotiation.

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The king thought, too, that Heraugiere, who had commanded the memorable expedition against Breda, and who was now governor of that stronghold, might be purchased, and he accordingly instructed the cardinal to make use of the Prince of Orange in the negotiations to be made for that purpose. The cardinal, in effect, received an offer from Heraugiere in the course of a few months not only to surrender Breda, without previous recompense, but likewise to place Gertruydenberg, the governor of which city was his relative, in the king's possession. But the cardinal was afraid of a trick, for Heraugiere was known to be as artful as he was brave, and there can be little doubt that the Netherlander was only disposed to lay an ambush for the governor-general.

And thus the son of William the Silent made his reappearance in the streets of Brussels, after twenty-eight years of imprisonment, riding in the procession of the new viceroy. The cardinal-archduke came next, with Fuentes riding at his left hand. That vigorous soldier and politician soon afterwards left the Netherlands to assume the government of Milan.

There was a correspondence between the Prince of Orange and the States-General, in which the republican authorities after expressing themselves towards him with great propriety, and affectionate respect, gave him plainly but delicately to understand that his presence at that time in the United Provinces would neither be desirable, nor, without their passports, possible. They were quite aware of the uses to which the king was hoping to turn their reverence for the memory and the family of the great martyr, and were determined to foil such idle projects on the threshold.

The Archduke Albert, born on 3rd of November, 1560, was now in his thirty-sixth year. A small, thin, pale-faced man, with fair hair, and beard, commonplace features, and the hereditary underhanging Burgundian jaw prominently developed, he was not without a certain nobility of presence. His manners were distant to haughtiness and grave to solemnity. He spoke very little and very slowly. He had resided long in Spain, where he had been a favourite with his uncle—as much as any man could be a favourite with Philip—and he had carefully formed himself on that royal model. He looked upon the King of Spain as the greatest, wisest, and best of created beings, as the most illustrious specimen of kingcraft ever yet vouchsafed to the world. He did his best to look sombre and Spanish, to turn his visage into a mask; to conceal his thoughts and emotions, not only by the expression of his features but by direct misstatements of his tongue, and in all things to present to the obedient Flemings as elaborate a reproduction of his great prototype as copy can ever recall inimitable original. Old men in the Netherlands; who remembered in how short a time Philip had succeeded, by the baleful effect of his personal presence, in lighting up a hatred which

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not the previous twenty years of his father's burnings, hangings, and butcherings in those provinces had been able to excite, and which forty subsequent years of bloodshed had not begun to allay, might well shake their heads when they saw this new representative of Spanish authority. It would have been wiser—so many astute politicians thought—for Albert to take the Emperor Charles for his model, who had always the power of making his tyranny acceptable to the Flemings, through the adroitness with which he seemed to be entirely a Fleming himself.

But Albert, although a German, valued himself on appearing like a Spaniard. He was industrious, regular in his habits, moderate in eating and drinking, fond of giving audiences on business. He spoke German, Spanish, and Latin, and understood French and Italian. He had at times been a student, and, especially, had some knowledge of mathematics. He was disposed to do his duty—so far as a man can do his duty, who imagines himself so entirely lifted above his fellow creatures as to owe no obligation except to exact their obedience and to personify to them the will of the Almighty. To Philip and the Pope he was ever faithful. He was not without pretensions to military talents, but his gravity, slowness, and silence made him fitter to shine in the cabinet than in the field. Henry IV., who loved his jests whether at his own expense or that of friend or foe, was wont to observe that there were three things which nobody would ever believe, and which yet were very true; that Queen Elizabeth deserved her title of the, throned vestal, that he was himself a good Catholic, and that Cardinal Albert was a good general. It is probable that the assertions were all equally accurate.

The new governor did not find a very able group of generals or statesmen assembled about him to assist in the difficult task which he had undertaken. There were plenty of fine gentlemen, with ancient names and lofty pretensions, but the working men in field or council had mostly disappeared. Mondragon, La Motte, Charles Mansfeld, Frank Verdugo were all dead. Fuentes was just taking his departure for Italy. Old Peter Ernest was a cipher; and his son's place was filled by the Marquis of Varambon; as principal commander in active military operations. This was a Burgundian of considerable military ability, but with an inordinate opinion of himself and of his family. "Accept the fact that his lineage is the highest possible, and that he has better connections than those of anybody else in the whole world, and he will be perfectly contented," said a sharp, splenetic Spaniard in the cardinal's confidence. "'Tis a faithful and loyal cavalier, but full of impertinences." The brother of Varambon, Count Varax, had succeeded la Motte as general of artillery, and of his doings there was a tale ere long to be told. On the whole, the best soldier in the archduke's service for the moment was the Frenchman Savigny de Rosne, an ancient

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Leaguer, and a passionate hater of the Bearnese, of heretics, and of France as then constituted. He had once made a contract with Henry by which he bound himself to his service; but after occasioning a good deal of injury by his deceitful attitude, he had accepted a large amount of Spanish dollars, and had then thrown off the mask and proclaimed himself the deadliest foe of his lawful sovereign. "He was foremost," said Carlos Coloma, "among those who were successfully angled for by the Commander Moreo with golden hooks." Although prodigiously fat, this renegade was an active and experienced campaigner; while his personal knowledge of his own country made his assistance of much value to those who were attempting its destruction.

The other great nobles, who were pressing themselves about the new viceroy with enthusiastic words of welcome, were as like to give him embarrassment as support. All wanted office, emoluments, distinctions, nor could much dependence be placed on the ability or the character of any of them. The new duke of Arschot had in times past, as prince of Chimay, fought against the king, and had even imagined himself a Calvinist, while his wife was still a determined heretic. It is true that she was separated from her husband. He was a man of more quickness and acuteness than his father had been, but if possible more mischievous both to friend and foe; being subtle, restless, intriguing, fickle; ambitious, and deceitful. The Prince of Orange was considered a man of very ordinary intelligence, not more than half witted, according to Queen Elizabeth, and it was probable that the peculiar circumstances of his life would extinguish any influence that he might otherwise have attained with either party. He was likely to affect a neutral position and, in times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing.

Arenberg, unlike the great general on the Catholic side who had made the name illustrious in the opening scenes of the mighty contest, was disposed to quiet obscurity so far as was compatible with his rank. Having inherited neither fortune nor talent with his ancient name, he was chiefly occupied with providing for the wants of his numerous family. A good papist, well-inclined and docile, he was strongly recommended for the post of admiral, not because he had naval acquirements, but because he had a great many children. The Marquis of Havre, uncle to the Duke of Arschot, had played in his time many prominent parts in the long Netherland tragedy. Although older than he was when Requesens and Don John of Austria had been governors, he was not much wiser, being to the full as vociferous, as false, as insolent, as self-seeking, and as mischievous as in his youth. Alternately making appeals to popular passions in his capacity of high-born demagogue, or seeking crumbs of bounty as the supple slave of his sovereign, he was not more likely to acquire the confidence of the cardinal than he had done that of his predecessors.

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The most important and opulent grandee of all the provinces was the Count de Ligne, who had become by marriage or inheritance Prince of Espinay, Seneschal of Hainault, and Viscount of Ghent. But it was only his enormous estates that gave him consideration, for he was not thought capable of either good or bad intentions. He had, however, in times past, succeeded in the chief object of his ambition, which was to keep out of trouble, and to preserve his estates from confiscation. His wife, who governed him, and had thus far guided him safely, hoped to do so to the end. The cardinal was informed that the Golden Fleece would be all-sufficient to keep him upon the right track.

Of the Egmonts, one had died on the famous field of Ivry, another was an outlaw, and had been accused of participation in plots of assassination against William of Orange; the third was now about the archduke's court, and was supposed, to be as dull a man—as Ligne, but likely to be serviceable so long as he could keep his elder brother out of his inheritance. Thus devoted to Church and King were the sons of the man whose head Philip had taken off on a senseless charge of treason. The two Counts Van den Berg—Frederic and Herman—sons of the sister of William the Silent, were, on the whole, as brave, efficient, and trustworthy servants of the king and cardinal as were to be found in the obedient, provinces.

The new governor had come well provided with funds, being supplied for the first three-quarters of the year with a monthly allowance of 1,100,000 florins. For reasons soon to appear, it was not probable that the States-General would be able very, soon to make a vigorous campaign, and it was thought best for the cardinal to turn his immediate attention to France.

The negotiations for, effecting an alliance offensive and defensive, between the three powers most interested in opposing the projects of Spain for universal empire, were not yet begun, and will be reserved for a subsequent chapter. Meantime there had been much informal discussion and diplomatic trifling between France and England for the purpose of bringing about a sincere co-operation of the two crowns against the Fifth Monarchy—as it was much the fashion to denominate Philip's proposed dominion.

Henry had suggested at different times to Sir Robert Sidney, during his frequent presence in France as special envoy for the queen, the necessity of such a step, but had not always found a hearty sympathy. But as the king began to cool in his hatred to Spain, after his declaration of war against that power, it seemed desirable to Elizabeth to fan his resentment afresh, and to revert to those propositions which had been so coolly received when made. Sir Harry Umton, ambassador from her Majesty, was accordingly provided with especial letters on the subject from the queen's own hand, and presented them early in the year at Coucy (Feb. 13, 1596). No man

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in the world knew better the tone to adopt in his communications with Elizabeth than did the chivalrous king. No man knew better than he how impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross for her to accept as spontaneous and natural effusions, of the heart. He received the letters from the hands of Sir Henry, read them with rapture, heaved a deep sigh, and exclaimed. "Ah! Mr. Ambassador, what shall I say to you? This letter of the queen, my sister, is full of sweetness and affection. I see that she loves me, while that I love her is not to be doubted. Yet your commission shows me the contrary, and this proceeds from her, ministers. How else can these obliquities stand with her professions of love? I am forced, as a king, to take a course which, as Henry, her loving brother, I could never adopt."

They then walked out into the park, and the king fell into frivolous discourse, on purpose to keep the envoy from the important subject which had been discussed in the cabinet. Sir Henry brought him back to business, and insisted that there was no disagreement between her Majesty and her counsellors, all being anxious to do what she wished. The envoy, who shared in the prevailing suspicions that Henry was about to make a truce with Spain, vehemently protested against such a step, complaining that his ministers, whose minds were distempered with jealousy, were inducing him to sacrifice her friendship to a false and hollow reconciliation with Spain. Henry protested that his preference would be for England's amity, but regretted that the English delays were so great, and that such dangers were ever impending over his head, as to make it impossible for him, as a king, to follow the inclinations of his heart.

They then met Madame de Monceaux, the beautiful Gabrielle, who was invited to join in the walk, the king saying that she was no meddler in politics, but of a tractable spirit.

This remark, in Sir Henry's opinion, was just, for, said he to Burghley, she is thought incapable of affairs, and, very simple.

The duchess unmasked very graciously as the ambassador was presented; but, said the splenetic diplomatist, "I took no pleasure in it, nor held it any grace at all." "She was attired in a plain satin gown," he continued, "with a velvet hood to keep her from the weather, which became her very ill. In my opinion, she is altered very much for the worse, and was very grossly painted." The three walked together discoursing of trifles, much to the annoyance of Umton. At last, a shower forced the lady into the house, and the king soon afterwards took the ambassador to his cabinet. "He asked me how I liked his mistress," wrote Sir Henry to Burghley, "and I answered sparingly in her praise, and told him that if without offence I might speak it, I had the picture of a far more excellent mistress, and yet did her picture come far from the perfection of her beauty."

"As you love me," cried the king, "show it me, if you have it about you!"

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"I made some difficulty," continued Sir Henry, "yet upon his importunity I offered it to his view very secretly, still holding it in my hand. He beheld it with passion and admiration, saying that I was in the right." "I give in," said the king, "Je me rends."

Then, protesting that he had never seen such beauty all his life, he kissed it reverently twice or thrice, Sir Henry still holding the miniature firmly in his hand.

The king then insisted upon seizing the picture, and there was a charming struggle between the two, ending in his Majesty's triumph. He then told Sir Henry that he might take his leave of the portrait, for he would never give it up again for any treasure, and that to possess the favour of the original he would forsake all the world. He fell into many more such passionate and incoherent expressions of rhapsody, as of one suddenly smitten and spell-bound with hapless love, bitterly reproaching the ambassador for never having brought him any answers to the many affectionate letters which he had written to the queen, whose silence had made him so wretched. Sir Henry, perhaps somewhat confounded at being beaten at his own fantastic game, answered as well as he could, "but I found," said he, "that the dumb picture did draw on more speech and affection from him than all my best arguments and eloquence. This was the effect of our conference, and, if infiniteness of vows and outward professions be a strong argument of inward affection, there is good likelihood of the king's continuance of amity with her Majesty; only I fear lest his necessities may inconsiderately draw him into some hazardous treaty with Spain, which I hope confidently it is yet in the power of her Majesty to prevent."

