

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1609 eBook

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1609 by John Lothrop Motley

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Contents

History of the United Netherlands from the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce, 1609 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	4
Page 1.....	5
Page 2.....	7
Page 3.....	8
Page 4.....	10
Page 5.....	12
Page 6.....	13
Page 7.....	15
Page 8.....	17
Page 9.....	18
Page 10.....	19
Page 11.....	20
Page 12.....	21
Page 13.....	22
Page 14.....	24
Page 15.....	26
Page 16.....	28
Page 17.....	29
Page 18.....	31
Page 19.....	33
Page 20.....	34
Page 21.....	35



Page 22..... 36
Page 23..... 38
Page 24..... 39
Page 25..... 40
Page 26..... 41
Page 27..... 42
Page 28..... 43
Page 29..... 44
Page 30..... 45
Page 31..... 46
Page 32..... 47
Page 33..... 49
Page 34..... 50
Page 35..... 51
Page 36..... 53
Page 37..... 55
Page 38..... 57
Page 39..... 59
Page 40..... 61
Page 41..... 62
Page 42..... 64



Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
Title: History of the United Netherlands, 1609		1
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 83		1
CHAPTER LII.		1
CHAPTER LIII.		17
ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:		37
Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)		38
(Three Pages)		39



Page 1

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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. 83

History of the United Netherlands, 1609

CHAPTER LII.

Vote of the States-General on the groundwork of the treaty— Meeting of the plenipotentiaries for arrangement of the truce— Signing of the twelve years' truce—Its purport—The negotiations concluded—Ratification by the States-General, the Archdukes, and the King of Spain—Question of toleration—Appeal of President Jeannin on behalf of the Catholics—Religious liberty the fruit of the war—Internal arrangements of the States under the rule of peace—Deaths of John Duke of Cleves and Jacob Arminius—Doctrines of Arminius and Gomarus—Theological warfare—Twenty years' truce between the Turkish and Roman empires—Ferdinand of Styria— Religious peace—Prospects of the future.



On the 11th January, 1609, the States-General decided by unanimous vote that the first point in the treaty should be not otherwise fixed than, thus:—

“That the archdukes—to superfluity—declare, as well in their own name as in that of the King of Spain, their willingness to treat with the lords States of the United Provinces in the capacity of, and as holding them for, free countries, provinces, and states, over which they have no claim, and that they are making a treaty with them in those said names and qualities.”

It was also resolved not to permit that any ecclesiastical or secular matters, conflicting with the above-mentioned freedom, should be proposed; nor that any delay should be sought for, by reason of the India navigation or any other point.

In case anything to the contrary should be attempted by the king or the archdukes, and the deliberations protracted in consequence more than eight days, it was further decided by unanimous vote that the negotiations should at once be broken off, and the war forthwith renewed, with the help, if possible, of the kings, princes, and states, friends of the good cause.



Page 2

This vigorous vote was entirely the work of Barneveld, the man whom his enemies dared to denounce as the partisan of Spain, and to hold up as a traitor deserving of death. It was entirely within his knowledge that a considerable party in the provinces had grown so weary of the war, and so much alarmed at the prospect of the negotiations for truce coming to nought, as to be ready to go into a treaty without a recognition of the independence of the States. This base faction was thought to be instigated by the English Government, intriguing secretly with President Richardot. The Advocate, acting in full sympathy with Jeannin, frustrated the effects of the manoeuvre by obtaining all the votes of Holland and Zeeland for this supreme resolution. The other five provinces dared to make no further effort in that direction against the two controlling states of the republic.

It was now agreed that the French and English ambassadors should delay going to Antwerp until informed of the arrival in that city of Spinola and his colleagues; and that they should then proceed thither, taking with them the main points of the treaty, as laid down by themselves, and accepted with slight alterations by the States.

When the Spanish commissioners had signed these points the plenipotentiaries were to come to Antwerp in order to settle other matters of less vital import. Meantime, the States-General were to be summoned to assemble in Bergen-op-Zoom, that they might be ready to deal with difficulties, should any arise.

The first meeting took place on the 10th February, 1609. The first objection to the draught was made by the Spaniards. It was about words and wind. They liked not the title of high and puissant lords which was given to the States-General, and they proposed to turn the difficulty by abstaining from giving any qualifications whatever, either to the archdukes or the republican authorities. The States refused to lower these ensigns of their new-born power. It was, however, at last agreed that, instead of high and mighty, they should be called illustrious and serene.

This point being comfortably adjusted, the next and most important one was accepted by the Spaniards. The independence of the States was recognised according to the prescribed form. Then came the great bone of contention, over which there had been such persistent wrangling—the India trade.

The Spanish Government had almost registered a vow in heaven that the word India should not be mentioned in the treaty. It was no less certain that India was stamped upon the very heart of the republic, and could not be torn from it while life remained. The subtle diplomatists now invented a phrase in which the word should not appear, while the thing itself should be granted. The Spaniards, after much altercation, at last consented.

By the end of February, most of the plenipotentiaries thought it safe to request the appearance of the States-General at Bergen-op-Zoom.



Page 3

Jeannin, not altogether satisfied, however, with the language of the Spaniards in regard to India, raised doubts as to the propriety of issuing the summons. Putting on his most reverend and artless expression of countenance, he assured Richardot that he had just received a despatch from the Hague, to the effect that the India point would, in all probability, cause the States at that very moment to break off the negotiations. It was surely premature, therefore, to invite them to Bergen. The despatch from the Hague was a neat fiction on the part of the president, but it worked admirably. The other president, himself quite as ready at inventions as Jeannin could possibly be, was nevertheless taken in; the two ex-leaguers being, on the whole, fully a match for each other in the art of intrigue. Richardot, somewhat alarmed, insisted that the States should send their plenipotentiaries to Antwerp as soon as possible. He would answer for it that they would not go away again without settling upon the treaty. The commissioners were forbidden, by express order from Spain, to name the Indies in writing, but they would solemnly declare, by word of mouth, that the States should have full liberty to trade to those countries; the King of Spain having no intention of interfering with such traffic during the period of the truce.

The commissioners came to Antwerp. The States-General assembled at Bergen. On the 9th April, 1609, the truce for twelve years was signed. This was its purport:

The preamble recited that the most serene princes and archdukes, Albert and Isabella Clara Eugenic, had made, on the 24th April, 1607, a truce and cessation of arms for eight months with the illustrious lords the States-General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands, in quality of, and as holding them for, states, provinces, and free countries, over which they pretended to nothing; which truce was ratified by his Catholic Majesty, as to that which concerned him, by letters patent of 18th September, 1607; and that, moreover, a special power had been given to the archdukes on the 10th January, 1608, to enable them in the king's name as well as their own to do everything that they might think proper to bring about a peace or a truce of many years.

It then briefly recited the rupture of the negotiations for peace, and the subsequent, proposition, originated by the foreign ambassadors, to renew the conference for the purpose of concluding a truce. The articles of the treaty thus agreed upon were:

That the archdukes declared, as well in their own name as that of the king, that they were content to treat with the lords the States-General of the United Provinces in quality of, and as holding them for, countries, provinces, and free states, over which they pretended to nothing, and to, make with them a truce on certain following conditions—to wit:

That the truce should be good, firm, loyal, inviolable, and for the term of twelve years, during which time there was to be cessation of all acts of hostility between the king, archdukes, and States-General, as well by sea and other waters as by land, in all their

kingdoms, countries, lands, and lordships, and for all their subjects and inhabitants of whatever quality and condition, without exception of places or of persons.

Page 4

That each party should remain seized of their respective possessions, and be not troubled therein during the truce.

That the subjects and inhabitants of the respective countries should preserve amity and good correspondence during the truce, without referring to past offences, and should freely and securely entertain communication and traffic with each other by land and sea. This provision, however, was to be expressly understood as limited by the king to the kingdoms and countries possessed by him in Europe, and in other places and seas where the subjects of other kings and princes, his friends and allies, have amicable traffic. In regard, however, to places, cities, ports, and harbours which he possessed outside of those limits, the States and their subjects were to exercise no traffic, without express permission of the king. They could, however, if they chose, trade with the countries of all other princes, potentates, and peoples who were willing to permit it; even outside those limits, without any hindrance by the king;

That the truce should begin in regard to those distant countries after a year from date, unless actual notification could be sooner served there on those concerned;

That the subjects of the United Provinces should have the same liberty and privilege within the States of the king and archdukes as had been accorded to the subjects of the by the King of Great Britain, according to the last treaty made with that sovereign;

That letters of marque and reprisal should not be granted during the truce, except for special cause, and in cases permitted by the laws and imperial constitutions, and according to the rules therein prescribed;

That those who had retired into neutral territory during the war were also to enjoy the benefit of the truce, and could reside wherever they liked without being deprived of their property;

That the treaty should be ratified by the archdukes and the States-General within four days. As to the ratification of the king, the archdukes were bound to deliver it in good and due form within three months, in order that the lords the States-General, their subjects and inhabitants, might enjoy effectively the fruits of the treaty;

That the treaty should be published everywhere immediately after the ratification of the archdukes and States-General.

This document was signed by the ambassadors of the Kings of France and Great Britain, as mediators, and then by the deputies of the archdukes, and afterwards by those of the lords the States-General.

There were thirty-eight articles in all, but the chief provisions have been indicated. The other clauses, relating to boundaries, confiscations, regulations of duties, frontier

fortifications, the estates of the Nassau family, and other sequestered property, have no abiding interest.

There was also a secret and special treaty which was demanded of the King of Spain by the States-General, and by him accorded.

Page 5

This secret treaty consisted of a single clause. That clause was made up of a brief preamble and of a promise. The preamble recited textually article fourth of the public treaty relative to the India trade. The promise was to this effect.

For the period of the truce the Spanish commissioners pledged the faith of the king and of his successors that his Majesty would cause no impediment, whether by sea or land, to the States nor their subjects, in the traffic that thereafter might be made in the countries of all princes, potentates, and peoples who might permit the same, in whatever place it might be, even without the limits designated, and everywhere else, nor similarly to those carrying on such traffic with them, and that the king and his successors would faithfully carry into effect everything thus laid, down, so that the said traffic should be free and secure, consenting even, in order that the clause might be the more authentic, that it should be considered as inserted in the principal treaty, and as making part thereof.

It will be perceived that the first article of all, and the last or secret article, contained the whole marrow of the treaty. It may be well understood, therefore, with what wry faces the Spanish plenipotentiaries ultimately signed the document.

