

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1619-23 eBook

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1619-23 by John Lothrop Motley

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Contents

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1619-23 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.....	14
Page 7.....	15
Page 8.....	17
Page 9.....	18
Page 10.....	19
Page 11.....	21
Page 12.....	22
Page 13.....	23
Page 14.....	24
Page 15.....	25
Page 16.....	26
Page 17.....	28
Page 18.....	30
Page 19.....	32
Page 20.....	34
Page 21.....	36

Page 22.....	38
Page 23.....	39
Page 24.....	41
Page 25.....	43
Page 26.....	44
Page 27.....	46
Page 28.....	47
Page 29.....	49
Page 30.....	51
Page 31.....	53
Page 32.....	54
Page 33.....	55
Page 34.....	56
Page 35.....	57
Page 36.....	59
Page 37.....	61
Page 38.....	63
Page 39.....	65
Page 40.....	67
Page 41.....	69
Page 42.....	70
Page 43.....	72

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	
Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
Title: The Life of John of Barneveld, 1619-23	1
THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND	1
MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 97	1
CHAPTER XXI.	1
CHAPTER XXII.	6
CHAPTER XXIII.	23
ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:	38
Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)	38
(Three Pages)	40

Page 1

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THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY
YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 97

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v11, 1619-23

CHAPTER XXI.

Barneveld's Execution—The Advocate's Conduct on the Scaffold—The Sentence printed and sent to the Provinces—The Proceedings irregular and inequitable.

In the beautiful village capital of the "Count's Park," commonly called the Hague, the most striking and picturesque spot then as now was that where the transformed remains

of the old moated castle of those feudal sovereigns were still to be seen. A three-storied range of simple, substantial buildings in brown brickwork, picked out with white stone in a style since made familiar both in England and America, and associated with a somewhat later epoch in the history of the House of Orange, surrounded three sides of a spacious inner paved quadrangle called the Inner Court, the fourth or eastern side being overshadowed by a beechen grove. A square tower flanked each angle, and on both sides of the south-western turret extended the commodious apartments of the Stadholder. The great gateway on the south-west opened into a wide open space called the Outer Courtyard. Along the north-west side a broad and beautiful sheet of water, in which the walls, turrets, and chapel-spires of the enclosed castle mirrored themselves, was spread between the mass of buildings and an umbrageous promenade called the Vyverberg, consisting of a sextuple alley of lime-trees and embowering here and there a stately villa. A small island, fringed with weeping willows and tufted all over with lilacs, laburnums, and other shrubs then in full flower, lay in the centre of the miniature lake, and the tall solid tower of the Great Church, surmounted by a light openwork spire, looked down from a little distance over the scene.

Page 2

It was a bright morning in May. The white swans were sailing tranquilly to and fro over the silver basin, and the mavis, blackbird, and nightingale, which haunted the groves surrounding the castle and the town, were singing as if the daybreak were ushering in a summer festival.

But it was not to a merry-making that the soldiers were marching and the citizens thronging so eagerly from every street and alley towards the castle. By four o'clock the Outer and Inner Courts had been lined with detachments of the Prince's guard and companies of other regiments to the number of 1200 men. Occupying the north-eastern side of the court rose the grim, time-worn front of the ancient hall, consisting of one tall pyramidal gable of ancient grey brickwork flanked with two tall slender towers, the whole with the lancet-shaped windows and severe style of the twelfth century, excepting a rose-window in the centre with the decorated mullions of a somewhat later period.

In front of the lower window, with its Gothic archway hastily converted into a door, a shapeless platform of rough, unhewn planks had that night been rudely patched together. This was the scaffold. A slight railing around it served to protect it from the crowd, and a heap of coarse sand had been thrown upon it. A squalid, unclean box of unplanned boards, originally prepared as a coffin for a Frenchman who some time before had been condemned to death for murdering the son of Goswyn Meurskens, a Hague tavern-keeper, but pardoned by the Stadholder—lay on the scaffold. It was recognized from having been left for a long time, half forgotten, at the public execution-place of the Hague.

Upon this coffin now sat two common soldiers of ruffianly aspect playing at dice, betting whether the Lord or the Devil would get the soul of Barneveld. Many a foul and ribald jest at the expense of the prisoner was exchanged between these gamblers, some of their comrades, and a few townsmen, who were grouped about at that early hour. The horrible libels, caricatures, and calumnies which had been circulated, exhibited, and sung in all the streets for so many months had at last thoroughly poisoned the minds of the vulgar against the fallen statesman.

The great mass of the spectators had forced their way by daybreak into the hall itself to hear the sentence, so that the Inner Courtyard had remained comparatively empty.

At last, at half past nine o'clock, a shout arose, "There he comes! there he comes!" and the populace flowed out from the hall of judgment into the courtyard like a tidal wave.

In an instant the Binnenhof was filled with more than three thousand spectators.

The old statesman, leaning on his staff, walked out upon the scaffold and calmly surveyed the scene. Lifting his eyes to Heaven, he was heard to murmur, "O God! what does man come to!" Then he said bitterly once more: "This, then, is the reward of forty years' service to the State!"

Page 3

La Motte, who attended him, said fervently: "It is no longer time to think of this. Let us prepare your coming before God."

"Is there no cushion or stool to kneel upon?" said Barneveld, looking around him.

The provost said he would send for one, but the old man knelt at once on the bare planks. His servant, who waited upon him as calmly and composedly as if he had been serving him at dinner, held him by the arm. It was remarked that neither master nor man, true stoics and Hollanders both, shed a single tear upon the scaffold.

La Motte prayed for a quarter of an hour, the Advocate remaining on his knees.

He then rose and said to John Franken, "See that he does not come near me," pointing to the executioner who stood in the background grasping his long double-handed sword. Barneveld then rapidly unbuttoned his doublet with his own hands and the valet helped him off with it. "Make haste! make haste!" said his master.

The statesman then came forward and said in a loud, firm voice to the people:

"Men, do not believe that I am a traitor to the country. I have ever acted uprightly and loyally as a good patriot, and as such I shall die."

The crowd was perfectly silent.

He then took his cap from John Franken, drew it over his eyes, and went forward towards the sand, saying:

"Christ shall be my guide. O Lord, my heavenly Father, receive my spirit."

As he was about to kneel with his face to the south, the provost said:

"My lord will be pleased to move to the other side, not where the sun is in his face."

He knelt accordingly with his face towards his own house. The servant took farewell of him, and Barneveld said to the executioner:

"Be quick about it. Be quick."

The executioner then struck his head off at a single blow.

Many persons from the crowd now sprang, in spite of all opposition, upon the scaffold and dipped their handkerchiefs in his blood, cut wet splinters from the boards, or grubbed up the sand that was steeped in it; driving many bargains afterwards for these relics to be treasured, with various feelings of sorrow, joy, gluttony or expiated vengeance.

It has been recorded, and has been constantly repeated to this day, that the Stadholder, whose windows exactly faced the scaffold, looked out upon the execution with a spy-glass; saying as he did so:

“See the old scoundrel, how he trembles! He is afraid of the stroke.”

But this is calumny. Colonel Hauterive declared that he was with Maurice in his cabinet during the whole period of the execution, that by order of the Prince all the windows and shutters were kept closed, that no person wearing his livery was allowed to be abroad, that he anxiously received messages as to the proceedings, and heard of the final catastrophe with sorrowful emotion.

It must be admitted, however, that the letter which Maurice wrote on the same morning to his cousin William Lewis does not show much pathos.

Page 4

“After the judges,” he said, “have been busy here with the sentence against the Advocate Barneveld for several days, at last it has been pronounced, and this morning, between nine o’clock and half past, carried into execution with the sword, in the Binnenhof before the great hall.

“The reasons they had for this you will see from the sentence, which will doubtless be printed, and which I will send you.

“The wife of the aforesaid Barneveld and also some of his sons and sons-in-law or other friends have never presented any supplication for his pardon, but till now have vehemently demanded that law and justice should be done to him, and have daily let the report run through the people that he would soon come out. They also planted a may-pole before their house adorned with garlands and ribbands, and practised other jollities and impertinences, while they ought to have conducted themselves in a humble and lowly fashion. This is no proper manner of behaving, and moreover not a practical one to move the judges to any favour even if they had been thereto inclined.”

The sentence was printed and sent to the separate provinces. It was accompanied by a declaration of the States-General that they had received information from the judges of various points, not mentioned in the sentence, which had been laid to the charge of the late Advocate, and which gave much reason to doubt whether he had not perhaps turned his eyes toward the enemy. They could not however legally give judgment to that effect without a sharper investigation, which on account of his great age and for other reasons it was thought best to spare him.

A meaner or more malignant postscript to a state paper recounting the issue of a great trial it would be difficult to imagine. The first statesman of the country had just been condemned and executed on a narrative, without indictment of any specified crime. And now, by a kind of apologetic after-thought, six or eight individuals calling themselves the States-General insinuated that he had been looking towards the enemy, and that, had they not mercifully spared him the rack, which is all that could be meant by their sharper investigation, he would probably have confessed the charge.

And thus the dead man’s fame was blackened by those who had not hesitated to kill him, but had shrunk from enquiring into his alleged crime.

Not entirely without semblance of truth did Grotius subsequently say that the men who had taken his life would hardly have abstained from torturing him if they had really hoped by so doing to extract from him a confession of treason.

The sentence was sent likewise to France, accompanied with a statement that Barneveld had been guilty of unpardonable crimes which had not been set down in the act of condemnation. Complaints were also made of the conduct of du Maurier in thrusting himself into the internal affairs of the States and taking sides so ostentatiously

against the government. The King and his ministers were indignant with these rebukes, and sustained the Ambassador. Jeannin and de Boississe expressed the opinion that he had died innocent of any crime, and only by reason of his strong political opposition to the Prince.

Page 5

The judges had been unanimous in finding him guilty of the acts recorded in their narrative, but three of them had held out for some time in favour of a sentence of perpetual imprisonment rather than decapitation.

They withdrew at last their opposition to the death penalty for the wonderful reason that reports had been circulated of attempts likely to be made to assassinate Prince Maurice. The Stadholder himself treated these rumours and the consequent admonition of the States-General that he would take more than usual precautions for his safety with perfect indifference, but they were conclusive with the judges of Barneveld.

“*Republica poscit exemplum*,” said Commissioner Junius, one of the three, as he sided with the death-warrant party.

The same Doctor Junius a year afterwards happened to dine, in company of one of his fellow-commissioners, with Attorney-General Sylla at Utrecht, and took occasion to ask them why it was supposed that Barneveld had been hanging his head towards Spain, as not one word of that stood in the sentence.

The question was ingenuous on the part of one learned judge to his colleagues in one of the most famous state trials of history, propounded as a bit of after-dinner casuistry, when the victim had been more than a year in his grave.

But perhaps the answer was still more artless. His brother lawyers replied that the charge was easily to be deduced from the sentence, because a man who breaks up the foundation of the State makes the country indefensible, and therefore invites the enemy to invade it. And this Barneveld had done, who had turned the Union, religion, alliances, and finances upside down by his proceedings.

Certainly if every constitutional minister, accused by the opposition party of turning things upside down by his proceedings, were assumed to be guilty of deliberately inviting a hostile invasion of his country, there would have been few from that day to this to escape hanging.