The king, while performing these apish tricks about the picture of a lady with beady black eyes, a hooked nose, black teeth, and a red wig, who was now in the sixty-fourth year of her age, knew very well that the whole scene would be at once repeated to the fair object of his passion by her faithful envoy; but what must have been the opinion entertained of Elizabeth by contemporary sovereigns and statesmen when such fantastic folly could be rehearsed and related every day in the year!

And the king knew, after all, and was destined very soon to acquire proof of it which there was no gainsaying, that the beautiful Elizabeth had exactly as much affection for him as he had for her, and was as capable of sacrificing his interests for her own, or of taking advantage of his direct necessities as cynically and as remorselessly, as the King of Spain, or the Duke of Mayenne, or the Pope had ever done.

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Henry had made considerable progress in re-establishing his authority over a large portion of the howling wilderness to which forty years of civil war had reduced his hereditary kingdom. There was still great danger, however, at its two opposite extremities. Calais, key to the Norman gate of France, was feebly held; while Marseilles, seated in such dangerous proximity to Spain on the one side, and to the Republic of Genoa, that alert vassal of Spain, on the other, was still in the possession of the League. A concerted action was undertaken by means of John Andrew Doria, with a Spanish fleet from Genoa on the outside and a well-organised conspiracy from within, to carry the city bodily over to Philip. Had it succeeded, this great Mediterranean seaport would have become as much a Spanish possession as Barcelona or Naples, and infinite might have been the damage to Henry's future prospects in consequence. But there was a man in Marseilles; Petrus Libertas by name, whose ancestors had gained this wholesome family appellation by a successful effort once made by them to rescue the little town of Calvi, in Corsica, from the tyranny of Genoa. Peter Liberty needed no prompting to vindicate, on a fitting occasion, his right to his patronymic. In conjunction with men in Marseilles who hated oppression, whether of kings, priests, or renegade republics, as much as he did, and with a secret and well-arranged understanding with the Duke of Guise, who was burning with ambition to render a signal benefit to the cause which he had just espoused, this bold tribune of the people succeeded in stirring the population to mutiny at exactly the right moment, and in opening the gates of Marseilles to the Duke of Guise and his forces before it was possible for the Leaguers to admit the fleet of Doria into its harbour. Thus was the capital of Mediterranean France lost and won. Guise gained great favour in Henry's eyes; and with reason; for the son of the great Balafre, who was himself the League, had now given the League the stroke of mercy. Peter Liberty became consul of Marseilles, and received a patent of nobility. It was difficult, however, for any diploma to confer anything more noble upon him than the name which he had inherited, and to which he had so well established his right.

But while Henry's cause had thus been so well served in the south, there was danger impending in the north. The king had been besieging, since autumn, the town of La Fere, an important military and strategic position, which had been Farnese's basis of operations during his memorable campaigns in France, and which had ever since remained in the hands of the League.

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The cardinal had taken the field with an army of fifteen thousand foot and three thousand horse, assembled at Valenciennes, and after hesitating some time whether, or not he should attempt to relieve La Fere, he decided instead on a diversion. In the second week of April; De Rosne was detached at the head of four thousand men, and suddenly appeared before Calais. The city had been long governed by De Gordan, but this wary and experienced commander had unfortunately been for two years dead. Still more unfortunately, it had been in his power to bequeath, not only his fortune, which was very large, but the government of Calais, considered the most valuable command in France, to his nephew, De Vidosan. He had, however, not bequeathed to him his administrative and military genius.

The fortress called the Risban, or Rysbank, which entirely governed the harbour, and the possession of which made Calais nearly impregnable, as inexhaustible supplies could thus be poured into it by sea, had fallen into comparative decay. De Gordan had been occupied in strengthening the work, but since his death the nephew had entirely neglected the task. On the land side, the bridge of Nivelet was the key to the place. The faubourg was held by two Dutch companies, under Captains Le Gros and Dominique, who undertook to prevent the entrance of the archduke's forces. Vidosan, however; ordered these faithful auxiliaries into the citadel.

De Rosne, acting with great promptness; seized both the bridge of Nivelet and the fort of Rysbank by a sudden and well-concerted movement. This having been accomplished, the city was in his power, and, after sustaining a brief cannonade, it surrendered. Vidosan, with his garrison, however, retired into the citadel, and it was agreed between, himself and De Rosne that unless succour should be received from the French king before the expiration of six days; the citadel should also be-evacuated.

Meantime Henry, who was at Boulogne, much disgusted at this unexpected disaster, had sent couriers to the Netherlands, demanding assistance of the States-General and of the stadholder. Maurice had speedily responded to the appeal. Proceeding himself to Zeeland, he had shipped fifteen companies of picked troops from Middelburg, together with a flotilla laden with munitions and provisions enough to withstand a siege of several weeks. When the arrangements were completed, he went himself on board of a ship of war to take command of the expedition in person. On the 17th of April he arrived with his succours off the harbour of Calais, and found to his infinite disappointment that the Rysbank fort was in the hands of the enemy. As not a vessel could pass the bar without almost touching that fortress, the entrance to Calais was now impossible. Had the incompetent Vidosan heeded the advice of his brave Dutch officers; the place might still have been saved, for it had surrendered in a panic on the very day when the fleet of Maurice arrived off the port.

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Henry had lost no time in sending, also, to his English allies for succour. The possession of Calais by the Spaniards might well seem alarming to Elizabeth, who could not well forget that up to the time of her sister this important position had been for two centuries an English stronghold. The defeat of the Spanish husband of an English queen had torn from England the last trophies of the Black Prince, and now the prize had again fallen into the hands of Spain; but of Spain no longer in alliance, but at war, with England. Obviously it was most dangerous to the interests and to the safety of the English realm, that this threatening position, so near the gates of London, should be in the hands of the most powerful potentate in the world and the dire enemy of England. In response to Henry's appeal, the Earl of Essex was despatched with a force of six thousand men—raised by express command of the queen on Sunday when the people were all at church—to Dover, where shipping was in readiness to transport the troops at once across the Channel. At the same time, the politic queen and some of her counsellors thought the opening a good one to profit by the calamity of their dear ally. Certainly it was desirable to prevent Calais from falling into the grasp of Philip. But it was perhaps equally desirable, now that the place without the assistance of Elizabeth could no longer be preserved by Henry, that Elizabeth, and not Henry, should henceforth be its possessor. To make this proposition as clear to the French king as it seemed to the English queen, Sir Robert Sidney was despatched in all haste to Boulogne, even while the guns of De Rosne were pointed at Calais citadel, and while Maurice's fleet, baffled by the cowardly surrender of the Risban, was on its retreat from the harbour.

At two o'clock in the afternoon of the 21st of April, Sidney landed at Boulogne. Henry, who had been intensely impatient to hear from England, and who suspected that the delay was boding no good to his cause, went down to the strand to meet the envoy, with whom then and there he engaged instantly in the most animated discourse.

As there was little time to be lost, and as Sidney on getting out of the vessel found himself thus confronted with the soldier-king in person, he at once made the demand which he had been sent across the Channel to make. He requested the king to deliver up the town and citadel of Calais to the Queen of England as soon as, with her assistance, he should succeed in recovering the place. He assigned as her Majesty's reasons for this peremptory summons that she would on no other terms find it in her power to furnish the required succour. Her subjects, she said, would never consent to it except on these conditions. It was perhaps not very common with the queen to exhibit so much deference to the popular will, but on this occasion the supposed inclinations of the nation furnished her with an excellent pretext for carrying out her own. Sidney urged moreover that her Majesty felt certain of being obliged—in case she did not take Calais into her own safe-keeping and protection—to come to the rescue again within four or six months to prevent it once more from being besieged, conquered, and sacked by the enemy.

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The king had feared some such proposition as this, and had intimated as much to the States' envoy, Calvaert, who had walked with him down to the strand, and had left him when the conference began. Henry was not easily thrown from his equanimity nor wont to exhibit passion on any occasion, least of all in his discussions with the ambassadors of England, but the cool and insolent egotism of this communication was too much for him.

He could never have believed, he said in reply, that after the repeated assurances of her Majesty's affection for him which he had received from the late Sir Henry Umton in their recent negotiations, her Majesty would now so discourteously seek to make her profit out of his misery. He had come to Boulogne, he continued, on the pledge given by the Earl of Essex to assist him with seven or eight thousand men in the recovery of Calais. If this after all should fail him—although his own reputation would be more injured by the capture of the place thus before his eyes than if it had happened in his absence—he would rather a hundred times endure the loss of the place than have it succoured with such injurious and dishonourable conditions. After all, he said, the loss of Calais was substantially of more importance to the queen than to himself. To him the chief detriment would be in the breaking up of his easy and regular communications with his neighbours through this position, and especially with her Majesty. But as her affection for him was now proved to be so slender as to allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune and dishonour, it would be better for him to dispense with her friendship altogether and to strengthen his connections with truer and more honourable friends. Should the worst come to the worst, he doubted not that he should be able, being what he was and much more than he was of old, to make a satisfactory arrangement with, the King of Spain. He was ready to save Calais at the peril of his life, to conquer it in person, and not by the hands of any of his lieutenants; but having done so, he was not willing—at so great a loss of reputation without and at so much peril within—to deliver it to her Majesty or to any-one else. He would far rather see it fall into the hands of the Spaniards.

Thus warmly and frankly did Henry denounce the unhandsome proposition made in the name of the queen, while, during his vehement expostulations, Sidney grew red with shame, and did not venture to look the king for one moment in the face. He then sought to mitigate the effect of his demand by intimating, with much embarrassment of demeanour, that perhaps her Majesty would be satisfied with the possession of Calais for her own life-time, and—as this was at once plumply refused—by the suggestion of a pledge of it for the term of one year. But the king only grew the more indignant as the bargaining became more paltry, and he continued to heap bitter reproaches upon the queen, who, without having any children or known inheritor of her possessions, should nevertheless, be so desirous of compassing his eternal disgrace and of exciting the discontent of his subjects for the sake of an evanescent gain for herself. At such a price, he avowed, he had no wish to purchase her Majesty's friendship.

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After this explosion the conference became more amicable. The English envoy assured the king that there could be, at all events, no doubt of the arrival of Essex with eight thousand men on the following Thursday to assist in the relief of the citadel; notwithstanding the answer which, he had received to the demand of her Majesty.

He furthermore expressed the strong desire which he felt that the king might be induced to make a personal visit to the queen at Dover, whither she would gladly come to receive him, so soon as Calais should have been saved. To this the king replied with gallantry, that it was one of the things in the world that he had most at heart. The envoy rejoined that her Majesty would consider such a visit a special honour and favour. She had said that she could leave this world more cheerfully, when God should ordain, after she had enjoyed two hours' conversation with his Majesty.

Sidney on taking his departure repeated the assurance that the troops under Essex would arrive before Calais by Thursday, and that they were fast marching to the English coast; forgetting, apparently, that, at the beginning of the interview, he had stated, according to the queen's instructions, that the troops had been forbidden to march until a favourable answer had been returned by the king to her proposal.

Henry then retired to his headquarters for the purpose of drawing up information for his minister in England, De Saucy, who had not yet been received by the queen, and who had been kept in complete ignorance of this mission of Sidney and of its purport.

While the king was thus occupied, the English envoy was left in the company of Calvaert, who endeavoured, without much success, to obtain from him the result of the conference which had just taken place. Sidney was not to be pumped by the Dutch diplomatist, adroit as he unquestionably was, but, so soon as the queen's ambassador was fairly afloat again on his homeward track—which was the case within three hours after his arrival at Boulogne—Calvaert received from the king a minute account of the whole conversation.

Henry expressed unbounded gratitude to the States-General of the republic for their prompt and liberal assistance, and he eagerly contrasted the conduct of Prince Maurice—sailing forth in person so chivalrously to his rescue—with the sharp bargainings and shortcomings of the queen. He despatched a special messenger to convey his thanks to the prince, and he expressed his hope to Calvaert that the States might be willing that their troops should return to the besieged place under the command of Maurice, whose, presence alone, as he loudly and publicly protested, was worth four thousand men.