After two years and a quarter of dreary negotiation, the republic had carried all its points, without swerving a hair's breadth from the principles laid down in the beginning. The only concession made was that the treaty was for a truce of twelve years, and not for peace. But as after all, in those days, an interval of twelve years might be almost considered an eternity of peace, and as calling a peace perpetual can never make it so, the difference was rather one of phraseology than of fact.

On the other hand, the States had extorted from their former sovereign a recognition of their independence.

They had secured the India trade.

They had not conceded Catholic worship.

Mankind were amazed at this result—an event hitherto unknown in history. When before had a sovereign acknowledged the independence of his rebellious subjects, and signed a treaty with them as with equals? When before had Spain, expressly or by implication, admitted that the East and West Indies were not her private property, and that navigators to those regions, from other countries than her own, were not to be chastised as trespassers and freebooters?

Yet the liberty of the Netherlands was acknowledged in terms which convinced the world that it was thenceforth an established fact. And India was as plainly expressed by the omission of the word, as if it had been engrossed in large capitals in Article IV.



Page 6

The King's Government might seek solace in syntax. They might triumph in Cardinal Bentivoglio's subtleties, and persuade themselves that to treat with the republic as a free nation was not to hold it for a free nation then and for ever. But the whole world knew that the republic really was free, and that it had treated, face to face, with its former sovereign, exactly as the Kings of France or Great Britain, or the Grand Turk, might treat with him. The new commonwealth had taken its place among the nations of the earth. Other princes and potentates made not the slightest difficulty in recognising it for an independent power and entering into treaties and alliances with it as with any other realm.

To the republic the substantial blessing of liberty: to his Catholic Majesty the grammatical quirk. When the twelve years should expire, Spain might reconquer the United Provinces if she could; relying upon the great truth that an adverb was not a preposition. And France or Great Britain might attempt the same thing if either felt strong enough for the purpose. Did as plausible a pretext as that ever fail to a state ambitious of absorbing its neighbours?

Jeannin was right enough in urging that this famous clause of recognition ought to satisfy both parties. If the United Provinces, he said, happened not to have the best muskets and cannons on their side when it should once more come to blows, small help would they derive from verbal bulwarks and advantages in the text of treaties.

Richardot consoled himself with his quibbles; for quibbles were his daily bread. "Thank God our truce is made," said he, "and we have only lost the sovereignty for twelve years, if after that we have the means or the will to resume the war—whatever Don Pedro de Toledo may say."

Barneveld, on his part, was devoutly and soberly pleased with the result. "To-day we have concluded our negotiations for the truce," he wrote to Aerssens. "We must pray to the Lord God, and we must do our highest duty that our work may redound to his honour and glory, and to the nation's welfare. It is certain that men will make their criticisms upon it according to their humours. But those who love their country, and all honest people who know the condition of the land, will say that it is well done."

Thus modestly, religiously, and sincerely spoke a statesman, who felt that he had accomplished a great work, and that he had indeed brought the commonwealth through the tempest at last.

The republic had secured the India trade. On this point the negotiators had taken refuge in that most useful figure of speech for hard-pressed diplomatists and law-makers—the ellipsis. They had left out the word India, and his Catholic Majesty might persuade himself that by such omission a hemisphere had actually been taken away from the Dutch merchants and navigators. But the whole world saw that Article IV. really

contained both the East and West Indies. It hardly needed the secret clause to make assurance doubly sure.



Page 7

President Richardot was facetiously wont to observe that this point in the treaty was so obscure that he did not understand it himself. But he knew better. He understood it very well. The world understood it very well. The United Provinces had throughout the negotiations ridiculed the idea of being excluded from any part of the old world or, the new by reason of the Borgian grant. All the commissioners knew that the war would be renewed if any attempt were to be seriously made to put up those famous railings around the ocean, of which the Dutch diplomatists spoke in such bitter scorn. The Spanish plenipotentiaries, therefore, had insisted that the word itself should be left out, and that the republic should be forbidden access to territories subject to the crown of Spain. So the Hollanders were thenceforth to deal directly with the kings of Sumatra and the Moluccas, and the republics of Banda, and all the rich commonwealths and principalities of nutmegs; cloves, and indigo, unless, as grew every day more improbable, the Spaniards and Portuguese could exclude them from that traffic by main force. And the Orange flag of the republic was to float with equal facility over all America, from the Isle of Manhattan to the shores of Brazil and the Straits of Magellan, provided Philip had not ships and soldiers to vindicate with the sword that sovereignty which Spanish swords and Spanish genius had once acquired.

As for the Catholic worship, the future was to prove that liberty for the old religion and for all forms of religion was a blessing more surely to flow from the enlightened public sentiment of a free people emerging out of the most tremendous war for liberty ever waged, than from the stipulations of a treaty with a foreign power.

It was characteristic enough of the parties engaged in the great political drama that the republic now requested from France and Great Britain a written recognition of its independence, and that both France and England refused.

It was strange that the new commonwealth, in the very moment of extorting her freedom from the ancient tyranny, should be so unconscious of her strength as to think free papers from neutral powers a boon. As if the sign-manual of James and Henry were a better guarantee than the trophies of the Nassaus, of Heemskerck, of Matelieff, and of Olden-Barneveld!

It was not strange that the two sovereigns should decline the proposition; for we well know the secret aspirations of each, and it was natural that they should be unwilling to sign a formal quit-claim, however improbable it might be that those dreams should ever become a reality.

Both powers, however, united in a guarantee of the truce.

This was signed on the 17th June, and stipulated that, without their knowledge and consent, the States should make no treaty during the period of truce with the King of Spain or the archdukes. On the other hand, in case of an infraction of the truce by the

enemy, the two kings agreed to lend assistance to the States in the manner provided—by the treaties concluded with the republic previously to the negotiation of the truce.

Page 8

The treaty had been at once ratified by the States-General, assembled for the purpose with an extraordinary number of deputies at Bergen-op-Zoom. It was also ratified without delay by the archdukes. The delivery of the confirmation by his Catholic Majesty had been promised within three months after the signatures of the plenipotentiaries.

It would however have been altogether inconsistent with the dignity and the traditions of the Spanish court to fulfil this stipulation. It was not to be expected that "I the King" could be written either by the monarch himself, or by his alter ego the Duke of Lerma, in so short a time as a quarter of a year.

Several weeks accordingly went by after the expiration of the stated period. The ratification did not come, and the Netherlanders began to be once more indignant. Before the storm had risen very high, however, the despatches arrived. The king's signature was ante-dated 7th April, being thus brought within the term of three months, and was a thorough confirmation of what had been done by his plenipotentiaries.

His Majesty, however, expressed a hope that during the truce the States would treat their Catholic subjects with kindness.

Certainly no exception could be taken to so reasonable an intimation as this. President Jeannin, too, just before his departure, handed in to the States-General an eloquent appeal on behalf of the Catholics of the Netherlands; a paper which was not immediately made public.

"Consider the great number of Catholics," he said, "in your territory, both in the cities and the country. Remember that they have worked with you; spent their property, have been exposed to the same dangers, and have always kept their fidelity to the commonwealth inviolate as long as the war endured, never complaining that they did not enjoy liberty of religious worship, believing that you had thus, ordained because the public safety required such guaranty. But they always promised themselves, should the end of the war be happy, and should you be placed in the enjoyment of entire freedom, that they too would have some part in this good fortune, even as they had been sharers in the inconveniences, the expenses, and the perils of the war.

"But those cannot be said to share in any enjoyment from whom has been taken the power of serving God according to the religion in which they were brought up. On the contrary, no slavery is more intolerable nor more exasperates the mind than such restraint. You know this well, my lords States; you know too that it was the principal, the most puissant cause that made you fly to arms and scorn all dangers, in order to effect your deliverance from this servitude. You know that it has excited similar movements in various parts of Christendom, and even in the kingdom of France, with such fortunate success everywhere as to make it appear that God had so willed it, in order to prove that religion ought to be taught and inspired

Page 9

by the movements which come from the Holy Ghost, and not by the force of man. Thus kings and princes should be induced by the evils and ruin which they and their subjects have suffered from this cause, as by a sentiment of their own interest, to take more care than has hitherto been taken to practise in good earnest those remedies which were wont to be used at a time when the church was in its greatest piety, in order to correct the abuses and errors which the corruption of mankind had tried to introduce as being the true and sole means of uniting all Christians in one and the same creed.”

Surely the world had made progress in these forty years of war. Was it not something to gain for humanity, for intellectual advancement, for liberty of thought, for the true interests of religion, that a Roman Catholic, an ex-leaguer, a trusted representative of the immediate successor of Charles IX. and Henry III., could stand up on the blood-stained soil of the Netherlands and plead for liberty of conscience for all mankind?

“Those cannot be said to share in, any enjoyment from whom has been taken the power of serving God according to the religion in which they have been brought up. No slavery is more intolerable nor more exasperating to the mind than such restraint.”

Most true, O excellent president! No axiom in mathematics is more certain than this simple statement. To prove its truth William the Silent had lived and died. To prove it a falsehood, emperors, and kings, and priests, had issued bans, and curses, and damnable decrees. To root it out they had butchered, drowned, shot, strangled, poisoned, tortured, roasted alive, buried alive, starved, and driven mad, thousands and tens of thousands of their fellow creatures. And behold there had been almost a century of this work, and yet the great truth was not rooted out after all; and the devil-worshippers, who had sought at the outset of the great war to establish the Holy Inquisition in the Netherlands upon the ruins of religious and political liberty, were overthrown at last and driven back into the pit. It was progress; it was worth all the blood and treasure which had been spilled, that, instead of the Holy Inquisition, there was now holy liberty of thought.

That there should have been a party, that there should have been an individual here and there, after the great victory was won, to oppose the doctrine which the Catholic president now so nobly advocated, would be enough to cause every believer in progress to hide his face in the dust, did we not know that the march of events was destined to trample such opposition out of existence, and had not history proved to us that the great lesson of the war was not to be rendered nought by the efforts of a few fanatics. Religious liberty was the ripened and consummate fruit, and it could not but be gathered.



Page 10

“Consider too,” continued the president, “how much injury your refusal, if you give it, will cause to those of your religion in the places where they are the weakest, and where they are every day imploring with tears and lamentations the grace of those Catholic sovereigns to whom they are subject, to enable them to enjoy the same religious liberty which our king is now demanding in favour of the Catholics among you. Do not cause it to come again into the minds of those sovereigns and their peoples, whom an inconsiderate zeal has often driven into violence and ferocity against protestants, that a war to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest is just and lawful.”