Constructive treason could scarcely go farther than it was made to do in these attempts to prove, after his death, that the Advocate had, as it was euphuistically expressed, been looking towards the enemy.

And no better demonstrations than these have ever been discovered.

He died at the age of seventy-one years seven months and eighteen days.

His body and head were huddled into the box upon which the soldiers had been shaking the dice, and was placed that night in the vault of the chapel in the Inner Court.

It was subsequently granted as a boon to the widow and children that it might be taken thence and decently buried in the family vault at Amersfoort.

On the day of the execution a formal entry was made in the register of the States of Holland.

Page 6

“Monday, 13th May 1619. To-day was executed with the sword here in the Hague, on a scaffold thereto erected in the Binnenhof before the steps of the great hall, Mr. John of Barneveld, in his life Knight, Lord of Berkel, Rodenrys, &c., Advocate of Holland and West Friesland, for reasons expressed in the sentence and otherwise, with confiscation of his property, after he had served the State thirty-three years two months and five days since 8th March 1586.; a man of great activity, business, memory, and wisdom—yes, extraordinary in every respect. He that stands let him see that he does not fall, and may God be merciful to his soul. Amen?”

A year later-on application made by the widow and children of the deceased to compound for the confiscation of his property by payment of a certain sum, eighty florins or a similar trifle, according to an ancient privilege of the order of nobility—the question was raised whether he had been guilty of high-treason, as he had not been sentenced for such a crime, and as it was only in case of sentence for lese-majesty that this composition was disallowed. It was deemed proper therefore to ask the court for what crime the prisoner had been condemned. Certainly a more sarcastic question could not have been asked. But the court had ceased to exist. The commission had done its work and was dissolved. Some of its members were dead. Letters however were addressed by the States-General to the individual commissioners requesting them to assemble at the Hague for the purpose of stating whether it was because the prisoners had committed lese-majesty that their property had been confiscated. They never assembled. Some of them were perhaps ignorant of the exact nature of that crime. Several of them did not understand the words. Twelve of them, among whom were a few jurists, sent written answers to the questions proposed. The question was, “Did you confiscate the property because the crime was lese-majesty?” The reply was, “The crime was lese-majesty, although not so stated in the sentence, because we confiscated the property.” In one of these remarkable documents this was stated to be “the unanimous opinion of almost all the judges.”

The point was referred to the commissioners, some of whom attended the court of the Hague in person, while others sent written opinions. All agreed that the criminal had committed high-treason because otherwise his property would not have been confiscated.

A more wonderful example of the argument in a circle was never heard of. Moreover it is difficult to understand by what right the high commission, which had been dissolved a year before, after having completed its work, could be deemed competent to emit afterwards a judicial decision. But the fact is curious as giving one more proof of the irregular, unphilosophical, and inequitable nature of these famous proceedings.

CHAPTER XXII.

Page 7

Grotius urged to ask Forgiveness—Grotius shows great Weakness—
Hoogerbeets and Grotius imprisoned for Life—Grotius confined at
Loevestein—Grotius' early Attainments—Grotius' Deportment in
Prison—Escape of Grotius—Deventer's Rage at Grotius' Escape.

Two days after the execution of the Advocate, judgment was pronounced upon Gillis van Ledenberg. It would have been difficult to try him, or to extort a confession of high-treason from him by the rack or otherwise, as the unfortunate gentleman had been dead for more than seven months.

Not often has a court of justice pronounced a man, without trial, to be guilty of a capital offence. Not often has a dead man been condemned and executed. But this was the lot of Secretary Ledenberg. He was sentenced to be hanged, his property declared confiscated.

His unburied corpse, reduced to the condition of a mummy, was brought out of its lurking-place, thrust into a coffin, dragged on a hurdle to the Golgotha outside the Hague, on the road to Ryswyk, and there hung on a gibbet in company of the bodies of other malefactors swinging there in chains.

His prudent scheme to save his property for his children by committing suicide in prison was thus thwarted.

The reading of the sentence of Ledenberg, as had been previously the case with that of Barneveld, had been heard by Grotius through the open window of his prison, as he lay on his bed. The scaffold on which the Advocate had suffered was left standing, three executioners were still in the town, and there was every reason for both Grotius and Hoogerbeets to expect a similar doom. Great efforts were made to induce the friends of the distinguished prisoners to sue for their pardon. But even as in the case of the Barneveld family these attempts were fruitless. The austere stoicism both on the part of the sufferers and their relatives excites something like wonder.

Three of the judges went in person to the prison chamber of Hoogerbeets, urging him to ask forgiveness himself or to allow his friends to demand it for him.

"If my wife and children do ask," he said, "I will protest against it. I need no pardon. Let justice take its course. Think not, gentlemen, that I mean by asking for pardon to justify your proceedings."

He stoutly refused to do either. The judges, astonished, took their departure, saying:

"Then you will fare as Barneveld. The scaffold is still standing."

He expected consequently nothing but death, and said many years afterwards that he knew from personal experience how a man feels who goes out of prison to be beheaded.

The wife of Grotius sternly replied to urgent intimations from a high source that she should ask pardon for her husband, "I shall not do it. If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head."

Yet no woman could be more devoted to her husband than was Maria van Reigersbergen to Hugo de Groot, as time was to prove. The Prince subsequently told her at a personal interview that "one of two roads must be taken, that of the law or that of pardon."

Page 8

Soon after the arrest it was rumoured that Grotius was ready to make important revelations if he could first be assured of the Prince's protection.

His friends were indignant at the statement. His wife stoutly denied its truth, but, to make sure, wrote to her husband on the subject.

"One thing amazes me," she said; "some people here pretend to say that you have stated to one gentleman in private that you have something to disclose greatly important to the country, but that you desired beforehand to be taken under the protection of his Excellency. I have not chosen to believe this, nor do I, for I hold that to be certain which you have already told me—that you know no secrets. I see no reason therefore why you should require the protection of any man. And there is no one to believe this, but I thought best to write to you of it. Let me, in order that I may contradict the story with more authority, have by the bearer of this a simple Yes or No. Study quietly, take care of your health, have some days' patience, for the Advocate has not yet been heard."

The answer has not been preserved, but there is an allusion to the subject in an unpublished memorandum of Grotius written while he was in prison.

It must be confessed that the heart of the great theologian and jurist seems to have somewhat failed him after his arrest, and although he was incapable of treachery—even if he had been possessed of any secrets, which certainly was not the case—he did not show the same Spartan firmness as his wife, and was very far from possessing the heroic calm of Barneveld. He was much disposed to extricate himself from his unhappy plight by making humble, if not abject, submission to Maurice. He differed from his wife in thinking that he had no need of the Prince's protection. "I begged the Chamberlain, Matthew de Cors," he said, a few days after his arrest, "that I might be allowed to speak with his Excellency of certain things which I would not willingly trust to the pen. My meaning was to leave all public employment and to offer my service to his Excellency in his domestic affairs. Thus I hoped that the motives for my imprisonment would cease. This was afterwards misinterpreted as if I had had wonderful things to reveal."

But Grotius towards the end of his trial showed still greater weakness. After repeated refusals, he had at last obtained permission of the judges to draw up in writing the heads of his defence. To do this he was allowed a single sheet of paper, and four hours of time, the trial having lasted several months. And in the document thus prepared he showed faltering in his faith as to his great friend's innocence, and admitted, without any reason whatever, the possibility of there being truth in some of the vile and anonymous calumnies against him.

Page 9

“The friendship of the Advocate of Holland I had always highly prized,” he said, “hoping from the conversation of so wise and experienced a person to learn much that was good I firmly believed that his Excellency, notwithstanding occasional differences as to the conduct of public affairs, considered him a true and upright servant of the land . . . I have been therefore surprised to understand, during my imprisonment, that the gentlemen had proofs in hand not alone of his correspondence with the enemy, but also of his having received money from them.

“He being thus accused, I have indicated by word of mouth and afterwards resumed in writing all matters which I thought—the above-mentioned proofs being made good—might be thereto indirectly referred, in order to show that for me no friendships were so dear as the preservation of the freedom of the land. I wish that he may give explanation of all to the contentment of the judges, and that therefore his actions—which, supposing the said correspondence to be true, are subject to a bad interpretation—may be taken in another sense.”

Alas! could the Advocate—among whose first words after hearing of his own condemnation to death were, “And must my Grotius die too?” adding, with a sigh of relief when assured of the contrary, “I should deeply grieve for that; he is so young and may live to do the State much service “could he have read those faltering and ungenerous words from one he so held in his heart, he would have felt them like the stab of Brutus.

Grotius lived to know that there were no such proofs, that the judges did not dare even allude to the charge in their sentence, and long years afterwards he drew a picture of the martyred patriot such as one might have expected from his pen.

But these written words of doubt must have haunted him to his grave.

On the 18th May 1619—on the fifty-first anniversary, as Grotius remarked, of the condemnation of Egmont and Hoorn by the Blood Tribunal of Alva—the two remaining victims were summoned to receive their doom. The Fiscal Sylla, entering de Groot’s chamber early in the morning to conduct him before the judges, informed him that he was not instructed to communicate the nature of the sentence. “But,” he said, maliciously, “you are aware of what has befallen the Advocate.”

“I have heard with my own ears,” answered Grotius, “the judgment pronounced upon Barneveld and upon Ledenberg. Whatever may be my fate, I have patience to bear it.”

The sentence, read in the same place and in the same manner as had been that upon the Advocate, condemned both Hoogerbeets and Grotius to perpetual imprisonment.

The course of the trial and the enumeration of the offences were nearly identical with the leading process which has been elaborately described.

Page 10

Grotius made no remark whatever in the court-room. On returning to his chamber he observed that his admissions of facts had been tortured into confessions of guilt, that he had been tried and sentenced against all principles and forms of law, and that he had been deprived of what the humblest criminal could claim, the right of defence and the examination of testimony. In regard to the penalty against him, he said, there was no such thing as perpetual imprisonment except in hell. Alluding to the leading cause of all these troubles, he observed that it was with the Stadholder and the Advocate as Cato had said of Caesar and Pompey. The great misery had come not from their being enemies, but from their having once been friends.

On the night of 5th June the prisoners were taken from their prison in the Hague and conveyed to the castle of Loevestein.

This fortress, destined thenceforth to be famous in history and—from its frequent use in after-times as a state-prison for men of similar constitutional views to those of Grotius and the Advocate—to give its name to a political party, was a place of extraordinary strength. Nature and art had made it, according to military ideas of that age, almost impregnable. As a prison it seemed the very castle of despair. “Abandon all hope ye who enter” seemed engraven over its portal.

Situate in the very narrow, acute angle where the broad, deep, and turbid Waal—the chief of the three branches into which the Rhine divides itself on entering the Netherlands—mingles its current with the silver Meuse whose name it adopts as the united rivers roll to the sea, it was guarded on many sides by these deep and dangerous streams. On the land-side it was surrounded by high walls and a double foss, which protected it against any hostile invasion from Brabant. As the Twelve Years’ Truce was running to its close, it was certain that pains would be taken to strengthen the walls and deepen the ditches, that the place might be proof against all marauders and land-robbers likely to swarm over from the territory of the Archdukes. The town of Gorcum was exactly opposite on the northern side of the Waal, while Worcum was about a league’s distance from the castle on the southern side, but separated from it by the Meuse.

