

History of the United Netherlands, 1597-98

John Lothrop Motley

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HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce—1609

By John Lothrop Motley

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History of the United Netherlands, 1597-1598

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The old year had closed with an abortive attempt of Philip to fulfil his favourite dream—the conquest of England. The new year opened with a spirited effort of Prince Maurice to measure himself in the open field with the veteran legions of Spain.

Turnhout, in Brabant, was an open village—the largest in all the Netherlands lying about twenty-five English miles in almost a direct line south from Gertruydenburg. It was nearly as far distant in an easterly direction from Antwerp, and was about five miles nearer Breda than it was to Gertruydenburg.

At this place the cardinal-archduke had gathered a considerable force, numbering at least four thousand of his best infantry, with several squadrons of cavalry, the whole under-command of the general-in-chief of artillery, Count Varax. People in the neighbourhood were growing uneasy, for it was uncertain in what direction it might be intended to use this formidable force. It was perhaps the cardinal's intention to make a sudden assault upon Breda, the governor of which seemed not inclined to carry out his proposition to transfer that important city to the king, or it was thought that he might take advantage of a hard frost and cross the frozen morasses and estuaries into the land of Ter Tholen, where he might overmaster some of the important strongholds of Zeeland.

Marcellus Bax, that boldest and most brilliant of Holland's cavalry officers, had come to Maurice early in January with an urgent suggestion that no time might be lost in making an attack upon the force of Turnhout, before they should succeed in doing any mischief. The prince pondered the proposition, for a little time, by himself, and then conferred very privately upon the subject with the state-council. On the 14th January it was agreed with that body that the enterprise should be attempted, but with the utmost secrecy. A week later the council sent an express messenger to Maurice urging him not to expose his own

life to peril, but to apprise them as soon as possible as to the results of the adventure.

Meantime, patents had been sent to the various garrisons for fifty companies of foot and sixteen squadrons of horse. On the 22nd January Maurice came to Gertruydenberg, the place of rendezvous, attended by Sir Francis Vere and Count Solms. Colonel Kloetingen was already there with the transports of ammunition and a few pieces of artillery from Zeeland, and in the course of the day the whole infantry force had assembled. Nothing could have been managed with greater promptness or secrecy.

Next day, before dawn, the march began. The battalia was led by Van der Noot, with six companies of Hollanders. Then came Vere, with eight companies of the reserve, Dockray with eight companies of Englishmen, Murray with eight companies of Scotch, and Kloetingen and La Corde with twelve companies of Dutch and Zeelanders. In front of the last troop under La Corde marched the commander of the artillery, with two demi-cannon and two field-pieces, followed by the ammunition and, baggage trains. Hohenlo arrived just as the march was beginning, to whom the stadholder, notwithstanding their frequent differences, communicated his plans, and entrusted the general command of the cavalry. That force met the expedition at Osterhout, a league's distance from Gertruydenberg, and consisted of the best mounted companies, English and Dutch, from the garrisons of Breda, Bergen, Nymegen, and the Zutphen districts.

It was a dismal, drizzly, foggy morning; the weather changing to steady rain as the expedition advanced. There had been alternate frost and thaw for the few previous weeks, and had that condition of the atmosphere continued the adventure could not have been attempted. It had now turned completely to thaw. The roads were all under water, and the march was sufficiently difficult. Nevertheless, it was possible; so the stout Hollanders, Zeelanders, and Englishmen struggled on manfully, shoulder to shoulder, through the mist and the mire. By nightfall the expedition had reached Ravels, at less than a league's distance from Turnhout, having accomplished, under the circumstances, a very remarkable march of over twenty miles. A stream of water, the Neethe, one of the tributaries of the Scheld, separated Ravels from Turnhout, and was crossed by a stone bridge. It was an anxious moment. Maurice discovered by his scouts that he was almost within cannon-shot of several of the most famous regiments in the Spanish army lying fresh, securely posted, and capable of making an attack at any moment. He instantly threw forward Marcellus Bax with four

squadrons of Bergen cavalry, who, jaded as they were by their day's work, were to watch the bridge that night, and to hold it against all comers and at every hazard.

The Spanish commander, on his part, had reconnoitred the advancing, foe, for it was impossible for the movement to have been so secret or so swift over those inundated roads as to be shrouded to the last moment in complete mystery. It was naturally to be expected therefore that those splendid legions—the famous Neapolitan tercio of Trevico, the veteran troops of Sultz and Hachicourt, the picked Epirote and Spanish cavalry of Nicolas Basta and Guzman—would be hurled upon the wearied, benumbed, bemired soldiers of the republic, as they came slowly along after their long march through the cold winter's rain.

Varax took no such heroic resolution. Had he done so that January afternoon, the career of Maurice of Nassau might have been brought to a sudden close, despite the affectionate warning of the state-council. Certainly it was difficult for any commander to be placed in a more perilous position than that in which the stadholder found himself. He remained awake and afoot the whole night, perfecting his arrangements for the morning, and watching every indication of a possible advance on the part of the enemy. Marcellus Bax and his troopers remained at the bridge till morning, and were so near the Spaniards that they heard the voices of their pickets, and could even distinguish in the distance the various movements in their camp.

But no attack was made, and the little army of Maurice was allowed to sleep off its fatigue. With the dawn of the 24th January, a reconnoitring party, sent out from the republican camp, discovered that Varax, having no stomach for an encounter, had given his enemies the slip. Long before daylight his baggage and ammunition trains had been sent off in a southerly direction, and his whole force had already left the village of Turnhout. It was the intention of the commander to take refuge in the fortified city of Herenthals, and there await the attack of Maurice. Accordingly, when the stadholder arrived on the fields beyond the immediate precincts of the village, he saw the last of the enemy's rearguard just disappearing from view. The situation was a very peculiar one.

The rain and thaw, following upon frosty weather, had converted the fenny country in many directions into a shallow lake. The little river which flowed by the village had risen above its almost level banks, and could with difficulty be traversed at any point, while there was no permanent bridge, such as there was at

Ravels. The retreating Spaniards had made their way through a narrow passage, where a roughly-constructed causeway of planks had enabled the infantry to cross the waters almost in single file, while the cavalry had floundered through as best they might. Those who were acquainted with the country reported that beyond this defile there was an upland heath, a league in extent, full of furze and thickets, where it would be easy enough for Varax to draw up his army in battle array, and conceal it from view. Maurice's scouts, too, brought information that the Spanish commander had left a force of musketeers to guard the passage at the farther end.

This looked very like an ambush. In the opinion of Hohenlo, of Solms, and of Sidney, an advance was not to be thought of; and if the adventure seemed perilous to such hardy and experienced campaigners as these three, the stadholder might well hesitate. Nevertheless, Maurice had made up his mind. Sir Francis Vere and Marcellus Bax confirmed him in his determination, and spoke fiercely of the disgrace which would come upon the arms of the republic if now, after having made a day's march to meet the enemy, they should turn their backs upon him just as he was doing his best to escape.

On leave obtained from the prince, these two champions, the Englishman and the Hollander, spurred their horses through the narrow pass, with the waters up to the saddle-bow, at the head of a mere handful of troopers, not more than a dozen men in all. Two hundred musketeers followed, picking their way across the planks. As they emerged into the open country beyond, the Spanish soldiers guarding the passage fled without firing a shot. Such was already the discouraging effect produced upon veterans by the unexpected order given that morning to retreat. Vere and Bax sent word for all the cavalry to advance at once, and meantime hovered about the rearguard of the retreating enemy, ready to charge upon him so soon as they should be strong enough.