Had not something been gained for the world when this language was held by a Catholic on the very spot where less than a half century before the whole population of the Netherlands, men, women, and children, had been condemned to death by a foreign tyrant, for the simple reason that it was just, legal, and a Christian duty to punish the weak for refusing to follow the religion of the strong?

“As for the perils which some affect to fear,” said Jeannin, further, “if this liberty of worship is accorded, experience teaches us every day that diversity of religion is not the cause of the ruin of states, and that a government does not cease to be good, nor its subjects to live in peace and friendship with one another, rendering due obedience to the laws and to their rulers as well as if they had all been of the same religion, without having another thought, save for the preservation of the dignity and grandeur of the state in which God had caused them to be born. The danger is not in the permission, but in the prohibition of religious liberty.”

All this seems commonplace enough to us on the western side of the Atlantic, in the middle of the nineteenth century, but it would have been rank blasphemy in New England in the middle of the seventeenth, many years after Jeannin spoke. It was a horrible sound, too, in the ears of some of his audience.

To the pretence so often urged by the Catholic persecutors, and now set up by their Calvinistic imitators; that those who still clung to the old religion were at liberty to depart from the land, the president replied with dignified scorn.

“With what justice,” he asked, “can you drive into exile people who have committed no offence, and who have helped to conquer the very country from which you would now banish them? If you do drive them away, you will make solitudes in your commonwealth, which will, be the cause of evils such as I prefer that you should reflect upon without my declaring them now. Although these reasons,” he continued, “would seem sufficient to induce you to accord the free and public exercise of the Catholic religion, the king, not hoping as much as that, because aware that you are not disposed to go so far, is content to request only this grace in behalf of the Catholics, that you will tolerate them, and suffer them to have some exercise of their religion within their own households, without interference or inquiry on that account, and without execution of the rigorous decrees heretofore enforced against them.”



Page 11

Certainly if such wholesome, moderate, and modest counsels as these had been rejected, it would have been sound doctrine to proclaim that the world did not move. And there were individuals enough, even an influential party, prepared to oppose them for both technical and practical reasons. And the cause of intolerance derived much warmth and comfort at this juncture from that great luminary of theology and political philosophy, the King of Great Britain. Direful and solemn were the warnings uttered by James to the republic against permitting the old religion, or any religion save his own religion, to obtain the slightest foothold within her borders.

“Let the religion be taught and preached in its parity throughout your provinces without the least mixture,” said Sir Ralph Winwood, in the name of his sovereign.

“On this foundation the justice of your cause is built. There is but one verity. Those who are willing to tolerate any religion, whatever it may be, and try to make you believe that liberty for both is necessary in your commonwealth, are paving the way towards atheism.”

Such were the counsels of King James to the united States of the Netherlands against harbouring Catholics. A few years later he was casting forth Calvinists from his own dominions as if they had been lepers; and they went forth on their weary pilgrimage to the howling wilderness of North America, those exiled Calvinists, to build a greater republic than had ever been dreamed of before on this planet; and they went forth, not to preach, but in their turn to denounce toleration and to hang heretics. “He who would tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated, would if need be, hang God’s bible at the devil’s girdle.” So spoke an early Massachusetts pilgrim, in the very spirit, almost the very words of the royal persecutor; who had driven him into outer darkness beyond the seas. He had not learned the lesson of the mighty movement in which he was a pioneer, any more than Gomarus or Uytenbogaart had comprehended why the Dutch republic had risen.

Yet the founders of the two commonwealths, the United States of the seventeenth and of the nineteenth centuries, although many of them fiercely intolerant, through a natural instinct of resistance, not only to the oppressor but to the creed of the oppressor, had been breaking out the way, not to atheism, as King James believed, but to the only garden in which Christianity can perennially flourish—religious liberty.

Those most ardent and zealous path-finders may be forgiven, in view of the inestimable benefits conferred by them upon humanity, that they did not travel on their own road. It should be sufficient for us, if we make due use of their great imperishable work ourselves; and if we never cease rendering thanks to the Omnipotent, that there is at least one great nation on the globe where the words toleration and dissenter have no meaning whatever.

Page 12

For the Dutch fanatics of the reformed church, at the moment of the truce, to attempt to reverse the course of events, and to shut off the mighty movement of the great revolt from its destined expanse, was as hopeless a dream as to drive back the Rhine, as it reached the ocean, into the narrow channel of the Rheinwald glacier whence it sprang.

The republic became the refuge for the oppressed of all nations, where Jews and Gentiles, Catholics, Calvinists, and Anabaptists, prayed after their own manner to the same God and Father. It was too much, however, to hope that passions which had been so fiercely bubbling during fifty years would subside at once, and that the most intense religious hatreds that ever existed would exhale with the proclamation of truce. The march of humanity is rarely rapid enough to keep pace with the leaders in its most sublime movements, and it often happens that its chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of the contemporaneous vulgar, by the very distance at which they precede their unconscious followers. But even if the progress of the human mind towards the truth is fated to be a spiral one, as if to remind us that mankind is of the earth, earthy—a worm in the dust while inhabiting this lower sphere—it is at least a consolation to reflect upon the gradual advancement of the intellect from age to age.

The spirit of Torquemada, of Charles, of Philip, of Titelmann, is even now not extinct on this globe, but there are counter forces at work, which must ultimately blast it into insignificance. At the moment of the great truce, that evil spirit was not exorcised from the human breast, but the number of its victims and the intensity of its influence had already miraculously diminished.

The truce was made and announced all over the Netherlands by the ringing of bells, the happy discharge of innocent artillery, by illuminations, by Te Deums in all the churches. Papist and Presbyterian fell on their knees in every grand cathedral or humblest village church, to thank God that what had seemed the eternal butchery was over. The inhabitants of the united and of the obedient Netherlands rushed across the frontiers into a fraternal embrace; like the meeting of many waters when the flood-gates are lifted. It was pity that the foreign sovereignty, established at Brussels, could not then and there have been for ever swept away, and self-government and beneficent union extended over all the seventeen Netherlands, Walloon and Flemish, Catholic and reformed. But it hardly needs a word to show that the course of events had created a deeper chasm between the two sections than the gravest physical catastrophe could have produced. The opposing cliffs which religious hatred had rent asunder, and between which it seemed destined to flow for ever, seemed very close, and yet eternally separated.

The great war had established the republic; and apparently doomed the obedient Netherlands to perpetual servitude.

Page 13

There were many details of minor importance to be settled between the various governments involved in these great transactions; but this history draws to its predestined close, and it is necessary to glide rapidly over matters which rather belong to a later epoch than the one now under consideration.

The treaty between the republic and the government of Great Britain, according to which each was to assist the other in case of war with four thousand troops and twenty ships of war, was confirmed in the treaty of truce. The debt of the United Provinces to the Crown of England was definitely reckoned at 8,184,080 florins, and it was settled by the truce that 200,000 florins should be paid semi-annually, to begin with the year 1611, until the whole debt should be discharged.

The army establishment of the republic was fixed during the truce at thirty thousand infantry and three thousand horse. This was a reduction from the war footing of fifteen thousand men. Of the force retained, four thousand were a French legion maintained by the king, two thousand other French at the expense of the States, and distributed among other troops, two thousand Scotch, three thousand English, three thousand Germans. The rest were native Netherlanders, among whom, however, were very few Hollanders and Zeelanders, from which races the navy, both public and mercantile, was almost wholly supplied.

The revenue of the United Provinces was estimated at between seven and eight millions of florins.

It is superfluous to call attention again to the wonderful smallness of the means, the minuteness of the physical enginry, as compared with more modern manifestations, especially in our own land and epoch, by which so stupendous a result had been reached. In the midst of an age in which regal and sacerdotal despotism had seemed as omnipotent and irreversible as the elemental laws of the universe, the republic had been reproduced. A commonwealth of sand-banks, lagoons, and meadows, less than fourteen thousand square miles in extent, had done battle, for nearly half a century, with the greatest of existing powers, a realm whose territory was nearly a third of the globe, and which claimed universal monarchy. And this had been done with an army averaging forty-six thousand men, half of them foreigners hired by the job, and by a sea-faring population, volunteering into ships of every class and denomination, from a fly-boat to a galleot of war.

And when the republic had won its independence, after this almost eternal warfare, it owed four or five millions of dollars, and had sometimes an annual revenue of nearly that amount.

It was estimated by Barneveld, at the conclusion of the truce, that the interest on the public debt of Spain was about thrice the amount of the yearly income of the republic, and it was characteristic of the financial ideas of the period, that fears were entertained

lest a total repudiation of that burthen by the Spanish Government would enable it to resume the war against the provinces with redoubled energy.

Page 14

The annual salary of Prince Maurice, who was to see his chief occupation gone by the cessation of the war, was fixed by the States at 120,000 florins. It was agreed, that in case of his marriage he should receive a further yearly sum of 25,000 florins, and this addition was soon afterwards voted to him outright, it being obvious that the prince would remain all his days a bachelor.

Count Frederic Henry likewise received a military salary of 25,000 florins, while the emoluments of Lewis William were placed at 36,000 florins a year.

It must be admitted that the republic was grateful. 70,000 dollars a year, in the seventeenth century, not only for life, but to be inherited afterwards by his younger brother, Frederic Henry, was surely a munificent sum to be accorded from the puny exchequer of the States-General to the chief magistrate of the nation.

The mighty transatlantic republic, with its population of thirty or forty millions, and its revenue of five hundred millions of dollars, pays 25,000 dollars annually for its president during his four years of office, and this in the second half of the nineteenth century, when a dollar is worth scarcely one-fifth of its value two hundred and fifty years ago.

Surely here is improvement, both in the capacity to produce and in the power to save.

In the year 1609, died John, the last sovereign of Cleves and Juliers, and Jacob Arminius, Doctor of Divinity at Leyden. It would be difficult to imagine two more entirely dissimilar individuals of the human family than this lunatic duke and that theological professor. And yet, perhaps, the two names, more concisely than those of any other mortals, might serve as an index to the ghastly chronicle over which a coming generation was to shudder. The death of the duke was at first thought likely to break off the negotiations for truce. The States-General at once declared that they would permit no movements on the part of the Spanish party to seize the inheritance in behalf of the Catholic claimants. Prince Maurice, nothing loth to make use of so well-timed an event in order to cut for ever the tangled skein at the Hague, was for marching forthwith into the duchies.