The prisoners, after crossing the drawbridge, were led through thirteen separate doors, each one secured by iron bolts and heavy locks, until they reached their separate apartments.

They were never to see or have any communication with each other. It had been accorded by the States-General however that the wives of the two gentlemen were to have access to their prison, were to cook for them in the castle kitchen, and, if they chose to inhabit the fortress, might cross to the neighbouring town of Gorcum from time to time to make purchases, and even make visits to the Hague. Twenty-four stuivers, or two shillings, a day were allowed by the States-General for the support of each prisoner and his family. As the family property of Grotius was at once sequestered, with a view

to its ultimate confiscation, it was clear that abject indigence as well as imprisonment was to be the lifelong lot of this illustrious person, who had hitherto lived in modest affluence, occupying the most considerable of social positions.

Page 11

The commandant of the fortress was inspired from the outset with a desire to render the prisoner's situation as hateful as it was in his power to make it. And much was in his power. He resolved that the family should really live upon their daily pittance. Yet Madame de Groot, before the final confiscation of her own and her husband's estates, had been able to effect considerable loans, both to carry on process against government for what the prisoners contended was an unjust confiscation, and for providing for the household on a decent scale and somewhat in accordance with the requirements of the prisoner's health. Thus there was a wearisome and ignoble altercation, revived from day to day, between the Commandant and Madame de Groot. It might have been thought enough of torture for this virtuous and accomplished lady, but twenty-nine years of age and belonging to one of the eminent families of the country, to see her husband, for his genius and accomplishments the wonder of Europe, thus cut off in the flower of his age and doomed to a living grave. She was nevertheless to be subjected to the perpetual inquisition of the market-basket, which she was not ashamed with her maid to take to and from Gorcum, and to petty wrangles about the kitchen fire where she was proud to superintend the cooking of the scanty fare for her husband and her five children.

There was a reason for the spite of the military jailer. Lieutenant Prouninx, called Deventer, commandant of Loevestein, was son of the notorious Gerard Prouninx, formerly burgomaster of Utrecht, one of the ringleaders of the Leicester faction in the days when the Earl made his famous attempts upon the four cities. He had sworn revenge upon all those concerned in his father's downfall, and it was a delight therefore to wreak a personal vengeance on one who had since become so illustrious a member of that party by which the former burgomaster had been deposed, although Grotius at the time of Leicester's government had scarcely left his cradle.

Thus these ladies were to work in the kitchen and go to market from time to time, performing this menial drudgery under the personal inspection of the warrior who governed the garrison and fortress, but who in vain attempted to make Maria van Reigersbergen tremble at his frown.

Hugo de Groot, when thus for life immured, after having already undergone a preliminary imprisonment of nine months, was just thirty-six years of age. Although comparatively so young, he had been long regarded as one of the great luminaries of Europe for learning and genius. Of an ancient and knightly race, his immediate ancestors had been as famous for literature, science, and municipal abilities as their more distant progenitors for deeds of arms in the feudal struggles of Holland in the middle ages.

Page 12

His father and grandfather had alike been eminent for Hebrew, Greek, and Latin scholarship, and both had occupied high positions in the University of Leyden from its beginning. Hugo, born and nurtured under such quickening influences, had been a scholar and poet almost from his cradle. He wrote respectable Latin verses at the age of seven, he was matriculated at Leyden at the age of eleven. That school, founded amid the storms and darkness of terrible war, was not lightly to be entered. It was already illustrated by a galaxy of shining lights in science and letters, which radiated over Christendom. His professors were Joseph Scaliger, Francis Junius, Paulus Merula, and a host of others. His fellow-students were men like Scriverius, Vossius, Baudius, Daniel Heinsius. The famous soldier and poet Douza, who had commanded the forces of Leyden during the immortal siege, addressed him on his admission to the university as “Magne peer magni dignissime cura parentis,” in a copy of eloquent verses.

When fourteen years old, he took his bachelor’s degree, after a rigorous examination not only in the classics but astronomy, mathematics, jurisprudence, and theology, at an age when most youths would have been accounted brilliant if able to enter that high school with credit.

On leaving the University he was attached to the embassy of Barneveld and Justinus van Nassau to the court of Henry IV. Here he attracted the attention of that monarch, who pointed him out to his courtiers as the “miracle of Holland,” presented him with a gold chain with his miniature attached to it, and proposed to confer on him the dignity of knighthood, which the boy from motives of family pride appears to have refused. While in France he received from the University of Orleans, before the age of fifteen, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws in a very eulogistic diploma. On his return to Holland he published an edition of the poet Johannes Capella with valuable annotations, besides giving to the public other learned and classical works and several tragedies of more or less merit. At the age of seventeen he was already an advocate in full practice before the supreme tribunals of the Hague, and when twenty-three years old he was selected by Prince Maurice from a list of three candidates for the important post of Fiscal or Attorney-General of Holland. Other civic dignities, embassies, and offices of various kinds, had been thrust upon him one after another, in all of which he had acquitted himself with dignity and brilliancy. He was but twenty-six when he published his argument for the liberty of the sea, the famous *Mare Liberum*, and a little later appeared his work on the Antiquity of the Batavian Republic, which procured for him in Spain the title of “Hugo Grotius, auctor damnatus.” At the age of twenty-nine he had completed his Latin history of the Netherlands from the period immediately preceding the war of independence down to the conclusion of the

Page 13

Truce, 1550-1609—a work which has been a classic ever since its appearance, although not published until after his death. A chief magistrate of Rotterdam, member of the States of Holland and the States-General, jurist, advocate, attorney-general, poet, scholar, historian, editor of the Greek and Latin classics, writer of tragedies, of law treatises, of theological disquisitions, he stood foremost among a crowd of famous contemporaries. His genius, eloquence, and learning were esteemed among the treasures not only of his own country but of Europe. He had been part and parcel of his country's history from his earliest manhood, and although a child in years compared to Barneveld, it was upon him that the great statesman had mainly relied ever since the youth's first appearance in public affairs. Impassible, emotional, and susceptible, he had been accused from time to time, perhaps not entirely without reason, of infirmity of purpose, or at least of vacillation in opinion; but his worst enemies had never assailed the purity of his heart or integrity of his character. He had not yet written the great work on the 'Rights of War and Peace', which was to make an epoch in the history of civilization and to be the foundation of a new science, but the materials lay already in the ample storehouse of his memory and his brain.

Possessed of singular personal beauty—which the masterly portraits of Miereveld attest to the present day—tall, brown-haired; straight-featured, with a delicate aquiline nose and piercing dark blue eyes, he was also athletic of frame and a proficient in manly exercises. This was the statesman and the scholar, of whom it is difficult to speak but in terms of affectionate but not exaggerated eulogy, and for whom the Republic of the Netherlands could now find no better use than to shut him up in the grim fortress of Loevestein for the remainder of his days. A commonwealth must have deemed itself rich in men which, after cutting off the head of Barneveld, could afford to bury alive Hugo Grotius.

His deportment in prison was a magnificent moral lesson. Shut up in a kind of cage consisting of a bedroom and a study, he was debarred from physical exercise, so necessary for his mental and bodily health. Not choosing for the gratification of Lieutenant Deventer to indulge in weak complaints, he procured a huge top, which he employed himself in whipping several hours a day; while for intellectual employment he plunged once more into those classical, juridical, and theological studies which had always employed his leisure hours from childhood upwards.

It had been forbidden by the States-General to sell his likeness in the shops. The copper plates on which they had been engraved had as far as possible been destroyed.

The wish of the government, especially of his judges, was that his name and memory should die at once and for ever. They were not destined to be successful, for it would be equally difficult to-day to find an educated man in Christendom ignorant of the name of Hugo Grotius, or acquainted with that of a single one of his judges.

Page 14

And his friends had not forgotten him as he lay there living in his tomb. Especially the learned Scriverius, Vossius, and other professors, were permitted to correspond with him at intervals on literary subjects, the letters being subjected to preliminary inspection. Scriverius sent him many books from his well-stocked library, de Groot's own books and papers having been confiscated by the government. At a somewhat later period the celebrated Orientalist Erpenius sent him from time to time a large chest of books, the precious freight being occasionally renewed and the chest passing to and from Loevestein by way of Gorcum. At this town lived a sister of Erpenius, married to one Daatselaer, a considerable dealer in thread and ribbons, which he exported to England. The house of Daatselaer became a place of constant resort for Madame de Groot as well as the wife of Hoogerbeets, both dames going every few days from the castle across the Waal to Gorcum, to make their various purchases for the use of their forlorn little households in the prison. Madame Daatselaer therefore received and forwarded into Loevestein or into Holland many parcels and boxes, besides attending to the periodical transmission of the mighty chest of books.

Professor Vossius was then publishing a new edition of the tragedies of Seneca, and at his request Grotius enriched that work, from his prison, with valuable notes. He employed himself also in translating the moral sentences extracted by Stobaeus from the Greek tragedies; drawing consolation from the ethics and philosophy of the ancient dramatists, whom he had always admired, especially the tragedies of Euripides; he formed a complete moral anthology from that poet and from the works of Sophocles, Menander, and others, which he translated into fluent Dutch verse. Becoming more and more interested in the subject, he executed a masterly rhymed translation of the 'Theban Brothers' of Euripides, thus seeking distraction from his own tragic doom in the portraiture of antique, distant, and heroic sorrow.

Turning again to legal science, he completed an Introduction to the Jurisprudence of Holland, a work which as soon as published became thenceforward a text-book and an oracle in the law courts and the high schools of the country. Not forgetting theology, he composed for the use of the humbler classes, especially for sailors, in whose lot, so exposed to danger and temptation, he ever took deep interest, a work on the proofs of Christianity in easy and familiar rhyme—a book of gold, as it was called at once, which became rapidly popular with those for whom it was designed.

At a somewhat later period Professor Erpenius, publishing a new edition of the New Testament in Greek, with translations in Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopian, solicited his friend's help both in translations and in the Latin commentaries and expositions with which he proposed to accompany the work. The prisoner began with a modest disclaimer, saying that after the labours of Erasmus and Beza, Maldonatus and Jasenius, there was little for him to glean. Becoming more enthusiastic as he went on, he completed a masterly commentary on the Four Evangelists, a work for which the learned and religious world has ever recognized a kind of debt of gratitude to the castle of Loevestein, and hailed in him the founder of a school of manly Biblical criticism.

Page 15

And thus nearly two years wore away. Spinning his great top for exercise; soothing his active and prolific brain with Greek tragedy, with Flemish verse, with jurisprudence, history, theology; creating, expounding, adorning, by the warmth of his vivid intellect; moving the world, and doing good to his race from the depths of his stony sepulchre; Hugo Grotius rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive. The man is not to be envied who is not moved by so noble an example of great calamity manfully endured.

The wife of Hoogerbeets, already advanced in years, sickened during the imprisonment and died at Loevestein after a lingering illness, leaving six children to the care of her unfortunate husband. Madame de Groot had not been permitted by the prison authorities to minister to her in sickness, nor to her children after her death.