Maurice lost no time in plunging with his whole mounted force through the watery defile; directing the infantry to follow as fast as practicable. When the commander-in-chief with his eight hundred horsemen, Englishmen, Zeelanders, Hollanders, and Germans, came upon the heath, the position and purpose of the enemy were plainly visible. He was not drawn up in battle order, waiting to sweep down upon his rash assailants so soon as, after struggling through the difficult pass, they should be delivered into his hands. On the contrary, it was obvious at a glance that his object was still to escape. The heath of Tiel, on which Spaniards, Italians, Walloons, Germans, Dutchmen, English; Scotch, and

Irishmen now all found themselves together, was a ridgy, spongy expanse of country, bordered on one side by the swollen river, here flowing again through steeper banks which were overgrown with alders and pollard willows. Along the left of the Spanish army, as they moved in the direction of Herenthals, was a continuous fringe of scrub-oaks, intermixed with tall beeches, skirting the heath, and forming a leafless but almost impervious screen for the movements of small detachments of troops. Quite at the termination of the open space, these thickets becoming closely crowded, overhung another extremely narrow passage, which formed the only outlet from the plain. Thus the heath of Tiel, upon that winter's morning, had but a single entrance and a single exit, each very dangerous or very fortunate for those capable of taking or neglecting the advantages offered by the position.

The whole force of Varax, at least five thousand strong, was advancing in close marching order towards the narrow passage by which only they could emerge from the heath. Should they reach this point in time, and thus effect their escape, it would be useless to attempt to follow them, for, as was the case with the first defile, it was not possible for two abreast to go through, while beyond was a swampy-country in which military operations were impossible. Yet there remained less than half a league's space for the retreating soldiers to traverse, while not a single foot-soldier Of Maurice's army had thus far made his appearance on the heath. All were still wallowing and struggling, single file, in the marshy entrance, through which only the cavalry had forced their way. Here was a dilemma. Should Maurice look calmly on while the enemy, whom he had made so painful a forced march to meet, moved off out of reach before his eyes? Yet certainly this was no slight triumph in itself. There sat the stadholder on his horse at the head of eight hundred carabineers, and there marched four of Philip's best infantry regiments, garnished with some of his most renowned cavalry squadrons, anxious not to seek but to avoid a combat. First came the Germans of Count Sultz, the musketeers in front, and the spearsmen, of which the bulk of this and of all the regiments was composed, marching in closely serried squares, with the company standards waving over each. Next, arranged in the same manner, came the Walloon regiments of Hachicourt and of La Barlotte. Fourth and last came the famous Neapolitans of Marquis Trevico. The cavalry squadrons rode on the left of the infantry, and were commanded by Nicolas Basta, a man who had been trampling upon the Netherlanders ever since the days of Alva, with whom he had first come to the country.

And these were the legions—these very men or their immediate predecessors—

these Italians, Spaniards, Germans, and Walloons, who during so many terrible years had stormed and sacked almost every city of the Netherlands, and swept over the whole breadth of those little provinces as with the besom of destruction.

Both infantry and cavalry, that picked little army of Varax was of the very best that had shared in the devil's work which had been the chief industry practised for so long in the obedient Netherlands. Was it not madness for the stadholder, at the head of eight hundred horsemen, to assail such an army as this? Was it not to invoke upon his head the swift vengeance of Heaven? Nevertheless, the painstaking, cautious Maurice did not hesitate. He ordered Hohenlo, with all the Brabantine cavalry, to ride as rapidly as their horses could carry them along the edge of the plain, and behind the tangled woodland, by which the movement would be concealed. He was at all hazards to intercept the enemy's vanguard before it should reach the fatal pass. Vere and Marcellus Bax meanwhile, supported now by Edmont with the Nymegen squadrons, were to threaten the Spanish rear. A company of two under Laurentz was kept by Maurice near his person in reserve.

The Spaniards steadily continued their march, but as they became aware of certain slight and indefinite movements on their left, their cavalry, changing their position, were transferred from the right to the left of the line of march, and now rode between the infantry and the belt of woods.

In a few minutes after the orders given to Hohenlo, that dashing soldier had circumvented the Spaniards, and emerged upon the plain between them and the entrance to the defile. The next instant the trumpets sounded a charge, and Hohenlo fell upon the foremost regiment, that of Sultz, while the rearguard, consisting of Trevico's Neapolitan regiment, was assailed by Du Bois, Donck, Rysoir, Marcellus Bax, and Sir Francis Vere. The effect seemed almost supernatural. The Spanish cavalry—those far-famed squadrons of Guzman and Basta—broke at the first onset and galloped off for the pass as if they had been riding a race. Most of them escaped through the hollow into the morass beyond. The musketeers of Sultz's regiment hardly fired a shot, and fell back in confusion upon the thickly clustered pikemen. The assailants, every one of them in complete armour, on powerful horses, and armed not with lances but with carbines, trampled over the panic-struck and struggling masses of leather jerkin pikemen and shot them at arm's length. The charge upon Trevico's men at the same moment was just as decisive. In less time than it took afterwards to describe the scene, those renowned veterans were broken into a helpless mass of

dying, wounded, or fugitive creatures, incapable of striking a blow.

Thus the Germans in the front and the Neapolitans in the rear had been simultaneously shattered, and rolled together upon the two other regiments, those of Hachicourt and La Barlotte, which were placed between them. Nor did these troops offer any better resistance, but were paralysed and hurled out of existence like the rest. In less than an hour the Spanish army was demolished. Varax himself lay dead upon the field, too fortunate not to survive his disgrace. It was hardly more than daylight on that dull January morning; nine o'clock had scarce chimed from the old brick steeples of Turnhout, yet two thousand Spaniards had fallen before the blows of eight hundred Netherlanders, and there were five hundred prisoners beside. Of Maurice's army not more than nine or ten were slain. The story sounds like a wild legend. It was as if the arm of each Netherlander had been nerved by the memory of fifty years of outrage, as if the spectre of their half-century of crime had appalled the soul of every Spaniard. Like a thunderbolt the son of William the Silent smote that army of Philip, and in an instant it lay blasted on the heath of Tiel. At least it could hardly be called sagacious generalship on the part of the stadholder. The chances were all against him, and if instead of Varax those legions had been commanded that morning by old Christopher Mondragon, there might perhaps have been another tale to tell. Even as it was, there had been a supreme moment when the Spanish disaster had nearly been changed to victory. The fight was almost done, when a small party of Staten' cavalry, who at the beginning of the action had followed the enemy's horse in its sudden retreat through the gap, came whirling back over the plain in wild confusion, pursued by about forty of the enemy's lancers. They swept by the spot where Maurice, with not more than ten horsemen around him, was directing and watching the battle, and in vain the prince threw himself in front of them and strove to check their flight. They were panic-struck, and Maurice would himself have been swept off the field, had not Marcellus Bax and Edmont, with half a dozen heavy troopers, come to the rescue. A grave error had been committed by Parker, who, upon being ordered by Maurice to cause Louis Laurentz to charge, had himself charged with the whole reserve and left the stadholder almost alone upon the field. Thus the culprits—who after pursuing the Spanish cavalry through the pass had been plundering the enemy's baggage until they were set upon by the handful left to guard it, and had become fugitives in their turn—might possibly have caused the loss of the day after the victory had been won, had there been a man on the Spanish side to take in the situation at a glance. But it is probable that the rout had been too absolute to allow of any such sudden turning to account of the serious errors of the victors. The cavalry,

except this handful, had long disappeared, at least half the infantry lay dead or wounded in the field, while the remainder, throwing away pipe and matchlock, were running helter-skelter for their lives.