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But it was too late. The six days were rapidly passing, away. The governor of Boulogne, Campagnolo, succeeded, by Henry's command, in bringing a small reinforcement of two or three hundred men into the citadel of Calais during the night of the 22nd of April. This devoted little band made their way, when the tide was low, along the flats which stretched between the fort of Rysbank and the sea. Sometimes wading up to the neck in water, sometimes swimming for their lives, and during a greater part of their perilous, march clinging so close to the hostile fortress as almost to touch its guns, the gallant adventurers succeeded in getting into the citadel in time to be butchered with the rest of the garrison on the following day. For so soon as the handful of men had gained admittance to the gates—although otherwise the aspect of affairs was quite unchanged—the rash and weak De Vidosan proclaimed that the reinforcements stipulated in his conditional capitulation having arrived, he should now resume hostilities. Whereupon he opened fire, upon the town, and a sentry was killed. De Rosne, furious, at what he considered a breach of faith, directed a severe cannonade against the not very formidable walls of the castle. During the artillery engagement which ensued the Prince of Orange, who had accompanied De Rosne to the siege, had a very narrow escape. A cannon-ball from the town took off the heads of two Spaniards standing near him, bespattering him with their blood and brains. He was urged to retire, but assured those about him that he came of too good a house to be afraid. His courage was commendable, but it seems not to have occurred to him that the place for his father's son was not by the aide of the general who was doing the work of his father's murderer. While his brother Maurice with a fleet of twenty Dutch war-ships was attempting in vain to rescue Calais from the grasp of the Spanish king, Philip William of Nassau was looking on, a pleased and passive spectator of the desperate and unsuccessful efforts at defence. The assault was then ordered? The first storm was repulsed, mainly by the Dutch companies, who fought in the breach until most of their numbers were killed or wounded, their captains Dominique and Le Gros having both fallen. The next attack was successful, the citadel was carried; and the whole garrison, with exception of what remained of the Hollanders and Zeelanders, put to the sword. De Vidosan himself perished. Thus Calais was once more a Spanish city, and was re-annexed to the obedient provinces of Flanders. Of five thousand persons, soldiers and citizens, who had taken refuge in the castle, all were killed or reduced to captivity.'

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The conversion of this important naval position into a Spanish-Flemish station was almost as disastrous to the republic as it was mortifying to France and dangerous to England. The neighbouring Dunkirk had long been a nest of pirates, whence small, fast-sailing vessels issued, daily and nightly, to prey indiscriminately upon the commerce of all nations. These corsairs neither gave nor took quarter, and were in the habit, after they had plundered their prizes, of setting them adrift, with the sailors nailed to the deck or chained to the rigging; while the officers were held for ransom. In case the vessels themselves were wanted, the crews were indiscriminately tossed overboard; while, on the other hand, the buccaneers rarely hesitated to blow up their own ships, when unable to escape from superior force. Capture was followed by speedy execution, and it was but recently that one of these freebooters having been brought into Rotterdam, the whole crew, forty-four in number, were hanged on the day of their arrival, while some five and twenty merchant-captains held for ransom by the pirates thus obtained their liberty.

And now Calais was likely to become a second and more dangerous sea-robbers' cave than even Dunkirk had been.

Notwithstanding this unlucky beginning of the campaign for the three allies, it was determined to proceed with a considerable undertaking which had been arranged between England and the republic. For the time, therefore, the importunate demands of the queen for repayments by the States of her disbursements during the past ten years were suspended. It had, indeed, never been more difficult than at that moment for the republic to furnish extraordinary sums of money. The year 1595 had not been prosperous. Although the general advance in commerce, manufactures, and in every department of national development had been very remarkable, yet there had recently been, for exceptional causes, an apparent falling off; while, on the other hand, there had been a bad harvest in the north of Europe. In Holland, where no grain was grown, and which yet was the granary of the world, the prices were trebled. One hundred and eight bushels (a last) of rye, which ordinarily was worth fifty florins, now sold for one hundred and fifty florins, and other objects of consumption were equally enhanced in value. On the other hand, the expenses of the war were steadily increasing, and were fixed for this year at five millions of florins. The republic, and especially the States of Holland, never hesitated to tax heroically. The commonwealth had no income except that which the several provinces chose to impose upon themselves in order to fill the quota assigned to them by the States-General; but this defect in their political organization was not sensibly felt so long as the enthusiasm for the war continued in full force. The people of the Netherlands knew full well that there was no liberty for them without fighting, no fighting without an army, no army

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without wages, and no wages without taxation; and although by the end of the century the imposts had become so high that, in the language of that keen observer, Cardinal Bentivoglio; nuncio at Brussels, they could scarcely be imagined higher, yet, according to the same authority, they were laid unflinchingly and paid by the people without a murmur. During this year and the next the States of Holland, whose proportion often amounted to fifty per cent. of the whole contribution of the United Provinces, and who ever set a wholesome example in taxation, raised the duty on imports and all internal taxes by one-eighth, and laid a fresh impost on such articles of luxury as velvets and satins, pleas and processes. Starch, too, became a source of considerable revenue. With the fast-rising prosperity of the country luxury had risen likewise, and, as in all ages and countries of the world of which there is record, woman's dress signaled itself by extravagant and very often tasteless conceptions. In a country where, before the doctrine of popular sovereignty had been broached in any part of the world by the most speculative theorists, very vigorous and practical examples of democracy had been afforded to Europe; in a country where, ages before the science of political economy had been dreamed of, lessons of free trade on the largest scale had been taught to mankind by republican traders instinctively breaking in many directions through the nets by which monarchs and oligarchs, guilds and corporations, had hampered the movements of commerce; it was natural that fashion should instinctively rebel against restraint. The honest burgher's vrow of Middelburg or Enkhuyzen claimed the right to make herself as grotesque as Queen Elizabeth in all her glory. Sumptuary laws were an unwholesome part of feudal tyranny, and, as such, were naturally dropping into oblivion on the free soil of the Netherlands. It was the complaint therefore of moralists that unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing. Formerly starch had been made of the refuse parts of corn, but now the manufacturers of that article made use of the bloom of the wheat and consumed as much of it as would have fed great cities. In the little village of Wormer the starch-makers used between three and four thousand bushels a week. Thus a substantial gentlewoman in fashionable array might bear the food of a parish upon her ample bosom. A single manufacturer in Amsterdam required four hundred weekly bushels. Such was the demand for the stiffening of the vast ruffs, the wonderful head-gear, the elaborate lace-work, stomachers and streamers, without which no lady who respected herself could possibly go abroad to make her daily purchases of eggs and poultry in the market-place.

"May God preserve us," exclaimed a contemporary chronicler, unreasonably excited on the starch question, "from farther luxury and wantonness, and abuse of His blessings and good gifts, that the punishment of Jeroboam, which followed upon Solomon's fortunate reign and the gold-ships of Ophir may not come upon us."

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The States of Holland not confounding—as so often has been the case—the precepts of moral philosophy with those of political economy, did not, out of fear for the doom of Jeroboam, forbid the use of starch. They simply laid a tax of a stiver a pound on the commodity, or about six per cent, ad valorem; and this was a more wholesome way of serving the State than by abridging the liberty of the people in the choice of personal attire. Meantime the preachers were left to thunder from their pulpits upon the sinfulness of starched rues and ornamental top-knots, and to threaten their fair hearers with the wrath to come, with as much success as usually attends such eloquence.

There had been uneasiness in the provinces in regard to the designs of the queen, especially since the States had expressed their inability to comply in full with her demands for repayment. Spanish emissaries had been busily circulating calumnious reports that her Majesty was on the eve of concluding a secret peace with Philip, and that it was her intention to deliver the cautionary towns to the king. The Government attached little credence to such statements, but it was natural that Envoy Caron should be anxious at their perpetual recurrence both in England and in the provinces. So, one day, he had a long conversation with the Earl of Essex on the subject; for it will be recollected that Lord Leicester had strenuously attempted at an earlier day to get complete possession, not only of the pledged cities but of Leyden also, in order to control the whole country. Essex was aflame with indignation at once, and, expressed himself with his customary recklessness. He swore that if her Majesty were so far forsaken of God and so forgetful of her own glory, as through evil counsel to think of making any treaty with Spain without the knowledge of the States-General and in order to cheat them, he would himself make the matter as public as it was possible to do, and would place himself in direct opposition to such a measure, so as to show the whole world that his heart and soul were foreign at least to any vile counsel of the kind that might have been given to his Sovereign. Caron and Essex conversed much in this vein, and although the envoy, especially requested him not to do so, the earl, who was not distinguished, for his powers of dissimulation, and who suspected Burleigh of again tampering, as he had often before tampered, with secret agents of Philip, went straight to the queen with the story. Next day, Essex invited Caron to dine and to go with him after dinner to the queen. This was done, and, so soon as the States' envoy was admitted to the royal presence, her Majesty at once opened the subject. She had heard, she said, that the reports in question had been spread through the provinces, and she expressed much indignation in regard to them. She swore very vehemently, as usual, and protested that she had better never have been born than prove so miserable a princess as these tales would make

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her. The histories of England, she said, should never describe her as guilty of such falsehood. She could find a more honourable and fitting means of making peace than by delivering up cities and strongholds so sincerely and confidingly placed in her hands. She hoped to restore them as faithfully as they had loyally been entrusted to her keeping. She begged Caron to acquaint the States-General with these asseverations; declaring that never since she had sent troops to the Netherlands had she lent her ear to those who had made such underhand propositions. She was aware that Cardinal Albert had propositions to make, and that he was desirous of inducing both the French king and, herself to consent to a peace with Spain: but she promised, the States' envoy solemnly before God to apprise him of any such overtures, so soon as they should be made known to herself.

Much more in this strain, with her usual vehemence and mighty oaths, did the great queen aver, and the republican envoy, to whom she was on this occasion very gracious, was fain to believe in her sincerity. Yet the remembrance of the amazing negotiations between the queen's ministers and the agents of Alexander Farnese, by which the invasion of the Armada had been masked; could not but have left an uneasy feeling in the mind of every Dutch statesman. "I trust in God," said Caron, "that He may never so abandon her as to permit her to do the reverse of what she now protests with so much passion. Should it be otherwise—which God forbid—I should think that He would send such chastisement upon her and her people that other princes would see their fate therein as in a mirror, should they make and break such oaths and promises. I tell you these things as they occur, because, as I often feel uneasiness myself, I imagine that my friends on the other side the water may be subject to the same anxiety. Nevertheless, beat the bush as I may, I can obtain no better information than this which I am now sending you."

It had been agreed that for a time the queen should desist from her demands for repayment—which, according to the Treaty of 1585, was to be made only after conclusion of peace between Spain and the provinces, but which Elizabeth was frequently urging on the ground that the States could now make that peace when they chose—and in return for such remission the republic promised to furnish twenty-four ships of war and four tenders for a naval expedition which was now projected against the Spanish coast. These war-ships were to be of four hundred, three hundred, and two hundred tons—eight of each dimension—and the estimated expense of their fitting out for five months was 512,796 florins.

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Before the end of April, notwithstanding the disappointment occasioned in the Netherlands by the loss of Calais, which the States had so energetically striven to prevent, the fleet under Admiral John of Duvenwoord, Seigneur of Warmond, and Vice-Admirals Jan Gerbrantz and Cornelius Leusen, had arrived at Plymouth, ready to sail with their English allies. There were three thousand sailors of Holland and Zeeland on board, the best mariners in the world, and two thousand two hundred picked veterans from the garrisons of the Netherlands. These land-troops were English, but they belonged to the States' army, which was composed of Dutch, German, Walloon, Scotch, and Irish soldiers, and it was a liberal concession on the part of the republican Government to allow them to serve on the present expedition. By the terms of the treaty the queen had no more power to send these companies to invade Spain than to campaign against Tyr Owen in Ireland, while at a moment when the cardinal archduke had a stronger and better-appointed army in Flanders than had been seen for many years in the provinces, it was a most hazardous experiment for the States to send so considerable a portion of their land and naval forces upon a distant adventure. It was also a serious blow to them to be deprived for the whole season of that valiant and experienced commander, Sir Francis Vere, the most valuable lieutenant, save Lewis William, that Maurice had at his disposition. Yet Vere was to take command of this contingent thus sent to the coast of Spain, at the very moment when the republican army ought to issue from their winter quarters and begin active operations in the field. The consequence of this diminution of their strength and drain upon their resources was that the States were unable to put an army in the field during the current year, or make any attempt at a campaign.