Early in the year 1621 Francis Aerssens, Lord of Sommelsdyk, the arch enemy of Barneveld and of Grotius, was appointed special ambassador to Paris. The intelligence—although hardly unexpected, for the stratagems of Aerssens had been completely successful—moved the prisoner deeply. He felt that this mortal enemy, not glutted with vengeance by the beheading of the Advocate and the perpetual imprisonment of his friend, would do his best at the French court to defame and to blacken him. He did what he could to obviate this danger by urgent letters to friends on whom he could rely.

At about the same time Muis van Holy, one of the twenty-four commissioners, not yet satisfied with the misery he had helped to inflict, informed the States-General that Madame de Groot had been buying ropes at Gorcum. On his motion a committee was sent to investigate the matter at Castle Loevestein, where it was believed that the ropes had been concealed for the purpose of enabling Grotius to make his escape from prison.

Lieutenant Deventer had heard nothing of the story. He was in high spirits at the rumour however, and conducted the committee very eagerly over the castle, causing minute search to be made in the apartment of Grotius for the ropes which, as they were assured by him and his wife, had never existed save in the imagination of Judge Muis. They succeeded at least in inflicting much superfluous annoyance on their victims, and in satisfying themselves that it would be as easy for the prisoner to fly out of the fortress on wings as to make his escape with ropes, even if he had them.

Grotius soon afterwards addressed a letter to the States-General denouncing the statement of Muis as a fable, and these persistent attempts to injure him as cowardly and wicked.

A few months later Madame de Groot happened to be in the house of Daatselaer on one of her periodical visits to Gorcum. Conversation turning on these rumours March of attempts at escape, she asked Madame Daatselaer if she would not be much embarrassed, should Grotius suddenly make his appearance there.

Page 16

"Oh no," said the good woman with a laugh; "only let him come. We will take excellent care of him."

At another visit one Saturday, 20th March, (1621) Madame de Groot asked her friend why all the bells of Gorcum march were ringing.

"Because to-morrow begins our yearly fair," replied Dame Daatselaer.

"Well, I suppose that all exiles and outlaws may come to Gorcum on this occasion," said Madame de Groot.

"Such is the law, they say," answered her friend.

"And my husband might come too?"

"No doubt," said Madame Daatselaer with a merry laugh, rejoiced at finding the wife of Grotius able to speak so cheerfully of her husband in his perpetual and hopeless captivity. "Send him hither. He shall have, a warm welcome."

"What a good woman you are!" said Madame de Groot with a sigh as she rose to take leave. "But you know very well that if he were a bird he could never get out of the castle, so closely, he is caged there."

Next morning a wild equinoctial storm was howling around the battlements of the castle. Of a sudden Cornelia, daughter of the de Groots, nine years of age, said to her mother without any reason whatever,

"To-morrow Papa must be off to Gorcum, whatever the weather may be."

De Groot, as well as his wife, was aghast at the child's remark, and took it as a direct indication from Heaven.

For while Madame Daatselaer had considered the recent observations of her visitor from Loevestein as idle jests, and perhaps wondered that Madame de Groot could be frivolous and apparently lighthearted on so dismal a topic, there had been really a hidden meaning in her words.

For several weeks past the prisoner had been brooding over a means of escape. His wife, whose every thought was devoted to him, had often cast her eyes on the great chest or trunk in which the books of Erpenius had been conveyed between Loevestein and Gorcum for the use of the prisoner. At first the trunk had been carefully opened and its contents examined every time it entered or left the castle. As nothing had ever been found in it save Hebrew, Greek, and Latin folios, uninviting enough to the Commandant, that warrior had gradually ceased to inspect the chest very closely, and had at last discontinued the practice altogether.

It had been kept for some weeks past in the prisoner's study. His wife thought—although it was two finger breadths less than four feet in length, and not very broad or deep in proportion—that it might be possible for him to get into it. He was considerably above middle height, but found that by curling himself up very closely he could just manage to lie in it with the cover closed. Very secretly they had many times rehearsed the scheme which had now taken possession of their minds, but had not breathed a word of it to any one. He had lain in the chest with the lid fastened, and with his wife sitting upon the top of it, two hours at

Page 17

a time by the hour-glass. They had decided at last that the plan, though fraught with danger, was not absolutely impossible, and they were only waiting now for a favourable opportunity. The chance remark of the child Cornelia settled the time for hazarding the adventure. By a strange coincidence, too, the commandant of the fortress, Lieutenant Deventer, had just been promoted to a captaincy, and was to go to Heusden to receive his company. He left the castle for a brief absence that very Sunday evening. As a precautionary measure, the trunk filled with books had been sent to Gorcum and returned after the usual interval only a few days before.

The maid-servant of the de Groots, a young girl of twenty, Elsje van Houwening by name, quick, intelligent, devoted, and courageous, was now taken into their confidence. The scheme was explained to her, and she was asked if she were willing to take the chest under her charge with her master in it, instead of the usual freight of books, and accompany it to Gorcum.

She naturally asked what punishment could be inflicted upon her in case the plot were discovered.

"None legally," answered her master; "but I too am innocent of any crime, and you see to what sufferings I have been condemned."

"Whatever come of it," said Elsje stoutly; "I will take the risk and accompany my master."

Every detail was then secretly arranged, and it was provided beforehand, as well as possible, what should be said or done in the many contingencies that might arise.

On Sunday evening Madame de Groot then went to the wife of the Commandant, with whom she had always been on more friendly terms than with her malicious husband. She had also recently propitiated her affections by means of venison and other dainties brought from Gorcum. She expressed the hope that, notwithstanding the absence of Captain Deventer, she might be permitted to send the trunk full of books next day from the castle.

"My husband is wearing himself out," she said, "with his perpetual studies. I shall be glad for a little time to be rid of some of these folios."

The Commandant's wife made no objection to this slight request.

On Monday morning the gale continued to beat with unabated violence on the turrets. The turbid Waal, swollen by the tempest, rolled darkly and dangerously along the castle walls.

But the die was cast. Grotius rose betimes, fell on his knees, and prayed fervently an hour long. Dressed only in linen underclothes with a pair of silk stockings, he got into the chest with the help of his wife. The big Testament of Erpenius, with some bunches of thread placed upon it, served him as a pillow. A few books and papers were placed in the interstices left by the curves of his body, and as much pains as possible taken to prevent his being seriously injured or incommoded during the hazardous journey he was contemplating. His wife then took solemn farewell of him, fastened the lock, which she kissed, and gave the key to Elsje.

Page 18

The usual garments worn by the prisoner were thrown on a chair by the bedside and his slippers placed before it. Madame de Groot then returned to her bed, drew the curtains close, and rang the bell.

It was answered by the servant who usually waited on the prisoner, and who was now informed by the lady that it had been her intention to go herself to Gorcum, taking charge of the books which were valuable. As the weather was so tempestuous however, and as she was somewhat indisposed, it had been decided that Elsje should accompany the trunk.

She requested that some soldiers might be sent as usual to take it down to the vessel. Two or three of the garrison came accordingly, and seeing the clothes and slippers of Grotius lying about, and the bed-curtains closed, felt no suspicion.

On lifting the chest, however, one of them said, half in jest:

"The Arminian must be in it himself, it seems so heavy,"

"Not the Arminian," replied Madame de Groot, in a careless voice, from the bed; "only heavy Arminian books."

Partly lifting, partly dragging the ponderous box, the soldiers managed to get it down the stairs and through the thirteen barred and bolted doors. Four several times one or other of the soldiers expressed the opinion that Grotius himself must be locked within it, but they never spoke quite seriously, and Elsje was ever ready to turn aside the remark with a jest. A soldier's wife, just as the box was approaching the wharf, told a story of a malefactor who had once been carried out of the castle in a chest.

"And if a malefactor, why not a lawyer?" she added. A soldier said he would get a gimlet and bore a hole into the Arminian. "Then you must get a gimlet that will reach to the top of the castle, where the Arminian lies abed and asleep," said Elsje.

Not much heed was given to this careless talk, the soldiers, before leaving the chamber of Grotius, having satisfied themselves that there were no apertures in the chest save the keyhole, and that it would be impossible by that means alone for sufficient air to penetrate to keep a man enclosed in it from smothering.

Madame Deventer was asked if she chose to inspect the contents of the trunk, and she enquired whether the Commandant had been wont so to do. When told that such search had been for a long time discontinued, as nothing had ever been found there but books, she observed that there was no reason why she should be more strict than her husband, and ordered the soldiers to take their heavy load to the vessel.

Elsje insisted that the boatmen should place a doubly thick plank for sliding the box on board, as it seemed probable, she said, that the usual one would break in two, and then

the valuable books borrowed of Professor Erpenius would be damaged or destroyed. The request caused much further grumbling, but was complied with at last and the chest deposited on the deck. The wind still continued to blow with great fury, and as soon as the sails were set the vessel heeled over so much, that Elsie implored the skipper to cause the box to be securely lashed, as it seemed in imminent danger, at the first lurch of the vessel, of sliding into the sea.

Page 19

This done, Elsje sat herself down and threw her white handkerchief over her head, letting it flutter in the wind. One of the crew asked her why she did so, and she replied that the servant in the castle had been tormenting her, saying that she would never dare to sail to Gorcum in such tempestuous weather, and she was now signalling him that she had been as good as her word. Whereupon she continued to wave the handkerchief.

In reality the signal was for her mistress, who was now straining her eyes from the barred window which looked out upon the Waal, and with whom the maid had agreed that if all went prosperously she would give this token of success. Otherwise she would sit with her head in her hands.

During the voyage an officer of the garrison, who happened to be on board, threw himself upon the chest as a convenient seat, and began drumming and pounding with his heels upon it. The ever watchful Elsje, feeling the dreadful inconvenience to the prisoner of these proceedings, who perhaps was already smothering and would struggle for air if not relieved, politely addressed the gentleman and induced him to remove to another seat by telling him that, besides the books, there was some valuable porcelain in the chest which might easily be broken.

No further incident occurred. The wind, although violent, was favourable, and Gorcum in due time was reached. Elsje insisted upon having her own precious freight carried first into the town, although the skipper for some time was obstinately bent on leaving it to the very last, while all the other merchandise in the vessel should be previously unshipped.

At last on promise of payment of ten stuivers, which was considered an exorbitant sum, the skipper and son agreed to transport the chest between them on a hand-barrow. While they were trudging with it to the town, the son remarked to his father that there was some living thing in the box. For the prisoner in the anguish of his confinement had not been able to restrain a slight movement.

“Do you hear what my son says?” cried the skipper to Elsje. “He says you have got something alive in your trunk.”

“Yes, yes,” replied the cheerful maid-servant; “Arminian books are always alive, always full of motion and spirit.”

They arrived at Daatselaer’s house, moving with difficulty through the crowd which, notwithstanding the boisterous weather, had been collected by the annual fair. Many people were assembled in front of the building, which was a warehouse of great resort, while next door was a book-seller’s shop thronged with professors, clergymen, and other literary persons. The carriers accordingly entered by the backway, and Elsje,

deliberately paying them their ten stuivers, and seeing them depart, left the box lying in a room at the rear and hastened to the shop in front.

