

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1600 eBook

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1600 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. 73

History of the United Netherlands, 1600

CHAPTER, XXXVIII.

Military events—Aggressive movement of the Netherlanders—State of the Archdukes provinces—Mutiny of the Spanish forces—Proposed invasion of Flanders by the States-General—Disembarkation of the troops on the Spanish coasts—Capture of Oudenburg and other places —Surprise of Nieuport—Conduct of the Archduke—Oudenburg and the other forts re-taken—Dilemma of the States' army—Attack of the Archduke on Count Ernest's cavalry—Panic and total overthrow of the advance-guard of the States' army—Battle of Nieuport—Details of the action—Defeat of the Spanish army—Results of the whole expedition.



The effect produced in the republic by the defensive and uneventful campaigning of the year 1599 had naturally been depressing. There was murmuring at the vast amount of taxation, especially at the new imposition of one-half per cent. upon all property, and two-and-a-half per cent. on all sales, which seemed to produce so few results. The successful protection of the Isle of Bommel and the judicious purchase of the two forts of Crevecoeur and St. Andrew; early in the following year, together with their garrisons, were not military events of the first magnitude, and were hardly enough to efface the mortification felt at the fact that the enemy had been able so lately to construct one of those strongholds within the territory of the commonwealth.



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It was now secretly determined to attempt an aggressive movement on a considerable scale, and to carry the war once for all into the heart of the obedient provinces. It was from Flanders that the Spanish armies drew a great portion of their supplies. It was by the forts erected on the coast of Flanders in the neighbourhood of Ostend that this important possession of the States was rendered nearly valueless. It was by privateers swarming from the ports of Flanders, especially from Nieuport and Dunkirk, that the foreign trade of the republic was crippled, and its intercommunications by river and estuary rendered unsafe. Dunkirk was simply a robbers' cave, a station from which an annual tax was levied upon the commerce of the Netherlands, almost sufficient, had it been paid to the national treasury instead of to the foreign freebooters, to support the expenses of a considerable army.

On the other hand the condition of the archdukes seemed deplorable. Never had mutiny existed before in so well-organised and definite a form even in the Spanish Netherlands.

Besides those branches of the "Italian republic," which had been established in the two fortresses of Crevecoeur and St. Andrew, and which had already sold themselves to the States, other organisations quite as formidable existed in various other portions of the obedient provinces. Especially at Diest and Thionville the rebellious Spaniards and Italians were numbered by thousands, all veterans, well armed, fortified in strong cities; and supplying themselves with perfect regularity by contributions levied upon the peasantry, obeying their Eletto and other officers with exemplary promptness; and paying no more heed to the edicts or the solicitations of the archduke than if he had been the Duke of Muscovy.

The opportunity seemed tempting to strike a great blow. How could Albert and Isabella, with an empty exchequer and a mutinous army, hope either to defend their soil from attack or to aim a counter blow at the republic, even if, the republic for a season should be deprived of a portion of its defenders?

The reasoning was plausible, the prize tempting. The States-General, who habitually discountenanced rashness, and were wont to impose superfluous restraints upon the valiant but discreet Lewis William, and upon the deeply pondering but energetic Maurice, were now grown as ardent as they had hitherto been hesitating. In the early days of June it was determined in secret session to organize a great force in Holland and Zeeland, and to embark suddenly for Nieuport, to carry that important position by surprise or assault, and from that basis to redeem Dunkirk. The possession of these two cities, besides that of Ostend, which had always been retained by the Republic, would ensure the complete subjugation of Flanders. The trifling force of two thousand men under Rivas—all that the archduke then had in that province—and the sconces and earthworks which had been constructed



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around Ostend to impede the movements and obstruct the supplies of the garrison, would be utterly powerless to prevent the consummation of the plan. Flanders once subjugated, it would not be long before the Spaniards were swept from the obedient Netherlands as thoroughly as they had been from the domains of the commonwealth, and all the seventeen provinces, trampling out every vestige of a hated foreign tyranny, would soon take their natural place as states of a free; prosperous, and powerful union.

But Maurice of Nassau did not share the convictions of the States-General. The unwonted ardour of Barneveld did not inflame his imagination. He urged that the enterprise was inexcusably rash; that its execution would require the whole army of the States, except the slender garrisons absolutely necessary to protect important places from surprise; that a defeat would not be simply disaster, but annihilation; that retreat without absolute triumph would be impossible, and that amid such circumstances the archduke, in spite of his poverty and the rebellious condition of his troops, would doubtless assemble a sufficient force to dispute with reasonable prospects of victory, this invasion of his territory.

Sir Francis Vere, too, was most decidedly opposed to the plan. He pointed out with great clearness its dangerous and possibly fatal character; assuring the Staten that, within a fortnight after the expedition had begun, the archduke would follow upon their heels with an army fully able to cope with the best which they could put into the field. But besides this experienced and able campaigner, who so thoroughly shared the opinions of Prince Maurice, every military man in the provinces of any consideration, was opposed to, the scheme. Especially Lewis William—than whom no more sagacious military critic or accomplished strategist existed in Europe, denounced it with energy and even with indignation. It was, in the opinion of the young stadholder of Friesland, to suspend the existence of the whole commonwealth upon a silken thread. Even success, he prophesied, would bring no permanent fruits, while the consequences of an overthrow, were fearful to contemplate. The immediate adherents and most trusted counsellors of William Lewis were even more unmeasured in their denunciations than he was himself. "Tis all the work of Barneveld and the long-gowns," cried Everard van Reyd. "We are led into a sack from which there is no extrication. We are marching to the Caudine Forks."

Certainly it is no small indication of the vast influence and the indomitable resolution of Barneveld that he never faltered in this storm of indignation. The Advocate had made up his mind to invade Flanders and to capture Nieuport; and the decree accordingly went forth, despite all opposition. The States-General were sovereign, and the Advocate and the States-General were one.

It was also entirely characteristic of Maurice that he should submit his judgment on this great emergency to that of Olden-Barneveld. It was difficult for him to resist the



influence of the great intellect to which he had always willingly deferred in affairs of state, and from which; even in military matters, it was hardly possible for him to escape. Yet in military matters Maurice was a consummate professor, and the Advocate in comparison but a school-boy.



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The ascendancy of Barneveld was the less wholesome, therefore, and it might have been better had the stadholder manifested more resolution. But Maurice had not a resolute character. Thorough soldier as he was, he was singularly vacillating, at times almost infirm of purpose, but never before in his career had this want of decision manifested itself in so striking a manner.

Accordingly the States-General, or in other words John of Olden-Barneveld proposed to invade Flanders, and lay siege, to Nieuport. The States-General were sovereign, and Maurice bowed to their authority. After the matter had been entirely decided upon the state-council was consulted, and the state-council attempted no opposition to the project. The preparations were made with matchless energy and extraordinary secrecy. Lewis William, who meanwhile was to defend the eastern frontier of the republic against any possible attack, sent all the troops that it was possible to spare; but he sent, them with a heavy heart. His forebodings were dismal. It seemed to him that all was about to be staked upon a single cast of the dice. Moreover it was painful to him while the terrible game, was playing to be merely a looker on and a prophet of evil from a distance, forbidden to contribute by his personal skill and experience to a fortunate result. Hohenlo too was appointed to protect the southern border, and was excluded from, all participation in the great expedition.

As to the enemy, such rumors as might come to them from day to day of mysterious military, preparations on the part of the rebels only served to excite suspicion in others directions. The archduke was uneasy in, regard to the Rhine and the Gueldrian; quarter, but never dreamt of a hostile descent upon the Flemish coast.

Meantime, on the 19th June Maurice of Nassau made his appearance at Castle Rammekens, not far from Flushing, at the mouth of the Scheld, to superintend the great movement. So large a fleet as was there assembled had never before been seen or heard of in Christendom. Of war-ships, transports, and flat-bottomed barges there were at least thirteen hundred. Many eye-witnesses, who counted however with their imaginations, declared that there were in all at least three thousand vessels, and the statement has been reproduced by grave and trustworthy chroniclers. As the number of troops to be embarked upon the enterprise certainly did not exceed fourteen thousand, this would have been an allowance of one vessel to every five soldiers, besides the army munitions and provisions—a hardly reasonable arrangement.



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Twelve thousand infantry and sixteen hundred cavalry, the consummate flower of the States' army, all well-paid, well-clad, well-armed, well-disciplined veterans, had been collected in this place of rendezvous and were ready to embark. It would be unjust to compare the dimensions of this force and the preparations for ensuring the success of the enterprise with the vast expeditions and gigantic armaments of later times, especially with the tremendous exhibitions of military and naval energy with which our own civil war has made us familiar. Maurice was an adept in all that science and art had as yet bequeathed to humanity for the purpose of human' destruction, but the number of his troops was small compared to the mighty hosts which the world since those days has seen embattled. War, as a trade, was then less easily learned. It was a guild in which apprenticeship was difficult, and in which enrolment was usually for life. A little republic of scarce three million souls, which could keep always on foot a regular well-appointed army of twenty-five thousand men and a navy of one or two hundred heavily armed cruisers, was both a marvel and a formidable element in the general polity of the world. The lesson to be derived both in military and political philosophy from the famous campaign of Nieuport does not depend for its value on the numbers of the ships or soldiers engaged in the undertaking. Otherwise, and had it been merely a military expedition like a thousand others which have been made and forgotten, it would not now deserve more than a momentary attention. But the circumstances were such as to make the issue of the impending battle one of the most important in human history. It was entirely possible that an overwhelming defeat of the republican forces on this foreign expedition would bring with it an absolute destruction of the republic, and place Spain once more in possession of the heretic "islands," from which basis she would menace the very existence of England more seriously than she had ever done before. Who could measure the consequences to Christendom of such a catastrophe?