The queen wrote a warm letter of thanks to Admiral Warmond for the promptness and efficiency with which he had brought his fleet to the place of rendezvous, and now all was bustle and preparation in the English ports for the exciting expedition resolved upon. Never during Philip's life-time, nor for several years before his birth, had a hostile foot trod the soil of Spain, except during the brief landing at Corunna in 1590, and, although the king's beard had been well singed ten years previously by Sir Francis Drake, and although the coast of Portugal had still more recently been invaded by Essex and Vere, yet the present adventure was on a larger scale, and held out brighter prospects of success than any preceding expedition had done. In an age when the line between the land and sea service, between regular campaigners and volunteers, between public and private warfare, between chivalrous knights-errant and buccaneers, was not very distinctly drawn, there could be nothing more exciting to adventurous spirits, more tempting to the imagination of those who hated the Pope and Philip, who loved fighting, prize-money, and the queen, than a foray into Spain.

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It was time to return the visit of the Armada. Some of the sea-kings were gone. Those magnificent freebooters, Drake and Hawkins, had just died in the West Indies, and doughty Sir Roger Williams had left the world in which he had bustled so effectively, bequeathing to posterity a classic memorial of near a half century of hard fighting, written, one might almost imagine, in his demi-pique saddle. But that most genial, valiant, impracticable, reckless, fascinating hero of romance, the Earl of Essex—still a youth although a veteran in service—was in the spring-tide of favour and glory, and was to command the land-forces now assembled at Plymouth. That other “corsair”—as the Spaniards called him—that other charming and heroic shape in England’s chequered chronicle of chivalry and crime—famous in arts and arms, politics, science, literature, endowed with so many of the gifts by which men confer lustre on their age and country, whose name was already a part of England’s eternal glory, whose tragic destiny was to be her undying shame—Raleigh, the soldier, sailor, scholar, statesman, poet, historian, geographical discoverer, planter of empires yet unborn—was also present, helping to organize the somewhat chaotic elements of which the chief Anglo-Dutch enterprise for this year against—the Spanish world-dominion was compounded.

And, again, it is not superfluous to recal the comparatively slender materials, both in bulk and numbers, over which the vivid intelligence and restless energy of the two leading Protestant powers, the Kingdom and the Republic, disposed. Their contest against the overshadowing empire, which was so obstinately striving to become the fifth-monarchy of history, was waged by land: and naval forces, which in their aggregate numbers would scarce make a startling list of killed and wounded in a single modern battle; by ships such that a whole fleet of them might be swept out of existence with half-a-dozen modern broadsides; by weapons which would seem to modern eyes like clumsy toys for children. Such was the machinery by which the world was to be lost and won, less than three centuries ago. Could science; which even in that age had made gigantic strides out of the preceding darkness, have revealed its later miracles, and have presented its terrible powers to the despotism which was seeking to crush all Christendom beneath its feet, the possible result might have been most tragical to humanity. While there are few inventions in morals, the demon Intellect is ever at his work, knowing no fatigue and scorning contentment in his restless demands upon the infinite Unknown. Yet moral truth remains unchanged, gradually through the ages extending its influence, and it is only by conformity to its simple and, eternal dictates that nations, like individuals, can preserve a healthful existence. In the unending warfare between right and wrong, between liberty and despotism; Evil has the advantage of rapidly

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assuming many shapes. It has been well said that constant vigilance is the price of liberty. The tendency of our own times, stimulated by scientific discoveries and their practical application, is to political consolidation, to the absorption of lesser communities in greater; just as disintegration was the leading characteristic of the darker ages. The scheme of Charlemagne to organize Europe into a single despotism was a brilliant failure because the forces which were driving human society into local and gradual reconstruction around various centres of crystallization: were irresistible to any countervailing engine which the emperor had at his disposal. The attempt of Philip, eight centuries later, at universal monarchy, was frivolous, although he could dispose of material agencies which in the hands of Charlemagne might have made the dreams of Charlemagne possible. It was frivolous because the rising instinct of the age was for religious, political, and commercial freedom in a far intenser degree than those who lived in that age were themselves aware. A considerable republic had been evolved as it were involuntarily out of the necessities of the time almost without self-consciousness that it was a republic, and even against the desire of many who were guiding its destinies. And it found itself in constant combination with two monarchs, despotic at heart and of enigmatical or indifferent religious convictions, who yet reigned over peoples, largely influenced by enthusiasm for freedom. Thus liberty was preserved for the world; but, as the law of human progress would seem to be ever by a spiral movement, it; seems strange to the superficial observer not prone to generalizing, that Calvinism, which unquestionably was the hard receptacle in which the germ of human freedom was preserved in various countries and at different epochs, should have so often degenerated into tyranny. Yet notwithstanding the burning of Servetus at Geneva, and the hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston, it is certain that France, England, the Netherlands, and America, owe a large share of such political liberty as they have enjoyed to Calvinism. It may be possible for large masses of humanity to accept for ages the idea of one infallible Church, however tyrannical but the idea once admitted that there may be many churches; that what is called the State can be separated from what is called the Church; the plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous—a mere fiction of political or fashionable quackery to impose upon the uneducated or the unreflecting.

And now Essex, Raleigh and Howard, Vere, Warmond and Nassau were about to invade the shores of the despot who sat in his study plotting to annex England, Scotland, Ireland, France, the Dutch republic, and the German empire to the realms of Spain, Portugal, Naples, Milan, and the Eastern and Western Indies, over which he already reigned.

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The fleet consisted of fifty-seven ships of war, of which twenty-four were Dutch vessels under Admiral Warmond, with three thousand sailors of Holland and Zeeland. Besides the sailors, there was a force of six thousand foot soldiers, including the English veterans from the Netherlands under Sir Francis Vere. There were also fifty transports laden with ammunition and stores. The expedition was under the joint command of Lord High Admiral Howard and of the Earl of Essex. Many noble and knightly volunteers, both from England and the republic, were on board, including, besides those already mentioned, Lord Thomas Howard, son of the Duke of Norfolk, Sir John Wingfield, who had commanded at Gertruydenburg, when it had been so treacherously surrendered to Farnese; Count Lewis Gunther of Nassau, who had so recently escaped from the disastrous fight with Mondragon in the Lippe, and was now continuing his education according to the plan laid down for him by his elder brother Lewis William; Nicolas Meetkerk, Peter Regesmortes, Don Christopher of Portugal, son of Don Antonio, and a host of other adventurers.

On the last day of June the expedition arrived off Cadiz. Next morning they found a splendid Spanish fleet in the harbour of that city, including four of the famous apostolic great galleons, St. Philip, St. Matthew, St. Thomas, and St. Andrew, with twenty or thirty great war-ships besides, and fifty-seven well-armed Indiamen, which were to be convoyed on their outward voyage, with a cargo estimated at twelve millions of ducats.

The St. Philip was the phenomenon of naval architecture of that day, larger and stronger than any ship before known. She was two thousand tons burthen, carried eighty-two bronze cannon, and had a crew of twelve hundred men. The other three apostles carried each fifty guns and four hundred men. The armament of the other war-ships varied from fifty-two to eighteen guns each. The presence of such a formidable force might have seemed a motive for discouragement, or at least of caution. On the contrary, the adventurers dashed at once upon their prey; thus finding a larger booty than they had dared to expect. There was but a brief engagement. At the outset a Dutch ship accidentally blew up, and gave much encouragement to the Spaniards. Their joy was but short-lived. Two of the great galleons were soon captured, the other two, the St. Philip and the St. Thomas, were run aground and burned. The rest of the war-ships were driven within the harbour, but were unable to prevent a landing of the enemy's forces. In the eagerness of the allies to seize the city, they unluckily allowed many of the Indiamen to effect their escape through the puente del Zuazzo, which had not been supposed a navigable passage for ships of such burthen. Nine hundred soldiers under Essex, and four hundred noble volunteers under Lewis Gunther of Nassau, now sprang on shore, and drove some eleven hundred Spanish skirmishers back within

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the gates of the city, or into a bastion recently raised to fortify the point when the troops had landed. Young Nassau stormed the bulwark sword in hand, carried it at the first assault, and planted his colours on its battlement. It was the flag of William the Silent; for the republican banner was composed of the family colours of the founder of the new commonwealth. The blazonry of the proscribed and assassinated rebel waved at last defiantly over one of the chief cities of Spain. Essex and Nassau and all the rest then entered the city. There was little fighting. Twenty-five English and Hollanders were killed, and about as many Spaniards. Essex knighted about fifty gentlemen, Englishmen and Hollanders, in the square of Cadiz for their gallantry. Among the number were Lewis Gunther of Nassau, Admiral Warmond, and Peter Regesmortes. Colonel Nicolas Meetkerke was killed in the brief action, and Sir John Wingfield, who insisted in prancing about on horseback without his armour, defying the townspeople and neglecting the urgent appeal of Sir Francis Vere, was also slain. The Spanish soldiers, discouraged by the defeat of the ships on which they had relied for protection of the town, retreated with a great portion of the inhabitants into the citadel. Next morning the citadel capitulated without striking a blow, although there, were six thousand able-bodied, well-armed men within its walls. It was one of the most astonishing panics ever recorded. The great fleet, making a third of the king's navy, the city of Cadiz and its fortress, were surrendered to this audacious little force, which had only arrived off the harbour thirty-six hours before. The invaders had, however, committed a great mistake. They had routed, and, as it were, captured the Spanish galleons, but they had not taken possession of them, such had been their eagerness to enter the city. It was now agreed that the fleet should be ransomed for two million ducats, but the proud Duke of Medina Sidonia, who had already witnessed the destruction of one mighty armada, preferred that these splendid ships too should perish rather than that they should pay tribute to the enemy. Scorning the capitulation of the commandant of the citadel, he ordered the fleet to be set on fire. Thirty-two ships, most of them vessels of war of the highest class, were burned, with all their equipments. Twelve hundred cannon sunk at once to the bottom of the Bay of Cadiz, besides arms for five or six thousand men. At least one-third of Philip's effective navy was thus destroyed.

The victors now sacked the city very thoroughly, but the results were disappointing. A large portion of the portable wealth of the inhabitants, their gold and their jewelry, had been so cunningly concealed that, although half a dozen persons were tortured till they should reveal hidden treasures, not more than five hundred thousand ducats worth of plunder was obtained. Another sum of equal amount having

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been levied upon the citizens; forty notable personages; among them eighteen ecclesiastical dignitaries, were carried off as hostages for its payment. The city was now set on fire by command of Essex in four different quarters. Especially the cathedral and other churches, the convents and the hospitals, were burned. It was perhaps not unnatural: that both Englishmen and Hollanders should be disposed to wreak a barbarous vengeance on everything representative of the Church which they abhorred, and from which such endless misery had issued to the uttermost corners of their own countries. But it is at any rate refreshing to record amid these acts of pillage and destruction, in which, as must ever be the case, the innocent and the lowly were made to suffer for the crimes of crowned and mitred culprits, that not many special acts of cruelty were committed upon individuals:

No man was murdered in cold blood, no woman was outraged. The beautiful city was left a desolate and blackened ruin, and a general levy of spoil was made for the benefit of the victors, but there was no infringement of the theory and practice of the laws of war as understood in that day or in later ages. It is even recorded that Essex ordered one of his soldiers, who was found stealing a woman's gown, to be hanged on the spot, but that, wearied by the intercession of an ecclesiastic of Cadiz, the canon Quesada, he consented at last to pardon the marauder.

It was the earnest desire of Essex to hold Cadiz instead of destroying it. With three thousand men, and with temporary supplies from the fleet, the place could be maintained against all comers; Holland and England together commanding the seas. Admiral Warmond and all the Netherlanders seconded the scheme, and offered at once to put ashore from their vessels food and munitions enough to serve two thousand men for two months. If the English admiral would do as much, the place might be afterwards supplied without limit and held till doomsday, a perpetual thorn in Philip's side. Sir Francis Vere was likewise warmly in favour of the project, but he stood alone. All the other Englishmen opposed it as hazardous, extravagant, and in direct contravention of the minute instructions of the queen. With a sigh or a curse for what he considered the superfluous caution of his royal mistress, and the exaggerated docility of Lord High Admiral Howard, Essex was fain to content himself with the sack and the conflagration, and the allied fleet sailed away from Cadiz.