But the archdukes gave such unequivocal assurances of abstaining from interference, and the desire for peace was so strong both in the obedient and in the United Provinces, that the question of the duchies was postponed. It was to serve as both torch and fuel for one of the longest and most hideous tragedies that had ever disgraced humanity. A thirty years' war of demons was, after a brief interval, to succeed the forty years' struggle between slaves and masters, which had just ended in the recognition of Dutch independence.

The gentle Arminius was in his grave, but a bloody harvest was fast ripening from the seeds which he had sown. That evil story must find its place in the melancholy chapter where the fortunes of the Dutch republic are blended with the grim chronicle of the thirty

years' war. Until the time arrives for retracing the course of those united transactions to their final termination in the peace of Westphalia, it is premature to characterize an epoch which, at the moment with which we are now occupied, had not fairly begun.



Page 15

The Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists, and of filling the soul of man with vilest arrogance and confidence in good works; while the Arminians complained that the God of the Gomarites was an unjust God, himself the origin of sin.

The disputes on these themes had been perpetual in the provinces ever since the early days of the Reformation. Of late, however, the acrimony of theological conflict had been growing day by day more intense. It was the eternal struggle of religious dogma to get possession of the State, and to make use of political forces in order to put fetters on the human soul; to condemn it to slavery where most it requires freedom.

The conflict between Gomarus and Arminius proceeded with such ferocity in Leyden, that, since the days of the memorable siege, to which the university owed its origin, men's minds had never been roused to such feverish anxiety: The theological cannonades, which thundered daily from the college buildings and caused all Holland to quake, seemed more appalling to the burghers than the engine of Valdez and Boisot had ever seemed to their fathers.

The Gomarite doctrine gained most favour with the clergy, the Arminian creed with the municipal magistracies. The magistrates claimed that decisions concerning religious matters belonged to the supreme authority. The Gomarites contended that sacred matters should be referred to synods of the clergy. Here was the germ of a conflict which might one day shake the republic to its foundations.

Barneveld, the great leader of the municipal party, who loved political power quite as well as he loved his country; was naturally a chieftain of the Arminians; for church matters were no more separated from political matters in the commonwealth at that moment than they were in the cabinets of Henry, James, or Philip.

It was inevitable therefore that the war party should pour upon his head more than seven vials of theological wrath. The religious doctrines which he espoused were, odious not only because they were deemed vile in themselves but because he believed in them.

Arminianism was regarded as a new and horrible epidemic, daily gaining ground, and threatening to destroy the whole population. Men deliberated concerning the best means to cut off communication with the infected regions, and to extirpate the plague even by desperate and heroic remedies, as men in later days take measures against the cholera or the rinderpest.

Theological hatred was surely not extinct in the Netherlands. It was a consolation, however, that its influence was rendered less noxious by the vastly increased strength of principles long dormant in the atmosphere. Anna van der Hoven, buried alive in Brussels, simply because her Calvinistic creed was a crime in the eyes of the monks who murdered her, was the last victim to purely religious persecution. If there were one

day to be still a tragedy or two in the Netherlands it was inevitable that theological hatred would be obliged to combine with political party spirit in its most condensed form before any deadly effect could be produced.

Page 16

Thus the year 1609 is a memorable one in the world's history. It forms a great landmark in human progress. It witnessed the recognition of a republic, powerful in itself, and whose example was destined to be most influential upon the career of two mighty commonwealths of the future. The British empire, just expanding for wider flight than it had hitherto essayed, and about to pass through a series of vast revolutions, gathering strength of wing as it emerged from cloud after cloud; and the American republic, whose frail and obscure beginnings at that very instant of time scarcely attracted a passing attention from the contemporaneous world—both these political organisms, to which so much of mankind's future liberties had been entrusted, were deeply indebted to the earlier self-governing commonwealth.

The Dutch republic was the first free nation to put a girdle of empire around the earth. It had courage, enterprise, intelligence, perseverance, faith in itself, the instinct of self-government and self-help, hatred of tyranny, the disposition to domineer, aggressiveness, greediness, inquisitiveness, insolence, the love of science, of liberty, and of money—all this in unlimited extent. It had one great defect, it had no country. Upon that meagre standing ground its hand had moved the world with an impulse to be felt through all the ages, but there was not soil enough in those fourteen thousand, square miles to form the metropolis of the magnificent empire which the genius of liberty had created beyond the seas.

That the political institutions bequeathed by the United States of the seventeenth century have been vastly improved, both in theory and practice, by the United States of the nineteenth, no American is likely to gainsay. That the elder Republic showed us also what to avoid, and was a living example of the perils besetting a Confederacy which dared not become a Union, is a lesson which we might take closely to heart.

But the year 1609 was not only memorable as marking an epoch in Dutch history. It was the beginning of a great and universal pause. The world had need of rest. Disintegration had been going on too rapidly, and it was absolutely necessary that there should be a new birth, if civilization were not to vanish.

A twenty years' truce between the Turkish and Holy Roman empires was nearly simultaneous with the twelve years' truce between Spain and the United Provinces. The Emperor Rudolph having refused to ratify the treaty which his brother Matthias had made, was in consequence partially discrowned. The same archduke who, thirty years before, had slipped away from Vienna in his nightgown; with his face blackened, to outwit and outgeneral William the Silent at Brussels, was now—more successful in his manoeuvres against his imperial brother. Standing at the head of his army in battle array, in the open fields before the walls of Prague, he received—from the unfortunate Rudolph the crown and regalia of Hungary, and was by solemn treaty declared sovereign of that ancient and chivalrous kingdom.



Page 17

His triumphal entrance into Vienna succeeded, where, surrounded by great nobles and burghers, with his brother Maximilian at his side, with immense pomp and with flowers strewn before his feet, he ratified that truce with Ahmed which Rudolph had rejected. Three months later he was crowned at Pressburg, having first accepted the conditions proposed by the estates of Hungary. Foremost among these was the provision that the exercise of the reformed religion should be free in all the cities and villages beneath his sceptre, and that every man in the kingdom was to worship God according to his conscience.

In the following March, at the very moment accordingly when the conclusive negotiations were fast ripening at Antwerp, Matthias granted religious peace for Austria likewise. Great was the indignation of his nephew Leopold, the nuncius, and the Spanish ambassador in consequence, by each and all of whom the revolutionary mischief-maker, with his brother's crown on his head, was threatened with excommunication.

As for Ferdinand of Styria, his wrath may well be imagined. He refused religious peace in his dominions with scorn ineffable. Not Gomarus in Leyden could have shrunk from Arminianism with more intense horror than that with which the archduke at Gratz recoiled from any form of Protestantism. He wrote to his brother-in-law the King of Spain and to other potentates—as if the very soul of Philip II. were alive within him—that he would rather have a country without inhabitants than with a single protestant on its soil. He strongly urged upon his Catholic Majesty—as if such urging were necessary at the Spanish court—the necessity of extirpating heresy, root and branch.

Here was one man at least who knew what he meant, and on whom the dread lessons of fifty years of bloodshed had been lost. Magnificent was the contempt which this pupil of the Jesuits felt for any little progress made by the world since the days of Torquemada. In Ferdinand's view Alva was a Christian hero, scarcely second to Godfrey of Bouillon, Philip II. a sainted martyr, while the Dutch republic had never been born.

And Ferdinand was one day to sit on the throne of the holy Roman Empire. Might not a shudder come over the souls of men as coming events vaguely shaped themselves to prophetic eyes?

Meantime there was religious peace in Hungary, in Austria, in Bohemia, in France, in Great Britain, in the Netherlands. The hangman's hands were for a period at rest, so far as theology had need of them. Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended throughout Christendom. The Cross and the Crescent, Santiago and the Orange banner, were for a season in repose.

There was a vast lull between two mighty storms. The forty years' war was in the past, the thirty years' war in the not far distant future.

CHAPTER LIII.

Conclusion.



Page 18

Forth-three years had passed since the memorable April morning in which the great nobles of the, Netherlands presented their "Request" to the Regent Margaret at Brussels.

They had requested that the holy Spanish Inquisition might not be established on their soil to the suppression of all their political and religious institutions.

The war which those high-born "beggars" had then kindled, little knowing what they were doing, had now come to a close, and the successor of Philip II., instead of planting the Inquisition in the provinces, had recognised them as an independent, sovereign, protestant republic.

In the ratification which he had just signed of the treaty of truce the most Catholic king had in his turn made a Request. He had asked the States-General to deal kindly with their Catholic subjects.

That request was not answered with the age and faggot; with the avenging sword of mercenary legions. On the contrary, it was destined to be granted. The world had gained something in forty-three years. It had at least begun to learn that the hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion.

During the period of apparent chaos with which this history of the great revolt has been occupied, there had in truth been a great reorganization, a perfected new birth. The republic had once more appeared in the world.

Its main characteristics have been indicated in the course of the narrative, for it was a polity which gradually unfolded itself out of the decay and change of previous organisms.

It was, as it were, in their own despite and unwittingly that the United Provinces became a republic at all.

In vain, after originally declaring their independence of the ancient tyrant, had they attempted to annex themselves to France and to England. The sovereignty had been spurned. The magnificent prize which France for centuries since has so persistently coveted, and the attainment of which has been a cardinal point of her perpetual policy—the Low Countries and the banks of the Rhine—was deliberately laid at her feet, and as deliberately refused.

It was the secret hope of the present monarch to repair the loss which the kingdom had suffered through the imbecility of his two immediate predecessors. But a great nation cannot with impunity permit itself to be despotically governed for thirty years by lunatics. It was not for the Bearnese, with all his valour, his wit, and his duplicity, to obtain the prize which Charles IX. and Henry III. had thrown away. Yet to make himself



sovereign of the Netherlands was his guiding but most secret thought during all the wearisome and tortuous negotiations which preceded the truce; nor did he abandon the great hope with the signature of the treaty of 1609.

Maurice of Nassau too was a formidable rival to Henry. The stadholder-prince was no republican. He was a good patriot, a noble soldier, an honest man. But his father had been offered the sovereignty of Holland and Zeeland, and the pistol of Balthasar Gerard had alone, in all human probability, prevented the great prince from becoming constitutional monarch of all the Netherlands, Batavian and Belgic.