The distance from the place where the fleet and army were assembled to Nieuport—the objective point of the enterprise—was but thirty-five miles as the crow flies. And the crow can scarcely fly in a straighter line than that described by the coast along which the ships were to shape their course.

And here it is again impossible not to reflect upon the change which physical science has brought over the conduct of human affairs. We have seen in a former chapter a most important embassy sent forth from the States for the purpose of preventing the consummation of a peace between their ally and their enemy. Celerity was a vital element in the success of such a mission; for the secret negotiations which it was intended to impede were supposed to be near their termination. Yet months were consumed in a journey which in our day would have been accomplished



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in twenty-four hours. And now in this great military expedition the essential and immediate purpose was to surprise a small town almost within sight from the station at which the army was ready to embark. Such a midsummer voyage in this epoch of steam-tugs and transports would require but a few hours. Yet two days long the fleet lay at anchor while a gentle breeze blew persistently from the south-west. As there seemed but little hope that the wind would become more favourable, and as the possibility of surprise grew fainter with every day's delay, it was decided to make a landing upon the nearest point of Flemish coast placed by circumstances within their reach: Count Ernest of Nassau; with the advance-guard, was accordingly, despatched on the 21st June to the neighbourhood of the Sas-of Ghent, where he seized a weakly guarded fort, called Philippine, and made thorough preparations, for the arrival of the whole army. On the following day the rest of the troops made their appearance, and in the course of five hours were safely disembarked.

The army, which consisted of Zeelanders, Frisians, Hollanders, Walloons, Germans, English, and Scotch, was divided into three corps. The advance was under the command of Count Ernest, the battalia under that of Count George Everard Solms, while the rear-guard during the march was entrusted to that experienced soldier Sir Francis Vere. Besides Prince Maurice, there were three other members of the house of Nassau serving in the expedition—his half-brother Frederic Henry, then a lad of sixteen, and the two brothers of the Frisian stadholder, Ernest and Lewis Gunther, whom Lewis William had been so faithfully educating in the arts of peace and war both by precept and example. Lewis Gunther, still a mere youth, but who had been the first to scale the fort of Cadiz, and to plant on its height the orange banner of the murdered rebel, and whose gallantry during the whole expedition had called forth the special commendations of Queen Elizabeth—expressed in energetic and affectionate terms to his father—now commanded all the cavalry. Certainly if the doctrine of primordial selection could ever be accepted among human creatures, the race of Nassau at that day might have seemed destined to be chiefs of the Netherland soil. Old John of Nassau, ardent and energetic as ever in the cause of the religious reformation of Germany and the liberation of Holland, still watched from his retirement the progress of the momentous event. Four of his brethren, including the great founder of the republic, had already laid down their lives for the sacred cause. His son Philip had already fallen under the banner in the fight of Bislich, and three other sons were serving the republic day and night, by sea and land, with sword, and pen, and purse, energetically, conscientiously, and honourably. Of the stout hearts and quick intellects on which the safety of the commonwealth then depended, none was more efficient or true than the accomplished soldier and statesman Lewis William. Thoroughly disapproving of the present invasion of Flanders, he was exerting himself, now that it had been decided upon by his sovereigns the States-Generals, with the same loyalty as that of Maurice, to bring it to a favourable issue, although not personally engaged in the adventure.



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So soon as the troops had been landed the vessels were sent off as expeditiously as possible, that none might fall into, the enemy's hands; the transports under a strong convoy of war-ships having been directed to proceed as fast as the wind would permit in the direction of Nieuport. The march then began. On the 23rd they advanced a league and halted for the night at Assenede. The next day brought them three leagues further, to a place called Eckerloo. On the 25th they marched to Male, a distance of three leagues and a half, passing close to the walls of Bruges, in which they had indulged faint hopes of exciting an insurrection, but obtained nothing but a feeble cannonade from the fortifications which did no damage except the killing of one muleteer. The next night was passed at Jabbeke, four leagues from Male, and on the 27th, after marching another league, they came before the fort of Oudenburg.

This important post on the road which the army would necessarily traverse in coming from the interior to the coast was easily captured and then strongly garrisoned. Maurice with the main army spent the two following days at the fortress, completing his arrangements. Solms was sent forward to seize the sconces and redoubts of the enemy around Ostend, at Breedene, Snaaskerk, Plassendaal, and other points, and especially to occupy the important fort called St. Albert, which was in the downs at about a league from that city. All this work was thoroughly accomplished; little or no resistance having been made to the occupation of these various places. Meantime the States-General, who at the special request of Maurice were to accompany the expedition in order to observe the progress of events for which they were entirely responsible, and to aid the army when necessary by their advice and co-operation, had assembled to the number of thirteen in Ostend. Solms having strengthened the garrison of that place then took up his march along the beach to Nieuport. During the progress of the army through Holland and Zeeland towards its place of embarkation there had been nothing but dismal prognostics, with expressions of muttered indignation, wherever the soldiers passed. It seemed to the country people, and to the inhabitants of every town and village, that their defenders were going to certain destruction; that the existence of the commonwealth was hanging by a thread soon to be snapped asunder. As the forces subsequently marched from the Sas of Ghent towards the Flemish coast there was no rising of the people in their favour, and although Maurice had issued distinct orders that the peasantry were to be dealt with gently and justly, yet they found neither peasants nor villagers to deal with at all. The whole population on their line of march had betaken themselves to the woods, except the village sexton of Jabbeke and his wife, who were too old to run. Lurking in the thickets and marshes, the peasants fell upon all stragglers from the army and murdered them without



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mercy—so difficult is it in times of civil war to make human brains pervious to the light of reason. The stadholder and his soldiers came to liberate their brethren of the same race, and speaking the same language, from abject submission to a foreign despotism. The Flemings had but to speak a word, to lift a finger, and all the Netherlands, self-governed, would coalesce into one independent confederation of States, strong enough to defy all the despots of Europe. Alas! the benighted victims of superstition hugged their chains, and preferred the tyranny under which their kindred had been tortured, burned, and buried alive for half-a-century long, to the possibility of a single Calvinistic conventicle being opened in any village of obedient Flanders. So these excellent children of Philip and the pope, whose language was as unintelligible to them as it was to Peruvians or Iroquois, lay in wait for the men who spoke their own mother tongue, and whose veins were filled with their own blood, and murdered them, as a sacred act of duty. Retaliation followed as a matter of course, so that the invasion of Flanders, in this early stage of its progress, seemed not likely to call forth very fraternal feelings between the two families of Netherlanders.

The army was in the main admirably well supplied, but there was a deficiency of drink. The water as they advanced became brackish and intolerably bad, and there was great difficulty in procuring any substitute. At Male three cows were given for a pot of beer, and more of that refreshment might have been sold at the same price, had there been any sellers.

On the 30th June Maurice marched from Oudenburg, intending to strike a point called Niewendam—a fort in the neighbourhood of Nieuport—and so to march along the walls of that city and take up his position immediately in its front. He found the ground, however, so marshy and impracticable as he advanced, that he was obliged to countermarch, and to spend that night on the downs between forts Isabella and St. Albert.

On the 1st July he resumed his march, and passing a bridge over a small stream at a place called Leffingen, laying down a road as he went with sods and sand, and throwing bridges over streams and swamps, he arrived in the forenoon before Nieuport. The fleet had reached the roadstead the same morning.

This was a strong, well-built, and well-fortified little city, situate half-a-league from the sea coast on low, plashy ground. At high water it was a seaport, for a stream or creek of very insignificant dimensions was then sufficiently filled by the tide to admit vessels of considerable burthen. This haven was immediately taken possession of by the stadholder, and two-thirds of his army were thrown across to the western side of the water, the troops remaining on the Ostend side being by a change of arrangement now under command of Count Ernest.



Thus the army which had come to surprise Nieuport had, after accomplishing a distance of nearly forty miles in thirteen days, at last arrived before that place. Yet there was no more expeditious or energetic commander in Christendom than Maurice, nor troops better trained in marching and fighting than his well-disciplined army.



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It is now necessary to cast a glance towards the interior of Flanders, in order to observe how the archduke conducted himself in this emergency. So soon as the news of the landing of the States' army at the port of Ghent reached the sovereign's ears, he awoke from the delusion that danger was impending on his eastern border, and lost no time in assembling such troops as could be mustered from far and near to protect the western frontier. Especially he despatched messengers well charged with promises, to confer with the authorities of the "Italian Republic" at Diest and Thionville. He appealed to them in behalf of the holy Catholic religion, he sought to arouse their loyalty to himself and the Infanta Isabella—daughter of the great and good Philip II., once foremost of earthly potentates, and now eminent among the saints of heaven—by whose fiat he and his wife had now become legitimate sovereigns of all the Netherlands. And those mutineers responded with unexpected docility. Eight hundred foot soldiers and six hundred cavalry men came forth at the first summons, making but two conditions in addition to the stipulated payment when payment should be possible—that they should be commanded by their own chosen officers, and that they should be placed in the first rank in the impending conflict. The example spread. Other detachments of mutineers in various strongholds, scenting the battle from afar, came in with offers to serve in the campaign on similar terms. Before the last week of June the archduke had a considerable army on foot. On the 29th of that month, accompanied by the Infanta, he reviewed a force of ten thousand foot and nearly two thousand cavalry in the immediate vicinity of Ghent. He addressed them in a few stirring words, reminding them of their duty to the Church and to himself, and assuring them—as commanders of every nation and every age are wont to assure their troops at the eve of every engagement—that the cause in which they were going forth to battle was the most sacred and inspiring for which human creatures could possibly lay down their lives. Isabella, magnificently attired, and mounted on a white palfrey, galloped along the lines, and likewise made an harangue. She spoke to the soldiers as "her lions," promised them boundless rewards in this world and the next, as the result of the great victory which they were now about to gain over the infidels; while as to their wages, she vowed that, rather than they should remain unpaid, she would sacrifice all her personal effects, even to the plate from which she ate her daily bread, and to the jewels which she wore in her ears.