Here she found the thread and ribbon dealer and his wife, busy with their customers, unpacking and exhibiting their wares. She instantly whispered in Madame Daatselaer's ear, "I have got my master here in your back parlour."

Page 20

The dame turned white as a sheet, and was near fainting on the spot. It was the first imprudence Elsje had committed. The good woman recovered somewhat of her composure by a strong effort however, and instantly went with Elsje to the rear of the house.

"Master! master!" cried Elsje, rapping on the chest.

There was no answer.

"My God! my God!" shrieked the poor maid-servant. "My poor master is dead."

"Ah!" said Madame Daatselaer, "your mistress has made a bad business of it. Yesterday she had a living husband. Now she has a dead one."

But soon there was a vigorous rap on the inside of the lid, and a cry from the prisoner:

"Open the chest! I am not dead, but did not at first recognize your voice."

The lock was instantly unfastened, the lid thrown open, and Grotius arose in his linen clothing, like a dead man from his coffin.

The dame instantly accompanied the two through a trapdoor into an upper room.

Grotius asked her if she was always so deadly pale.

"No," she replied, "but I am frightened to see you here. My lord is no common person. The whole world is talking of you. I fear this will cause the loss of all my property and perhaps bring my husband into prison in your place."

Grotius rejoined: "I made my prayers to God before as much as this had been gained, and I have just been uttering fervent thanks to Him for my deliverance so far as it has been effected. But if the consequences are to be as you fear, I am ready at once to get into the chest again and be carried back to prison."

But she answered, "No; whatever comes of it, we have you here and will do all that we can to help you on."

Grotius being faint from his sufferings, the lady brought him a glass of Spanish wine, but was too much flustered to find even a cloak or shawl to throw over him. Leaving him sitting there in his very thin attire, just as he had got out of the chest, she went to the front warehouse to call her husband. But he prudently declined to go to his unexpected guest. It would be better in the examination sure to follow, he said, for him to say with truth that he had not seen him and knew nothing of the escape, from first to last.

Grotius entirely approved of the answer when told to him. Meantime Madame Daatselaer had gone to her brother-in-law van der Veen, a clothier by trade, whom she found in his shop talking with an officer of the Loevestein garrison. She whispered in the clothier's ear, and he, making an excuse to the officer, followed her home at once. They found Grotius sitting where he had been left. Van der Veen gave him his hand, saying:

"Sir, you are the man of whom the whole country is talking?"

"Yes, here I am," was the reply, "and I put myself in your hands—"

"There isn't a moment to lose," replied the clothier. "We must help you away at once."

Page 21

He went immediately in search of one John Lambertsen, a man in whom he knew he could confide, a Lutheran in religion, a master-mason by occupation. He found him on a scaffold against the gable-end of a house, working at his trade.

He told him that there was a good deed to be done which he could do better than any man, that his conscience would never reproach him for it, and that he would at the same time earn no trifling reward.

He begged the mason to procure a complete dress as for a journeyman, and to follow him to the house of his brother-in-law Daatselaer.

Lambertsen soon made his appearance with the doublet, trunk-hose, and shoes of a bricklayer, together with trowel and measuring-rod. He was informed who his new journeyman was to be, and Grotius at once put on the disguise.

The doublet did not reach to the waistband of the trunkhose, while those nether garments stopped short of his knees; the whole attire belonging to a smaller man than the unfortunate statesman. His delicate white hands, much exposed by the shortness of the sleeves, looked very unlike those of a day-labourer, and altogether the new mason presented a somewhat incongruous and wobegone aspect. Grotius was fearful too lest some of the preachers and professors frequenting the book-shop next door would recognize him through his disguise. Madame Daatselaer smeared his face and hands with chalk and plaster however and whispered encouragement, and so with a felt hat slouched over his forehead and a yardstick in his hand, he walked calmly forth into the thronged marketplace and through the town to the ferry, accompanied by the friendly Lambertsen. It had been agreed that van der Veen should leave the house in another direction and meet them at the landing-place.

When they got to the ferry, they found the weather as boisterous as ever. The boatmen absolutely refused to make the dangerous crossing of the Merwede over which their course lay to the land of Altona, and so into the Spanish Netherlands, for two such insignificant personages as this mason and his scarecrow journeyman.

Lambertsen assured them that it was of the utmost importance that he should cross the water at once. He had a large contract for purchasing stone at Altona for a public building on which he was engaged. Van der Veen coming up added his entreaties, protesting that he too was interested in this great stone purchase, and so by means of offering a larger price than they at first dared to propose, they were able to effect their passage.

After landing, Lambertsen and Grotius walked to Waalwyk, van der Veen returning the same evening to Gorcum. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when they reached Waalwyk, where a carriage was hired to convey the fugitive to Antwerp. The friendly mason here took leave of his illustrious journeyman, having first told the driver that his

companion was a disguised bankrupt fleeing from Holland into foreign territory to avoid pursuit by his creditors. This would explain his slightly concealing his face in passing through a crowd in any village.

Page 22

Grotius proved so ignorant of the value of different coins in making small payments on the road, that the honest waggoner, on being occasionally asked who the odd-looking stranger was, answered that he was a bankrupt, and no wonder, for he did not know one piece of money from another. For, his part he thought him little better than a fool.

Such was the depreciatory opinion formed by the Waalwyk coachman as to the “rising light of the world” and the “miracle of Holland.” They travelled all night and, arriving on the morning of the 21st within a few leagues of Antwerp, met a patrol of soldiers, who asked Grotius for his passport. He enquired in whose service they were, and was told in that of “Red Rod,” as the chief bailiff of Antwerp was called. That functionary happened to be near, and the traveller approaching him said that his passport was on his feet, and forthwith told him his name and story.

Red Rod treated him at once with perfect courtesy, offered him a horse for himself with a mounted escort, and so furthered his immediate entrance to Antwerp. Grotius rode straight to the house of a banished friend of his, the preacher Grevinkhoven. He was told by the daughter of that clergyman that her father was upstairs ministering at the bedside of his sick wife. But so soon as the traveller had sent up his name, both the preacher and the invalid came rushing downstairs to fall upon the neck of one who seemed as if risen from the dead.

The news spread, and Episcopius and other exiled friends soon thronged to the house of Grevinkhoven, where they all dined together in great glee, Grotius, still in his journeyman’s clothes, narrating the particulars of his wonderful escape.

He had no intention of tarrying in his resting-place at Antwerp longer than was absolutely necessary. Intimations were covertly made to him that a brilliant destiny might be in store for him should he consent to enter the service of the Archdukes, nor were there waning rumours, circulated as a matter of course by his host of enemies, that he was about to become a renegade to country and religion. There was as much truth in the slanders as in the rest of the calumnies of which he had been the victim during his career. He placed on record a proof of his loyal devotion to his country in the letters which he wrote from Antwerp within a week of his arrival there. With his subsequent history, his appearance and long residence at the French court as ambassador of Sweden, his memorable labours in history, diplomacy, poetry, theology, the present narrative is not concerned. Driven from the service of his Fatherland, of which his name to all time is one of the proudest garlands, he continued to be a benefactor not only to her but to all mankind. If refutation is sought of the charge that republics are ungrateful, it will certainly not be found in the history of Hugo Grotius or John of Barneveld.

Nor is there need to portray the wrath of Captain Deventer when he returned to Castle Loevestein.



Page 23

"Here is the cage, but your bird is flown," said corpulent Maria Grotius with a placid smile. The Commandant solaced himself by uttering imprecations on her, on her husband, and on Elsje van Houwening. But these curses could not bring back the fugitive. He flew to Gorcum to browbeat the Daatselaers and to search the famous trunk. He found in it the big New Testament and some skeins of thread, together with an octavo or two of theology and of Greek tragedies; but the Arminian was not in it, and was gone from the custody of the valiant Deventer for ever.

After a brief period Madame de Groot was released and rejoined her husband. Elsje van Houwening, true heroine of the adventure, was subsequently married to the faithful servant of Grotius, who during the two years' imprisonment had been taught Latin and the rudiments of law by his master, so that he subsequently rose to be a thriving and respectable advocate at the tribunals of Holland.

The Stadholder, when informed of the escape of the prisoner, observed, "I always thought the black pig was deceiving me," making not very complimentary allusion to the complexion and size of the lady who had thus aided the escape of her husband.

He is also reported as saying that it "is no wonder they could not keep Grotius in prison, as he has more wit than all his judges put together."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Barneveld's Sons plot against Maurice—The Conspiracy betrayed to Maurice—Escape of Stoutenburg—Groeneveld is arrested—Mary of Barneveld appeals to the Stadholder—Groeneveld condemned to Death—Execution of Groeneveld.

The widow of Barneveld had remained, since the last scene of the fatal tragedy on the Binnenhof, in hopeless desolation. The wife of the man who during a whole generation of mankind had stood foremost among the foremost of the world, and had been one of those chief actors and directors in human affairs to whom men's eyes turned instinctively from near and from afar, had led a life of unbroken prosperity. An heiress in her own right, Maria van Utrecht had laid the foundation of her husband's wealth by her union with the rising young lawyer and statesman. Her two sons and two daughters had grown up around her, all four being married into the leading families of the land, and with apparently long lives of prosperity and usefulness before them. And now the headsman's sword had shivered all this grandeur and happiness at a blow. The name of the dead statesman had become a word of scoffing and reproach; vagabond mountebanks enacted ribald scenes to his dishonour in the public squares and streets; ballad-mongers yelled blasphemous libels upon him in the very ears of his widow and children. For party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk.

It would be idle to paint the misery of this brokenhearted woman.

Page 24

The great painters of the epoch have preserved her face to posterity; the grief-stricken face of a hard-featured but commanding and not uncomely woman, the fountains of whose tears seem exhausted; a face of austere and noble despair. A decorous veil should be thrown over the form of that aged matron, for whose long life and prosperity Fate took such merciless vengeance at last.

For the woes of Maria of Barneveld had scarcely begun. Desolation had become her portion, but dishonour had not yet crossed her threshold. There were sterner strokes in store for her than that which smote her husband on the scaffold.

She had two sons, both in the prime of life. The eldest, Reinier, Lord of Groeneveld, who had married a widow of rank and wealth, Madame de Brandwyk, was living since the death of his father in comparative ease, but entire obscurity. An easy-tempered, genial, kindly gentleman, he had been always much beloved by his friends and, until the great family catastrophe, was popular with the public, but of an infirm and vacillating character, easily impressed by others, and apt to be led by stronger natures than his own. He had held the lucrative office of head forester of Delfland of which he had now been deprived.

The younger son William, called, from an estate conferred on him by his father, Lord of Stoutenburg, was of a far different mould. We have seen him at an earlier period of this narrative attached to the embassy of Francis Aerssens in Paris, bearing then from another estate the unmusical title of Craimgepolder, and giving his subtle and dangerous chief great cause of complaint by his irregular, expensive habits. He had been however rather a favourite with Henry IV., who had so profound a respect for the father as to consult him, and him only of all foreign statesmen, in the gravest affairs of his reign, and he had even held an office of honour and emolument at his court. Subsequently he had embraced the military career, and was esteemed a soldier of courage and promise. As captain of cavalry and governor of the fortress of Bergen op Zoom, he occupied a distinguished and lucrative position, and was likely, so soon as the Truce ran to its close, to make a name for himself in that gigantic political and religious war which had already opened in Bohemia, and in which it was evident the Republic would soon be desperately involved. His wife, Walburg de Marnix, was daughter to one of the noblest characters in the history of the Netherlands, or of any history, the illustrious Sainte-Aldegonde. Two thousand florins a year from his father's estate had been settled on him at his marriage, which, in addition to his official and military income, placed him in a position of affluence.