On their way towards Lisbon they anchored off Faro, and landed a force, chiefly of Netherlanders, who expeditiously burned and plundered the place. When they reached the neighbourhood of Lisbon, they received information that a great fleet of Indiamen, richly laden, were daily expected from the Flemish islands, as the Azores were then denominated. Again Essex was vehemently disposed to steer at once for that station, in order to grasp so tempting a

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prize; again he was strenuously supported by the Dutch admiral and Yere, and again Lord Howard peremptorily interdicted the plan. It was contrary to his instructions and to his ideas of duty, he said, to risk so valuable a portion of her Majesty's fleet on so doubtful a venture. His ships were not fitted for a winter's cruise, he urged. Thus, although it was the very heart of midsummer, the fleet was ordered to sail homeward. The usual result of a divided command was made manifest, and it proved in the sequel that, had they sailed for the islands, they would have pounced at exactly the right moment upon an unprotected fleet of merchantmen, with cargoes valued at seven millions of ducats. Essex, not being willing to undertake the foray to the Azores with the Dutch ships alone, was obliged to digest his spleen as best he could. Meantime the English fleet bore away for England, leaving Essex in his own ship, together with the two captured Spanish galleons, to his fate. That fate might, have been a disastrous one, for his prizes were not fully manned, his own vessel was far from powerful, and there were many rovers and cruisers upon the seas. The Dutch admiral, with all his ships, however, remained in company, and safely convoyed him to Plymouth, where they arrived only a day or two later than Howard and his fleet. Warmond, who had been disposed to sail up the Thames in order to pay his respects to the queen, was informed that his presence would not be desirable but rather an embarrassment. He, however, received the following letter from the hand of Elizabeth.

Monsieur DUYENWOORD,—The report made to me by the generals of our fleet, just happily arrived from the coast of Spain, of the devoirs of those who have been partakers in so, famous a victory, ascribes so much of it to the valour, skill, and readiness exhibited by yourself and our other friends from the Netherlands under your command, during the whole course of the expedition, as to fill our mind with special joy and satisfaction, and, with a desire to impart these feelings to you. No other means presenting themselves at this moment than that of a letter (in some sense darkening the picture of the conceptions of our soul), we are willing to make use of it while waiting for means more effectual. Wishing thus to disburthen ourselves we find ourselves confused, not-knowing where to begin, the greatness of each part exceeding the merit of the other. For, the vigour and promptness with which my lords the States-General stepped into the enterprise, made us acknowledge that the good favour, which we have always borne the United Provinces and the proofs thereof which we have given in the benefits conferred by us upon them, had not been ill-bestowed. The valour, skill, and discipline manifested by you in this enterprise show that you and your, whole nation are worthy the favour and protection of princes against those who wish to tyrannize over you. But the honourableness

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and the valour shown by you, Sir Admiral, towards our cousin the Earl of Essex on his return, when he unfortunately was cut off from the fleet, and deep in the night was deprived of all support, when you kept company with him and gave him escort into the harbour of Plymouth, demonstrate on the one hand your foresight in providing thus by your pains and patience against all disasters, which through an accident falling upon one of the chiefs of our armada might have darkened the great victory; and on the other hand the fervour and fire of the affection which you bear us, increasing thus, through a double bond, the obligations we are owing you, which is so great in our hearts that we have felt bound to discharge a part of it by means of this writing, which we beg you to communicate to the whole company of our friends under your command; saying to them besides, that they may feel assured that even as we have before given proof of our goodwill to their fatherland, so henceforth—incited by their devoirs and merits—we are ready to extend our bounty and affection in all ways which may become a princess recompensing the virtues and gratitude of a nation so worthy as yours.

“Elizabeth R.

“14th August, 1596.”

This letter was transmitted by the admiral to the States-General; who, furnished him with a copy of it, but enrolled the original in their archives; recording as it did, in the hand of the great English queen, so striking a testimony to the valour and the good conduct of Netherlanders.

The results of this expedition were considerable, for the king's navy was crippled, a great city was destroyed, and some millions of plunder had been obtained. But the permanent possession of Cadiz, which, in such case, Essex hoped to exchange for Calais, and the destruction of the fleet at the Azores—possible achievements both, and unwisely neglected—would have been far more profitable, at least to England. It was also matter of deep regret that there was much quarrelling between the Netherlanders and the Englishmen as to their respective share of the spoils; the Netherlanders complaining loudly that they had been defrauded. Moreover the merchants of Middelburg, Amsterdam, and other commercial cities of Holland and Zeeland were, as it proved, the real owners of a large portion of the property destroyed or pillaged at Cadiz; so that a loss estimated as high as three hundred thousand florins fell upon those unfortunate traders through this triumph of the allies.

The internal consequences of the fall of Calais had threatened at the first moment to be as disastrous as the international results of that misfortune had already proved. The hour for the definite dismemberment and partition of the French kingdom, not by foreign conquerors but among its own self-seeking and disloyal grandees, seemed to have struck. The indomitable Henry, ever most buoyant when most pressed by misfortune,

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was on the way to his camp at La Fere, encouraging the faint-hearted, and providing as well as he could for the safety of the places most menaced, when he was met at St. Quentin by a solemn deputation of the principal nobles, military commanders, and provincial governors of France. The Duke of Montpensier was spokesman of the assembly, and, in an harangue carefully prepared for the occasion, made an elaborate proposition to the king that the provinces, districts, cities, castles; and other strong-holds throughout the kingdom should now be formally bestowed upon the actual governors and commandants thereof in perpetuity, and as hereditary property, on condition of rendering a certain military service to the king and his descendants. It seemed so amazing that this temporary disaster to the national arms should be used as a pretext for parcelling out France, and converting a great empire into a number of insignificant duchies and petty principalities; that this movement should be made, not by the partisans of Spain, but by the adherents of the king; and that its leader should be his own near relative, a prince of the blood, and a possible successor to the crown, that Henry was struck absolutely dumb. Misinterpreting his silence, the duke proceeded very confidently with his well-conned harangue; and was eloquently demonstrating that, under such a system, Henry, as principal feudal chief, would have greater military forces at his disposal whenever he chose to summon his faithful vassals to the field than could be the case while the mere shadow of royal power or dignity was allowed to remain; when the king, finding at last a tongue, rebuked his cousin; not angrily, but with a grave melancholy which was more impressive than wrath.

He expressed his pity for the duke that designing intriguers should have thus taken advantage of his facility of character to cause him to enact a part so entirely unworthy a Frenchman, a gentleman, and a prince of the blood. He had himself, at the outset of his career, been much farther from the throne than Montpensier was at that moment; but at no period of his life would he have consented to disgrace himself by attempting the dismemberment of the realm. So far from entering for a moment into the subject-matter of the duke's discourse, he gave him and all his colleagues distinctly to understand that he would rather die a thousand deaths than listen to suggestions which would cover his family and the royal dignity with infamy.

Rarely has political cynicism been displayed in more revolting shape than in this deliberate demonstration by the leading patricians and generals of France, to whom patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea. Thus signally was their greediness to convert a national disaster into personal profit rebuked by the king. Henry was no respecter of the People, which he regarded as something immeasurably below his feet. On the contrary, he was the most sublime self-seeker of them all; but his courage, his intelligent ambition,

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his breadth and strength of purpose, never permitted him to doubt that his own greatness was inseparable from the greatness of France. Thus he represented a distinct and wholesome principle—the national integrity of a great homogeneous people at a period when that integrity seemed, through domestic treason and foreign hatred, to be hopelessly lost. Hence it is not unnatural that he should hold his place in the national chronicle as Henry the Great.

Meantime, while the military events just recorded had been occurring in the southern peninsula, the progress of the archduke and his lieutenants in the north against the king and against the republic had been gratifying to the ambition of that martial ecclesiastic. Soon after the fall of Calais, De Rosne had seized the castles of Guynes and Hames, while De Mexia laid siege to the important stronghold of Ardres. The garrison, commanded by Count Belin, was sufficiently numerous and well supplied to maintain the place until Henry, whose triumph at La Fere could hardly be much longer delayed, should come to its relief. To the king's infinite dissatisfaction, however, precisely as Don Alvario de Osorio was surrendering La Fere to him, after a seven months' siege, Ardres was capitulating to De Mexia. The reproaches upon Belin for cowardice, imbecility, and bad faith, were bitter and general. All his officers had vehemently protested against the surrender, and Henry at first talked of cutting off his head. It was hardly probable, however—had the surrender been really the result of treachery—that the governor would have put himself, as he did at once in the king's power; for the garrison marched out of Ardres with the commandant at their head, banners displayed, drums beating, matches lighted and bullet in mouth, twelve hundred fighting men strong, besides invalids. Belin was possessed of too much influence, and had the means of rendering too many pieces of service to the politic king, whose rancour against Spain was perhaps not really so intense as was commonly supposed, to meet with the condign punishment which might have been the fate of humbler knaves.

These successes having been obtained in Normandy, the cardinal with a force of nearly fifteen thousand men now took the field in Flanders; and, after hesitating for a time whether he should attack Breda, Bergen, Ostend, or Gertruydenburg,—and after making occasional feints in various directions, came, towards the end of June, before Hulst. This rather insignificant place, with a population of but one thousand inhabitants, was defended by a strong garrison under command of that eminent and experienced officer Count Everard Solms. Its defences were made more complete by a system of sluices, through which the country around could be laid under water; and Maurice, whose capture of the town in the year 1591 had been one of his earliest military achievements, was disposed to hold it at all hazards. He came in person to inspect the

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fortifications, and appeared to be so eager on the subject, and so likely to encounter unnecessary hazards, that the States of Holland passed a resolution imploring him "that he would not, in his heroic enthusiasm and laudable personal service, expose a life on which the country so much depended to manifest dangers." The place was soon thoroughly invested, and the usual series of minings and counter-minings, assaults, and sorties followed, in the course of which that courageous and corpulent renegade, De Rosne, had his head taken off by a cannon-ball, while his son, a lad of sixteen, was fighting by his side. On the 16th August the cardinal formally demanded the surrender of the place, and received the magnanimous reply that Hulst would be defended to the death. This did not, however, prevent the opening of negotiations the very same day. All the officers, save one, united in urging Solms to capitulate; and Solms, for somewhat mysterious reasons, and, as was stated, in much confusion, gave his consent. The single malcontent was the well-named Matthew Held, whose family name meant Hero, and who had been one of the chief actors in the far-famed capture of Breda. He was soon afterwards killed in an unsuccessful attack made by Maurice upon Venlo.

Hulst capitulated on the 18th August. The terms were honourable; but the indignation throughout the country against Count Solms was very great. The States of Zeeland, of whose regiment he had been commander ever, since the death of Sir Philip Sidney, dismissed him from their service, while a torrent of wrath flowed upon him from every part of the country. Members of the States-General refused to salute him in the streets; eminent person, ages turned their backs upon him, and for a time there was no one willing to listen to a word in his defence. The usual reaction in such cases followed; Maurice sustained the commander, who had doubtless committed a grave error, but who had often rendered honourable service to the republic, and the States-General gave him a command as important as that of which he had been relieved by the Zeeland States. It was mainly on account of the tempest thus created within the Netherlands, that an affair of such slight importance came to occupy so large a space in contemporary history. The defenders of Solmstold wild stories about the losses of the besieging army. The cardinal, who was thought prodigal of blood, and who was often quoted as saying "his soldiers' lives belonged to God and their bodies to the king," had sacrificed, it, was ridiculously said, according to the statement of the Spaniards themselves, five thousand soldiers before the walls of Hulst. It was very logically deduced therefrom that the capture of a few more towns of a thousand inhabitants each would cost him his whole army. People told each other, too, that the conqueror had refused a triumph which the burghers of Brussels wished to prepare for him on his entrance into the capital, and that he had administered the very proper

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rebuke that, if they had more money than they knew what to do with, they should expend it in aid of the wounded and of the families of the fallen, rather than in velvets and satins and triumphal arches. The humanity of the suggestion hardly tallied with the blood-thirstiness of which he was at the same time so unjustly accused—although it might well be doubted whether the commander-in-chief, even if he could witness unflinchingly the destruction of five thousand soldiers on the battle-field, would dare to confront a new demonstration of schoolmaster Houwaerts and his fellowpedants.