Page 19

Maurice himself asserted that not only had he been offered a million of dollars, and large estates besides in Germany, if he would leave the provinces to their fate, but that the archdukes had offered, would he join his fortunes with theirs, to place him in a higher position over all the Netherlands than he had ever enjoyed in the United Provinces, and that they had even unequivocally offered him the sovereignty over the whole land.

Maurice was a man of truth, and we have no right to dispute the accuracy of the extraordinary statement. He must however have reflected upon the offer once made by the Prince of Darkness from the mountain top, and have asked himself by what machinery the archdukes proposed to place him in possession of such a kingdom.

There had, however, been serious question among leading Dutch statesmen of making him constitutional, hereditary monarch of the United Netherlands. As late as 1602 a secret conference was held at the house of Olden-Barneveld, in which the Advocate had himself urged the claims of the prince to the sovereignty, and reminded his guests that the signed and sealed documents—with the concurrence of the Amsterdam municipality alone lacking—by which William the Silent had been invited to assume the crown were still in the possession of his son.

Nothing came of these deliberations. It was agreed that to stir in the matter at that moment would be premature, and that the pursuit by Maurice of the monarchy in the circumstances then existing would not only over-burthen him with expense, but make him a more conspicuous mark than ever for the assassin. It is certain that the prince manifested no undue anxiety at any period in regard to those transactions.

Subsequently, as Olden-Barneveld's personal power increased, and as the negotiations for peace became more and more likely to prove successful, the Advocate lost all relish for placing his great rival on a throne. The whole project, with the documents and secret schemes therewith connected, became mere alms for oblivion. Barneveld himself, although of comparatively humble birth and station, was likely with time to exercise more real power in the State than either Henry or Maurice; and thus while there were three individuals who in different ways aspired to supreme power, the republic, notwithstanding, asserted and established itself.

Freedom of government and freedom, of religion were, on the whole, assisted by this triple antagonism. The prince, so soon as war was over, hated the Advocate and his daily increasing power more and more. He allied himself more closely than ever with the Gomarites and the clerical party in general, and did his best to inflame the persecuting spirit, already existing in the provinces, against the Catholics and the later sects of Protestants.

Jeannin warned him that "by thus howling with the priests" he would be suspected of more desperately ambitious designs than he perhaps really cherished.



Page 20

On the other hand, Barneveld was accused of a willingness to wink at the introduction, privately and quietly, of the Roman Catholic worship. That this was the deadliest of sins, there was no doubt whatever in the minds of his revilers. When it was added that he was suspected of the Arminian leprosy, and that he could tolerate the thought that a virtuous man or woman, not predestined from all time for salvation, could possibly find the way to heaven, language becomes powerless to stigmatize his depravity. Whatever the punishment impending over his head in this world or the next, it is certain that the cause of human freedom was not destined on the whole to lose ground through the life-work of Barneveld.

A champion of liberties rather than of liberty, he defended his fatherland with heart and soul against the stranger; yet the government of that fatherland was, in his judgments to be transferred from the hand of the foreigner, not to the self-governing people, but to the provincial corporations. For the People he had no respect, and perhaps little affection. He often spoke of popular rights with contempt. Of popular sovereignty he had no conception. His patriotism, like his ambition, was provincial. Yet his perceptions as to eternal necessity in all healthy governments taught him that comprehensible relations between the state and the population were needful to the very existence of a free commonwealth. The United Provinces, he maintained, were not a republic, but a league of seven provinces very loosely hung together, a mere provisional organization for which it was not then possible to substitute anything better. He expressed this opinion with deep regret, just as the war of independence was closing, and added his conviction that, without some well-ordered government, no republic could stand.

Yet, as time wore on, the Advocate was destined to acquiesce more and more in this defective constitution. A settled theory there was none, and it would have been difficult legally and historically to establish the central sovereignty of the States-General as matter of right.

Thus Barneveld, who was anything but a democrat, became, almost unwittingly, the champion of the least venerable or imposing of all forms of aristocracy—an oligarchy of traders who imagined themselves patricians. Corporate rights, not popular liberty, seemed, in his view, the precious gains made by such a prodigious expenditure of time, money, and blood. Although such acquisitions were practically a vast addition to the stock of human freedom then existing in the world, yet torrents of blood and millions of treasure were to be wasted in the coming centuries before mankind was to convince itself that a republic is only to be made powerful and perpetual by placing itself upon the basis of popular right rather than on that of municipal privilege.

The singular docility of the Dutch people, combined with the simplicity, honesty, and practical sagacity of the earlier burgher patricians, made the defects of the system tolerable for a longer period than might have been expected; nor was it until theological dissensions had gathered to such intensity as to set the whole commonwealth aflame that the grave defects in the political structure could be fairly estimated.



Page 21

It would be anticipating a dark chapter in the history of the United Provinces were the reader's attention now to be called to those fearful convulsions. The greatest reserve is therefore necessary at present in alluding to the subject.

It was not to be expected that an imperious, energetic but somewhat limited nature like that of Barneveld should at that epoch thoroughly comprehend the meaning of religious freedom. William the Silent alone seems to have risen to that height. A conscientious Calvinist himself, the father of his country would have been glad to see Protestant and Papist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Anabaptist living together in harmony and political equality. This was not to be. The soul of the immortal prince could not inspire the hearts of his contemporaries. That Barneveld was disposed to a breadth of religious sympathy unusual in those days, seems certain. It was inevitable, too, that the mild doctrines of Arminius should be more in harmony with such a character than were the fierce dogmas of Calvin. But the struggle, either to force Arminianism upon the Church which considered itself the established one in the Netherlands, or to expel the Calvinists from it, had not yet begun; although the seeds of religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants had already been sown broadcast.

The day was not far distant when the very Calvinists, to whom, more than to any other class of men, the political liberties of Holland, England, and America are due, were to be hunted out of churches into farm-houses, suburban hovels, and canal-boats by the arm of provincial sovereignty and in the name of state-rights, as pitilessly as the early reformers had been driven out of cathedrals in the name of emperor and pope; and when even those refuges for conscientious worship were to be denied by the dominant sect. And the day was to come, too, when the Calvinists, regaining ascendancy in their turn, were to hunt the heterodox as they had themselves been hunted; and this, at the very moment when their fellow Calvinists of England were driven by the Church of that kingdom into the American wilderness.

Toleration—that intolerable term of insult to all who love liberty—had not yet been discovered. It had scarcely occurred to Arminian or Presbyterian that civil authority and ecclesiastical doctrine could be divorced from each other. As the individual sovereignty of the seven states established itself more and more securely, the right of provincial power to dictate religious dogmas, and to superintend the popular conscience, was exercised with a placid arrogance which papal infallibility could scarcely exceed. The alternation was only between the sects, each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting. The lessened intensity of persecution however, which priesthood and authority were now allowed to exercise, marked the gains secured.

Yet while we censure—as we have a right to do from the point of view which we have gained after centuries—the crimes committed by bigotry against liberty, we should be false, to our faith in human progress did we not acknowledge our debt of gratitude to the hot gossellers of Holland and England.



Page 22

The doctrine of predestination, the consciousness of being chosen soldiers of Christ, inspired those puritans, who founded the commonwealths of England, of Holland, and of America, with a contempt of toil, danger, and death which enabled them to accomplish things almost supernatural.

No uncouthness of phraseology, no unlovely austerity of deportment, could, except to vulgar minds, make that sublime enthusiasm ridiculous, which on either side the ocean ever confronted tyranny with dauntless front, and welcomed death on battle-field, scaffold, or rack with perfect composure.

The early puritan at least believed. The very intensity of his belief made him—all unconsciously to himself, and narrowed as was his view of his position—the great instrument by which the widest human liberty was to be gained for all mankind.

The elected favourite of the King of kings feared the power of no earthly king. Accepting in rapture the decrees of a supernatural tyranny, he rose on mighty wings above the reach of human wrath. Prostrating himself before a God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice, he naturally imitated the attributes which he believed to be divine. It was inevitable, therefore, that Barneveld, and those who thought with him, when they should attempt to force the children of Belial into the company of the elect and to drive the faithful out of their own churches, should be detested as bitterly as papists had ever been.

Had Barneveld's intellect been broad enough to imagine in a great republic the separation of Church and State, he would deserve a tenderer sympathy, but he would have been far in advance of his age. It is not cheerful to see so powerful an intellect and so patriotic a character daring to entrust the relations between man and his Maker to the decree of a trading corporation. But alas! the world was to wait for centuries until it should learn that the State can best defend religion by letting it alone, and that the political arm is apt to wither with palsy when it attempts to control the human conscience.

It is not entirely the commonwealth of the United Netherlands that is of importance in the epoch which I have endeavoured to illustrate. History can have neither value nor charm for those who are not impressed with a conviction of its continuity.

More than ever during the period which we call modern history has this idea of the continuousness of our race, and especially of the inhabitants of Europe and America, become almost oppressive to the imagination. There is a sense of immortality even upon earth when we see the succession of heritages in the domains of science, of intellectual and material wealth by which mankind, generation after generation, is enriching itself.



If this progress be a dream, if mankind be describing a limited circle instead of advancing towards the infinite; then no study can be more contemptible than the study of history.

Page 23

Few strides more gigantic have been taken in the march of humanity than those by which a parcel of outlying provinces in the north of Europe exchanged slavery to a foreign despotism and to the Holy Inquisition for the position of a self-governing commonwealth, in the front rank of contemporary powers, and in many respects the foremost of the world. It is impossible to calculate the amount of benefit tendered to civilization by the example of the Dutch republic. It has been a model which has been imitated, in many respects, by great nations. It has even been valuable in its very defects; indicating to the patient observer many errors most important to avoid.

Therefore, had the little republic sunk for ever in the sea so soon as the treaty of peace had been signed at Antwerp, its career would have been prolific of good for all succeeding time.

Exactly at the moment when a splendid but decaying despotism, founded upon wrong—upon oppression of the human body and the immortal soul, upon slavery, in short, of the worst kind—was awaking from its insane dream of universal empire to a consciousness of its own decay, the new republic was recognised among the nations.