Besides Prince Maurice himself, to whom the chief credit of the whole expedition justly belonged, nearly all the commanders engaged obtained great distinction by their skill and valour. Sir Francis Vere, as usual, was ever foremost in the thickest of the fray, and had a horse killed under him. Parker erred by too much readiness to engage, but bore himself manfully throughout the battle. Hohenlo, Solma, Sidney, Louis Laurentz, Du Bois, all displayed their usual prowess; but the real hero of the hour, the personal embodiment of the fortunate madness which prompted and won the battle, was undoubtedly Marcellus Bax.

Maurice remained an hour or two on the field of battle, and then, returning towards the village of Turnhout, summoned its stronghold. The garrison of sixty, under Captain Van der Delf, instantly surrendered. The victor allowed these troops to go off scot free, saying that there had been blood enough shed that day. Every standard borne by the Spaniards in the battle—thirty-eight in number—was taken, besides nearly all their arms. The banners were sent to the Hague to be hung up in the great hall of the castle. The dead body of Varax was sent to the archduke with a courteous letter, in which, however, a categorical explanation was demanded as to a statement in circulation that Albert had decided to give the soldiers of the republic no quarter.

No answer being immediately returned, Maurice ordered the five hundred prisoners to be hanged or drowned unless ransomed within twenty days, and this horrible decree appears from official documents to be consistent with the military usages of the period. The arrival of the letter from the cardinal-archduke, who levied the money for the ransom on the villagers of Brabant, prevented, however, the execution of the menace, which could hardly have been seriously intended.

Within a week from the time of his departure from the Hague to engage in this daring adventure, the stadholder had returned to that little capital, having achieved a complete success. The enthusiastic demonstrations throughout the land on account of so signal a victory can easily be imagined. Nothing like this had ever before been recorded in the archives of the young commonwealth. There had been glorious defences of beleaguered cities, where scenes of heroic endurance and self-sacrifice had been enacted, such as never can be forgotten so

long as the history of human liberty shall endure, but a victory won in the open field over the most famous legions of Spain and against overwhelming numbers, was an achievement entirely without example. It is beyond all doubt that the force under Varax was at least four times as large as that portion of the States' army which alone was engaged; for Maurice had not a foot-soldier on the field until the battle was over, save the handful of musketeers who had followed Vere and Bax at the beginning of the action.

Therefore it is that this remarkable action merits a much more attentive consideration than it might deserve, regarded purely as a military exploit. To the military student a mere cavalry affair, fought out upon an obscure Brabantine heath between a party of Dutch carabineers and Spanish pikemen, may seem of little account—a subject fitted by picturesque costume and animated action for the pencil of a Wouvermanns or a Terburg, but conveying little instruction. As illustrating a period of transition in which heavy armoured troopers—each one a human iron-clad fortress moving at speed and furnished with the most formidable portable artillery then known—could overcome the resistance of almost any number of foot-soldiers in light marching gear and armed with the antiquated pike, the affair may be worthy of a moment's attention; and for this improvement—itself now as obsolete as the slings and cataphracts of Roman legions—the world was indebted to Maurice. But the shock of mighty armies, the manoeuvring of vast masses in one magnificent combination, by which the fate of empires, the happiness or the misery of the peoples for generations, may perhaps be decided in a few hours, undoubtedly require a higher constructive genius than could be displayed in any such hand-to-hand encounter as that of Turnhout, scientifically managed as it unquestionably was. The true and abiding interest of the battle is derived from its moral effect, from its influence on the people of the Netherlands. And this could scarcely be exaggerated. The nation was electrified, transformed in an instant. Who now should henceforth dare to say that one Spanish fighting-man was equal to five or ten Hollanders? At last the days of Jemmingen and Mooker-heath needed no longer to be remembered by every patriot with a shudder of shame. Here at least in the open field a Spanish army, after in vain refusing a combat and endeavouring to escape, had literally bitten the dust before one fourth of its own number. And this effect was a permanent one. Thenceforth for foreign powers to talk of mediation between the republic and the ancient master, to suggest schemes of reconciliation and of a return to obedience, was to offer gratuitous and trivial insult, and we shall very soon have occasion to mark the simple eloquence with which the thirty-eight Spanish standards of Turnhout, hung up in the old hall of the Hague, were made

to reply to the pompous rhetoric of an interfering ambassador.

This brief episode was not immediately followed by other military events of importance in the provinces during what remained of the winter. Very early in the spring, however, it was probable that the campaign might open simultaneously in France and on the frontiers of Flanders. Of all the cities in the north of France there was none, after Rouen, so important, so populous, so wealthy as Amiens. Situate in fertile fields, within three days march of Paris, with no intervening forests or other impediments of a physical nature to free communication, it was the key to the gates of the capital. It had no garrison, for the population numbered fifteen thousand men able to bear arms, and the inhabitants valued themselves on the prowess of their trained militiamen, five thousand of whom they boasted to be able to bring into the field at an hour's notice—and they were perfectly loyal to Henry.

One morning in March there came a party of peasants, fifteen or twenty in number, laden with sacks of chestnuts and walnuts, to the northernmost gate of the town. They offered them for sale, as usual, to the soldiers at the guard-house, and chattered and jested—as boors and soldiers are wont to do—over their wares. It so happened that in the course of the bargaining one of the bags became untied, and its contents, much to the dissatisfaction of the proprietor, were emptied on the ground. There was a scramble for the walnuts, and much shouting, kicking, and squabbling ensued, growing almost into a quarrel between the burgher-soldiers and the peasants. As the altercation was at its height a heavy wagon, laden with long planks, came towards the gate for the use of carpenters and architects within the town. The portcullis was drawn up to admit this lumbering vehicle, but in the confusion caused by the chance medley going on at the guard-house, the gate dropped again before the wagon had fairly got through the passage, and remained resting upon the timber with which it was piled.

At that instant a shrill whistle was heard; and as if by magic the twenty chestnut-selling peasants were suddenly transformed to Spanish and Walloon soldiers. armed to the teeth, who were presently reinforced by as many more of their comrades, who sprang from beneath the plank-work by which the real contents of the wagon had thus been screened. Captain Dognano, his brother the sergeant-major, Captain d'Arco, and other officers of a Walloon regiment stationed in Dourlans, were the leaders of the little party, and while they were busily occupied in putting the soldiers of the watch, thus taken unawares, to death, the master-spirit of the whole adventure suddenly made his appearance and entered

the city at the head of fifteen hundred men. This was an extremely small, yellow, dried up, energetic Spanish captain, with a long red beard, Hernan Tello de Porto Carrero by name, governor of the neighbouring city of Dourlens, who had conceived this plan for obtaining possession of Amiens. Having sent these disguised soldiers on before him, he had passed the night with his men in ambush until the signal should sound. The burghers of the town were mostly in church; none were dreaming of an attack, as men rarely do—for otherwise how should they ever be surprised—and in half an hour Amiens was the property of Philip of Spain. There were not very many lives lost, for the resistance was small, but great numbers were tortured for ransom and few women escaped outrage. The sack was famous, for the city was rich and the captors were few in number, so that each soldier had two or three houses to plunder for his own profit.