The fact was, however, that the list of casualties in the cardinal's camp during the six weeks' siege amounted to six hundred, while the losses within the city were at least as many. There was no attempt to relieve the place; for the States, as before observed, had been too much cramped by the strain upon their resources and by the removal of so many veterans for the expedition against Cadiz to be able to muster any considerable forces in the field during the whole of this year.

For a vast war in which the four leading powers of the earth were engaged, the events, to modern eyes, of the campaign of 1596 seem sufficiently meagre. Meantime, during all this campaigning by land and sea in the west, there had been great but profitless bloodshed in the east. With difficulty did the holy Roman Empire withstand the terrible, ever-renewed assaults of the unholy realm of Ottoman—then in the full flush of its power—but the two empires still counterbalanced each other, and contended with each other at the gates of Vienna.

As the fighting became more languid, however, in the western part of Christendom, the negotiations and intrigues grew only the more active. It was most desirable for the republic to effect, if possible, a formal alliance offensive and defensive with France and England against Spain. The diplomacy of the Netherlands had been very efficient in bringing about the declaration of war by Henry against Philip, by which the current year had opened, after Henry and Philip had been doing their best to destroy each other and each other's subjects during the half-dozen previous years. Elizabeth, too, although she had seen her shores invaded by Philip with the most tremendous armaments that had ever floated on the seas, and although she had herself just been sending fire and sword into the heart of Spain, had very recently made the observation that she and Philip were not formally at war with each other. It seemed, therefore, desirable to the States-General that this very practical warfare should be, as it were, reduced to a theorem. In this case the position of the republic to both powers and to Spain itself might perhaps be more accurately defined.

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Calvaert, the States' envoy—to use his own words—haunted Henry like his perpetual shadow, and was ever doing his best to persuade him of the necessity of this alliance. De Saucy, as we have seen, had just arrived in England, when the cool proposition of the queen to rescue Calais from Philip on condition of keeping it for herself had been brought to Boulogne by Sidney. Notwithstanding the indignation of the king, he had been induced directly afterwards to send an additional embassy to Elizabeth, with the Duke of Bouillon at its head; and he had insisted upon Calvaert's accompanying the mission. He had, as he frequently observed, no secrets from the States-General, or from Calvaert, who had been negotiating upon these affairs for two years past and was so well acquainted with all their bearings. The Dutch envoy was reluctant to go, for he was seriously ill and very poor in purse, but Henry urged the point so vehemently, that Calvaert found himself on board ship within six hours of the making of the proposition. The incident shows of how much account the republican diplomatist was held by so keen a judge of mankind as the Bearnese; but it will subsequently appear that the candour of the king towards the States-General and their representative was by no means without certain convenient limitations.

De Sancy had arrived just as—without his knowledge—Sidney had been despatched across the channel with the brief mission already mentioned. When he was presented to the queen, the next day, she excused herself for the propositions by which Henry had been so much enraged, by assuring the envoy that it had been her intention only to keep Calais out of the enemy's hand, so long as the king's forces were too much occupied at a distance to provide for its safety. As diplomatic conferences were about to begin in which—even more than in that age, at least, was usually the case—the object of the two conferring powers was to deceive each other, and at the same time still more decidedly to defraud other states, Sancy accepted the royal explanation, although Henry's special messenger, Lomenie, had just brought him from the camp at Boulogne a minute account of the propositions of Sidney.

The envoy had, immediately afterwards, an interview with Lord Burghley, and at once perceived that he was no friend to his master. Cecil observed that the queen had formerly been much bound to the king for religion's sake. As this tie no longer existed, there was nothing now to unite them save the proximity of the two States to each other and their ancient alliances, a bond purely of interest which existed only so long as princes found therein a special advantage.

De Sancy replied that the safety of the two crowns depended upon their close alliance against a very powerful foe who was equally menacing to them both. Cecil rejoined that he considered the Spaniards deserving of the very highest praise for having been able to plan so important an enterprise, and to have so well deceived the King of France by the promptness and the secrecy of their operations as to allow him to conceive no suspicion as to their designs.

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To this not very friendly sarcasm the envoy, indignant that France should thus be insulted in her misfortunes, exclaimed that he prayed to God that the affairs of Englishmen might never be reduced to such a point as to induce the world to judge by the result merely, as to the sagacity of their counsels. He added that there were many passages through which to enter France, and that it was difficult to be present everywhere, in order to defend them all against the enemy.

A few days afterwards the Duke of Bouillon arrived in London. He had seen Lord Essex at Dover as he passed, and had endeavoured without success to dissuade him from his expedition against the Spanish coast. The conferences opened on the 7th May, at Greenwich, between Burghley, Cobham, the Lord Chamberlain, and one or two other commissioners on the part of the queen, and Bouillon, Sancy, Du Yair, and Ancel, as plenipotentiaries of Henry.

There was the usual indispensable series of feints at the outset, as if it were impossible for statesmen to meet around a green table except as fencers in the field or pugilists in the ring.

"We have nothing to do," said Burghley, "except to listen to such propositions as may be made on the part of the king, and to repeat them to her Highness the queen."

"You cannot be ignorant," replied Bouillon, "of the purpose for which we have been sent hither by his Very Christian Majesty. You know very well that it is to conclude a league with England. 'Tis necessary, therefore, for the English to begin by declaring whether they are disposed to enter into such an alliance. This point once settled, the French can make their propositions, but it would be idle to dispute about the conditions of a treaty, if there is after all no treaty to be made."

To this Cecil rejoined, that, if the king were reduced to the necessity of asking succour from the queen, and of begging for her alliance, it was necessary for them, on the other hand, to see what he was ready to do for the queen in return, and to learn what advantage she could expect from the league.

The duke said that the English statesmen were perfectly aware of the French intention of proposing a league against the common enemy of both nations, and that it would be unquestionably for the advantage of both to unite their forces for a vigorous attack upon Spain, in which case it would be more difficult for the Spanish to resist them than if each were acting separately. It was no secret that the Spaniards would rather attack England than France, because their war against England, being coloured by a religious motive, would be much less odious, and would even have a specious pretext. Moreover the conquest of England would give them an excellent vantage ground to recover what they had lost in the Netherlands. If, on the contrary, the enemy should throw himself with his whole force upon France, the king, who would perhaps lose many places at once, and might hardly be able

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to maintain himself single-handed against domestic treason and a concentrated effort on the part of Spain, would probably find it necessary to make a peace with that power. Nothing could be more desirable for Spain than such a result, for she would then be free to attack England and Holland, undisturbed by any fear of France. This was a piece of advice, the duke said, which the king offered, in the most friendly spirit, and as a proof of his affection, to her Majesty's earnest consideration.

Burghley replied that all this seemed to him no reason for making a league. "What more can the queen do," he observed, "than she is already doing? She has invaded Spain by land and sea, she has sent troops to Spain, France, and the Netherlands; she has lent the king fifteen hundred thousand crowns in gold. In short, the envoys ought rather to be studying how to repay her Majesty for her former benefits than to be soliciting fresh assistance." He added that the king was so much stronger by the recent gain of Marseilles as to be easily able to bear the loss of places of far less importance, while Ireland, on the contrary, was a constant danger to the queen. The country was already in a blaze, on account of the recent landing effected there by the Spaniards, and it was a very ancient proverb among the English, that to attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland.

Bouillon replied that in this war there was much difference between the position of France and that of England. The queen, notwithstanding hostilities, obtained her annual revenue as usual, while the king was cut off from his resources and obliged to ruin his kingdom in order to wage war. Sancy added, that it must be obvious to the English ministers that the peril of Holland was likewise the peril of England and of France, but that at the same time they could plainly see that the king, if not succoured, would be forced to a peace with Spain. All his counsellors were urging him to this, and it was the interest of all his neighbours to prevent such a step. Moreover, the proposed league could not but be advantageous to the English; whether by restraining the Spaniards from entering England, or by facilitating a combined attack upon the common enemy. The queen might invade any portion of the Flemish coast at her pleasure, while the king's fleet could sail with troops from his ports to prevent any attack upon her realms.

At this Burghley turned to his colleagues and said, in English, "The French are acting according to the proverb; they wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear." Sancy, who understood English, rejoined, "We have no bear-skin to sell, but we are giving you a very good and salutary piece of advice. It is for you to profit by it as you may."

"Where are these ships of war, of which you were speaking?" asked Burghley.

"They are at Rochelle, at Bordeaux, and at St. Malo," replied de Sancy.

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“And these ports are not in the king’s possession,” said the Lord Treasurer.

The discussion was growing warm. The Duke of Bouillon, in order to, put an end to it, said that what England had most to fear was a descent by Spain upon her coasts, and that the true way to prevent this was to give occupation to Philip’s army in Flanders. The soldiers in the fleet then preparing were raw levies with which he would not venture to assail her kingdom. The veterans in Flanders were the men on whom he relied for that purpose. Moreover the queen, who had great influence with the States-General, would procure from them a prohibition of all commerce between the provinces and Spain; all the Netherlands would be lost to Philip, his armies would disperse of their own accord; the princes of Italy, to whom the power of Spain was a perpetual menace, would secretly supply funds to the allied powers, and the Germans, declared enemies of Philip, would furnish troops.

Burghley asserted confidently that this could never be obtained from the Hollanders, who lived by commerce alone. Upon which Saucy, wearied with all these difficulties, interrupted the Lord Treasurer by exclaiming, “If the king is to expect neither an alliance nor any succour on your part, he will be very much obliged to the queen if she will be good enough to inform him of the decision taken by her, in order that he may, upon his side, take the steps most suitable to the present position of his affairs.”

The session then terminated. Two days afterwards, in another conference, Burghley offered three thousand men on the part of the queen, on condition that they should be raised at the king’s expense, and that they should not leave England until they had received a month’s pay in advance.

The Duke of Bouillon said this was far from being what had been expected of the generosity of her Majesty, that if the king had money he would find no difficulty in raising troops in Switzerland and Germany, and that there was a very great difference between hired princes and allies. The English ministers having answered that this was all the queen could do, the duke and Saucy rose in much excitement, saying that they had then no further business than to ask for an audience of leave, and to return to France as fast as possible.

Before they bade farewell to the queen, however, the envoys sent a memoir to her Majesty, in which they set forth that the first proposition as to a league had been made by Sir Henry Umton, and that now, when the king had sent commissioners to treat concerning an alliance, already recommended by the queen’s ambassador in France, they had been received in such a way as to indicate a desire to mock them rather than to treat with them. They could not believe, they said, that it was her Majesty’s desire to use such language as had been addressed to them, and they therefore implored her plainly to declare her intentions, in order that they might waste no more time unnecessarily, especially as the high offices with which their sovereign had honoured them did not allow them to remain for a long time absent from France.

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The effect of this memoir upon the queen was, that fresh conferences were suggested, which took place at intervals between the 11th and the 26th of May. They were characterized by the same mutual complaints of overreachings and of shortcomings by which all the previous discussions had been distinguished. On the 17th May the French envoys even insisted on taking formal farewell of the queen, and were received by her Majesty for that purpose at a final audience. After they had left the presence—the preparations for their homeward journey being already made—the queen sent Sir Robert Cecil, Henry Brooke, son of Lord Cobham, and La Fontaine, minister of a French church in England, to say to them how very much mortified she was that the state of her affairs did not permit her to give the king as much assistance as he desired, and to express her wish to speak to them once more before their departure.

The result of the audience given accordingly to the envoys, two days later, was the communication of her decision to enter into the league proposed, but without definitely concluding the treaty until it should be ratified by the king.

On the 26th May articles were finally agreed upon, by which the king and queen agreed to defend each other's dominions, to unite in attacking the common enemy, and to invite other princes and states equally interested with themselves in resisting the ambitious projects of Spain, to join in the league. It was arranged that an army should be put in the field as soon as possible, at the expense of the king and queen, and of such other powers as should associate themselves in the proposed alliance; that this army should invade the dominions of the Spanish monarch, that the king and queen were never, without each other's consent, to make peace or truce with Philip; that the queen should immediately raise four thousand infantry to serve six months of every year in Picardy and Normandy, with the condition that they were never to be sent to a distance of more than fifty leagues from Boulogna; that when the troubles of Ireland should be over the queen should be at liberty to add new troops to the four thousand men thus promised by her to the league; that the queen was to furnish to these four thousand men six months' pay in advance before they should leave England, and that the king should agree to repay the amount six months afterwards, sending meanwhile four nobles to England as hostages. If the dominions of the queen should be attacked it was stipulated that, at two months' notice, the king should raise four thousand men at the expense of the queen and send them to her assistance, and that they were to serve for six months at her charge, but were not to be sent to a distance of more than fifty leagues from the coasts of France.