It would hardly be incorrect to describe the Holland of the beginning of the seventeenth century as the exact reverse of Spain. In the commonwealth labour was most honourable; in the kingdom it was vile. In the north to be idle was accounted and punished as a crime. In the southern peninsula, to be contaminated with mechanical, mercantile, commercial, manufacturing pursuits, was to be accursed. Labour was for slaves, and at last the mere spectacle of labour became so offensive that even the slaves were expelled from the land. To work was as degrading in the south as to beg or to steal was esteemed unworthy of humanity in the north. To think a man's thought upon high matters of religion and government, and through a thousand errors to pursue the truth; with the aid of the Most High and with the best use of human reason, was a privilege secured by the commonwealth, at the expense of two generations of continuous bloodshed. To lie fettered, soul and body, at the feet of authority wielded by a priesthood in its last stage of corruption, and monarchy almost reduced to imbecility, was the lot of the chivalrous, genial; but much oppressed Spaniard.

The pictures painted of the republic by shrewd and caustic observers, not inclined by nature or craft to portray freedom in too engaging colours, seem, when contrasted with those revealed of Spain, almost like enthusiastic fantasies of an ideal commonwealth.

Page 24

During the last twenty years of the great war the material prosperity of the Netherlands had wonderfully increased. They had, become the first commercial nation in the world. They had acquired the supremacy of the seas. The population of Amsterdam had in twenty years increased from seventy thousand to a hundred and thirty thousand, and was destined to be again more than doubled in the coming decade. The population of Antwerp had sunk almost as rapidly as that of its rival had increased; having lessened by fifty thousand during the same period. The commercial capital of the obedient provinces, having already lost much of its famous traffic by the great changes in the commercial current of the world, was unable to compete with the cities of the United Provinces in the vast trade which the geographical discoveries of the preceding century had opened to civilization. Freedom of thought and action were denied, and without such liberty it was impossible for oceanic commerce to thrive. Moreover, the possession by the Hollanders of the Scheldt forts below Antwerp, and of Flushing at the river's mouth, suffocated the ancient city, and would of itself have been sufficient to paralyze all its efforts.

In Antwerp the exchange, where once thousands of the great merchants of the earth held their daily financial parliament, now echoed to the solitary footfall of the passing stranger. Ships lay rotting at the quays; brambles grow in the commercial streets. In Amsterdam the city had been enlarged by two-thirds, and those who swarmed thither to seek their fortunes could not wait for the streets to be laid out and houses to be built, but established themselves in the environs, building themselves hovels and temporary residences, although certain to find their encampments swept away with the steady expanse of the city. As much land as could be covered by a man's foot was worth a ducat in gold.

In every branch of human industry these republicans took the lead. On that scrap of solid ground, rescued by human energy from the ocean, were the most fertile pastures in the world. On those pastures grazed the most famous cattle in the world. An ox often weighed more than two thousand pounds. The cows produced two and three calves at a time, the sheep four and five lambs. In a single village four thousand kine were counted. Butter and cheese were exported to the annual value of a million, salted provisions to an incredible extent. The farmers were industrious, thriving, and independent. It is an amusing illustration of the agricultural thrift and republican simplicity of this people that on one occasion a farmer proposed to Prince Maurice that he should marry his daughter, promising with her a dowry of a hundred thousand florins.



Page 25

The mechanical ingenuity of the Netherlanders, already celebrated by Julius Caesar and by Tacitus, had lost nothing of its ancient fame. The contemporary world confessed that in many fabrics the Hollanders were at the head of mankind. Dutch linen, manufactured of the flax grown on their own fields or imported from the obedient provinces, was esteemed a fitting present for kings to make and to receive. The name of the country had passed into the literature of England as synonymous with the delicate fabric itself. The Venetians confessed themselves equalled, if not outdone, by the crystal workers and sugar refiners of the northern republic. The tapestries of Arras—the name of which Walloon city had become a household word of luxury in all modern languages—were now transplanted to the soil of freedom, more congenial to the advancement of art. Brocades of the precious metals; splendid satins and velvets; serges and homely fustians; laces of thread and silk; the finer and coarser manufactures of clay and porcelain; iron, steel, and all useful fabrics for the building and outfitting of ships; substantial broadcloths manufactured of wool imported from Scotland—all this was but a portion of the industrial production of the provinces.

They supplied the deficiency of coal, not then an article readily obtained by commerce, with other remains of antediluvian forests long since buried in the sea, and now recovered from its depths and made useful and portable by untiring industry. Peat was not only the fuel for the fireside, but for the extensive fabrics of the country, and its advantages so much excited the admiration of the Venetian envoys that they sent home samples of it, in the hope that the lagunes of Venice might prove as prolific of this indispensable article as the polders of Holland.

But the foundation of the national wealth, the source of the apparently fabulous power by which the republic had at last overthrown her gigantic antagonist, was the ocean. The republic was sea-born and sea-sustained.

She had nearly one hundred thousand sailors, and three thousand ships. The sailors were the boldest, the best disciplined, and the most experienced in the-world, whether for peaceable seafaring or ocean warfare. The ships were capable of furnishing from out of their number in time of need the most numerous and the best appointed navy then known to mankind.

The republic had the carrying trade for all nations. Feeling its very existence dependent upon commerce, it had strode centuries in advance of the contemporary world in the liberation of trade. But two or three per cent. ad valorem was levied upon imports; foreign goods however being subject, as well as internal products, to heavy imposts in the way of both direct and indirect taxation.

Every article of necessity or luxury known was to be purchased in profusion and at reasonable prices in the warehouses of Holland.

Page 26

A swarm of river vessels and fly-boats were coming daily through the rivers of Germany, France and the Netherlands, laden with the agricultural products and the choice manufactures of central and western Europe. Wine and oil, and delicate fabrics in thread and wool, came from France, but no silks, velvets, nor satins; for the great Sully had succeeded in persuading his master that the white mulberry would not grow in his kingdom, and that silk manufactures were an impossible dream for France. Nearly a thousand ships were constantly employed in the Baltic trade. The forests of Holland were almost as extensive as those which grew on Norwegian hills, but they were submerged. The foundation of a single mansion required a grove, and wood was extensively used in the superstructure. The houses, built of a framework of substantial timber, and filled in with brick or rubble, were raised almost as rapidly as tents, during the prodigious expansion of industry towards the end of the war. From the realms of the Osterlings, or shores of the Baltic, came daily fleets laden with wheat and other grains so that even in time of famine the granaries of the republic were overflowing, and ready to dispense the material of life to the outer world.

Eight hundred vessels of lesser size but compact build were perpetually fishing for herrings on the northern coasts. These hardy mariners, the militia of the sea, who had learned in their life of hardship and daring the art of destroying Spanish and Portuguese armadas, and confronting the dangers of either pole, passed a long season on the deep. Commercial voyagers as well as fishermen, they salted their fish as soon as taken from the sea, and transported them to the various ports of Europe, thus reducing their herrings into specie before their return, and proving that a fishery in such hands was worth more than the mines of Mexico and Peru.

It is customary to speak of the natural resources of a country as furnishing a guarantee of material prosperity. But here was a republic almost without natural resources, which had yet supplied by human intelligence and thrift what a niggard nature had denied. Spain was overflowing with unlimited treasure, and had possessed half the world in fee; and Spain was bankrupt, decaying, sinking into universal pauperism. Holland, with freedom of thought, of commerce, of speech, of action, placed itself, by intellectual power alone, in the front rank of civilization.

From Cathay, from the tropical coasts of Africa, and from farthest Ind, came every drug, spice, or plant, every valuable jewel, every costly fabric, that human ingenuity had discovered or created. The Spaniards, maintaining a frail tenure upon a portion of those prolific regions, gathered their spice harvests at the point of the sword, and were frequently unable to prevent their northern rivals from ravaging such fields as they had not yet been able to appropriate.



Page 27

Certainly this conduct of the Hollanders was barbarism and supreme selfishness, if judged by the sounder political economy of our time. Yet it should never be forgotten that the contest between Spain and Holland in those distant regions, as everywhere else, was war to the knife between superstition and freedom, between the spirits of progress and of dogma. Hard blows and foul blows were struck in such a fight, and humanity, although gaining at last immense results, had much to suffer and much to learn ere the day was won.

But Spain was nearly beaten out of those eastern regions, and the very fact that the naval supremacy of the republic placed her ancient tyrant at her mercy was the main reason for Spain to conclude the treaty of truce. Lest she should lose the India trade entirely, Spain consented to the treaty article by which, without mentioning the word, she conceded the thing. It was almost pathetic to witness, as we have witnessed, this despotism in its dotage, mumbling so long over the formal concession to her conqueror of a portion of that India trade which would have been entirely wrested from herself had the war continued. And of this Spain was at heart entirely convinced. Thus the Portuguese, once the lords and masters, as they had been the European discoverers, of those prolific regions and of the ocean highways which led to them, now came with docility to the republic which they had once affected to despise, and purchased the cloves and the allspice, the nutmegs and the cinnamon, of which they had held the monopoly; or waited with patience until the untiring Hollanders should bring the precious wares to the peninsula ports.

A Dutch Indianian would make her voyage to the antipodes and her return in less time than was spent by a Portuguese or a Spaniard in the outward voyage. To accomplish such an enterprise in two years was accounted a wonder of rapidity, and when it is remembered that inland navigation through France by canal and river from the North Sea to the Mediterranean was considered both speedier and safer, because the sea voyage between the same points might last four or five months, it must be admitted that two years occupied in passing from one end of the earth to the other and back again might well seem a miracle.

The republic was among the wealthiest and the most powerful of organized States. Her population might be estimated at three millions and a half, about equal to that of England at the same period. But she was richer than England. Nowhere in the world was so large a production in proportion to the numbers of a people. Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers. Every one was at work. Vagabonds, idlers, and do-nothings, such as must be in every community, were caught up by the authorities and made to earn their bread. The devil's pillow, idleness, was smoothed for no portion of the population.



Page 28

There were no beggars, few paupers, no insolently luxurious and ostentatiously idle class. The modesty, thrift, and simple elegance of the housekeeping, even among the wealthy, was noted by travellers with surprise. It will be remembered with how much amused wonder, followed by something like contempt, the magnificent household of Spinola, during his embassy at the Hague, was surveyed by the honest burghers of Holland. The authorities showed their wisdom in permitting the absurd exhibition, as an example of what should be shunned, in spite of grave remonstrances from many of the citizens. Drunken Helotism is not the only form of erring humanity capable of reading lessons to a republic.