When the work was done, the faubourgs were all destroyed, for it was the intention of the conquerors to occupy the place, which would be a most convenient basis of operations for any attack upon Paris, and it was desirable to contract the limits to be defended. Fifteen hundred houses, many of them beautiful villas surrounded with orchards and pleasure gardens,—were soon in flames, and afterwards razed to the ground. The governor of the place, Count St. Pol, managed to effect his escape. His place was now supplied by the Marquis of Montenegro, an Italian in the service of the Spanish king. Such was the fate of Amiens in the month of March, 1597; such the result of the refusal by the citizens to accept the garrison urged upon them by Henry.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the consternation produced throughout France by this astounding and altogether unlooked for event. "It seemed," said President De Thou, "as if it had extinguished in a moment the royal majesty and the French name." A few nights later than the date of this occurrence, Maximilian de Bethune (afterwards Duke of Sully, but then called Marquis de Rosny) was asleep in his bed in Paris. He had returned, at past two o'clock in the morning, from a magnificent ball given by the Constable of France. The capital had been uncommonly brilliant during the winter with banquets and dances, tourneys and masquerades, as if to cast a lurid glare over the unutterable misery of the people and the complete desolation of the country; but this entertainment—given by Montmorency in honour of a fair dame with whom he supposed himself desperately in love, the young bride of a very ancient courtier—surpassed in splendour every festival that had been heard of for years. De Bethune had hardly lost himself in slumber when he was startled by Beringen,

who, on drawing his curtains in this dead hour of the night, presented such a ghastly visage that the faithful friend of Henry instantly imagined some personal disaster to his well-beloved sovereign. "Is the King dead?" he cried.

Being re-assured as to, this point and told to hasten to the Louvre, Rosny instantly complied with the command. When he reached the palace he was admitted at once to the royal bed-chamber, where he found the king in the most unsophisticated of costumes, striding up and down the room, with his hands clasped together behind his head, and with an expression of agony upon his face: Many courtiers were assembled there, stuck all of them like images against the wall, staring before them in helpless perplexity.

Henry rushed forward as Rosny entered, and wringing him by the hand, exclaimed, "Ah, my friend, what a misfortune, Amiens is taken!"

"Very well," replied the financier, with unperturbed visage; "I have just completed a plan which will restore to your Majesty not only Amiens but many other places."

The king drew a great sigh of relief and asked for his project. Rosny, saying that he would instantly go and fetch his papers, left the apartment for an interval, in order to give vent to the horrible agitation which he had been enduring and so bravely concealing ever since the fatal words had been spoken. That a city so important, the key to Paris, without a moment's warning, without the semblance of a siege, should thus fall into the hands of the enemy, was a blow as directly to the heart of De Bethune as it could have been to any other of Henry's adherents. But while they had been distracting the king by unavailing curses or wailings, Henry, who had received the intelligence just as he was getting into bed, had sent for support and consolation to the tried friend of years, and he now reproachfully contrasted their pusillanimity with De Rosny's fortitude.

A great plan for reorganising the finances of the kingdom was that very night submitted by Rosny to the king, and it was wrought upon day by day thereafter until it was carried into effect.

It must be confessed that the crudities and immoralities which the project revealed do not inspire the political student of modern days with so high a conception of the financial genius of the great minister as his calm and heroic deportment on trying occasions, whether on the battle- field or in the council-

chamber, does of his natural authority over his fellow-men. The scheme was devised to put money in the king's coffers, which at that moment were completely empty. Its chief features were to create a great many new offices in the various courts of justice and tribunals of administration, all to be disposed of by sale to the highest bidder; to extort a considerable loan from the chief courtiers and from the richest burghers in the principal towns; to compel all the leading speculators—whose name in the public service was legion—to disgorge a portion of their ill-gotten gains, on being released from prosecution; and to increase the tax upon salt.

Such a project hardly seems a masterpiece of ethics or political economy, but it was hailed with rapture by the needy monarch. At once there was a wild excitement amongst the jobbers and speculators in places. The creation of an indefinite number of new judgeships and magistracies, to be disposed of at auction, was a tempting opportunity even in that age of corruption. One of the most notorious traders in the judicial ermine, limping Robin de Tours by name, at once made a private visit to Madame de Rosny and offered seventy-two thousand crowns for the exclusive right to distribute these new offices. If this could be managed to his satisfaction, he promised to give her a diamond worth two thousand crowns, and another, worth six thousand, to her husband. The wife of the great minister, who did not comprehend the whole amount of the insult, presented Robin to her husband. She was enlightened, however, as to the barefaced iniquity of the offer, when she heard De Bethune's indignant reply, and saw the jobber limp away, crest-fallen and amazed. That a financier or a magistrate should decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places, which were after all objects of merchandise, was to him incomprehensible. The industrious Robin, accordingly, recovering from his discomfiture, went straightway to the chancellor, and concluded the same bargain in the council chamber which had been rejected by De Bethune, with the slight difference that the distribution of the places. was assigned to the speculator for seventy-five thousand instead of seventy-two thousand crowns. It was with great difficulty that De Bethune, who went at once to the king with complaints and insinuations as to the cleanness of the chancellor's hands, was able to cancel the operation. The day was fast approaching when the universal impoverishment of the great nobles and landholders—the result of the long, hideous, senseless massacres called the wars of religion—was to open the way for the labouring classes to acquire a property in the soil. Thus that famous fowl in every pot was to make its appearance, which vulgar tradition ascribes to the bounty of a king who hated everything like popular rights, and loved nothing but his own glory and his own

amusement. It was not until the days of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren that Privilege could renew those horrible outrages on the People, which were to be avenged by a dread series of wars, massacres, and crimes, compared to which even the religious conflicts of the sixteenth century grow pale.

Meantime De Bethune comforted his master with these financial plans, and assured him in the spirit of prophecy that the King of Spain, now tottering as it was thought to his grave, would soon be glad to make a favourable peace with France even if he felt obliged to restore not only Amiens but every other city or stronghold that he had ever conquered in that kingdom. Time would soon show whether this prediction were correct or delusive; but while the secret negotiations between Henry and the Pope were vigorously proceeding for that peace with Spain which the world in general and the commonwealth of the Netherlands in particular thought to be farthest from the warlike king's wishes, it was necessary to set about the siege of Amiens.

Henry assembled a force of some twelve or fifteen thousand men for that purpose, while the cardinal-archduke, upon his part, did his best to put an army in the field in order to relieve the threatened city so recently acquired by a coarse but successful artifice.

But Albert was in even a worse plight than that in which his great antagonist found himself. When he had first arrived in the provinces, his exchequer was overflowing, and he was even supposed to devote a considerable portion of the military funds to defray the expenses of his magnificent housekeeping at Brussels. But those halcyon days were over. A gigantic fraud, just perpetrated by Philip; had descended like a thunderbolt upon the provinces and upon all commercial Europe, and had utterly blasted the unfortunate viceroy. In the latter days of the preceding year the king had issued a general repudiation of his debts.

He did it solemnly, too, and with great religious unction, for it was a peculiarity of this remarkable sovereign that he was ever wont to accomplish his darkest crimes, whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue. Perhaps he really believed them to be such, for a man, before whom so many millions of his fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust, might well imagine himself a deity.

So the king, on the 20th November, 1596, had publicly revoked all the

assignments, mortgages, and other deeds by which the royal domains; revenues, taxes, and other public property had been transferred or pledged for moneys already advanced to merchants, banker, and other companies or individuals, and formally took them again into his own possession, on the ground that his exertions in carrying on this long war to save Christianity from destruction had reduced him to beggary, while the money-lenders, by charging him exorbitant interest, had all grown rich at his expense.

This was perfectly simple. There was no attempt to disguise the villany of the transaction. The massacre of so many millions of Protestants, the gigantic but puerile attempts to subjugate the Dutch republic, and to annex France, England, and the German empire to his hereditary dominions, had been attended with more expense than Philip had calculated upon. The enormous wealth which a long series of marriages, inheritances, conquests, and maritime discoveries had heaped upon Spain had been exhausted by the insane ambition of the king to exterminate heresy throughout the world, and to make himself the sovereign of one undivided, universal, catholic monarchy. All the gold and silver of America had not sufficed for this purpose, and he had seen, with an ever rising indignation, those very precious metals which, in his ignorance of the laws of trade, he considered his exclusive property flowing speedily into the coffers of the merchants of Europe, especially those of the hated commonwealth of the rebellious Netherlands.