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The English were not willing that the States-General should be comprehended among the powers to be invited to join the league, because being under the protection of the Queen of England they were supposed to have no will but hers. Burghley insisted accordingly that, in speaking of those who were thus to be asked, no mention was to be made of peoples nor of states, for fear lest the States-General might be included under those terms. The queen was, however, brought at last to yield the point, and consented, in order to satisfy the French envoys, that to the word princes should be added the general expression orders or estates. The obstacle thus interposed to the formation of the league by the hatred of the queen and of the privileged classes of England to popular liberty, and by the secret desire entertained of regaining that sovereignty over the provinces which had been refused ten years before by Elizabeth, was at length set aside. The republic, which might have been stifled at its birth, was now a formidable fact, and could neither be annexed to the English dominions nor deprived of its existence as a new member of the European family.

It being no longer possible to gainsay the presence of the young commonwealth among the nations, the next best thing—so it was thought— was to defraud her in the treaty to which she was now invited to accede. This, as it will presently appear, the King of France and the Queen of England succeeded in doing very thoroughly, and they accomplished it notwithstanding the astuteness and the diligence of the States' envoy, who at Henry's urgent request had accompanied the French mission to England. Calvaert had been very active in bringing about the arrangement, to assist in which he had, as we have seen, risen from a sick bed and made the journey to England: "The proposition for an offensive and defensive alliance was agreed to by her Majesty's Council, but under intolerable and impracticable conditions," said he, "and, as such, rejected by the duke and Sancy, so that they took leave of her Majesty. At last, after some negotiation in which, without boasting, I may say that I did some service, it was again taken in hand, and at last, thank God, although with much difficulty, the league has been concluded."

When the task was finished the French envoys departed to obtain their master's ratification of the treaty. Elizabeth expressed herself warmly in regard to her royal brother, inviting him earnestly to pay her a visit, in which case she said she would gladly meet him half way; for a sight of him would be her only consolation in the midst of her adversity and annoyance. "He may see other princesses of a more lovely appearance," she added, "but he will never make a visit to a more faithful friend."

But the treaty thus concluded was for the public. The real agreement between France and England was made by a few days later, and reduced the ostensible arrangement to a sham, a mere decoy to foreign nations, especially to the Dutch republic, to induce them to imitate England in joining the league, and to emulate her likewise in affording that substantial assistance to the league which in reality England was very far from giving.

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“Two contracts were made,” said Secretary of State Villeroy; “the one public, to give credit and reputation to the said league, the other secret, which destroyed the effects and the promises of the first. By the first his Majesty was to be succoured by four thousand infantry, which number was limited by the second contract to two thousand, who were to reside and to serve only in the cities of Boulogne and Montreuil, assisted by an equal number of French, and not otherwise, and on condition of not being removed from those towns unless his Majesty should be personally present in Picardy with an army, in which case they might serve in Picardy, but nowhere else.”

An English garrison in a couple of French seaports, over against the English coast, would hardly have seemed a sufficient inducement to other princes and states to put large armies in the field to sustain the Protestant league, had they known that this was the meagre result of the protocolling and disputations that had been going on all the summer at Greenwich.

Nevertheless the decoy did its work, The envoys returned to France, and it was not until three months later that the Duke of Bouillon again made his appearance in England, bringing the treaty duly ratified by Henry. The league was then solemnized, on, the 26th August, by the queen with much pomp and ceremony. Three peers of the realm waited upon the French ambassador at his lodgings, and escorted him and his suite in seventeen royal coaches to the Tower. Seven splendid barges then conveyed them along the Thames to Greenwich. On the pier the ambassador was received by the Earl of Derby at the head of a great suite of nobles and high functionaries, and conducted to the palace of Nonesuch.

There was a religious ceremony in the royal chapel, where a special pavilion had been constructed. Standing, within this sanctuary, the queen; with her hand on her breast, swore faithfully to maintain the league just concluded. She then gave her hand to the Duke of Bouillon, who held it in both his own, while psalms were sung and the organ resounded through the chapel. Afterwards there was a splendid banquet in the palace, the duke sitting in solitary grandeur at the royal table, being placed at a respectful distance from her Majesty, and the dishes being placed on the board by the highest nobles of the realm, who, upon their knees, served the queen with wine. No one save the ambassador sat at Elizabeth's table, but in the same hall was spread another, at which the Earl of Essex entertained many distinguished guests, young Count Lewis Gunther of Nassau among the number.

In the midsummer twilight the brilliantly decorated barges were again floating on the historic river, the gaily-coloured lanterns lighting the sweep of the oars, and the sound of lute and viol floating merrily across the water. As the ambassador came into the courtyard of his house, he found a crowd of several thousand people assembled, who shouted welcome to the representative of Henry, and invoked blessings on the head of Queen Elizabeth and of her royal brother of France. Meanwhile all the bells of London

were ringing, artillery was thundering, and bonfires were blazing, until the night was half spent.

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Such was the holiday-making by which the league between the great Protestant queen and the ex-chief of the Huguenots of France was celebrated within a year after the pope had received him, a repentant sinner, into the fold of the Church. Truly it might be said that religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation among the nations, as had been the case for the two last generations of mankind.

The Duke of Bouillon soon afterwards departed for the Netherlands, where the regular envoy to the commonwealth, Paul Chouart Seigneur de Buzanval, had already been preparing the States-General for their entrance into the league. Of course it was duly impressed upon those republicans that they should think themselves highly honoured by the privilege of associating themselves with so august an alliance. The queen wrote an earnest letter to the States, urging them to join the league. "Especially should you do so," she said, "on account of the reputation which you will thereby gain for your affairs with the people who are under you, seeing you thus sustained (besides the certainty which you have of our favour) by the friendship of other confederated princes, and particularly by that of the most Christian king."

On the 31st October the articles of agreement under which the republic acceded to the new confederation were signed at the Hague. Of course it was not the exact counterpart of the famous Catholic association. Madam League, after struggling feebly for the past few years, a decrepit beldame, was at last dead and buried. But there had been a time when she was filled with exuberant and terrible life. She, at least, had known the object of her creation, and never, so long as life was in her, had she faltered in her dread purpose. To extirpate Protestantism, to murder Protestants, to burn, hang, butcher, bury them alive, to dethrone every Protestant sovereign in Europe, especially to assassinate the Queen of England, the Prince of Orange, with all his race, and Henry of Navarre, and to unite in the accomplishment of these simple purposes all the powers of Christendom under the universal monarchy of Philip of Spain— for all this, blood was shed in torrents, and the precious metals of the "Indies" squandered as fast as the poor savages, who were thus taking their first lessons in the doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth, could dig it from the mines. For this America had been summoned, as it were by almighty fiat, out of previous darkness, in order that it might furnish money with which to massacre all the heretics of the earth. For this great purpose was the sublime discovery of the Genoese sailor to be turned to account. These aims were intelligible, and had in part been attained. William of Orange had fallen, and a patent of nobility, with a handsome fortune, had been bestowed upon his assassin. Elizabeth's life had been frequently attempted. So had those of Henry, of Maurice, of Olden-Barneveld. Divine providence might perhaps guide the hand of future murderers with greater accuracy, for even if Madam League were dead, her ghost still walked among the Jesuits and summoned them to complete the crimes left yet unfinished.

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But what was the design of the new confederacy? It was not a Protestant league. Henry of Navarre could no longer be the chief of such an association, although it was to Protestant powers only that he could turn for assistance. It was to the commonwealth of the Netherlands, to the northern potentates and to the Calvinist and Lutheran princes of Germany, that the king and queen could alone appeal in their designs against Philip of Spain.

The position of Henry was essentially a false one from the beginning. He felt it to be so, and the ink was scarce dry with which he signed the new treaty before he was secretly casting about him to, make peace with that power with which he was apparently summoning all the nations of the earth to do battle. Even the cautious Elizabeth was deceived by the crafty Bearnese, while both united to hoodwink the other states and princes.

On the 31st October, accordingly, the States-General agreed to go into the league with England and France; "in order to resist the enterprises and ambitious designs of the King of Spain against all the princes and potentates of Christendom." As the queen had engaged—according to the public treaty or decoy—to furnish four thousand infantry to the league, the States now agreed to raise and pay for another four thousand to be maintained in the king's service at a cost of four hundred and fifty thousand florins annually, to be paid by the month. The king promised, in case the Netherlands should be invaded by the enemy with the greater part of his force, that these four thousand soldiers should return to the Netherlands. The king further bound himself to carry on a sharp offensive war in Artois and Hainault.

The States-General would have liked a condition inserted in the treaty that no peace should be made with Spain by England or France without the consent of the provinces; but this was peremptorily refused.

Perhaps the republic had no special reason to be grateful for the grudging and almost contemptuous manner in which it had thus been virtually admitted into the community of sovereigns; but the men who directed its affairs were far too enlightened not to see how great a step was taken when their political position, now conceded to them, had been secured. In good faith they intended to carry out the provisions of the new treaty, and they immediately turned their attention to the vital matters of making new levies and of imposing new taxes, by means of which they might render themselves useful to their new allies.

Meantime Ancel was deputed by Henry to visit the various courts of Germany and the north in order to obtain, if possible, new members for the league? But Germany was difficult to rouse. The dissensions among Protestants were ever inviting the assaults of the Papists. Its multitude of sovereigns were passing their leisure moments in wrangling among themselves as usual on abstruse points of theology,

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and devoting their serious hours to banquetting, deep drinking, and the pleasures of the chase. The jeremiads of old John of Nassau grew louder than ever, but his voice was of one crying in the wilderness. The wrath to come of that horrible Thirty Years' War, which he was not to witness seemed to inspire all his prophetic diatribes. But there were few to heed them. Two great dangers seemed ever impending over Christendom, and it is difficult to decide which fate would have been the more terrible, the establishment of the universal monarchy of Philip II., or the conquest of Germany by the Grand Turk. But when Ancel and other emissaries sought to obtain succour against the danger from the south-west, he was answered by the clash of arms and the shrieks of horror which came daily from the south-east. In vain was it urged, and urged with truth, that the Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition, that the soil of Europe might be overrun by Turks and Tartars, and the crescent planted triumphantly in every village, with less disaster to the human race, and with better hope that the germs of civilization and the precepts of Christianity might survive the invasion, than if the system of Philip, of Torquemada, and of Alva, should become the universal law. But the Turk was a frank enemy of Christianity, while Philip murdered Christians in the name of Christ. The distinction imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things. Moreover, the danger from the young and enterprising Mahomet seemed more appalling to the imagination than the menace, from which experience had taken something of its terrors, of the old and decrepit Philip.

The Ottoman empire, in its exact discipline, in its terrible concentration of purpose, in its contempt for all arts and sciences, and all human occupation save the trade of war and the pursuit of military dominion, offered a strong contrast to the distracted condition of the holy Roman empire, where an intellectual and industrious people, distracted by half a century of religious controversy and groaning under one of the most elaborately perverse of all the political systems ever invented by man, seemed to offer itself an easy prey to any conqueror. The Turkish power was in the fulness of its aggressive strength, and seemed far more formidable than it would have done had there been clearer perceptions of what constitutes the strength and the wealth of nations. Could the simple truth have been thoroughly comprehended that a realm founded upon such principles was the grossest of absurdities, the Eastern might have seemed less terrible than the Western danger.

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But a great campaign, at no considerable distance from the walls of Vienna, had occupied the attention of Germany during the autumn. Mahomet had taken the field in person with a hundred thousand men, and the emperor's brother, Maximilian, in conjunction with the Prince of Transylvania, at the head of a force of equal magnitude, had gone forth to give him battle. Between the Theiss and the Danube, at Keveste, not far from the city of Erlau, on the 26th October, the terrible encounter on which the fate of Christendom seemed to hang at last took place, and Europe held its breath in awful suspense until its fate should be decided. When the result at last became known, a horrible blending of the comic and the tragic, such as has rarely been presented in history, startled the world. Seventy thousand human beings—Moslems and Christians—were lying dead or wounded on the banks of a nameless little stream which flows into the Theisa, and the commanders-in-chief of both armies were running away as fast as horses could carry them. Each army believed itself hopelessly defeated, and abandoning tents, baggage, artillery, ammunition, the remnants of each, betook themselves to panic-stricken flight. Generalissimo Maximilian never looked behind him as he fled, until he had taken refuge in Kaschan, and had thence made his way, deeply mortified and despondent, to Vienna. The Prince of Transylvania retreated into the depths of his own principality. Mahomet, with his principal officers, shut himself up in Buda, after which he returned to Constantinople and abandoned himself for a time to a voluptuous ease, inconsistent with the Ottoman projects of conquering the world. The Turks, less prone to desperation than the Christians, had been utterly overthrown in the early part of the action, but when the victors were, as usual, greedily bent upon plunder before the victory had been fairly secured, the tide of battle was turned by the famous Italian renegade Cicala. The Turks, too, had the good sense to send two days afterwards and recover their artillery, trains, and other property, which ever since the battle had been left at the mercy of the first comers.