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Thousands of hoarse voices greeted the eloquence of the archdukes with rude acclamations, while the discharge of arquebus and volleys of cannon testified to the martial ardour with which the troops were inspired; none being more enthusiastic than the late mutineers. The army marched at once, under many experienced leaders—Villars, Zapena, and Avalos among the most conspicuous. The command of the artillery was entrusted to Velasco; the marshal-general of the camp was Frederic van den Berg, in place of the superannuated Peter Ernest; while the Admiral of Arragon, Francisco de Mendoza, “terror of Germany and of Christendom,” a little man with flowing locks, long hooked nose, and a sinister glance from his evil black eyes, was general of the cavalry. The admiral had not displayed very extraordinary genius in his recent campaigning in the Rhenish duchies, but his cruelty had certainly been conspicuous. Not even Alva could have accomplished more murders and other outrages in the same space of time than had been perpetrated by the Spanish troops during the infamous winter of 1598-9. The assassination of Count Broeck at his own castle had made more stir than a thousand other homicides of nameless wretches at the same period had done, because the victim had been a man of rank and large possessions, but it now remained to be seen whether Mendoza was to gain fresh laurels of any kind in the battle which was probably impending.

On the 1st of July the archduke came before Oudenburg. Not a soul within that fortress nor in Ostend dreamed of an enemy within twenty miles of them, nor had it been supposed possible that a Spanish army could take the field for many weeks to come. The States-General at Ostend were complacently waiting for the first bulletin from Maurice announcing his capture of Nieuport and his advance upon Dunkirk, according to the program so succinctly drawn up for him, and meantime were holding meetings and drawing up comfortable protocols with great regularity. Colonel Piron, on his part, who had been left with several companies of veterans to hold Oudenburg and the other forts, and to protect the rear of the invading army, was accomplishing that object by permitting a large portion of his force to be absent on foraging parties and general marauding. When the enemy came before Oudenburg they met with no resistance. The fort was surrendered at once, and with it fell the lesser sconces of Breedene, Snaaskerk, and Plassendaal—all but the more considerable fort St. Albert. The archduke, not thinking it advisable to delay his march by the reduction of this position, and having possession of all the other fortifications around Ostend, determined to push forward next morning at daybreak. He had granted favourable terms of surrender to the various garrisons, which, however, did not prevent them from being dearly—every man of them immediately butchered in cold blood.

Thus were these strong and well-manned redoubts, by which Prince Maurice had hoped to impede for many days the march of a Spanish army—should a Spanish army indeed be able to take the field at all—already swept off in an hour. Great was the dismay in Ostend when Colonel Piron and a few stragglers brought the heavy news of discomfiture and massacre to the high and mighty States-General in solemn meeting assembled.

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Meanwhile, the States' army before Nieuport, not dreaming of any pending interruption to their labours, proceeded in a steady but leisurely manner to invest the city. Maurice occupied himself in tracing the lines of encampment and entrenchment, and ordered a permanent bridge to be begun across the narrowest part of the creek, in order that the two parts of his army might not be so dangerously divided from each other as they now were, at high water, by the whole breadth and depth of the harbour. Evening came on before much had been accomplished on this first day of the siege. It was scarcely dusk when a messenger, much exhausted and terrified, made his appearance at Count Ernest's tent. He was a straggler who had made his escape from Oudenburg, and he brought the astounding intelligence that the archduke had already possession of that position and of all the other forts. Ernest instantly jumped into a boat and had himself rowed, together with the messenger, to the headquarters of Prince Maurice on the other side of the river. The news was as unexpected as it was alarming. Here was the enemy, who was supposed incapable of mischief for weeks to come, already in the field, and planted directly on their communications with Ostend. Retreat, if retreat were desired, was already impossible, and as to surprising the garrison of Nieuport and so obtaining that stronghold as a basis for further aggressive operations, it is very certain that if any man in Flanders was more surprised than another at that moment it was Prince Maurice himself. He was too good a soldier not to see at a glance that if the news brought by the straggler were true, the whole expedition was already a failure, and that, instead of a short siege and an easy victory, a great battle was to be fought upon the sands of Nieuport, in which defeat was destruction of the whole army of the republic, and very possibly of the republic itself.

The stadholder hesitated. He was prone in great emergencies to hesitate at first, but immovable when his resolution was taken. Vere, who was asleep in his tent, was sent for and consulted. Most of the generals were inclined to believe that the demonstrations at Oudenburg, which had been so successful, were merely a bravado of Rivas, the commander of the permanent troops in that district, which were comparatively insignificant in numbers. Vere thought otherwise. He maintained that the archduke was already in force within a few hours' march of them, as he had always supposed would be the case. His opinion was not shared by the rest, and he went back to his truckle-bed, feeling that a brief repose was necessary for the heavy work which would soon be upon him. At midnight the Englishman was again called from his slumbers. Another messenger, sent directly from the States-General at Ostend, had made his way to the stadholder. This time there was no possibility of error, for Colonel Piron had sent the accord with the garrison commanders of the forts which had been so shamefully violated, and which bore the signature of the archduke.



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It was now perfectly obvious that a pitched battle was to be fought before another sunset, and most anxious were the deliberations in that brief midsummer's night. The dilemma was as grave a one as commander-in-chief had ever to solve in a few hours. A portentous change had come over the prospects of the commonwealth since the arrival of these despatches. But a few hours before, and never had its destiny seemed so secure, its attitude more imposing. The little republic, which Spain had been endeavouring forty years long to subjugate, had already swept every Spanish soldier out of its territory, had repeatedly carried fire and sword into Spain itself, and even into its distant dependencies, and at that moment—after effecting in a masterly manner the landing of a great army in the very face of the man who claimed to be sovereign of all the Netherlands, and after marching at ease through the heart of his territory—was preparing a movement, with every prospect of success, which should render the hold of that sovereign on any portion of Netherland soil as uncertain and shifting as the sands on which the States army was now encamped.

The son of the proscribed and murdered rebel stood at the head of as powerful and well-disciplined an army as had ever been drawn up in line of battle on that blood-stained soil. The daughter of the man who had so long oppressed the provinces might soon be a fugitive from the land over which she had so recently been endowed with perpetual sovereignty. And now in an instant these visions were fading like a mirage.

The archduke, whom poverty and mutiny were to render powerless against invasion, was following close up upon the heels of the triumphant army of the stadholder. A decision was immediately necessary. The siege of Nieuport was over before it had begun. Surprise had failed, assault for the moment was impossible, the manner how best to confront the advancing foe the only question.

Vere advised that the whole army should at once be concentrated and led without delay against the archduke before he should make further progress. The advice involved an outrageous impossibility, and it seems incredible that it could have been given in good faith; still more amazing that its rejection by Maurice should have been bitterly censured. Two-thirds of the army lay on the other side of the harbour, and it was high water at about three o'clock. While they were deliberating, the sea was rising, and, so soon as daybreak should make any evolutions possible, they would be utterly prohibited during several hours by the inexorable tide. More time would be consumed by the attempt to construct temporary bridges (for of course little progress had been made in the stone bridge hardly begun) or to make use of boats than in waiting for the falling of the water, and, should the enemy make his appearance while they were engaged in such confusing efforts, the army would be hopelessly lost.

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Maurice, against the express advice of Vere, decided to send his cousin Ernest, with the main portion of the force established on the right bank of the harbour, in search of the archduke, for the purpose of holding him in check long enough to enable the rest of the army to cross the water when the tide should serve. The enemy, it was now clear, would advance by precisely the path over which the States' army had marched that morning. Ernest was accordingly instructed to move with the greatest expedition in order to seize the bridge at Leffingen before the archduke should reach the deep, dangerous, and marshy river, over which it was the sole passage to the downs. Two thousand infantry, being the Scotch regiment of Edmonds and the Zeelanders of Van der Noot, four squadrons of Dutch cavalry, and two pieces of artillery composed the force with which Ernest set forth at a little before dawn on his hazardous but heroic enterprise.

With a handful of troops he was to make head against an army, and the youth accepted the task in the cheerful spirit of self-sacrifice which characterized his house. Marching as rapidly as the difficult ground would permit, he had the disappointment, on approaching the fatal point at about eight o'clock, to see the bridge at Leffingen in the possession of the enemy. Maurice had sent off a messenger early that morning with a letter marked post haste (*cito, cito*) to Ostend ordering up some four hundred cavalrymen then stationed in that city under Piron and Bruges, to move up to the support of Ernest, and to destroy the bridge and dams at Leffingen before the enemy should arrive. That letter, which might have been so effective, was delivered, as it subsequently appeared, exactly ten days after it was written. The States, of their own authority, had endeavoured to send out those riders towards the scene of action, but it was with great difficulty that they could be got into the saddle at all, and they positively refused to go further than St. Albert fort.