Therefore he solemnly renounced all his contracts, and took God to witness that it was to serve His Divine will. How else could he hope to continue his massacre of the Protestants?

The effect of the promulgation of this measure was instantaneous. Two millions and a half of bills of exchange sold by the Cardinal Albert came back in one day protested. The chief merchants and bankers of Europe suspended payment. Their creditors became bankrupt. At the Frankfort fair there were more failures in one day than there had ever been in all the years since Frankfort existed. In Genoa alone a million dollars of interest were confiscated. It was no better in Antwerp; but Antwerp was already ruined. There was a general howl of indignation and despair upon every exchange, in every counting-room, in every palace, in every cottage of Christendom. Such a tremendous repudiation of national debts was never heard of before. There had been debasements of the currency, petty frauds by kings upon their unfortunate peoples, but such a crime as this had never been conceived by human heart before.

The archduke was fain to pawn his jewelry, his plate, his furniture, to support the daily expenses of his household. Meantime he was to set an army in the field to relieve a city, beleaguered by the most warlike monarch in Christendom. Fortunately for him, that prince was in very similar straits, for the pressure upon the public swindlers and the auction sales of judicial ermine throughout his kingdom were not as rapidly productive as had been hoped.

It was precisely at this moment, too, that an incident of another nature occurred in Antwerp, which did not tend to make the believers in the possibility of religious or political freedom more in love with the system of Spain and Rome. Those blood-dripping edicts against heresy in the Netherlands, of which enough has been said in previous volumes of this history, and which had caused the deaths, by axe, faggot, halter, or burial alive, of at least fifty thousand human creatures—however historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence—had now been, dormant for twenty years. Their activity had ceased with the pacification of Ghent; but the devilish spirit which had inspired them still lived in the persons of the Jesuits, and there were now more Jesuits in the obedient provinces than there had been for years. We have seen that Champagny's remedy for the ills the country was enduring was "more Jesuits." And this, too, was Albert's recipe. Always "more Jesuits." And now the time had come when the Jesuits thought that they might step openly with their works into the daylight again. Of late years they had shrouded themselves in comparative mystery, but from their seminaries and colleges had gone forth a plentiful company of assassins against Elizabeth and Henry, Nassau, Barneveld, and others who, whether avowedly or involuntarily, were prominent in the party of human progress. Some important murders had already been accomplished, and the prospect was fair that still others might follow, if the Jesuits persevered. Meantime those ecclesiastics thought that a wholesome example might be by the spectacle of a public execution.

Two maiden ladies lived on the north rampart of Antwerp. They had formerly professed the Protestant religion, and had been thrown into prison for that crime; but the fear of further persecution, human weakness, or perhaps sincere conviction, had caused them to renounce the error of their ways, and they now went to mass. But they had a maidservant, forty years of age, Anna van den Hove by name, who was staunch in that reformed faith in which she had been born and bred. The Jesuits denounced this maid-servant to the civil authority, and claimed her condemnation and execution under the edicts of 1540, decrees which every one had supposed as obsolete as the statutes of Draco, which they

had so entirely put to shame.

The sentence having been obtained from the docile and priest-ridden magistrates, Anna van den Hove was brought to Brussels and informed that she was at once to be buried alive. At the same time, the Jesuits told her that by converting herself to the Church she might escape punishment.

When King Henry IV. was summoned to renounce that same Huguenot faith, of which he was the political embodiment and the military champion, the candid man answered by the simple demand to be instructed. When the proper moment came, the instruction was accomplished by an archbishop with the rapidity of magic. Half an hour undid the work of half a life-time. Thus expeditiously could religious conversion be effected when an earthly crown was its guerdon. The poor serving-maid was less open to conviction. In her simple fanaticism she too talked of a crown, and saw it descending from Heaven on her poor forlorn head as the reward, not of apostasy, but of steadfastness. She asked her tormentors how they could expect her to abandon her religion for fear of death. She had read her Bible every day, she said, and had found nothing there of the pope or purgatory, masses, invocation of saints, or the absolution of sins except through the blood of the blessed Redeemer. She interfered with no one who thought differently; she quarrelled with no one's religious belief. She had prayed for enlightenment from Him, if she were in error, and the result was that she felt strengthened in her simplicity, and resolved to do nothing against her conscience. Rather than add this sin to the manifold ones committed by her, she preferred, she said, to die the death. So Anna van den Hove was led, one fine midsummer morning, to the hayfield outside of Brussels, between two Jesuits, followed by a number of a peculiar kind of monks called love-brothers. Those holy men goaded her as she went, telling her that she was the devil's carrion, and calling on her to repent at the last moment, and thus save her life and escape eternal damnation beside. But the poor soul had no ear for them, and cried out that, like Stephen, she saw the heavens opening, and the angels stooping down to conduct her far away from the power of the evil one. When they came to the hay-field they found the pit already dug, and the maid-servant was ordered to descend into it. The executioner then covered her with earth up to the waist, and a last summons was made to her to renounce her errors. She refused, and then the earth was piled upon her, and the hangman jumped upon the grave till it was flattened and firm.

Of all the religious murders done in that hideous sixteenth century in the

Netherlands; the burial of the Antwerp servantmaid was the last and the worst. The worst, because it was a cynical and deliberate attempt to revive the demon whose thirst for blood had been at last allayed, and who had sunk into repose. And it was a spasmodic revival only, for, in the provinces at least, that demon had finished his work.

Still, on the eastern borders of what was called civilization, Turk and Christian were contending for the mastery. The great battle of Kovesd had decided nothing, and the crescent still shone over the fortified and most important Hungarian stronghold of Raab, within arm's length of Vienna. How rapidly might that fatal and menacing emblem fill its horns, should it once be planted on the walls of the Imperial capital! It was not wonderful that a sincere impatience should be felt by all the frontier States for the termination of the insurrection of the Netherlands. Would that rebellious and heretical republic only consent to go out of existence, again bow its stubborn knee to Philip and the Pope, what a magnificent campaign might be made against Mahomet! The King of Spain was the only potentate at all comparable in power to the grand Turk. The King of France, most warlike of men, desired nothing better, as he avowed, than to lead his brave nobles into Hungary to smite the unbelievers. Even Prince Maurice, it was fondly hoped, might be induced to accept a high command in the united armies of Christendom, and seek for glory by campaigning, in alliance with Philip; Rudolph, and Henry, against the Ottoman, rather than against his natural sovereign. Such were the sagacity, the insight, the power of forecasting the future possessed in those days by monarchs, statesmen, and diplomatists who were imagining that they held the world's destiny in their hands.

There was this summer a solemn embassy from the emperor to the States-General proposing mediation referring in the usual conventional phraseology to the right of kings to command, and to the duty of the people to submit, and urging the gentle-mindedness and readiness to forgive which characterised the sovereign of the Netherlands and of Spain.

And the statesmen of the republic had answered as they always did, showing with courteous language, irresistible logic, and at, unmerciful length, that there never had been kings in the Netherlands at all, and that the gentle-mindedness of Philip had been exhibited in the massacre of a hundred thousand Netherlanders in various sieges and battles, and in the murder, under the Duke of Alva alone, of twenty thousand human beings by the hangman.