There had been monasteries, convents, ecclesiastical establishments of all kinds in the country, before the great war between Holland and the Inquisition. These had, as a matter of course, been confiscated as the strife went on. The buildings, farms, and funds, once the property of the Church, had not, however, been seized upon, as in other Protestant lands, by rapacious monarchs, and distributed among great nobles according to royal caprice. Monarchs might give the revenue of a suppressed convent to a cook, as reward for a successful pudding; the surface of Britain and the continent might be covered with abbeys and monasteries now converted into lordly palaces—passing thus from the dead hand of the Church into the idle and unproductive palm of the noble; but the ancient ecclesiastical establishments of the free Netherlands were changed into eleemosynary institutions, admirably organized and administered with wisdom and economy, where orphans of the poor, widows of those slain in the battles for freedom by land and sea, and the aged and the infirm, who had deserved well of the republic in the days of their strength, were educated or cherished at the expense of the public, thus endowed from the spoils of the Church.

In Spain, monasteries upon monasteries were rising day by day, as if there were not yet receptacles enough for monks and priests, while thousands upon thousands of Spaniards were pressing into the ranks of the priesthood, and almost forcing themselves into monasteries, that they might be privileged to beg, because ashamed to work. In the United Netherlands the confiscated convents, with their revenues, were appropriated for the good of those who were too young or too old to labour, and too poor to maintain themselves without work. Need men look further than to this simple fact to learn why Spain was decaying while the republic was rising?

Page 29

The ordinary budget of the United Provinces was about equal to that of England, varying not much from four millions of florins, or four hundred thousand pounds. But the extraordinary revenue was comparatively without limits, and there had been years, during the war, when the citizens had taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent. on each individual income, and doubled the receipts of the exchequer. The budget was proposed once a year, by the council of state, and voted by the States-General, who assigned the quota of each province; that of Holland being always one-half of the whole, that of Zeeland sixteen per cent., and that of the other five of course in lesser proportions. The revenue was collected in the separate provinces, one-third of the whole being retained for provincial expenses, and the balance paid into the general treasury. There was a public debt, the annual interest of which amounted to 200,000 florins. During the war, money had been borrowed at as high a rate as thirty-six per cent., but at the conclusion of hostilities the States could borrow at six per cent., and the whole debt was funded on that basis. Taxation was enormously heavy, but patriotism caused it to be borne with cheerfulness, and productive industry made it comparatively light. Rents were charged twenty-five per cent. A hundred per cent. was levied upon beer, wine, meat, salt, spirits. Other articles of necessity and luxury were almost as severely taxed. It is not easy to enumerate the tax-list, scarcely anything foreign or domestic being exempted, while the grave error was often committed of taxing the same article, in different forms, four, five, and six times.

The people virtually taxed themselves, although the superstition concerning the State, as something distinct from and superior to the people, was to linger long and work infinite mischief among those seven republics which were never destined to be welded theoretically and legally into a union. The sacredness of corporations had succeeded, in a measure, to the divinity which hedges kings. Nevertheless, those corporations were so numerous as to be effectively open to a far larger proportion of the population than, in those days, had ever dreamed before of participating in the Government. The magistracies were in general unpaid and little coveted, being regarded as a burthen and a responsibility rather than an object of ambition. The jurisconsults, called pensionaries, who assisted the municipal authorities, received, however, a modest salary, never exceeding 1500 florins a year.

These numerous bodies, provincial and municipal, elected themselves themselves by supplying their own vacancies. The magistrates were appointed by the stadholder, on a double or triple nomination from the municipal board. This was not impartial suffrage nor manhood suffrage. The germ of a hateful burgher-oligarchy was in the system, but, as compared with Spain, where municipal magistracies were sold by the crown at public auction; or with France, where every office in church, law, magistrature, or court was an object of merchandise disposed of in open market, the system was purity itself, and marked a great advance in the science of government.



Page 30

It should never be forgotten, moreover, that while the presidents and judges of the highest courts of judicature in other civilized lands were at the mercy of an irresponsible sovereign, and held office—even although it had been paid for in solid specie—at his pleasure, the supreme justices of the high courts of appeal at the Hague were nominated by a senate, and confirmed by a stadholder, and that they exercised their functions for life, or so long as they conducted themselves virtuously in their high office—'quamdiu se bene gesserint.'

If one of the great objects of a civilized community is to secure to all men their own—'ut sua tenerent'—surely it must be admitted that the republic was in advance of all contemporary States in the laying down of this vital principle, the independence of judges.

As to the army and navy of the United Provinces, enough has been said, in earlier chapters of these volumes, to indicate the improvements introduced by Prince Maurice, and now carried to the highest point of perfection ever attained in that period. There is no doubt whatever, that for discipline, experience, equipment, effectiveness of movement, and general organization, the army of the republic was the model army of Europe. It amounted to but thirty thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred cavalry, but this number was a large one for a standing army at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It was composed of a variety of materials, Hollanders, Walloons, Flemings, Scotch, English, Irish, Germans, but all welded together into a machine of perfect regularity. The private foot-soldier received twelve florins for a so-called month of forty-two days, the drummer and corporal eighteen, the lieutenant fifty-two, and the captain one hundred and fifty florins. Prompt payment was made every week. Obedience was implicit; mutiny, such as was of periodical recurrence in the archduke's army, entirely unknown. The slightest theft was punished with the gallows, and there was therefore no thieving.

The most accurate and critical observers confessed, almost against their will, that no army in Europe could compare with the troops of the States. As to the famous regiments of Sicily, and the ancient legions of Naples and Milan, a distinguished Venetian envoy, who had seen all the camps and courts of Christendom, and was certainly not disposed to overrate the Hollanders at the expense of the Italians, if any rivalry between them had been possible, declared that every private soldier in the republic was fit to be a captain in any Italian army; while, on the other hand, there was scarcely an Italian captain who would be accepted as a private in any company of the States. So low had the once famous soldiery of Alva, Don John, and Alexander Farnese descended.



Page 31

The cavalry of the republic was even more perfectly organized than was the infantry. "I want words to describe its perfection," said Contarini. The pay was very high, and very prompt. A captain received four hundred florins a month (of forty-two days), a lieutenant one hundred and eighty florins, and other officers and privates in proportion. These rates would be very high in our own day. When allowance is made for the difference in the value of money at the respective epochs, the salaries are prodigious; but the thrifty republic found its account in paying well and paying regularly the champions on whom so much depended, and by whom such splendid services had been rendered.

While the soldiers in the pay of Queen Elizabeth were crawling to her palace gates to die of starvation before her eyes; while the veterans of Spain and of Italy had organized themselves into a permanent military, mutinous republic, on the soil of the so-called obedient Netherland, because they were left by their masters without clothing or food; the cavalry and infantry of the Dutch commonwealth, thanks to the organizing spirit and the wholesome thrift of the burgher authorities, were contented, obedient, well fed, well clothed, and well paid; devoted to their Government, and ever ready to die in its defence.

Nor was it only on the regular army that reliance was placed. On the contrary, every able-bodied man in the country was liable to be called upon to serve, at any moment, in the militia. All were trained to arms, and provided with arms, and there had been years during this perpetual war in which one man out of three of the whole male population was ready to be mustered at any moment into the field.

Even more could be said in praise of the navy than has been stated of the armies of the republic; for the contemporary accounts of foreigners, and of foreigners who were apt to be satirical, rather than enthusiastic, when describing the institutions, leading personages, and customs of other countries, seemed ever to speak of the United Provinces in terms of eulogy. In commerce, as in war, the naval supremacy of the republic was indisputable. It was easy for the States to place two thousand vessels of war in commission, if necessary, of tonnage varying from four hundred to twelve hundred tons, to man them with the hardiest and boldest sailors in the world, and to despatch them with promptness to any quarter of the globe.

It was recognised as nearly impossible to compel a war-vessel of the republic to surrender. Hardly an instance was on her naval record of submission, even to far superior force, while it was filled with the tragic but heroic histories of commanders who had blown their ships, with every man on board, into the air, rather than strike their flag. Such was the character, and such the capacity of the sea-born republic.

That republic had serious and radical defects, but the design remained to be imitated and improved upon, centuries afterwards. The history of the rise and progress of the Dutch republic is a leading chapter in the history of human liberty.

Page 32

The great misfortune of the commonwealth of the United Provinces, next to the slenderness of its geographical proportions, was the fact that it was without a centre and without a head, and therefore not a nation capable of unlimited vitality. There were seven states. Each claimed to be sovereign. The pretension on the part of several of them was ridiculous. Overijssel, for example, contributed two and three-quarters per cent. of the general budget. It was a swamp of twelve hundred square miles in extent, with some heath-spots interspersed, and it numbered perhaps a hundred thousand inhabitants. The doughty Count of Embden alone could have swallowed up such sovereignty, have annexed all the buckwheat patches and cranberry marshes of Overijssel to his own meagre territories, and nobody the wiser.

Zeeland, as we have seen, was disposed at a critical moment to set up its independent sovereignty. Zeeland, far more important than Overijssel, had a revenue of perhaps five hundred thousand dollars,—rather a slender budget for an independent republic, wedged in as it was by the most powerful empires of the earth, and half drowned by the ocean, from which it had scarcely emerged.

There was therefore no popular representation, and on the other hand no executive head. As sovereignty must be exercised in some way, however, in all living commonwealths, and as a low degree of vitality was certainly not the defect of those bustling provinces, the supreme functions had now fallen into the hands of Holland.

While William the Silent lived, the management of war, foreign affairs, and finance, for the revolted provinces, was in his control. He was aided by two council boards, but the circumstances of history and the character of the man had invested him with an inevitable dictatorship.

After his death, at least after Leicester's time, the powers of the state-council, the head of which, Prince Maurice, was almost always absent at the wars, fell into comparative disuse. The great functions of the confederacy passed into the possession of the States-General. That body now came to sit permanently at the Hague. The number of its members, deputies from the seven provinces—envoys from those seven immortal and soulless sovereigns—was not large. The extraordinary assembly held at Bergen-op-Zoom for confirmation of the truce was estimated by Bentivoglio at eight hundred. Bentivoglio, who was on the spot, being then nuncius at Brussels, ought to have been able to count them, yet it is very certain that the number was grossly exaggerated.

At any rate the usual assembly at the Hague rarely amounted to one hundred members. The presidency was changed once a week, the envoy of each province taking his turn as chairman.