What course should he now pursue? He had been sent to cut the archduke's road. He had failed. Had he remained in his original encampment his force would have been annihilated by the overwhelming numbers of the enemy so soon as they reached the right bank of Nieupoort haven, while Maurice could have only looked hopelessly on from the opposite shore. At least nothing worse than absolute destruction could befall him now. Should he accept a combat of six or eight to one the struggle would be hopeless, but the longer it was protracted the better it would be for his main army, engaged at that very moment as he knew in crossing the haven with the ebbing tide. Should he retreat, it might be possible for him to escape into Fort Albert or even Ostend, but to do so would be to purchase his own safety and that of his command at the probable sacrifice of the chief army of the republic. Ernest hesitated but an instant. Coming within carbine-shot of the stream, where he



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met his cavalry which had been sent forward at full speed, in the vain hope of seizing or destroying the bridge before it should be too late, he took up a position behind a dyke, upon which he placed his two field-pieces, and formed his troops in line of battle exactly across the enemy's path. On the right he placed the regiment of Scots. On the left was Van der Noot's Zeeland infantry, garnished with four companies of riders under Risoir, which stood near St. Mary's church. The passage from the stream to the downs was not more than a hundred yards wide, being skirted on both sides by a swamp. Here Ernest with his two thousand men awaited the onset of the archduke's army. He was perfectly aware that it was a mere question of time, but he was sure that his preparations must interpose a delay to the advance of the Spaniards, should his troops, as he felt confident, behave themselves as they had always done, and that the delay would be of inestimable value to his friends at the haven of Nieuport.

The archduke paused; for he, too, could not be certain, on observing the resolute front thus presented to him, that he was not about to engage the whole of the States' army. The doubt was but of short duration, however, and the onset was made. Ernest's artillery fired four volleys into the advancing battalions with such effect as to stagger them for a moment, but they soon afterwards poured over the dyke in over-whelming numbers, easily capturing the cannon. The attack began upon Ernest's left, and Risoir's cavalry, thinking that they should be cut off from all possibility of retreat into Fort St. Albert, turned their backs in the most disgraceful manner, without even waiting for the assault. Galloping around the infantry on the left they infected the Zeelanders with their own cowardice. Scarcely a moment passed before Van der Noot's whole regiment was running away as fast as the troopers, while the Scots on the right hesitated not for an instant to follow their example. Even before the expected battle had begun, one of those hideous and unaccountable panics which sometimes break out like a moral pestilence to destroy all the virtue of an army, and to sweep away the best-considered schemes of a general, had spread through Ernest's entire force. So soon as the demi-cannon had discharged their fourth volley, Scots, Zeelanders, Walloons, pikemen, musketeers, and troopers, possessed by the demon of cowardice, were running like a herd of swine to throw themselves into the sea. Had they even kept the line of the downs in the direction of the fort many of them might have saved their lives, although none could have escaped disgrace. But the Scots, in an ecstasy of fear, throwing away their arms as they fled, ran through the waters behind the dyke, skimmed over the sands at full speed, and never paused till such as survived the sabre and musket of their swift pursuers had literally drowned themselves in the ocean. Almost every man of them was slain



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or drowned. All the captains—Stuart, Barclay, Murray, Kilpatrick, Michael, Nesbit—with the rest of the company officers, doing their best to rally the fugitives, were killed. The Zeelanders, more cautious in the midst of their panic, or perhaps knowing better the nature of the country, were more successful in saving their necks. Not more than a hundred and fifty of Van der Noot's regiment were killed, while such of the cavalry of Bruges and Piron as had come to the neighbourhood of Fort Albert, not caring to trust themselves to the shelter of that redoubt, now fled as fast as their horses' legs would carry them, and never pulled bridle till they found themselves in Ostend. And so beside themselves with panic were these fugitives, and so virulent was the contagion, that it was difficult to prevent the men who had remained in the fort from joining in the flight towards Ostend. Many of them indeed threw themselves over the walls and were sabred by the enemy when they might have been safe within the fortifications. Had these cavalry companies of Bruges and Piron been even tolerably self-possessed, had they concentrated themselves in the fort instead of yielding to the delirium which prompted them to participate in their comrades' flight, they would have had it entirely in their power, by making an attack, or even the semblance of an attack, by means of a sudden sally from the fort, to have saved, not the battle indeed, but a large number of lives. But the panic was hopeless and universal, and countless fugitives scrambling by the fort were shot in a leisurely manner by a comparative few of the enemy as easily as the rabbits which swarmed in those sands were often knocked down in multitudes by half-a-dozen sportsmen.

And thus a band of patriots, who were not cowards by nature, and who had often played the part of men, had horribly disgraced themselves, and were endangering the very existence of their country, already by mistaken councils brought within the jaws of death. The glory of Thermopyla; might have hung for ever over that bridge of Leffingen. It was now a pass of infamy, perhaps of fatal disaster. The sands were covered with weapons—sabre, pike, and arquebus—thrown away by almost every soldier as he fled to save the life which after all was sacrificed. The artillery, all the standards and colours, all the baggage and ammunition, every thing was lost. No viler panic, no more complete defeat was ever recorded. Such at half-past eight in the morning was that memorable Sunday of the 2nd July, 1600, big with the fate of the Dutch republic — the festival of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary, always thought of happy augury for Spanish arms.

Thus began the long expected battle of Nieuport. At least a thousand of the choicest troops of the stadholder were slain, while the Spanish had hardly lost a man.

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The archduke had annihilated his enemy, had taken his artillery and thirty flags. In great exultation he despatched a messenger to the Infanta at Ghent, informing her that he had entirely defeated the advance-guard of the States' army, and that his next bulletin would announce his complete triumph and the utter overthrow of Maurice, who had now no means of escape. He stated also that he would very soon send the rebel stadholder himself to her as a prisoner. The Infanta, much pleased with the promise, observed to her attendants that she was curious to see how Nassau would conduct himself when he should be brought a captive into her presence. As to the Catholic troops, they were informed by the archduke that after the complete victory which they were that day to achieve, not a man should be left alive save Maurice and his brother Frederic Henry. These should be spared to grace the conqueror's triumph, but all else should be put to the sword.

Meantime artillery thundered, bonfires blazed, and bells rang their merriest peals in Ghent, Bruges, and the other obedient cities as the news of the great victory spread through the land.

When the fight was done the archduke called a council of war. It was a grave question whether the army should at once advance in order to complete the destruction of the enemy that day, or pause for an interval that the troops fatigued with hard marching and with the victorious combat in which they just had been engaged, should recover their full strength. That the stadholder was completely in their power was certain. The road to Ostend was barred, and Nieupoort would hold him at bay, now that the relieving army was close upon his heels. All that was necessary in order to annihilate his whole force, was that they should entrench themselves for the night on the road which he must cross. He would then be obliged to assault their works with troops inferior in number to theirs and fatigued by the march. Should he remain where he was he would soon be starved into submission, and would be obliged to surrender his whole army. On the other hand, by advancing now, in the intolerable heat of a July sun over the burning and glaring sands, the troops already wearied would arrive on the field of battle utterly exhausted, and would be obliged to attack an enemy freshly and cheerfully awaiting them on ground of his own selection.

Moreover it was absolutely certain that Fort Albert would not hold an hour if resolutely assaulted in the midst of the panic of Ernest's defeat, and, with its capture, the annihilalation of Maurice was certain.

Meantime the three thousand men under Velasco, who had been detached to protect the rear, would arrive to reinforce the archduke's main army, should he pause until the next day.

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These arguments, which had much logic in them, were strongly urged by Zapena, a veteran marshal of the camp who had seen much service, and whose counsels were usually received with deference. But on this occasion commanders and soldiers were hot for following up their victory. They cared nothing for the numbers of their enemy, they cried, "The more infidels the greater glory in destroying them." Delay might after all cause the loss of the prize, it was eagerly shouted. The archduke ought to pray that the sun might stand still for him that morning, as for Joshua in the vale of Ajalon. The foe seeing himself entrapped, with destruction awaiting him, was now skulking towards his ships, which still offered him the means of escape. Should they give him time he would profit by their negligence, and next morning when they reached Nieupoort, the birds would be flown. Especially the leaders of the mutineers of Diest and Thionville were hoarse with indignation at the proposed delay. They had not left their brethren, they shouted, nor rallied to the archduke's banner in order to sit down and dig in the sand like ploughmen. There was triumph for the Holy Church, there was the utter overthrow of the heretic army, there was rich booty to be gathered, all these things were within their reach if they now advanced and smote the rebels while, confused and panic-stricken, they were endeavouring to embark in their ships.

While these vehement debates were at the hottest, sails were descried in the offing; for the archduke's forces already stood upon the edge of the downs. First one ship, then another and another, moved steadily along the coast, returning from Nieupoort in the direction of Ostend.

This was more than could be borne. It was obvious that the rebels were already making their escape, and it was urged upon the cardinal that probably Prince Maurice and the other chieftains were on board one of those very vessels, and were giving him the slip. With great expedition it would still be possible to overtake them before the main body could embark, and the attack might yet be made at the most favourable moment. Those white sails gleaming in the distance were more eloquent than Zapena or any other advocate of delay, and the order was given to advance. And it was exactly at this period that it still lay within the power of the States' cavalry at Ostend to partially redeem their character, and to render very effective service. Had four or five hundred resolute troopers hung upon the rear of the Spanish army now, as it moved toward Nieupoort, they might, by judiciously skirmishing, advancing and retreating according to circumstances, have caused much confusion, and certainly have so harassed the archduke as to compel the detachment of a very considerable force of his own cavalry to protect himself against such assaults. But the terror was an enduring one. Those horsemen remained paralyzed and helpless, and it was impossible for the States, with all their commands or entreaties, to induce them to mount and ride even a half mile beyond the city gates.