After the death of his father the family estates were confiscated, and he was likewise deprived of his captaincy and his governorship. He was reduced at a blow from luxury and high station to beggary and obscurity. At the renewal of the war he found himself, for no fault of his own, excluded from the service of his country. Yet the Advocate almost in his last breath had recommended his sons to the Stadholder, and Maurice had

sent a message in response that so long as the sons conducted themselves well they might rely upon his support.

Page 25

Hitherto they had not conducted themselves otherwise than well. Stoutenburg, who now dwelt in his house with his mother, was of a dark, revengeful, turbulent disposition. In the career of arms he had a right to look forward to success, but thus condemned to brood in idleness on the cruel wrongs to himself and his house it was not improbable that he might become dangerous.

Years long he fed on projects of vengeance as his daily bread. He was convinced that his personal grievances were closely entwined with the welfare of the Commonwealth, and he had sworn to avenge the death of his father, the misery of his mother, and the wrongs which he was himself suffering, upon the Stadholder, whom he considered the author of all their woe. To effect a revolution in the government, and to bring back to power all the municipal regents whom Maurice had displaced so summarily, in order, as the son believed, to effect the downfall of the hated Advocate, this was the determination of Stoutenburg.

He did not pause to reflect whether the arm which had been strong enough to smite to nothingness the venerable statesman in the plenitude of his power would be too weak to repel the attack of an obscure and disarmed partisan. He saw only a hated tyrant, murderer, and oppressor, as he considered him, and he meant to have his life.

He had around him a set of daring and desperate men to whom he had from time to time half confided his designs. A certain unfrocked preacher of the Remonstrant persuasion, who, according to the fashion of the learned of that day, had translated his name out of Hendrik Sleet into Henricus Slatius, was one of his most unscrupulous instruments. Slatius, a big, swarthy, shag-eared, beetle-browed Hollander, possessed learning of no ordinary degree, a tempestuous kind of eloquence, and a habit of dealing with men; especially those of the humbler classes. He was passionate, greedy, overbearing, violent, and loose of life. He had sworn vengeance upon the Remonstrants in consequence of a private quarrel, but this did not prevent him from breathing fire and fury against the Contra-Remonstrants also, and especially against the Stadholder, whom he affected to consider the arch-enemy of the whole Commonwealth.

Another twelvemonth went by. The Advocate had been nearly four years in his grave. The terrible German war was in full blaze. The Twelve Years' Truce had expired, the Republic was once more at war, and Stoutenburg, forbidden at the head of his troop to campaign with the Stadholder against the Archdukes, nourished more fiercely than ever his plan against the Stadholder's life.

Besides the ferocious Slatius he had other associates. There was his cousin by marriage, van der Dussen, a Catholic gentleman, who had married a daughter of Elias Barneveld, and who shared all Stoutenburg's feelings of resentment towards Maurice. There was Korenwinder, another Catholic, formerly occupying an official position of responsibility as secretary of the town of Berkel, a man of immense corpulence, but none the less an active and dangerous conspirator.

Page 26

There was van Dyk, a secretary of Bleiswyk, equally active and dangerous, and as lean and hungry as Korenwinder was fat. Stoutenburg, besides other rewards, had promised him a cornetcy of cavalry, should their plans be successful. And there was the brother-in-law of Slatius, one Cornelis Gerritaen, a joiner by trade, living at Rotterdam, who made himself very useful in all the details of the conspiracy.

For the plot was now arranged, the men just mentioned being its active agents and in constant communication with Stoutenburg.

Korenwinder and van Dyk in the last days of December 1622 drew up a scheme on paper, which was submitted to their chief and met with his approval. The document began with a violent invective against the crimes and tyranny of the Stadholder, demonstrated the necessity of a general change in the government, and of getting rid of Maurice as an indispensable preliminary, and laid down the means and method of doing this deed.

The Prince was in the daily habit of driving, unattended by his body-guard, to Ryswyk, about two miles from the Hague. It would not be difficult for a determined band of men divided into two parties to set upon him between the stables and his coach, either when alighting from or about to enter it—the one party to kill him while the other protected the retreat of the assassins, and beat down such defence as the few lackeys of the Stadholder could offer.

The scheme, thus mapped out, was submitted to Stoutenburg, who gave it his approval after suggesting a few amendments. The document was then burnt. It was estimated that twenty men would be needed for the job, and that to pay them handsomely would require about 6000 guilders.

The expenses and other details of the infamous plot were discussed as calmly as if it had been an industrial or commercial speculation. But 6000 guilders was an immense sum to raise, and the Seigneur de Stoutenburg was a beggar. His associates were as forlorn as himself, but his brother-in-law, the ex-Ambassador van der Myle, was living at Beverwyk under the supervision of the police, his property not having been confiscated. Stoutenburg paid him a visit, accompanied by the Reverend Slatius, in hopes of getting funds from him, but at the first obscure hint of the infamous design van der Myle faced them with such looks, gestures, and words of disgust and indignation that the murderous couple recoiled, the son of Barneveld saying to the expreacher: "Let us be off, Slaet,'tis a mere cur. Nothing is to be made of him."

The other son of Barneveld, the Seigneur de Groeneveld, had means and credit. His brother had darkly hinted to him the necessity of getting rid of Maurice, and tried to draw him into the plot. Groeneveld, more unstable than water, neither repelled nor encouraged these advances. He joined in many conversations with Stoutenburg, van Dyk, and Korenwinder, but always weakly affected not to know what they were driving

at. "When we talk of business," said van Dyk to him one day, "you are always turning off from us and from the subject. You had better remain." Many anonymous letters were sent to him, calling on him to strike for vengeance on the murderer of his father, and for the redemption of his native land and the Remonstrant religion from foul oppression.

Page 27

At last yielding to the persuasions and threats of his fierce younger brother, who assured him that the plot would succeed, the government be revolutionized, and that then all property would be at the mercy of the victors, he agreed to endorse certain bills which Korenwinder undertook to negotiate. Nothing could be meaner, more cowardly, and more murderous than the proceedings of the Seigneur de Groeneveld. He seems to have felt no intense desire of vengeance upon Maurice, which certainly would not have been unnatural, but he was willing to supply money for his assassination. At the same time he was careful to insist that this pecuniary advance was by no means a free gift, but only a loan to be repaid by his more bloodthirsty brother upon demand with interest. With a businesslike caution, in ghastly contrast with the foulness of the contract, he exacted a note of hand from Stoutenburg covering the whole amount of his disbursements. There might come a time, he thought, when his brother's paper would be more negotiable than it was at that moment.

Korenwinder found no difficulty in discounting Groeneveld's bills, and the necessary capital was thus raised for the vile enterprise. Van Dyk, the lean and hungry conspirator, now occupied himself vigorously in engaging the assassins, while his corpulent colleague remained as treasurer of the company. Two brothers Blansaerts, woollen manufacturers at Leyden—one of whom had been a student of theology in the Remonstrant Church and had occasionally preached—and a certain William Party, a Walloon by birth, but likewise a woollen worker at Leyden, agreed to the secretary's propositions. He had at first told, them that their services would be merely required for the forcible liberation of two Remonstrant clergymen, Niellius and Poppius, from the prison at Haarlem. Entertaining his new companions at dinner, however, towards the end of January, van Dyk, getting very drunk, informed them that the object of the enterprise was to kill the Stadholder; that arrangements had been made for effecting an immediate change in the magistracies in all the chief cities of Holland so soon as the deed was done; that all the recently deposed regents would enter the Hague at once, supported by a train of armed peasants from the country; and that better times for the oppressed religion, for the Fatherland, and especially for everyone engaged in the great undertaking, would begin with the death of the tyrant. Each man taking direct part in the assassination would receive at least 300 guilders, besides being advanced to offices of honour and profit according to his capacity.

Page 28

The Blansaerts assured their superior that entire reliance might be placed on their fidelity, and that they knew of three or four other men in Leyden “as firm as trees and fierce as lions,” whom they would engage—a fustian worker, a tailor, a chimney-sweeper, and one or two other mechanics. The looseness and utter recklessness with which this hideous conspiracy was arranged excites amazement. Van Dyk gave the two brothers 100 pistoles in gold—a coin about equal to a guinea—for their immediate reward as well as for that of the comrades to be engaged. Yet it seems almost certain from subsequent revelations that they were intending all the time to deceive him, to take as much money as they could get from him, “to milk the cow as long as she would give milk,” as William Party expressed it, and then to turn round upon and betray him. It was a dangerous game however, which might not prove entirely successful.

Van Dyk duly communicated with Stoutenburg, who grew more and more feverish with hatred and impatience as the time for gratifying those passions drew nigh, and frequently said that he would like to tear the Stadholder to pieces with his own hands. He preferred however to act as controlling director over the band of murderers now enrolled.

For in addition to the Leyden party, the Reverend Slatius, supplied with funds by van Dyk, had engaged at Rotterdam his brother-in-law Gerritsen, a joiner, living in that city, together with three sailors named respectively Dirk, John, and Herman.

The ex-clergyman’s house was also the arsenal of the conspiracy, and here were stored away a stock of pistols, snaphances, and sledge-hammers— together with that other death-dealing machinery, the whole edition of the ‘Clearshining Torch’, an inflammatory, pamphlet by Slatius—all to be used on the fatal day fast approaching.

On the 1st February van Dyk visited Slatius at Rotterdam. He found Gerritsen hard at work.

There in a dark back kitchen, by the lurid light of the fire in a dim wintry afternoon, stood the burly Slatius, with his swarthy face and heavy eyebrows, accompanied by his brother-in-law the joiner, both in workman’s dress, melting lead, running bullets, drying powder, and burnishing and arranging the fire-arms and other tools to be used in the great crime now so rapidly maturing. The lean, busy, restless van Dyk, with his adust and sinister visage, came peering in upon the couple thus engaged, and observed their preparations with warm approval.

He recommended that in addition to Dirk, John, and Herman, a few more hardy seafaring men should be engaged, and Slatius accordingly secured next day the services of one Jerome Ewouts and three other sailors. They were not informed of the exact nature of the enterprise, but were told that it was a dangerous although not a desperate one, and sure to be of great service to the Fatherland. They received, as all

the rest had done, between 200 and 300 guilders in gold, that they would all be promoted to be captains and first mates.

Page 29

It was agreed that all the conspirators should assemble four days later at the Hague on Sunday, the 5th February, at the inn of the “Golden Helmet.” The next day, Monday the 6th, had been fixed by Stoutenburg for doing the deed. Van Dyk, who had great confidence in the eloquence of William Party, the Walloon wool manufacturer, had arranged that he should make a discourse to them all in a solitary place in the downs between that city and the sea-shore, taking for his theme or brief the Clearshining Torch of Slatius.