Olden-Barneveld, as member for Holland, was always present in the diet. As Advocate-General of the leading province, and keeper of its great seal, more especially as possessor of the governing intellect of the whole commonwealth, he led the

administration of Holland, and as the estates of Holland contributed more than half of the whole budget of the confederacy, it was a natural consequence of the actual supremacy of that province, and of the vast legal and political experience of the Advocate, that Holland should govern the confederacy, and that Barneveld should govern Holland.

Page 33

The States-General remained virtually supreme, receiving envoys from all the great powers, sending abroad their diplomatic representatives, to whom the title and rank of ambassador was freely accorded, and dealing in a decorous and dignified way with all European affairs. The ability of the republican statesmen was as fully recognised all over the earth, as was the genius of their generals and great naval commanders.

The People did not exist; but this was merely because, in theory, the People had not been invented. It was exactly because there was a People—an energetic and intelligent People—that the republic was possible.

No scheme had yet been devised for laying down in primary assemblies a fundamental national law, for distributing the various functions of governmental power among selected servants, for appointing representatives according to population or property, and for holding all trustees responsible at reasonable intervals to the nation itself.

Thus government was involved, fold within fold, in successive and concentric municipal layers. The States-General were the outer husk, of which the separate town-council was the kernel or bulb. Yet the number of these executive and legislative boards was so large, and the whole population comparatively so slender, as to cause the original inconveniences from so incomplete a system to be rather theoretic than practical. In point of fact, almost as large a variety of individuals served the State as would perhaps have been the case under a more philosophically arranged democracy. The difficulty was rather in obtaining a candidate for the post than in distributing the posts among candidates.

Men were occupied with their own affairs. In proportion to their numbers, they were more productive of wealth than any other nation then existing. An excellent reason why the people were so, well governed, so productive, and so enterprising, was the simple fact that they were an educated people. There was hardly a Netherlander—man, woman, or child—that could not read and write. The school was the common property of the people, paid for among the municipal expenses. In the cities, as well as in the rural districts, there were not only common schools but classical schools. In the burgher families it was rare to find boys who had not been taught Latin, or girls unacquainted with French. Capacity to write and speak several modern languages was very common, and there were many individuals in every city, neither professors nor pedants, who had made remarkable progress in science and classical literature. The position, too, of women in the commonwealth proved a high degree of civilization. They are described as virtuous, well-educated, energetic, sovereigns in their households, and accustomed to direct all the business at home. “It would be ridiculous,” said Donato, “to see a man occupying himself with domestic house-keeping. The women do it all, and command absolutely.” The Hollanders, so rebellious against Church and King, accepted with meekness the despotism of woman.



Page 34

The great movement of emancipation from political and ecclesiastical tyranny had brought with it a general advancement of the human intellect. The foundation of the Leyden university in memory of the heroism displayed by the burghers during the siege was as noble a monument as had ever been raised by a free people jealous of its fame. And the scientific lustre of the university well sustained the nobility of its origin. The proudest nation on earth might be more proud of a seat of learning, founded thus amidst carnage and tears, whence so much of profound learning and brilliant literature had already been diffused. The classical labours of Joseph Scaliger, Heinsius father and son the elder Dousa, almost as famous with his pen in Latin poetry as his sword had made him in the vernacular chronicle; of Dousa the son, whom Grotius called "the crown and flower of all good learning, too soon snatched away by envious death, than whom no man more skilled in poetry, more consummate in acquaintance with ancient science and literature, had ever lived;" of Hugo Grotius himself, who at the age of fifteen had taken his doctor's degree at Leyden who as a member of Olden-Barneveld's important legation to France and England very soon afterwards had excited the astonishment of Henry IV. and Elizabeth, who had already distinguished himself by editions of classic poets, and by original poems and dramas in Latin, and was already, although but twenty-six years of age; laying the foundation of that magnificent reputation as a jurist, a philosopher, a historian, and a statesman, which was to be one of the enduring glories of humanity, all these were the precious possessions of the high school of Leyden.

The still more modern university of Franeker, founded amid the din of perpetual warfare in Friesland, could at least boast the name of Arminius, whose theological writings and whose expansive views were destined to exert such influence over his contemporaries and posterity.

The great history of Hoofd, in which the splendid pictures and the impassioned drama of the great war of independence were to be preserved for his countrymen through all time, was not yet written. It was soon afterwards, however, to form not only a chief source of accurate information as to the great events themselves, but a model of style never since surpassed by any prose writer in either branch of the German tongue.

Had Hoofd written for a wider audience, it would be difficult to name a contemporary author of any nation whose work would have been more profoundly studied or more generally admired.

Page 35

But the great war had not waited to be chronicled by the classic and impassioned Hoofd. Already there were thorough and exhaustive narrators of what was instinctively felt to be one of the most pregnant episodes of human history. Bor of Utrecht, a miracle of industry, of learning, of unwearied perseverance, was already engaged in the production of those vast folios in which nearly all the great transactions of the forty years' war were conscientiously portrayed, with a comprehensiveness of material and an impartiality of statement, such as might seem almost impossible for a contemporary writer. Immersed in attentive study and profound contemplation, he seemed to lift his tranquil head from time to time over the wild ocean of those troublous times, and to survey with accuracy without being swayed or appalled by the tempest. There was something almost sublime in his steady, unimpassioned gaze.

Emanuel van Meteren, too, a plain Protestant merchant of Antwerp and Amsterdam, wrote an admirable history of the war and of his own times, full of precious details, especially rich in statistics—a branch of science which he almost invented—which still, remains as one of the leading authorities, not only for scholars, but for the general reader.

Reyd and Burgundius, the one the Calvinist private secretary of Lewis William, the other a warm Catholic partisan, both made invaluable contemporaneous contributions to the history of the war.

The trophies already secured by the Netherlanders in every department of the fine arts, as well as the splendour which was to enrich the coming epoch, are too familiar to the world to need more than a passing allusion.

But it was especially in physical science that the republic was taking a leading part in the great intellectual march of the nations.

The very necessities of its geographical position had forced it to pre-eminence in hydraulics and hydrostatics. It had learned to transform water into dry land with a perfection attained by no nation before or since. The wonders of its submarine horticulture were the despair of all gardeners in the world.

And as in this gentlest of arts, so also in the dread science of war, the republic had been the instructor of mankind.

The youthful Maurice and his cousin Lewis William had so restored and improved the decayed intelligence of antique strategy, that the greybeards of Europe became docile pupils in their school. The mathematical teacher of Prince Maurice amazed the contemporary world with his combinations and mechanical inventions; the flying chariots of Simon Stevinua seeming products of magical art.



Yet the character of the Dutch intellect was averse to sorcery. The small but mighty nation, which had emancipated itself from the tyranny of Philip and of the Holy Inquisition, was foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition. Out of Holland came the first voice to rebuke one of the hideous delusions of the age. While grave magistrates and sages of other lands were exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims, John Wier, a physician of Grave, boldly denounced the demon which had taken possession, not of the wizards, but of the judges.

Page 36

The age was lunatic and sick, and it was fitting that the race which had done so much for the physical and intellectual emancipation of the world, should have been the first to apply a remedy for this monstrous madness. Englishmen and their descendants were drowning and hanging witches in New England, long after John Wier had rebuked and denounced the belief in witchcraft.

It was a Zeelander, too; who placed the instrument in the hand of Galileo by which that daring genius traced the movements of the universe, and who, by another wondrous invention, enabled future discoverers to study the infinite life which lies all around us, hidden not by its remoteness but it's minuteness. Zacharias Jansens of Middelburg, in 1590, invented both the telescope and the microscope.

The wonder-man of Alkmaar, Cornelius Drebbel, who performed such astounding feats for the amusement of Rudolph of Germany and James of Britain, is also supposed to have invented the thermometer and the barometer. But this claim has been disputed. The inventions of Jansens are proved.

Willebrod Snellius, mathematical professor of Leyden, introduced the true method of measuring the degrees of longitude and latitude, and Huygens, who had seen his manuscripts, asserted that Snellius had invented, before Descartes, the doctrine of refraction.

But it was especially to that noble band of heroes and martyrs, the great navigators and geographical discoverers of the republic, that science is above all indebted.

Nothing is more sublime in human story than the endurance and audacity with which those pioneers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries confronted the nameless horrors of either pole, in the interests of commerce, and for the direct purpose of enlarging the bounds of the human intellect.

The achievements, the sufferings, and the triumphs of Barendz and Cordes, Heemskerck, Van der Hagen, and many others, have been slightly indicated in these pages. The contributions to botany, mineralogy, geometry, geography, and zoology, of Linschoten, Plancius, Wagenaar, and Houtmann, and so many other explorers of pole and tropic, can hardly be overrated.

The Netherlanders had wrung their original fatherland out of the grasp of the ocean. They had confronted for centuries the wrath of that ancient tyrant, ever ready to seize the prey of which he had been defrauded.

They had waged fiercer and more perpetual battle with a tyranny more cruel than the tempest, with an ancient superstition more hungry than the sea. It was inevitable that a race, thus invigorated by the ocean, cradled to freedom by their conflicts with its power, and hardened almost to invincibility by their struggle against human despotism, should



be foremost among the nations in the development of political, religious, and commercial freedom.

The writer now takes an affectionate farewell of those who have followed him with an indulgent sympathy as he has attempted to trace the origin and the eventful course of the Dutch commonwealth. If by his labours a generous love has been fostered for that blessing, without which everything that this earth can afford is worthless—freedom of thought, of speech, and of life—his highest wish has been fulfilled.



Page 37

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

About equal to that of England at the same period
An unjust God, himself the origin of sin
Butchery in the name of Christ was suspended
Calling a peace perpetual can never make it so
Chieftains are dwarfed in the estimation of followers
Each in its turn becoming orthodox, and therefore persecuting
Exorcising the devil by murdering his supposed victims
Foremost to shake off the fetters of superstition
God of vengeance, of jealousy, and of injustice
Gomarites accused the Arminians of being more lax than Papists
Hangman is not the most appropriate teacher of religion
He often spoke of popular rights with contempt
John Wier, a physician of Grave
Necessity of extirpating heresy, root and branch
Nowhere were so few unproductive consumers
Paving the way towards atheism (by toleration)
Privileged to beg, because ashamed to work
Religious persecution of Protestants by Protestants
So unconscious of her strength
State can best defend religion by letting it alone
Taxed themselves as highly as fifty per cent
The People had not been invented
The slightest theft was punished with the gallows
Tolerate another religion that his own may be tolerated
Toleration—that intolerable term of insult
War to compel the weakest to follow the religion of the strongest

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