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While these events had been occurring in the neighbourhood of Ostend, Maurice had not been idle at Nieuport. No sooner had Ernest been despatched on his desperate errand than his brother Lewis Gunther was ordered by the stadholder to get on horseback and ride through the quarters of the army. On the previous afternoon there had been so little thought of an enemy that large foraging parties had gone out from camp in all directions, and had not returned. Lewis gave notice that a great battle was to be expected on the morrow, instead of the tranquil commencement of a leisurely siege, and that therefore no soul was henceforth to leave the camp, while a troop of horse was despatched at the first gleam of daylight to scour the country in search of all the stragglers. Maurice had no thought of retreating, and his first care was to bring his army across the haven. The arrangements were soon completed, but it was necessary to wait until nearly low water. Soon after eight o'clock Count Lewis began to cross with eight squadrons of cavalry, and partly swimming, partly wading, effected the passage in safety. The advanced guard of infantry, under Sir Francis Vere—consisting of two thousand six hundred Englishmen, and two thousand eight hundred Frisians, with some companies of horse, followed by the battalia under Solms, and the rearguard under Tempel—then slowly and with difficulty moved along the same dangerous path with the water as high as their armpits, and often rising nearly over their heads. Had the archduke not been detained near the bridge of Leffingen by Ernest's Scotchmen and Zeelanders during three or four precious hours that morning; had he arrived, as he otherwise might have done, just as the States' army—horse, foot, and artillery—was floundering through that treacherous tide, it would have fared ill for the stadholder and the republic. But the devotion of Ernest had at least prevented the attack of the archduke until Maurice and his men stood on dry land.

Dripping from head to foot, but safe and sound, the army had at last reached the beach at Nieuport. Vere had refused his soldiers permission to denude themselves in crossing of their shoes and lower garments. There was no time for that, he said, and they would either earn new clothes for themselves that day, or never need doublet and hose again any more in the world. Some hours had elapsed before the tedious and difficult crossing of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and munition trains had been accomplished.

Lewis Gunther, with eight squadrons of picked cavalry, including his own company, Maurice's own, Frederic Henry's own, with Batenburg's arquebus-men, and other veterans, was first to place himself in battle order on the beach. His squadrons in iron corslet and morion, and armed with lances, carbines, and sabres, stretched across from the water to the downs. He had not been long stationed there when he observed that far away in the direction of Ostend the beach was growing black with troops. He believed them at first to be his brother Ernest and his forces returning victorious from their hazardous expedition, but he was soon undeceived.

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A couple of troopers from Ostend came spurring full gallop along the strand, and almost breathless with dismay, announced that it was the whole army of the archduke advancing in line of battle. They were instantly sent to the rear, without being allowed to speak further, in order that they might deliver their message in private to the commander-in-chief. And most terrible were the tidings to which Maurice now listened in very secret audience. Ernest was utterly defeated, his command cut to pieces, the triumphant foe advancing rapidly, and already in full sight. The stadholder heard the tale without flinching, and having quietly ordered the messengers upon their lives not to open their lips on the subject to living soul, sent them securely guarded in a boat on board one of the war-ships in the offing. With perfect cheerfulness he then continued his preparations, consulting with Vere, on whom he mainly relied for the marshalling of the army in the coming conflict. Undecided as he had sometimes shown himself, he was resolute now. He called no council of war, for he knew not how much might be known or suspected of the disaster already sustained, and he had fully made up his mind as to the course to be pursued. He had indeed taken a supreme resolution. Entirely out of his own breast, without advising with any man, he calmly gave directions that every war-ship, transport, barge, or wherry should put to sea at once. As the tide had now been long on the flood, the few vessels that had been aground—within the harbour were got afloat, and the whole vast, almost innumerable armada, was soon standing out to sea. No more heroic decision was ever taken by fighting man.

Sir Francis gave advice that entrenchments should be thrown up on the north-east, and that instead of advancing towards the enemy they should await his coming, and refuse the battle that day if possible. The Englishman, not aware of the catastrophe at Leffingen, which Maurice had locked up in his own breast, was now informed by the stadholder that there were to be no entrenchments that day but those of pike and arquebus. It was not the fault of Maurice that the fate of the commonwealth had been suspended on a silken thread that morning, but he knew that but one of two issues was possible. They must fight their way through the enemy back to Ostend, or perish, every man of them. The possibility of surrender did not enter his mind, and he felt that it was better to hasten the action before the news of Ernest's disaster should arrive to chill the ardour of the troops.

Meantime Lewis Gunther and his cavalry had been sitting motionless upon their horses on the beach. The enemy was already in full view, and the young general, most desirous to engage in a preliminary skirmish, sent repeated messages to the stadholder for permission to advance. Presently Sir Francis Vere rode to the front, to whom he eagerly urged his request that the infantry of the vanguard might be, brought



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up at once to support him. On the contrary the English general advised that the cavalry should fall back to the infantry, in order to avoid a premature movement. Lewis strongly objected to this arrangement, on the ground that the mere semblance of retreat, thus upon the eve of battle, would discourage all the troops. But he was over-ruled, for Maurice had expressly enjoined upon his cousin that morning to defer in all things to the orders of Vere. These eight squadrons of horse accordingly shifted their position, and were now placed close to the edge of the sea, on the left flank of the vanguard, which Vere had drawn up across the beach and in the downs. On the edge of the downs, on the narrow slip of hard sand above high-water mark, and on Vere's right, Maurice had placed a battery of six demi-cannon.

Behind the advance was the battalia, or centre, under command of that famous fighter, George Everard Solms, consisting of Germans, Swiss, French, and Walloons. The "New Beggars," as the Walloons were called, who had so recently surrendered the forts of Crevecoeur and St. Andrew, and gone over from the archduke's service to the army of the States, were included in this division, and were as eager to do credit to their new chief as were the mutineers in the archduke's army to merit the approbation of their sovereign.

The rearguard under Tempel was made up, like the other divisions, of the blended nationalities of German, Briton, Hollander, and Walloon, and, like the others, was garnished at each flank with heavy cavalry.

The Spanish army, after coming nearly within cannon-shot of their adversary, paused. It was plain that the States' troops were not in so great a panic as the more sanguine advisers of the archduke had hoped. They were not cowering among the shipping, preparing to escape. Still less had any portion of them already effected their retreat in those vessels, a few of which had so excited the enemy's ardour when they came in sight. It was obvious that a great struggle, in which the forces were very evenly balanced, was now to be fought out upon those sands. It was a splendid tournament—a great duel for life and death between the champions of the Papacy and of Protestantism, of the Republic and of absolutism, that was to be fought out that midsummer's day. The lists were closed. The trumpet signal for the fray would soon be blown.

The archduke, in Milanese armour, on a wonderfully beautiful snow-white Spanish stallion, moved in the centre of his army. He wore no helmet, that his men might the more readily recognize him as he rode gallantly to and fro, marshalling, encouraging, exhorting the troops. Never before had he manifested such decided military talent, combined with unquestionable personal valour, as he had done since this campaign began. Friend and foe agreed that day that Albert fought like a lion. He was at first well seconded by Mendoza, who led the van, and by Villars, La Bourlotte,



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Avalos, Zapena, and many other officers of note. The mutinous Spanish and Italian cavalry, combined with a few choice squadrons of Walloon and German horse, were placed in front and on the flanks. They were under the special supervision of the admiral, who marshalled their squadrons and directed their charging, although mounted on a hackney himself, and not intending to participate in the action. Then came the battalia and rear, crowding very closely upon each other.

Face to face with them stood the republican host, drawn up in great solid squares of infantry, their standards waving above each closely planted clump of pikemen, with the musketeers fringing their skirts, while the iron-clad ponderous cavalry of Count Lewis and Marcellus Bax, in black casque and, corslet, were in front, restlessly expecting the signal for the onset. The volunteers of high rank who were then serving on the staff of the stadholder—the Duke of Holstein, the Prince of Anhalt, two young Counts Solms, and others—had been invited and even urged to abandon the field while there was yet time for setting them on board the fleet. Especially it was thought desirable that young Frederic Henry, a mere boy, on whom the hopes of the Orange-Nassau house would rest if Maurice fell in the conflict, should be spared the fate which seemed hanging over the commonwealth and her defenders. But the son of William the Silent implored his brother with clasped hands not to send him from his side at that moment, so that Maurice granted his prayer, and caused him to be provided with a complete suit of armour. Thus in company with young Coligny—a lad of his own age, and like himself a grandson of the great admiral—the youth who was one day to play so noble a part on the stage of the world's affairs was now to be engaged in his first great passage of arms. No one left the field but Sir Robert Sidney, who had come over from Ostend, from irrepressible curiosity to witness the arrangements, but who would obviously have been guilty of unpardonable negligence had he been absent at such a crisis from the important post of which he was governor for the queen.