On Saturday that eminent divine entertained his sister and her husband Gerritsen, Jerome Ewouts, who was at dinner but half informed as to the scope of the great enterprise, and several other friends who were entirely ignorant of it. Slatius was in high spirits, although his sister, who had at last become acquainted with the vile plot, had done nothing but weep all day long. They had better be worms, with a promise of further reward and an intimation she said, and eat dirt for their food, than crawl in so base a business. Her brother comforted her with assurances that the project was sure to result in a triumph for religion and Fatherland, and drank many healths at his table to the success of all engaged in it. That evening he sent off a great chest filled with arms and ammunition to the “Golden Helmet” at the Hague under the charge of Jerome Ewouts and his three mates. Van Dyk had already written a letter to the landlord of that hostelry engaging a room there, and saying that the chest contained valuable books and documents to be used in a lawsuit, in which he was soon to be engaged, before the supreme tribunal.

On the Sunday this bustling conspirator had John Blansaert and William Party to dine with him at the “Golden Helmet” in the Hague, and produced seven packages neatly folded, each containing gold pieces to the amount of twenty pounds sterling. These were for themselves and the others whom they had reported as engaged by them in Leyden. Getting drunk as usual, he began to bluster of the great political revolution impending, and after dinner examined the carbines of his guests. He asked if those weapons were to be relied upon. “We can blow a hair to pieces with them at twenty paces,” they replied. “Ah! would that I too could be of the party,” said van Dyk, seizing one of the carbines. “No, no,” said John Blansaert, “we can do the deed better without you than with you. You must look out for the defence.”

Van Dyk then informed them that they, with one of the Rotterdam sailors, were to attack Maurice as he got out of his coach at Ryswyk, pin him between the stables and the coach, and then and there do him to death. “You are not to leave him,” he cried, “till his soul has left his body.”

The two expressed their hearty concurrence with this arrangement, and took leave of their host for the night, going, they said, to distribute the seven packages of blood-money. They found Adam Blansaert waiting for them in the downs, and immediately divided the whole amount between themselves and him—the chimney-sweeper, tailor,

and fustian worker, “firm as trees and fierce as lions,” having never had any existence save in their fertile imaginations.

Page 30

On Monday, 6th February, van Dyk had a closing interview with Stoutenburg and his brother at the house of Groeneveld, and informed them that the execution of the plot had been deferred to the following day. Stoutenburg expressed disgust and impatience at the delay. "I should like to tear the Stadholder to pieces with my own hands!" he cried. He was pacified on hearing that the arrangements had been securely made for the morrow, and turning to his brother observed, "Remember that you can never retract. You are in our power and all your estates at our mercy." He then explained the manner in which the magistracies of Leyden, Gouda, Rotterdam, and other cities were to be instantly remodelled after the death of Maurice, the ex-regents of the Hague at the head of a band of armed peasants being ready at a moment's warning to take possession of the political capital.

Prince Frederic Henry moreover, he hinted darkly and falsely, but in a manner not to be mistaken, was favourable to the movement, and would after the murder of Maurice take the government into his hands.

Stoutenburg then went quietly home to pass the day and sleep at his mother's house awaiting the eventful morning of Tuesday.

Van Dyk went back to his room at the "Golden Helmet" and began inspecting the contents of the arms and ammunition chest which Jerome Ewouts and his three mates had brought the night before from Rotterdam. He had been somewhat unquiet at having seen nothing of those mariners during the day; when looking out of window, he saw one of them in conference with some soldiers. A minute afterwards he heard a bustle in the rooms below, and found that the house was occupied by a guard, and that Gerritsen, with the three first engaged sailors Dirk, Peter, and Herman, had been arrested at the Zotje. He tried in vain to throw the arms back into the chest and conceal it under the bed, but it was too late. Seizing his hat and wrapping himself in his cloak, with his sword by his side, he walked calmly down the stairs looking carelessly at the group of soldiers and prisoners who filled the passages. A waiter informed the provost-marshal in command that the gentleman was a respectable boarder at the tavern, well known to him for many years. The conspirator passed unchallenged and went straight to inform Stoutenburg.

The four mariners, last engaged by Slatius at Rotterdam, had signally exemplified the danger of half confidences. Surprised that they should have been so mysteriously entrusted with the execution of an enterprise the particulars of which were concealed from them, and suspecting that crime alone could command such very high prices as had been paid and promised by the ex-clergyman, they had gone straight to the residence of the Stadholder, after depositing the chest at the "Golden Helmet."

Finding that he had driven as usual to Ryswyk, they followed him thither, and by dint of much importunity obtained an audience. If the enterprise was a patriotic one, they

reasoned, he would probably know of it and approve it. If it were criminal, it would be useful for them to reveal and dangerous to conceal it.

Page 31

They told the story so far as they knew it to the Prince and showed him the money, 300 florins apiece, which they had already received from Slatius. Maurice hesitated not an instant. It was evident that a dark conspiracy was afoot. He ordered the sailors to return to the Hague by another and circuitous road through Voorburg, while he lost not a moment himself in hurrying back as fast as his horses would carry him. Summoning the president and several councillors of the chief tribunal, he took instant measures to take possession of the two taverns, and arrest all the strangers found in them.

Meantime van Dyk came into the house of the widow Barneveld and found Stoutenburg in the stable-yard. He told him the plot was discovered, the chest of arms at the "Golden Helmet" found. "Are there any private letters or papers in the bog?" asked Stoutenburg. "None relating to the affair," was the answer.

"Take yourself off as fast as possible," said Stoutenburg. Van Dyk needed no urging. He escaped through the stables and across the fields in the direction of Leyden. After skulking about for a week however and making very little progress, he was arrested at Hazerswoude, having broken through the ice while attempting to skate across the inundated and frozen pastures in that region.

Proclamations were at once made, denouncing the foul conspiracy in which the sons of the late Advocate Barneveld, the Remonstrant clergyman Slatius, and others, were the ringleaders, and offering 4000 florins each for their apprehension. A public thanksgiving for the deliverance was made in all the churches on the 8th February.

On the 12th February the States-General sent letters to all their ambassadors and foreign agents, informing them of this execrable plot to overthrow the Commonwealth and take the life of the Stadholder, set on foot by certain Arminian preachers and others of that faction, and this too in winter, when the ice and snow made hostile invasion practicable, and when the enemy was encamped in so many places in the neighbourhood. "The Arminians," said the despatch, "are so filled with bitterness that they would rather the Republic should be lost than that their pretended grievances should go unredressed." Almost every pulpit shook with Contra-Remonstrant thunder against the whole society of Remonstrants, who were held up to the world as rebels and prince-murderers; the criminal conspiracy being charged upon them as a body. Hardly a man of that persuasion dared venture into the streets and public places, for fear of being put to death by the rabble. The Chevalier William of Nassau, natural son of the Stadholder, was very loud and violent in all the taverns and tap-rooms, drinking mighty draughts to the damnation of the Arminians.

Many of the timid in consequence shrank away from the society and joined the Contra-Remonstrant Church, while the more courageous members, together with the leaders of that now abhorred communion, published long and stirring appeals to the universal sense of justice, which was outraged by the spectacle of a whole sect being punished for a crime committed by a few individuals, who had once been unworthy members of it.

Page 32

Meantime hue and cry was made after the fugitive conspirators. The Blansaerts and William Party having set off from Leyden towards the Hague on Monday night, in order, as they said, to betray their employers, whose money they had taken, and whose criminal orders they had agreed to execute, attempted to escape, but were arrested within ten days. They were exhibited at their prison at Amsterdam to an immense concourse at a shilling a peep, the sums thus collected being distributed to the poor. Slatius made his way disguised as a boor into Friesland, and after various adventures attempted to cross the Bourtange Moors to Lingen. Stopping to refresh himself at a tavern near Koevorden, he found himself in the tap-room in presence of Quartermaster Blau and a company of soldiers from the garrison. The dark scowling boor, travel-stained and weary, with felt hat slouched over his forbidding visage, fierce and timorous at once like a hunted wild beast, excited their suspicion. Seeing himself watched, he got up, paid his scot, and departed, leaving his can of beer untasted. This decided the quartermaster, who accordingly followed the peasant out of the house, and arrested him as a Spanish spy on the watch for the train of specie which the soldiers were then conveying into Koevorden Castle.

Slatius protested his innocence of any such design, and vehemently besought the officer to release him, telling him as a reason for his urgency and an explanation of his unprepossessing aspect—that he was an oculist from Amsterdam, John Hermansen by name, that he had just committed a homicide in that place, and was fleeing from justice.

The honest quartermaster saw no reason why a suspected spy should go free because he proclaimed himself a murderer, nor why an oculist should escape the penalties of homicide. “The more reason,” he said, “why thou shouldst be my prisoner.” The ex-preacher was arrested and shut up in the state prison at the Hague.

The famous engraver Visser executed a likeness on copper-plate of the grim malefactor as he appeared in his boor’s disguise. The portrait, accompanied by a fiercely written broadsheet attacking the Remonstrant Church, had a great circulation, and deepened the animosity against the sect upon which the unfrocked preacher had sworn vengeance. His evil face and fame thus became familiar to the public, while the term Hendrik Slaet became a proverb at pot-houses, being held equivalent among tipplers to shirking the bottle.

Korenwinder, the treasurer of the association, coming to visit Stoutenburg soon after van Dyk had left him, was informed of the discovery of the plot and did his best to escape, but was arrested within a fortnight’s time.

Page 33

Stoutenburg himself acted with his usual promptness and coolness. Having gone straightway to his brother to notify him of the discovery and to urge him to instant flight, he contrived to disappear. A few days later a chest of merchandise was brought to the house of a certain citizen of Rotterdam, who had once been a fiddler, but was now a man of considerable property. The chest, when opened, was found to contain the Seigneur de Stoutenburg, who in past times had laid the fiddler under obligations, and in whose house he now lay concealed for many days, and until the strictness with which all roads and ferries in the neighbourhood were watched at first had somewhat given way. Meantime his cousin van der Dussen had also effected his escape, and had joined him in Rotterdam. The faithful fiddler then, for a thousand florins, chartered a trading vessel commanded by one Jacob Beltje to take a cargo of Dutch cheese to Wesel on the Rhine. By this means, after a few adventures, they effected their escape, and, arriving not long afterwards at Brussels, were formally taken under the protection of the Archduchess Isabella.

Stoutenburg afterwards travelled in France and Italy, and returned to Brussels. His wife, loathing his crime and spurning all further communication with him, abandoned him to his fate. The daughter of Marnix of Sainte-Aldegonde had endured poverty, obscurity, and unmerited obloquy, which had become the lot of the great statesman's family after his tragic end, but she came of a race that would not brook dishonour. The conspirator and suborner of murder and treason, the hirer and companion of assassins, was no mate for her.

Stoutenburg hesitated for years as to his future career, strangely enough keeping up a hope of being allowed to return to his country.

Subsequently he embraced the cause of his country's enemies, converted himself to the Roman Church, and obtained a captaincy of horse in the Spanish service. He was seen one day, to the disgust of many spectators, to enter Antwerp in black foreign uniform, at the head of his troopers, waving a standard with a death's-head embroidered upon it, and wearing, like his soldiers, a sable scarf and plume. History disdains to follow further the career of the renegade, traitor, end assassin.