They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness. They recognised no duty on their part to consent to such a system. Even the friendly King of Denmark sent a legation for a similar purpose, which was respectfully but very decidedly allowed to return as it came; but the most persistent in schemes of interference for the purpose of putting an end to the effusion of blood in the Netherlands was Sigismund of Poland. This monarch, who occupied two very incompatible positions, being sovereign at once of fanatically Protestant Sweden and of orthodox Poland, and who was, moreover, son-in-law of Archduke Charles of Styria whose other daughter was soon to be espoused by the Prince of Spain—was personally and geographically interested in liberating Philip from the inconvenience of his Netherland war. Only thus could he hope to bring the Spanish power to the rescue of Christendom against the Turk. Troubles enough were in store for Sigismund in his hereditary northern realms, and he was to learn that his intermarriage with the great Catholic and Imperial house did not enable him to trample out Protestantism in those hardy Scandinavian and Flemish regions where it had taken secure root. Meantime he despatched, in solemn mission to the republic and to the heretic queen, a diplomatist whose name and whose oratorical efforts have by a caprice of history been allowed to endure to our times.

Paul Dialyn was solemnly received at the Hague on the 21st July. A pragmatist fop, attired in a long, magnificent Polish robe, covered with diamonds and other jewels, he was yet recognised by some of those present as having been several years before a student at Leyden under a different name, and with far less gorgeous surroundings. He took up his position in the council-chamber, in the presence of the stadholder and the leading members of the States-General, and pronounced a long Latin oration, in the manner, as it was said, of a monk delivering a sermon from the pulpit. He kept his eyes steadily fixed on the ceiling, never once looking at the men whom he was addressing, and speaking in a loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable to the audience. He dwelt in terms of extravagant eulogy on the benignity and gentleness of the King of Spain—qualities in which he asserted that no prince on earth could be compared to him—and he said this to the very face of Maurice of Nassau. That the benignant and gentle king had caused the stadholder's father to be assassinated, and that he had rewarded the murderer's family with a patent of nobility, and with an ample revenue taken from the murdered man's property, appeared of no account to the envoy in the full sweep of his rhetoric. Yet the reminiscence caused a shudder of disgust in all who heard him.

He then stated the wish of his master the Polish king to be that, in regard to the Turk, the provinces might reconcile themselves to their natural master, who was the most powerful monarch in Christendom, and the only one able to make head against the common foe. They were solemnly warned of the enormous power and resources of the great king, with whom it was hopeless for them to protract a struggle sure to end at last in their uttermost destruction. It was for kings to issue commands; he said, and for the people to obey; but Philip was full of sweetness, and would accord them full forgiveness for their manifold sins against him. The wish to come to the rescue of Christendom, in this extreme peril from the Turk, was with him paramount to all other considerations.

Such; in brief, was the substance of the long Latin harangue by which it was thought possible to induce those sturdy republicans and Calvinists to renounce their vigorous national existence and to fal on their knees before the most Catholic king. This was understood to be mediation, statesmanship, diplomacy, in deference to which the world was to pause and the course of events to flow backwards. Truly, despots and their lackeys were destined to learn some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth in the North Sea, before it should have accomplished its mission on earth.

The States-General dissembled their disgust, however, for it was not desirable to make open enemies of Sigismund or Rudolph. They refused to accept a copy of the oration, but they promised to send him a categorical answer to it in writing. Meantime the envoy had the honour of walking about the castle with the stadholder, and, in the course of their promenade, Maurice pointed to the thirty-eight standards taken at the battle of Turnhout, which hung from the cedarn rafters of the ancient banquetting hall. The mute eloquence of those tattered banners seemed a not illogical reply to the diplomatic Paul's rhetoric in regard to the hopelessness of a contest with Spanish armies.

Next, Van der Werken—pensionary of Leyden, and a classical scholar—waited upon the envoy with a Latin reply to his harangue, together with a courteous letter for Sigismund. Both documents were scathing denunciations of the policy pursued by the King of Spain and by all his aiders and abettors, and a distinct but polished refusal to listen to a single word in favour of mediation or of peace.

Paul Dialyn then received a courteous permission to leave the territory of the republic, and was subsequently forwarded in a States' vessel of war to England.

His reception, about a month later, by Queen Elizabeth is an event on which all English historians are fond of dwelling. The pedant, on being presented to that imperious and accomplished sovereign, deported himself with the same ludicrous arrogance which had characterised him at the Hague. His Latin oration, which had been duly drawn up for him by the Chancellor of Sweden, was quite as impertinent as his harangue to the States-General had been, and was delivered with the same conceited air. The queen replied on the instant in the same tongue. She was somewhat in a passion, but spoke with majestic moderation?

"Oh, how I have been deceived!" she exclaimed. "I expected an ambassador, and behold a herald! In all my life I never heard of such an oration. Your boldness and unadvised temerity I cannot sufficiently admire. But if the king your master has given you any such thing in charge—which I much doubt—I believe it is because, being but a young man, and lately advanced to the crown, not by ordinary succession of blood, but by election, he understandeth not yet the way of such affairs." And so on—for several minutes longer.

Never did envoy receive such a setting down from sovereign.

"God's death, my lords!" said the queen to her ministers; as she concluded, "I have been enforced this day to scour up my old Latin that hath lain long in rusting."

This combination of ready wit, high spirit, and good Latin, justly excited the enthusiasm of the queen's subjects, and endeared her still more to every English heart. It may, however, be doubted whether the famous reply was in reality so entirely extemporaneous as it has usually been considered. The States-General had lost no time in forwarding to England a minute account of the proceedings of Paul Dialyn at the Hague, together with a sketch of his harangue and of the reply on behalf of the States. Her Majesty and her counsellors therefore, knowing that the same envoy was on his way to England with a similar errand, may be supposed to have had leisure to prepare the famous impromptu. Moreover, it is difficult to understand, on the presumption that these classic utterances were purely extemporaneous, how they have kept their place in all chronicles and histories from that day to the present, without change of a word in the text. Surely there was no stenographer present to take down the queen's words as they fell from her lips.

The military events of the year did not testify to a much more successful activity on the part of the new league in the field than it had displayed in the sphere of diplomacy. In vain did the envoy of the republic urge Henry and his counsellors to follow up the crushing blow dealt to the cardinal at Turnhout by vigorous operations in conjunction with the States' forces in Artois and Hainault. For Amiens had meantime been taken, and it was now necessary for the king to employ all his energy and all his resources to recover that important city. So much damage to the cause of the republic and of the new league had the little yellow Spanish captain inflicted in an hour, with his bags of chestnuts and walnuts. The siege of Amiens lasted nearly six months, and was the main event of the campaign, so far as Henry was concerned. It is true—as the reader has already seen, and as will soon be more clearly developed—that Henry's heart had been fixed on peace from the moment that he consented in conjunction with the republic to declare war, and that he had entered into secret and separate negotiations for that purpose with the agents of Philip so soon as he had bound himself by solemn covenant with Elizabeth to have no negotiations whatever with him except with her full knowledge and consent.

The siege of Amiens, however, was considered a military masterpiece, and its whole progress showed the revolution which the stadholder of Holland had already effected in European warfare. Henry IV. beleaguered Amiens as if he were a pupil of Maurice, and contemporaries were enthusiastic over the science, the patience, the inventive ingenuity which were at last crowned with success. The heroic Hernan Tello de Porto Carrero was killed in a sortie during the defence of the place which he had so gallantly won, and when the city was surrendered to the king on the 19th of September it was stipulated in the first article of the capitulation that the tomb, epitaph, and trophies, by which his memory was honoured in the principal church, should not be disturbed, and that his body might be removed whenever and whither it seemed good to his sovereign. In vain the cardinal had taken the field with an army of eighteen thousand foot and fifteen hundred light cavalry. The king had learned so well to entrench himself and to moderate his ardour for inopportune pitched battles, that the relieving force could find, no occasion to effect its purpose. The archduke retired. He came to Amiens like a soldier, said Henry, but he went back like a priest. Moreover, he was obliged to renounce, besides the city, a most tempting prize which he thought that he had secured within the city. Alexander Farnese, in his last French campaign, had procured and sent to his uncle the foot of St. Philip and the head of St. Lawrence; but what was Albert's delight when he learned that in Amiens cathedral there was a large piece of the head of John the

Baptist! "There will be a great scandal about it in this kingdom," he wrote to Philip, "if I undertake to transport it out of the country, but I will try to contrive it as your Majesty desires."