The arena of the conflict seemed elaborately prepared by the hand of nature. The hard, level, sandy beach, swept clean and smooth by the ceaseless action of the tides, stretched out far as the eye could reach in one long, bold, monotonous line. Like the whole coast of Flanders and of Holland, it seemed drawn by a geometrical rule, not a cape, cove, or estuary breaking the perfect straightness of the design. On the right, just beyond high-water mark, the downs, fantastically heaped together like a mimic mountain chain, or like tempestuous ocean-waves suddenly changed to sand, rolled wild and confused, but still in a regularly parallel course with the line of the beach. They seemed a barrier thrown up to protect the land from being bitten quite away by the ever-restless and encroaching sea. Beyond the downs, which were seven hundred



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yards in width; extended a level tract of those green fertile meadows, artificially drained, which are so characteristic a feature of the Netherland landscapes, the stream which ran from Ostend towards the town of Nieuport flowing sluggishly through them. It was a bright warm midsummer day. The waves of the German Ocean came lazily rolling in upon the crisp yellow sand, the surf breaking with its monotonous music at the very feet of the armies. A gentle south-west breeze was blowing, just filling the sails of more than a thousand ships in the offing, which moved languidly along the sparkling sea. It was an atmosphere better befitting a tranquil holiday than the scene of carnage which seemed approaching.

Maurice of Nassau, in complete armour, rapier in hand, with the orange-plumes waving from his helmet and the orange-scarf across his breast, rode through the lines, briefly addressing his soldiers with martial energy. Pointing to the harbour of Nieuport behind them, now again impassable with the flood, to the ocean on the left where rode the fleet, carrying with it all hope of escape by sea, and to the army of the archduke in front, almost within cannon-range, he simply observed that they had no possible choice between victory and death. They must either utterly overthrow the Spanish army, he said, or drink all the waters of the sea. Either drowning or butchery was their doom if they were conquered, for no quarter was to be expected from their unscrupulous and insolent foe. He was there to share their fate, to conquer or to perish with them, and from their tried valour and from the God of battles he hoped a more magnificent victory than had ever before been achieved in this almost perpetual war for independence. The troops, perfectly enthusiastic, replied with a shout that they were ready to live or die with their chieftain, and eagerly demanded to be led upon the foe. Whether from hope or from desperation they were confident and cheerful. Some doubt was felt as to the Walloons, who had so lately transferred themselves from the archduke's army, but their commander, Marquette, made them all lift up their hands, and swear solemnly to live or die that day at the feet of Prince Maurice.

Two hours long these two armies had stood looking each other in the face. It was near two o'clock when the arch duke at last gave the signal to advance. The tide was again almost at the full. Maurice stood firm, awaiting the assault; the enemy slowly coming nearer, and the rising tide as steadily lapping away all that was left of the hard beach which fringed the rugged downs. Count Lewis chafed with impatience as it became each moment more evident that there would be no beach left for cavalry fighting, while in the downs the manoeuvring of horse was entirely impossible. Meantime, by command of Vere, all those sandy hillocks and steeps had been thickly sown with musketeers and pikemen. Arquebus-men and carabineers were planted



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in every hollow, while on the highest and most advantageous elevation two pieces of cannon had been placed by the express direction of Maurice. It seemed obvious that the battle would, after all, be transferred to the downs. Not long before the action began, a private of the enemy's cavalry was taken, apparently with his own consent, in a very trifling preliminary skirmish. He bragged loudly of the immense force of the archduke, of the great victory already gained over Ernest, with the utter annihilation of his forces, and of the impending destruction of the whole States' army. Strange to say, this was the first intimation received by Count Lewis of that grave disaster, although it had been for some hours known to Maurice. The prisoner was at once gagged, that he might spread his disheartening news no further, but as he persisted by signs and gestures in attempting to convey the information which he had evidently been sent forward to impart, he was shot by command of the stadholder, and so told no further tales.

The enemy had now come very close, and it was the desire of Count Lewis that a couple of companies of horse, in accordance with the commands of Maurice, should charge the cavalry in front, and that after a brief skirmish they should retreat as if panic-stricken behind the advance column, thus decoying the Spanish vanguard in hot pursuit towards the battery upon the edge of the downs. The cannon were then suddenly to open upon them, and during the confusion sure to be created in their ranks, the musketeers, ambushed among the hollows, were to attack them in flank, while the cavalry in one mass should then make a concentrated charge in front. It seemed certain that the effect of this movement would be to hurl the whole of the enemy's advance, horse and foot, back upon his battalia, and thus to break up his army in irretrievable rout. The plan was a sensible one, but it was not ingeniously executed. Before the handful of cavalry had time to make the proposed feint the cannoneers, being unduly excited, and by express command of Sir Francis Vere, fired a volley into the advancing columns of the archduke. This precipitated the action; almost in an instant changed its whole character, and defeated the original plan of the republican leader. The enemy's cavalry broke at the first discharge from the battery, and wheeled in considerable disorder, but without panic, quite into and across the downs. The whole army of the archduke, which had already been veering in the same direction, as it advanced, both because the tide was so steadily devouring the even surface of the sands, and because the position of a large portion of the States' forces among the hillocks exposed him to an attack in flank, was now rapidly transferred to the downs. It was necessary for that portion of Maurice's army which still stood on what remained of the beach to follow this movement. A rapid change of front was then undertaken, and—thanks to the careful system of wheeling, marching, and counter-marching in which the army had been educated by William Lewis and Maurice—was executed with less confusion than might have been expected.

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But very few companies of infantry now remained on the strip of beach still bare of the waves, and in the immediate vicinity of the artillery planted high and dry beyond their reach.

The scene was transformed as if by magic, and the battle was now to be fought out in those shifting, uneven hills and hollows, where every soldier stood mid-leg deep in the dry and burning sand. Fortunately for the States' army, the wind was in its back, blowing both sand and smoke into the faces of its antagonists, while the already weltering sun glared fiercely in their eyes. Maurice had skilfully made use of the great advantage which accident had given him that day, and his very refusal to advance and to bring on a premature struggle thus stood him in stead in a variety of ways Lewis Gunther was now ordered, with Marcellus Bax and six squadrons of horse, to take position within the belt of pasture land on the right of the downs. When he arrived there the van of the archduke's infantry had already charged the States' advance under Vere, while just behind and on the side of the musketeers and pikemen a large portion of the enemy's cavalry was standing stock still on the green. Without waiting for instructions Lewis ordered a charge. It was brilliantly successful. Unheeding a warm salutation in flank from the musketeers as they rode by them, and notwithstanding that they were obliged to take several ditches as they charged, they routed the enemy's cavalry at the first onset, and drove them into panic-stricken flight. Some fled for protection quite to the rear of their infantry, others were hotly pursued across the meadows till they took refuge under the walls of Nieuport. The very success of the attack was nearly fatal however to Count Lewis; for, unable to restrain the ardour of his troopers in the chase, he found himself cut off from the army with only ten horsemen to support him, and completely enveloped by the enemy. Fortunately Prince Maurice had foreseen the danger, and had ordered all the cavalry to the meadows so soon as the charge was made. Captain Kloet, with a fresh company of mounted carabineers, marked the little squad of States' cavalry careering about in the midst of the Catholics, recognized their leader by the orange-plumes on his calque, and dashed forward to the rescue. Lewis again found himself at the head of his cavalry, but was obliged to wait a long time for the return of the stragglers.

While this brilliant diversion had been enacting as it were on the fringe of the battle, its real bustle and business had been going on in the downs. Just as Lewis made his charge in the pastures, the infantry of the archduke and the advance guard of the republicans met in deadly shock. More than an hour long they contended with varying success. Musketeers, pikemen, arquebusmen, swordmen, charged, sabred, or shot each other from the various hollows or heights of vantage, plunging knee-deep in the sand, torn and impeded by the prickly broom-plant which grew



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profusely over the whole surface, and fighting breast to breast and hand to hand in a vast series of individual encounters. Thrice were the Spaniards repulsed in what for a moment seemed absolute rout, thrice they rallied and drove their assailants at push of pike far beyond their original position; and again the conquered republicans recovered their energy and smote their adversaries as if the contest were just begun. The tide of battle ebbed and flowed like the waves of the sea, but it would be mere pedantry to affect any technical explanation of its various changes. It was a hot struggle of twenty thousand men, pent up in a narrow space, where the very nature of the ground had made artistic evolutions nearly impracticable. The advance, the battalia, even the rearguard on both sides were mixed together pell-mell, and the downs were soon covered at every step with the dead and dying-Briton, Hollander, Spaniard, Italian, Frisian, Frenchman, Walloon, fighting and falling together, and hotly contesting every inch of those barren sands.

It seemed, said one who fought there, as if the last day of the world had come.

Political and religious hatred, pride of race, remembrance of a half-century of wrongs, hope, fury, and despair; these were the real elements contending with each other that summer's day. It was a mere trial of ferocity and endurance, not more scientific than a fight between packs of wolves and of bloodhounds.

No doubt the brunt of the conflict fell upon Vere, with his Englishmen and Frisians, for this advance-guard made up nearly one-half of the States' army actually engaged. And most nobly, indefatigably, did the hardy veteran discharge his duty. Having personally superintended almost all the arrangements in the morning, he fought all day in the front, doing the work both of a field-marshal and a corporal.

He was twice wounded, shot each time through the same leg, yet still fought on as if it were some one else's blood and not his own that was flowing from "those four holes in his flesh." He complained that he was not sufficiently seconded, and that the reserves were not brought up rapidly enough to his support. He was manifestly unjust, for although it could not be doubted that the English and the Frisians did their best, it was equally certain that every part of the army was as staunch as the vanguard. It may be safely asserted that it would not have benefited the cause of the States, had every man been thrown into the fight at one and the same moment.