So ended the Turkish campaign of the year 1596. Ancel, accordingly, fared ill in his negotiations with Germany. On the other hand Mendoza, Admiral of Arragon, had been industriously but secretly canvassing the same regions as the representative of the Spanish king. It was important for Philip, who put more faith in the league of the three powers than Henry himself did, to lose no time in counteracting its influence. The condition of the holy Roman empire had for some time occupied his most serious thoughts. It seemed plain that Rudolph would never marry. Certainly he would never marry the Infanta, although he was very angry that his brother should aspire to the hand which he himself rejected. In case of his death without children, Philip thought it possible that there might be a Protestant revolution in Germany,

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and that the house of Habsburg might lose the imperial crown altogether. It was even said that the emperor himself was of that opinion, and preferred that the empire should end with his own life." Philip considered that neither Matthias nor Maximilian was fit to succeed their brother, being both of them lukewarm in the Catholic faith." In other words, he chose that his destined son-in-law, the Cardinal Albert, should supersede them, and he was anxious to have him appointed as soon as possible King of the Romans.

"His Holiness the Pope and the King of Spain," said the Admiral of Arragon, "think it necessary to apply most stringent measures to the emperor to compel him to appoint a successor, because, in case of his death without one, the administration during the vacancy would fall to the elector palatine,—a most perverse Calvinistic heretic, and as great an enemy of the house of Austria and of our holy religion as the Turk himself—as sufficiently appears in those diabolical laws of his published in the palatinate a few months since. A vacancy is so dreadful, that in the north of Germany the world would come to an end; yet the emperor, being of rather a timid nature than otherwise, is inclined to quiet, and shrinks from the discussions and conflicts likely to be caused by an appointment. Therefore his Holiness and his Catholic Majesty, not choosing that we should all live in danger of the world's falling in ruins, have resolved to provide the remedy. They are to permit the electors to use the faculty which they possess of suspending the emperor and depriving him of his power; there being examples of this in other times against emperors who governed ill."

The Admiral farther alluded to the great effort made two years before to elect the King of Denmark emperor, reminding Philip that in Hamburg they had erected triumphal arches, and made other preparations to receive him. This year, he observed, the Protestants were renewing their schemes. On the occasion of the baptism of the child of the elector palatine, the English envoy being present, and Queen Elizabeth being god-mother, they had agreed upon nine articles of faith much more hostile to the Catholic creed than anything ever yet professed. In case of the death of the emperor, this elector palatine would of course make much trouble, and the emperor should therefore be induced, by fair means if possible, on account of the great inconvenience of forcing him, but not without a hint of compulsion, to acquiesce in the necessary measures. Philip was represented as willing to assist the empire with considerable force against the Turk—as there could be no doubt that Hungary was in great danger—but in recompense it was necessary to elect a King of the Romans in all respects satisfactory to him. There were three objections to the election of Albert, whose recent victories and great abilities entitled him in Philip's opinion to the crown. Firstly, there was a doubt whether the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia were elective or hereditary, and it was very important that the King of the Romans should succeed to those two crowns, because the electors and other princes having fiefs within those kingdoms would be unwilling to

swear fealty to two suzerains, and as Albert was younger than his brothers he could scarcely expect to take by inheritance.

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Secondly, Albert had no property of his own, but the Admiral suggested that the emperor might be made to abandon to him the income of the Tyrol.

Thirdly, it was undesirable for Albert to leave the Netherlands at that juncture. Nevertheless, it was suggested by the easy-going Admiral, with the same tranquil insolence which marked all his proposed arrangements, that as Rudolph would retire from the government altogether, Albert, as King of the Romans and acting emperor, could very well take care of the Netherlands as part of his whole realm. Albert being moreover about to marry the Infanta, the handsome dowry which he would receive with her from the king would enable him to sustain his dignity.

Thus did Philip who had been so industrious during the many past years in his endeavours to expel the heretic Queen of England and the Huguenot Henry from the realms of their ancestors, and to seat himself or his daughter, or one or another of his nephews, in their places, now busy himself with schemes to discrown Rudolph of Habsburg, and to place the ubiquitous Infanta and her future husband on his throne. Time would show the result.

Meantime, while the Protestant Ancel and other agents of the new league against Philip were travelling about from one court of Europe to another to gain adherents to their cause, the great founder of the confederacy was already secretly intriguing for a peace with that monarch. The ink was scarce dry on the treaty to which he had affixed his signature before he was closeted with the agents of the Archduke Albert, and receiving affectionate messages and splendid presents from that military ecclesiastic.

In November, 1596, La Balvena, formerly a gentleman of the Count de la Fera, came to Rouen. He had a very secret interview with Henry IV. at three o'clock one morning, and soon afterwards at a very late hour in the night. The king asked him why the archduke was not willing to make a general peace, including England and Holland. Balvena replied that he had no authority to treat on that subject; it being well known, however, that the King of Spain would never consent to a peace with the rebels, except on the ground of the exclusive maintenance of the Catholic religion.

He is taking the very course to destroy that religion, said Henry. The king then avowed himself in favour of peace for the sake of the poor afflicted people of all countries. He was not tired of arms, he said, which were so familiar to him, but his wish was to join in a general crusade against the Turk. This would be better for the Catholic religion than the present occupations of all parties. He avowed that the Queen of England was his very good friend, and said he had never yet broken his faith with her, and never would do so. She had sent him the Garter, and he had accepted it, as his brother Henry III. had done before him, and he would negotiate no peace which did not include her.

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The not very distant future was to show how much these stout professions of sincerity were worth. Meantime Henry charged Balvena to keep their interviews a profound secret, especially from every one in France. The king expressed great anxiety lest the Huguenots should hear of it, and the agent observed that any suspicion of peace negotiations would make great disturbance among the heretics, as one of the conditions of the king's absolution by the pope was supposed to be that he should make war upon his Protestant subjects. On his return from Rouen the emissary made a visit to Monlevet, marshal of the camp to Henry IV. and a Calvinist. There was much conversation about peace, in the course of which Monlevet observed, "We are much afraid of you in negotiation, for we know that you Spaniards far surpass us in astuteness."

"Nay," said Balvena, "I will only repeat the words of the Emperor Charles V.—'The Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen; the French seem madmen, and are wise.'"

A few weeks later the archduke sent Balvena again to Rouen. He had another interview with the king, at which not only Villeroy and other Catholics were present, but Monlevet also. This proved a great obstacle to freedom of conversation. The result was the same as before.

There were strong professions of a desire on the part of the king for a peace but it was for a general peace; nothing further.

On the 4th December Balvena was sent for by the king before daylight, just as he was mounting his horse for the chase.

"Tell his Highness," said Henry, "that I am all frankness, and incapable of dissimulation, and that I believe him too much a man of honour to wish to deceive me. Go tell him that I am most anxious for peace, and that I deeply regret the defeat that has been sustained against the Turk. Had I been there I would have come out dead or victorious. Let him arrange an agreement between us, so that presto he may see me there with my brave nobles, with infantry and with plenty of Switzers. Tell him that I am his friend: Begone. Be diligent."

On the last day but two of the year, the archduke, having heard this faithful report of Henry's affectionate sentiments, sent him a suit of splendid armour, such as was then made better in Antwerp than anywhere else, magnificently burnished of a blue colour, according to an entirely new fashion.

With such secret courtesies between his most Catholic Majesty's vicegerent and himself was Henry's league with the two Protestant powers accompanied.



Exactly at the same epoch Philip was again preparing an invasion of the queen's dominions. An armada of a hundred and twenty-eight ships, with a force of fourteen thousand infantry and three thousand horse, had been assembled during the autumn of this year at Lisbon, notwithstanding the almost crushing blow that the English and Hollanders had dealt the king's navy so recently at Cadiz. This

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new expedition was intended for Ireland, where it was supposed that the Catholics would be easily roused. It was also hoped that the King of Scots might be induced to embrace this opportunity of wreaking vengeance on his mother's destroyer. "He was on the watch the last time that my armada went forth against the English," said Philip, "and he has now no reason to do the contrary, especially if he remembers that here is a chance to requite the cruelty which was practised on his mother."

The fleet sailed on the 5th October under the command of the Count Santa Gadea. Its immediate destination was the coast of Ireland, where they were to find some favourable point for disembarking the troops. Having accomplished this, the ships, with the exception of a few light vessels, were to take their departure and pass the winter in Ferrol. In case the fleet should be forced by stress of weather on the English coast, the port of Milford Haven in Wales was to be seized, "because," said Philip, "there are a great many Catholics there well affected to our cause, and who have a special enmity to the English." In case the English fleet should come forth to give battle, Philip sent directions that it was to be conquered at once, and that after the victory Milford Haven was to be firmly held.

This was easily said. But it was not fated that this expedition should be more triumphant than that of the unconquerable armada which had been so signally conquered eight years before. Scarcely had the fleet put to sea when it was overtaken by a tremendous storm, in which forty ships foundered with five thousand men. The shattered remnants took refuge in Ferrol. There the ships were to refit, and in the spring the attempt was to be renewed. Thus it was ever with the King of Spain. There was a placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat which sycophants thought sublime. And such insensibility might have been sublimity had the monarch been in person on the deck of a frigate in the howling tempest, seeing ship after ship go down before his eyes; and exerting himself with tranquil energy and skill to encourage his followers, and to preserve what remained afloat from destruction. Certainly such exhibitions of human superiority to the elements are in the highest degree inspiring. His father had shown himself on more than one occasion the master of his fate. The King of France, too, bare-headed, in his iron corslet, leading a forlorn hope, and, by the personal charm of his valour, changing fugitives into heroes and defeat into victory, had afforded many examples of sublime unconsciousness of disaster, such as must ever thrill the souls of mankind. But it is more difficult to be calm in battle and shipwreck than at the writing desk; nor is that the highest degree of fortitude which enables a monarch—himself in safety—to endure without flinching the destruction of his fellow creatures.

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No sooner, however, was the remnant of the tempest-tost fleet safe in Ferrol than the king requested the cardinal to collect an army at Calais and forthwith to invade England. He asked his nephew whether he could not manage to send his troops across the channel in vessels of light draught, such as he already had at command, together with some others which might be furnished him from Spain. In this way he was directed to gain a foot-hold in England, and he was to state immediately whether he could accomplish this with his own resources or should require the assistance of the fleet at Ferrol. The king further suggested that the enemy, encouraged by his success at Cadiz the previous summer, might be preparing a fresh expedition against Spain, in which case the invasion of England would be easier to accomplish.

Thus on the last day of 1596, Philip, whose fleet sent forth for the conquest of Ireland and England had been too crippled to prosecute the adventure, was proposing to his nephew to conquer England without any fleet at all. He had given the same advice to Alexander Farnese so soon as he heard of the destruction of the invincible armada.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Allow her to seek a profit from his misfortune
Burning of Servetus at Geneva
Constant vigilance is the price of liberty
Evil has the advantage of rapidly assuming many shapes
French seem madmen, and are wise
Hanging of Mary Dyer at Boston
Imposed upon the multitudes, with whom words were things
Impossible it was to invent terms of adulation too gross
In times of civil war, to be neutral is to be nothing
Meet around a green table except as fencers in the field
One-third of Philip's effective navy was thus destroyed
Patriotism seemed an unimaginable idea
Placid unconsciousness on his part of defeat
Plea of infallibility and of authority soon becomes ridiculous
Religion was rapidly ceasing to be the line of demarcation
So often degenerated into tyranny (Calvinism)
Spaniards seem wise, and are madmen
The Alcoran was less cruel than the Inquisition
There are few inventions in morals
To attack England it was necessary to take the road of Ireland
Tranquil insolence
Unproductive consumption was alarmingly increasing
Upon their knees, served the queen with wine
Wish to sell us the bear-skin before they have killed the bear

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