When the Seigneur de Groeneveld learned from his younger brother, on the eventful 6th of February, that the plot had been discovered, he gave himself up for lost. Remorse and despair, fastening upon his naturally feeble character, seemed to render him powerless. His wife, of more hopeful disposition than himself and of less heroic mould than Walburg de Marnix, encouraged him to fly. He fled accordingly, through the desolate sandy downs which roll between the Hague and the sea, to Scheveningen, then an obscure fishing village on the coast, at a league's distance from the capital. Here a fisherman, devoted to him and his family, received him in his hut, disguised him in boatman's attire, and went with him to the strand, proposing to launch his pinkie, put out at once to sea, and to land him on the English coast, the French coast, in Hamburg—where he would.

Page 34

The sight of that long, sandy beach stretching for more than seventy miles in an unbroken, melancholy line, without cove, curve, or indentation to break its cruel monotony, and with the wild waves of the German Ocean, lashed by a wintry storm, breaking into white foam as far as the eye could reach, appalled the fugitive criminal. With the certainty of an ignominious death behind him, he shrank abjectly from the terrors of the sea, and, despite the honest fisherman's entreaties, refused to enter the boat and face the storm. He wandered feebly along the coast, still accompanied by his humble friend, to another little village, where the fisherman procured a waggon, which took them as far as Sandvoort. Thence he made his way through Egmond and Petten and across the Marsdiep to Tegel, where not deeming himself safe he had himself ferried over to the neighbouring island of Vlieland. Here amongst the quicksands, whirlpools, and shallows which mark the last verge of habitable Holland, the unhappy fugitive stood at bay.

Meantime information had come to the authorities that a suspicious stranger had been seen at Scheveningen. The fisherman's wife was arrested. Threatened with torture she at last confessed with whom her husband had fled and whither. Information was sent to the bailiff of Vlieland, who with a party of followers made a strict search through his narrow precincts. A group of seamen seated on the sands was soon discovered, among whom, dressed in shaggy pea jacket with long fisherman's boots, was the Seigneur de Groeneveld, who, easily recognized through his disguise, submitted to his captors without a struggle. The Scheveningen fisherman, who had been so faithful to him, making a sudden spring, eluded his pursuers and disappeared; thus escaping the gibbet which would probably have been his doom instead of the reward of 4000 golden guilders which he might have had for betraying him. Thus a sum more than double the amount originally furnished by Groeneveld, as the capital of the assassination company, had been rejected by the Rotterdam boatman who saved Stoutenburg, and by the Scheveningen fisherman who was ready to save Groeneveld. On the 19th February, within less than a fortnight from the explosion of the conspiracy, the eldest son of Barneveld was lodged in the Gevangen Poort or state prison of the Hague.

The awful news of the 6th February had struck the widow of Barneveld as with a thunderbolt. Both her sons were proclaimed as murderers and suborners of assassins, and a price put upon their heads. She remained for days neither speaking nor weeping; scarcely eating, drinking, or sleeping. She seemed frozen to stone. Her daughters and friends could not tell whether she were dying or had lost her reason. At length the escape of Stoutenburg and the capture of Groeneveld seemed to rouse her from her trance. She then stooped to do what she had sternly refused to do when her husband was in the hands of the authorities. Accompanied by the wife and infant son of Groeneveld she obtained an audience of the stern Stadholder, fell on her knees before him, and implored mercy and pardon for her son.

Page 35

Maurice received her calmly and not discourteously, but held out no hopes of pardon. The criminal was in the hands of justice, he said, and he had no power to interfere. But there can scarcely be a doubt that he had power after the sentence to forgive or to commute, and it will be remembered that when Barneveld himself was about to suffer, the Prince had asked the clergyman Walaeus with much anxiety whether the prisoner in his message had said nothing of pardon.

Referring to the bitter past, Maurice asked Madame de Barneveld why she not asked mercy for her son, having refused to do so for her husband.

Her answer was simple and noble:

“My husband was innocent of crime,” she said; “my son is guilty.”

The idea of pardon in this case was of course preposterous. Certainly if Groeneveld had been forgiven, it would have been impossible to punish the thirteen less guilty conspirators, already in the hands of justice, whom he had hired to commit the assassination. The spectacle of the two cowardly ringleaders going free while the meaner criminals were gibbeted would have been a shock to the most rudimentary ideas of justice. It would have been an equal outrage to pardon the younger Barnevelds for intended murder, in which they had almost succeeded, when their great father had already suffered for a constructive lese-majesty, the guilt of which had been stoutly denied. Yet such is the dreary chain of cause and effect that it is certain, had pardon been nobly offered to the statesman, whose views of constitutional law varied from those of the dominant party, the later crime would never have been committed. But Francis Aerssens—considering his own and other partisans lives at stake if the States’ right party did not fall—had been able to bear down all thoughts of mercy. He was successful, was called to the house of nobles, and regained the embassy of Paris, while the house of Barneveld was trodden into the dust of dishonour and ruin. Rarely has an offended politician’s revenge been more thorough than his. Never did the mocking fiend betray his victims into the hands of the avenger more sardonically than was done in this sombre tragedy.

The trials of the prisoners were rapidly conducted. Van Dyk, cruelly tortured, confessed on the rack all the details of the conspiracy as they were afterwards embodied in the sentences and have been stated in the preceding narrative. Groeneveld was not tortured. His answers to the interrogatories were so vague as to excite amazement at his general ignorance of the foul transaction or at the feebleness of his memory, while there was no attempt on his part to exculpate himself from the damning charge. That it was he who had furnished funds for the proposed murder and mutiny, knowing the purpose to which they were to be applied, was proved beyond all cavil and fully avowed by him.

On the 28th May, he, Korenwinder, and van Dyk were notified that they were to appear next day in the courthouse to hear their sentence, which would immediately afterwards be executed.

Page 36

That night his mother, wife, and son paid him a long visit of farewell in his prison. The Gevangen Poort of the Hague, an antique but mean building of brown brick and commonplace aspect, still stands in one of the most public parts of the city. A gloomy archway, surmounted by windows grimly guarded by iron lattice-work, forms the general thoroughfare from the aristocratic Plaats and Kneuterdyk and Vyverberg to the inner court of the ancient palace. The cells within are dark, noisome, and dimly lighted, and even to this day the very instruments of torture, used in the trials of these and other prisoners, may be seen by the curious. Half a century later the brothers de Witt were dragged from this prison to be literally torn to pieces by an infuriated mob.

The misery of that midnight interview between the widow of Barneveld, her daughter-in-law, and the condemned son and husband need not be described. As the morning approached, the gaoler warned the matrons to take their departure that the prisoner might sleep.

“What a woful widow you will be,” said Groeneveld to his wife, as she sank choking with tears upon the ground. The words suddenly aroused in her the sense of respect for their name.

“At least for all this misery endured,” she said firmly, “do me enough honour to die like a gentleman.” He promised it. The mother then took leave of the son, and History drops a decorous veil henceforth over the grief-stricken form of Mary of Barneveld.

Next morning the life-guards of the Stadholder and other troops were drawn up in battle-array in the outer and inner courtyard of the supreme tribunal and palace. At ten o'clock Groeneveld came forth from the prison. The Stadholder had granted as a boon to the family that he might be neither fettered nor guarded as he walked to the tribunal. The prisoner did not forget his parting promise to his wife. He appeared full-dressed in velvet cloak and plumed hat, with rapier by his side, walking calmly through the inner courtyard to the great hall. Observing the windows of the Stadholder's apartments crowded with spectators, among whom he seemed to recognize the Prince's face, he took off his hat and made a graceful and dignified salute. He greeted with courtesy many acquaintances among the crowd through which he passed. He entered the hall and listened in silence to the sentence condemning him to be immediately executed with the sword. Van Dyk and Korenwinder shared the same doom, but were provisionally taken back to prison.

Groeneveld then walked calmly and gracefully as before from the hall to the scaffold, attended by his own valet, and preceded by the provost-marshal and assistants. He was to suffer, not where his father had been beheaded, but on the “Green Sod.” This public place of execution for ordinary criminals was singularly enough in the most elegant and frequented quarter of the Hague. A few rods from the Gevangen Poort, at the western end of the Vyverberg, on the edge of the cheerful triangle called the Plaats, and looking directly down the broad and stately Kneuterdyk, at the end of which stood

Aremberg House, lately the residence of the great Advocate, was the mean and sordid scaffold.

Page 37

Groeneveld ascended it with perfect composure. The man who had been browbeaten into crime by an overbearing and ferocious brother, who had quailed before the angry waves of the North Sea, which would have borne him to a place of entire security, now faced his fate with a smile upon his lips. He took off his hat, cloak, and sword, and handed them to his valet. He calmly undid his ruff and wristbands of pointlace, and tossed them on the ground. With his own hands and the assistance of his servant he unbuttoned his doublet, laying breast and neck open without suffering the headsman's hands to approach him.

He then walked to the heap of sand and spoke a very few words to the vast throng of spectators.

"Desire of vengeance and evil counsel," he said, "have brought me here. If I have wronged any man among you, I beg him for Christ's sake to forgive me."

Kneeling on the sand with his face turned towards his father's house at the end of the Kneuterdyk, he said his prayers. Then putting a red velvet cap over his eyes, he was heard to mutter:

"O God! what a man I was once, and what am I now?"

Calmly folding his hands, he said, "Patience."

The executioner then struck off his head at a blow. His body, wrapped in a black cloak, was sent to his house and buried in his father's tomb.

Van Dyk and Korenwinder were executed immediately afterwards. They were quartered and their heads exposed on stakes. The joiner Gerritsen and the three sailors had already been beheaded. The Blansaerts and William Party, together with the grim Slatius, who was savage and turbulent to the last, had suffered on the 5th of May.

Fourteen in all were executed for this crime, including an unfortunate tailor and two other mechanics of Leyden, who had heard something whispered about the conspiracy, had nothing whatever to do with it, but from ignorance, apathy, or timidity did not denounce it. The ringleader and the equally guilty van der Dussen had, as has been seen, effected their escape.

Thus ended the long tragedy of the Barnevelds. The result of this foul conspiracy and its failure to effect the crime proposed strengthened immensely the power, popularity, and influence of the Stadholder, made the orthodox church triumphant, and nearly ruined the sect of the Remonstrants, the Arminians—most unjustly in reality, although with a pitiful show of reason—being held guilty of the crime of Stoutenburg and Slatius.

The Republic—that magnificent commonwealth which in its infancy had confronted, single-handed, the greatest empire of the earth, and had wrested its independence from

the ancient despot after a forty years' struggle—had now been rent in twain, although in very unequal portions, by the fiend of political and religious hatred. Thus crippled, she was to go forth and take her share in that awful conflict now in full blaze, and of which after-ages were to speak with a shudder as the Thirty Years' War.

Page 38

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Argument in a circle
He that stands let him see that he does not fall
If he has deserved it, let them strike off his head
Misery had come not from their being enemies
O God! what does man come to!
Party hatred was not yet glutted with the blood it had drunk
Rose superior to his doom and took captivity captive
This, then, is the reward of forty years' service to the State
To milk, the cow as long as she would give milk

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