During this "bloody bit," as Vere called it, between the infantry on both sides, the little battery of two field-pieces planted on the highest hillock of the downs had been very effective. Meantime, while the desperate and decisive struggle had been going on, Lewis Gunther, in the meadow, had again rallied all the cavalry, which, at the first stage of the action, had been dispersed in pursuit of the enemy's horse. Gathering them together



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in a mass, he besought Prince Maurice to order him to charge. The stadholder bade him pause yet a little longer. The aspect of the infantry fight was not yet, in his opinion, sufficiently favourable. Again and again Lewis sent fresh entreaties, and at last received the desired permission. Placing three picked squadrons in front, the young general made a furious assault upon the Catholic cavalry, which had again rallied and was drawn up very close to the musketeers. Fortune was not so kind to him as at the earlier stage of the combat. The charge was received with dauntless front by the Spanish and Italian horse, while at the same moment the infantry poured a severe fire into their assailants. The advancing squadrons faltered, wheeled back upon the companies following them, and the whole mass of the republican cavalry broke into wild and disorderly retreat. At the same moment the archduke, observing his advantage, threw in his last reserves of infantry, and again there was a desperate charge upon Vere's wearied troops, as decisive as the counter charge of Lewis's cavalry had been unsuccessful. The English and Frisians, sorely tried during those hours of fighting with superior numbers in the intolerable heat, broke at last and turned their backs upon the foe. Some of them fled panic-stricken quite across the downs and threw themselves into the sea, but the mass retreated in a comparatively orderly manner, being driven from one down to another, and seeking a last refuge behind the battery placed on the high-water line of the beach. In the confusion and panic Sir Francis Vere went down at last. His horse, killed by a stray shot fell with and upon him, and the heroic Englishman would then and there have finished his career—for he would hardly have found quarter from the Spaniards—had not Sir Robert Drury, riding by in the tumult, observed him as he lay almost exhausted in the sand. By his exertion and that of his servant Higham, Vere was rescued from his perilous situation, placed on the crupper of Sir Robert's horse, and so borne off the field.

The current of the retreating and pursuing hosts swept by the spot where Maurice sat on horseback, watching and directing the battle. His bravest and best general, the veteran Vere, had fallen; his cousin Lewis was now as utterly overthrown as his brother Ernest had been but a few hours before at the fatal bridge of Leffingen; the whole army, the only army, of the States was defeated, broken, panic-struck; the Spanish shouts of victory rang on every side. Plainly the day was lost, and with it the republic. In the blackest hour that the Netherland commonwealth had ever known, the fortitude of the stadholder did not desert him. Immoveable as a rock in the torrent he stemmed the flight of his troops. Three squadrons of reserved cavalry, Balen's own, Vere's own, and Cecil's, were all that was left him, and at the head of these he essayed an advance. He seemed the only man on the field



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not frightened; and menacing, conjuring, persuading the fugitives for the love of fatherland, of himself and his house, of their own honour, not to disgrace and destroy themselves for ever; urging that all was not yet lost, and beseeching them at least to take despair for their master, and rather to die like men on the field than to drown like dogs in the sea, he succeeded in rallying a portion of those nearest him. The enemy paused in their mad pursuit, impressed even more than were the States' troops at the dauntless bearing of the prince. It was one of those supreme moments in battle and in history which are sometimes permitted to influence the course of events during a long future. The archduke and his generals committed a grave error in pausing for an instant in their career. Very soon it was too late to repair the fault, for the quick and correct eye of the stadholder saw the point to which the whole battle was tending, and he threw his handful of reserved cavalry, with such of the fugitives as had rallied, straight towards the battery on the beach.

It was arranged that Balen should charge on the strand, Horace Vere through the upper downs, and Cecil along the margin of the beach. Balen rode slowly through the heavy sand, keeping his horses well in wind, and at the moment he touched the beach, rushed with fury upon the enemy's foot near the battery. The moment was most opportune, for the last shot had been fired from the guns, and they had just been nearly abandoned in despair. The onset of Balen was successful: the Spanish infantry, thus suddenly attached, were broken, and many were killed and taken. Cecil and Vere were equally fortunate, so that the retreating English and Frisians began to hold firm again. It was the very crisis of the battle, which up to that instant seemed wholly lost by the republic, so universal was the overthrow and the flight. Some hundred and fifty Frisian pikemen now rallied from their sullen retreat, and drove the enemy off one hillock or dune.

Foiled in their attempt to intercept the backward movement of the States' army and to seize this vital point and the artillery with it, the Spaniards hesitated and were somewhat discouraged. Some Zeeland sailors, who had stuck like wax to those demi-cannon during the whole conflict, now promptly obeyed orders to open yet once more upon the victorious foe. At the first volley the Spaniards were staggered, and the sailors with a lively shout of "lan-fall on," inspired the defeated army with a portion of their own cheerfulness. Others vehemently shouted victory without any reason whatever. At that instant Maurice ordered a last charge by those few cavalry squadrons, while the enemy was faltering under the play of the artillery. It was a forlorn hope, yet such was the shifting fortune of that memorable day that the charge decided the battle. The whole line of the enemy broke, the conquered became the victors, the fugitives quickly rallying and shouting



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victory almost before they had turned their faces to the foe, became in their turn the pursuers. The Catholic army could no longer be brought to a stand, but fled wildly in every direction, and were shot and stabbed by the republicans as they fled. The Admiral of Arragon fell with his hackney in this last charge. Unwounded, but struggling to extricate himself from his horse that had been killed, he was quickly surrounded by the enemy.

Two Spaniards, Mendo and Villalobos by name, who had recently deserted to the States, came up at the moment and recognised the fallen admiral. They had reason to recognise him, for both had been in his service, and one of them, who was once in immediate household attendance upon him, bore the mark of a wound which he had received from his insolent master. "Admiral, look at this," cried Villalobos, pointing to the scar on his face. The admiral looked and knew his old servants, and gave his scarf to the one and the hanger of his sword-belt to the other, as tokens that he was their prisoner. Thus his life was saved for heavy ransom, of which those who had actually captured him would receive a very trifling portion. The great prisoner was carried to the rear, where he immediately asked for food and drink, and fell to with an appetite, while the pursuit and slaughter went on in all directions.

The archduke, too, whose personal conduct throughout the day was admirable, had been slightly wounded by a halberd stroke on the ear. This was at an earlier stage of the action, and he had subsequently mounted another horse, exchanged his splendid armour for a plain black harness, over which he wore a shabby scarf. In the confusion of the rout he was hard beset. "Surrender, scoundrel!" cried a Walloon pikeman, seizing his horse by the bridle. But a certain Flemish Captain Kabbeljaw recognising his sovereign and rushing to his rescue, slew his assailant and four others with his own hand. He was at last himself killed, but Albert escaped, and, accompanied by the Duke of Aumale, who was also slightly wounded, by Colonel La Bourlotte, and half a dozen troopers rode for their life in the direction of Bruges. When they reached the fatal bridge of Leffingen, over which the archduke had marched so triumphantly but a few hours before to annihilate Count Ernest's division, he was nearly taken prisoner. A few soldiers, collected from the scattered garrisons, had occupied the position, but knowing nothing of the result of the action in the downs, took to their heels and fled as the little party of cavaliers advanced. Had the commander at Ostend or the States-General promptly sent out a company or two so soon as the news of the victory reached them to seize this vital point, the doom of the archduke would have been sealed. Nothing then could have saved him from capture. Fortunately escaping this danger, he now pushed on, and never pulled bridle till he reached Bruges. Thence without pausing he was conveyed to Ghent, where he presented himself to the Infanta. He was not accompanied by the captive Maurice of Nassau, and the curiosity of the princess to know how that warrior would demean himself as a prisoner was not destined on this occasion to be gratified.

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Isabella bore the disappointment and the bitter intelligence of the defeat with a stoicism worthy of her departed father. She had already had intimations that the day was going against her army, and had successively received tidings that her husband was killed, was dangerously wounded, was a prisoner; and she was now almost relieved to receive him, utterly defeated, but still safe and sound.

Meantime the mad chase continued along the beach and through the downs. Never was a rout more absolute than that of Albert's army. Never had so brilliant a victory been achieved by Hollander or Spaniard upon that great battleground of Europe—the Netherlands.

Maurice, to whom the chief credit of the victory was unquestionably due, had been firm and impassive during the various aspects of the battle, never losing his self-command when affairs seemed blackest. So soon, however, as the triumph, after wavering so long, was decided in his favour—the veteran legions of Spain and Italy, the picked troops of Christendom, all flying at last before his troops—the stadholder was fairly melted. Dismounting from his horse, he threw himself on his knees in the sand, and with streaming eyes and uplifted hands exclaimed, "O God, what are we human creatures to whom Thou hast brought such honour, and to whom Thou hast vouchsafed such a victory!"

The slaughter went on until nightfall, but the wearied conquerors were then obliged to desist from the pursuit. Three thousand Spaniards were slain and about six hundred prisoners were taken. The loss of the States' army; including the affair in the morning at Leffingen, was about two thousand killed. Maurice was censured for not following up his victory more closely, but the criticism seems unjust. The night which followed the warm summer's day was singularly black and cloudy, the army was exhausted, the distance for the enemy to traverse before they found themselves safe within their own territory was not great. In such circumstances the stadholder might well deem himself sufficiently triumphant to have plucked a splendid victory out of the very jaws of death. All the artillery of the archduke—seven pieces besides the two captured from Ernest in the morning—one hundred and twenty standards, and a long list of distinguished prisoners, including the Admiral Zapena and many other officers of note, were the trophies of the conqueror. Maurice passed the night on the battle-field; the admiral supping with him in his tent. Next morning he went to Ostend, where a great thanksgiving was held, Uytenbogart preaching an eloquent sermon on the 116th Psalm. Afterwards there was a dinner at the house of the States-General, in honour of the stadholder, to which the Admiral of Arragon was likewise bidden. That arrogant but discomfited personage was obliged to listen to many a rough martial joke at his disaster as they sat at table, but he bore the brunt of the encounter with much fortitude.