But the military events of the year prevented the cardinal from gratifying the king in regard to these choice curiosities.

After the reduction of the city Henry went a considerable distance with his army towards the frontier of Flanders, in order to return, as he said, "his cousin's visit." But the recovery of Amiens had placed too winning a card in the secret game which he was then playing to allow him to push his nominal adversary to extremities.

The result, suspected very early in the year by the statesmen of the republic, was already very plainly foreshadowing itself as the winter advanced.

Nor had the other two members of the league affected much in the field. Again an expedition had been fitted forth under Essex against the Spanish coast to return the compliment which Philip had intended with the unlucky armada under Santa Gadea; and again Sir Francis Vere, with two thousand veterans from the Netherlands, and the Dutch admirals, with ten ships of war and a large number of tenders and transports, had faithfully taken part in the adventure.

The fleet was tempest-tossed for ten days, during which it reached the threatened coast and was blown off again. It returned at last into the English ports, having accomplished nothing, and having expended superfluously a considerable amount of money and trouble. Essex, with a few of the vessels, subsequently made a cruise towards the Azores, but, beyond the capture of a Spanish merchantman or two, gained no glory and inflicted no damage.

Nothing could be feebler than the military operations of the three confederated powers ever since they had so solemnly confederated themselves.

Sick at heart with the political intrigues of his allies which had— brought a paralysis upon his arms which the blows of the enemy could hardly have effected, Maurice took the field in August: for an autumnal campaign on the eastern frontier of the republic. Foiled in his efforts for a combined attack by the whole force of the league upon Philip's power in the west, he thought it at least expedient to liberate the Rhine, to secure the important provinces of Zutphen, Gelderland, and Overijssel from attack, and to provide against the dangerous

intrigues and concealed warfare carried on by Spain in the territories of the mad Duke of Juliers, Clever and Berg. For the seeds of the Thirty Years' War of Germany were already sown broadcast in those fatal duchies, and it was the determination of the agents of Spain to acquire the mastery of that most eligible military position, that excellent 'sedes belli,' whenever Protestantism was to be assailed in England, the Netherlands, or Germany.

Meantime the Hispaniolated counsellors of Duke John had strangled—as it was strongly suspected—his duchess, who having gone to bed in perfect health one evening was found dead in her bed next morning, with an ugly mark on her throat; and it was now the purpose of these statesmen to find a new bride for their insane sovereign in the ever ready and ever orthodox house of Lorraine. And the Protestant brothers-in-law and nephews and nieces were making every possible combination in order to check such dark designs, and to save these important territories from the ubiquitous power of Spain.

The stadholder had also family troubles at this period. His sister Emilia had conceived a desperate passion for Don Emmanuel, the pauper son of the forlorn pretender to Portugal, Don Antonio, who had at last departed this life. Maurice was indignant that a Catholic, an outcast, and, as it was supposed, a bastard, should dare to mate with the daughter of William of Orange-Nassau; and there were many scenes of tenderness, reproaches, recriminations, and 'hysterica passio,' in which not only the lovers, the stadholder and his family, but also the high and mighty States-General, were obliged to enact their parts. The chronicles are filled with the incidents, which, however, never turned to tragedy, nor even to romance, but ended, without a catastrophe, in a rather insipid marriage. The Princess Emilia remained true both to her religion and her husband during a somewhat obscure wedded life, and after her death Don Emmanuel found means to reconcile himself with the King of Spain and to espouse, in second nuptials, a Spanish lady. On the 4th of August, Maurice arrived at Arnhem with a force of seven thousand foot and twelve hundred horse. Hohenlo was with him, and William Lewis, and there was yet another of the illustrious house of Nassau in the camp, Frederick Henry, a boy in his thirteenth year, the youngest born of William the Silent, the grandson of Admiral de Coligny, now about; in this his first campaign, to take the first step in a long and noble career.

Having reduced the town and castle of Alphen, the stadholder came before Rheinberg, which he very expeditiously invested. During a preliminary skirmish William Lewis received a wound in the leg, while during the brief siege Maurice

had a narrow escape from death, a cannon-ball passing through his tent and over his head as he lay taking a brief repose upon his couch.

On the 19th, Rheinberg, the key to that portion of the river, surrendered. On the 31st the stadholder opened his batteries upon the city of Meurs, which capitulated on the 2nd of September; the commandant, Andrew Miranda, stipulating that he should carry off an old fifty- pounder, the only piece of cannon in the place. Maurice gave his permission with a laugh, begging Miranda not to batter down any cities with his big gun.

On the 8th September the stadholder threw a bridge over the Rhine, and crossing that river and the Lippe, came on the 11th before Grol. There was no Christopher Mondragon now in his path to check his progress and spoil his campaign, so that in seventeen days the city, being completely surrounded with galleries and covered ways up to its walls, surrendered. Count van Stirum, royal governor of the place, dined with the stadholder on that day, and the garrison, from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred strong; together with such of the townsfolk as chose to be subjects of Philip rather than citizens of the republic, were permitted to depart in peace.

On the 9th October the town and castle of Brevoort were taken by storm and the town was burned.

On the 18th October, Maurice having summoned Enschede, the commandant requested permission to examine the artillery by which it was proposed to reduce the city. Leave being granted, two captains were deputed accordingly as inspectors, who reported that resistance was useless. The place accordingly capitulated at once.

Here, again, was an improvement on the heroic practice of Alva and Romero.

On the 21st and 22nd October, Ootmarsum and Oldenzaal were taken, and on the 28th the little army came before Lingen. This important city surrendered after a fortnight's siege.

Thus closed a sagacious, business-like, three-months' campaign, in the course of which the stadholder, although with a slender force, had by means of his excellent organization and his profound practical science, achieved very considerable results. He had taken nine strongly-fortified cities and five castles,

opened the navigation of the Rhine, and strengthened the whole eastern bulwarks of the republic. He was censured by the superficial critics of the old school for his humanity towards the conquered garrisons. At least it was thought quite superfluous to let these Spanish soldiers go scot free. Five thousand veterans had thus been liberated to swell the ranks of the cardinal's army, but the result soon proved the policy of Maurice to be, in many ways, wholesome. The great repudiation by Philip, and the consequent bankruptcy of Albrecht converted large numbers of the royal troops into mutineers, and these garrisons from the eastern frontier were glad to join in the game.

After the successful siege of Hulst in the previous year the cardinal had reduced the formidable mutiny which had organized itself at Tirlemont and Chapelle in the days of his luckless predecessor. Those rebels had been paid off and had mainly returned to Italy and other lands to spend their money. But soon a new rebellion in all the customary form's established itself in Antwerp citadel during the temporary absence of Mexia, the governor, and great was the misery of the unhappy burghers thus placed at the mercy of the guns of that famous pentagon. They were obliged to furnish large sums to the whole garrison, paying every common foot- soldier twelve stivers a day and the officers in proportion, while the great Eletto demanded, beside his salary, a coach and six, a state bed with satin curtains and fine linen, and the materials for banquetting sumptuously every day. At the slightest demur to these demands the bombardment from the citadel would begin, and the accurate artillery practice of those experienced cannoneers soon convinced the loyal citizens of the propriety of the arrangement. The example spread. The garrison of Ghent broke into open revolt, and a general military rebellion lasted for more than a year.