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“Monsieur the Admiral of Arragon,” said the stadholder in French, “is more fortunate than many of his army. He has been desiring these four years to see Holland. Now he will make his entrance there without striking a blow.” The gibe was perhaps deficient in delicacy towards a fallen foe, but a man who had passed a whole winter in murdering his prisoners in cold blood might be satisfied if he were stung only by a sharp sarcasm or two, when he had himself become a captive.

Others asked him demurely what he thought of these awkward apprentices of Holland and Zeeland, who were good enough at fighting behind dykes and ramparts of cities, but who never ventured to face a Spanish army in the open field. Mendoza sustained himself with equanimity however, and found plenty of answers. He discussed the battle with coolness, blamed the archduke for throwing the whole of his force prematurely into the contest, and applauded the prudence of Maurice in keeping his reserves in hand. He ascribed a great share of the result to the States’ artillery, which had been well placed upon wooden platforms and well served, while the archduke’s cannon, sinking in the sands, had been of comparatively little use. Especially he expressed a warm admiration for the heroism of Maurice in sending away his ships, and in thus leaving himself and his soldiers no alternative but death or triumph.

While they still sat at table many of the standards taken from the enemy were brought in and exhibited; the stadholder and others amusing themselves with reading the inscriptions and devices emblazoned upon them.

And thus on the 2nd July, 1600, the army of the States-General, led by Maurice of Nassau, had utterly defeated Albert of Austria.

[“Enfin l’affaire vint aux mains et fut combattu bien furieusement de deux costes l’espace de deux heures. Enfin Dieu par sa grace voulut que la victoire demeura de more coste.” Such were the simple words in which Maurice announced to his cousin Lewis William his victory in the most important battle that had been fought for half a century. Not even General Ulysses Grant could be more modest in the hour of immense triumph.]

Strange to say—on another 2nd July, three centuries and two years before, a former Albert of Austria had overthrown the emperor Adolphus of Nassau, who had then lost both crown and life in the memorable battle of Worms. The imperial shade of Maurice’s ancestor had been signally appeased.

In Ostend, as may well be imagined, ineffable joy had succeeded to the horrible gloom in which the day had been passed, ever since the tidings had been received of Ernest’s overthrow.



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Those very cavalry men, who had remained all day cowering behind the walls of the city, seeing by the clouds of dust which marked the track of the fugitives that the battle had been won by the comrades whom they had so basely deserted in the morning, had been eager enough to join in the pursuit. It was with difficulty that the States, who had been unable to drive them out of the town while the fight was impending or going on, could keep enough of them within the walls to guard the city against possible accident, now that the work was done. Even had they taken the field a few hours earlier, without participating in the action, or risking their own lives, they might have secured the pass of Leffingen, and made the capture of the archduke or his destruction inevitable.

The city, which had seemed deserted, swarmed with the garrison and with the lately trembling burghers, for it seemed to all as if they had been born again. Even the soldiers on the battle-field had embraced each other like comrades who had met in another world. "Blessed be His holy name," said the stadholder's chaplain, "for His right hand has led us into hell and brought us forth again. I know not," he continued, "if I am awake or if I dream, when I think how God has in one moment raised us from the dead."

Lewis Gunther, whose services had been so conspicuous, was well rewarded. "I hope," said that general, writing to his brother Lewis William, "that this day's work will not have been useless to me, both for what I have learned in it and for another thing. His Excellency has done me the honour to give me the admiral for my prisoner." And equally characteristic was the reply of the religious and thrifty stadholder of Friesland.

"I thank God," he said, "for His singular grace in that He has been pleased to make use of your person as the instrument of so renowned and signal a victory, for which, as you have derived therefrom not mediocre praise, and acquired a great reputation, it should be now your duty to humble yourself before God, and to acknowledge that it is He alone who has thus honoured you You should reverence Him the more, that while others are admonished of their duty by misfortunes and miseries, the good God invites you to His love by benefits and honours I am very glad, too, that his Excellency has given you the admiral for your prisoner, both because of the benefit to you, and because it is a mark of your merit on that day. Knowing the state of our affairs, you will now be able to free your patrimony from encumbrances, when otherwise you would have been in danger of remaining embarrassed and in the power of others. It will therefore be a perpetual honour to you that you, the youngest of us all, have been able by your merits to do more to raise up our house out of its difficulties than your predecessors or myself have been able to do."

The beautiful white horse which the archduke had ridden during the battle fell into the hands of Lewis Gunther, and was presented by him to Prince Maurice, who had expressed great admiration of the charger. It was a Spanish horse, for which the archduke had lately paid eleven hundred crowns.



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A white hackney of the Infanta had also been taken, and became the property of Count Ernest.

The news of the great battle spread with unexampled rapidity, not only through the Netherlands but to neighbouring countries. On the night of the 7th July (N.S.) five days after the event, Envoy Caron, in England, received intimations of the favourable news from the French ambassador, who had received a letter from the Governor of Calais. Next morning, very early, he waited on Sir Robert Cecil at Greenwich, and was admitted to his chamber, although the secretary was not yet out of bed. He, too, had heard of the battle, but Richardot had informed the English ambassador in Paris that the victory had been gained, not by the stadholder, but by the archduke. While they were talking, a despatch-bearer arrived with letters from Vere to Cecil, and from the States-General to Caron, dated on the 3rd July. There could no longer be any doubt on the subject, and the envoy of the republic had now full details of the glorious triumph which the Spanish agent in Paris had endeavoured for a time to distort into a defeat.

While the two were conversing, the queen, who had heard of Caron's presence in the palace, sent down for the latest intelligence. Cecil made notes of the most important points in the despatches to be forthwith conveyed to her Majesty. The queen, not satisfied however, sent for Caron himself. That diplomatist, who had just ridden down from London in foul weather, was accordingly obliged to present himself—booted and spurred and splashed with mud from head to foot—before her Majesty. Elizabeth received him with such extraordinary manifestations of delight at the tidings that he was absolutely amazed, and she insisted upon his reading the whole of the letter just received from Olden-Barneveld, her Majesty listening very patiently as he translated it out of Dutch into French. She then expressed unbounded admiration of the States-General and of Prince Maurice. The sagacious administration of the States' government is so full of good order and policy," she said, "as to far surpass in its wisdom the intelligence of all kings and potentates." "We kings," she said, "understand nothing of such affairs in comparison, but require, all of us, to go to school to the States-General." She continued to speak in terms of warm approbation of the secrecy and discretion with which the invasion of Flanders had been conducted, and protested that she thanked God on both knees for vouchsafing such a splendid victory to the United Provinces.

Yet after all, her Majesty, as mankind in general, both wise and simple, are apt to do, had judged only according to the result, and the immediate result. No doubt John of Barneveld was second to no living statesman in breadth of view and adroitness of handling, yet the invasion of Flanders, which was purely his work, was unquestionably a grave mistake, and might easily have proved a fatal one. That the deadly peril was escaped was due, not to his prudence, but to the heroism of Maurice, the gallantry of Vere, Count Lewis Gunther, and the forces under them, and the noble self-devotion of Ernest. And even, despite the exertions of these brave men, it seems certain that

victory would have been impossible had the archduke possessed that true appreciation of a situation which marks the consummate general.



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Surely the Lord seemed to have delivered the enemy into his hands that morning. Maurice was shut in between Nieuport on one side and the archduke's army on the other, planted as it was on the only road of retreat. Had Albert entrenched himself, Maurice must either have attacked at great disadvantage or attempted embarkation in the face of his enemy. To stay indefinitely where he was would have proved an impossibility, and amid the confusion necessary to the shipping of his army, how could he have protected himself by six demi-cannon placed on the sea-beach?

That Maurice was able to extricate himself from the horrible dilemma in which he had been placed, through no fault of his own, and to convert imminent disaster into magnificent victory, will always redound to his reputation as a great military chief. And this was all the fruit of the expedition, planned, as Elizabeth thought, with so much secrecy and discretion. Three days after the battle the stadholder came again before Nieuport, only to find the garrison strengthened meantime by La Bourlotte to three thousand men. A rainy week succeeded, and Maurice then announced to the States-General the necessity of abandoning an enterprise, a successful issue to which was in his opinion impossible. The States-General, grown more modest in military matters, testified their willingness to be governed by his better judgment, and left Ostend for the Hague on the 18th July. Maurice, after a little skirmishing with some of the forts around that city, in one of which the archduke's general La Bourlotte was killed, decided to close the campaign, and he returned with his whole army on the last day of July into Holland.

The expedition was an absolute failure, but the stadholder had gained a great victory. The effect produced at home and abroad by this triumphant measuring of the republican forces, horse, foot, and artillery, in a pitched battle and on so conspicuous an arena, with the picked veterans of Spain and Italy, was perhaps worth the cost, but no other benefit was derived from the invasion of Flanders.

The most healthy moral to be drawn from this brief but memorable campaign is that the wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war, success in which seems to require a special education and a distinct genius. Alternation between hope and despair, between culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence, are but too apt to mark the warlike counsels of politicians who have not been bred soldiers. This, at least, had been eminently the case with Barneveld and his colleagues of the States-General.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

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Culpable audacity and exaggerated prudence
The wisest statesmen are prone to blunder in affairs of war

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