While the loyal cities of the obedient provinces were thus enjoying the fruits of their loyalty and obedience, the rebellious capital of the republic was receiving its stadholder with exuberant demonstrations of gratitude. The year, begun with the signal victory of Turnhout, had worthily terminated, so far as military events were concerned, with the autumnal campaign on the Rhine, and great were the rejoicings throughout the little commonwealth.

Thus, with diminished resources, had the republic been doing its share of the work which the anti-Spanish league had been called into existence to accomplish. But, as already intimated, this league was a mere fraud upon the Netherlands, which their statesmen were not slow in discovering. Of course it was the object of Philip and of the pope to destroy this formidable triple alliance

as soon as formed, and they found potent assistance, not only in Henry's counsellors, but in the bosom of that crafty monarch himself. Clement hated Philip as much as he feared him, so that the prospect both of obtaining Henry as a counterpoise to his own most oppressive and most Catholic protector, and of breaking up the great convert's alliance with the heretic queen and the rebellious republic, was a most tempting one to his Holiness. Therefore he employed, indefatigably, the matchless powers of intrigue possessed by Rome to effect this great purpose. As for Elizabeth, she was weary of the war, most anxious to be reimbursed her advances to the States, and profoundly jealous of the rising commercial and naval greatness of the new commonwealth. If the league therefore proved impotent from the beginning, certainly it was not the fault of the United Netherlands. We have seen how much the king deplored, in intimate conversation with De Bethune, his formal declaration of war against Spain which the Dutch diplomatists had induced him to make; and indeed nothing can be more certain than that this public declaration of war, and this solemn formation of the triple alliance against Philip, were instantly accompanied on Henry's part by secret peace negotiations with Philip's agents. Villeroy, told Envoy Calvaert that as for himself he always trembled when he thought on what he had done, in seconding the will of his Majesty in that declaration at the instance of the States-General, of which measure so many losses and such bitter fruits had been the result. He complained, too, of the little assistance or co-operation yielded by England. Calvaert replied that he had nothing to say in defence of England, but that certainly the king could have no cause to censure the States. The republic, however, had good ground, he said, to complain that nothing had been done by France, that all favourable occasions had been neglected, and that there was a perpetual change of counsels. The envoy, especially, and justly, reproached the royal government for having taken no advantage of the opportunity offered by the victory of Turnhout, in which the republic had utterly defeated the principal forces of the common enemy. He bluntly remarked, too, that the mysterious comings and goings of Balvena had naturally excited suspicions in the Netherlands, and that it would be better that all such practices should be at once abandoned. They did his Majesty no service, and it was no wonder that they caused uneasiness to his allies. Villeroy replied that the king had good reasons to give satisfaction to those who were yearning for peace.

As Henry himself was yearning in this regard as much as any of his subjects, it was natural enough that he should listen to Balvena and all other informal negotiators whom Cardinal Ilbert might send from Brussels or Clement from

Rome. It will be recollected that Henry's parting words to Balvena at Rouen had been: "Tell the archduke that I am very much his friend. Let him arrange a peace. Begone. Be diligent."

But the king's reply to Calvaert, when, after the interview with Villeroy, that envoy was admitted to the royal dressing room for private conversation and took the occasion to remonstrate with his Majesty on these intrigues with the Spanish agent, was that he should send off Balvena in such fashion that it would take from the cardinal-archduke all hope of troubling him with any further propositions.

It has been seen, too, with what an outbreak of wrath the proposition, made by Elizabeth through Robert Sydney, that she should succour Calais on condition of keeping it for herself, had been received by Henry. At a somewhat later moment, when Calais had passed entirely into the possession of Spain, the queen offered to lay siege to that city with twelve thousand men, but with the understanding that the success was to be entirely for her own profit. Again the king had expressed great astonishment and indignation at the proposition.

Nevertheless, after Amiens had been lost, Henry had sent Fonquerolles on a special mission to England, asking Elizabeth's assistance in the siege for its recovery, and offering that she should keep Calais as a pledge for expenses thus incurred, on the same terms as those on which she held the Brill and Flushing in the Netherlands. This proposal, however, to make a considerable campaign in Picardy, and to be indemnified by Henry for her trouble with the pledge of a city which was not his property, did not seem tempting to Elizabeth: The mission of Fonquerolles was fruitless, as might have been supposed. Nothing certainly in the queen's attitude, up to that moment, could induce the supposition that she would help to reduce Amiens for the sake of the privilege of conquering Calais if she could.

So soon as her refusal was made certain, Henry dropped the mask. Buzanval, the regular French envoy at the Hague—even while amazing the States by rebukes for their short-comings in the field and by demands for immediate co-operation in the king's campaign, when the king was doing nothing but besiege Amiens—astonished the republican statesmen still further by telling them—that his master was listening seriously to the pope's secret offers.

His Holiness had assured the king, through the legate at Paris, that he could easily bring about a peace between him and Philip, if Henry would agree to make it alone, and he would so manage it that the king's name should not be mixed up with the negotiations, and that he should not appear as seeking for

peace. It was to be considered however—so Henry's envoy intimated both at Greenwich and the Hague—that if the king should accept the pope's intervention he would be obliged to exclude from a share in it the queen and all others not of the Catholic religion, and it was feared that the same necessity which had compelled him to listen to these overtures would force him still further in the same path. He dreaded lest, between peace and war, he might fall into a position in which the law would be dictated to him either by the enemy or by those who had undertaken to help him out of danger.

Much more information to this effect did Buzanval communicate to the States on the authority of a private letter from the king, telling him of the ill-success of the mission of Fonquerolles. That diplomatist had brought back nothing from England, it appeared, save excuses, general phrases, and many references to the troubles in Ireland and to the danger of a new Spanish Armada.

It was now for the first time, moreover, that the States learned how they had been duped both by England and France in the matter of the League. To their surprise they were informed that while they were themselves furnishing four thousand men, according to the contract signed by the three powers, the queen had in reality only agreed to contribute two thousand soldiers, and these only for four months' service, within a very strict territorial limit, and under promise of immediate reimbursement of the expenses thus incurred.

These facts, together with the avowal that their magnanimous ally had all along been secretly treating for peace with the common enemy, did not make a cheerful impression upon those plain-spoken republicans, nor was it much consolation to them to receive the assurance that "after the king's death his affection and gratitude towards the States would be found deeply engraved upon his heart."

The result of such a future autopsy might seem a matter of comparative indifference, since meantime the present effect to the republic of those deep emotions was a treacherous desertion. Calvaert, too, who had so long haunted the king like his perpetual shadow, and who had believed him—at least so far as the Netherlands were concerned—to be almost without guile, had been destined after all to a rude awakening. Sick and suffering, he did not cease, so long as life was in him, to warn the States-General of the dangers impending over them from the secret negotiations which their royal ally was doing his best to conceal from them, and as to which he had for a time succeeded so dexterously in

hoodwinking their envoy himself. But the honest and energetic agent of the republic did not live to see the consummation of these manœuvres of Henry and the pope. He died in Paris during the month of June of this year.

Certainly the efforts of Spanish and Papal diplomacy had not been unsuccessful in bringing about a dissolution of the bonds of amity by which the three powers seemed so lately to be drawing themselves very closely together. The republic and Henry IV. were now on a most uncomfortable footing towards each other. On the other hand, the queen was in a very ill humour with the States and very angry with Henry. Especially the persistent manner in which the Hollanders carried on trade with Spain and were at the same time making fortunes for themselves and feeding the enemy, while Englishmen, on pain of death, were debarred from participation in such traffic, excited great and general indignation in England. In vain was it represented that this trade, if prohibited to the commonwealth would fall into the hands of neutral powers, and that Spain would derive her supplies from the Baltic and other regions as regularly as ever, while the republic, whose whole life was in her foreign commerce, would not only become incapable of carrying on the war but would perish of inanition. The English statesmen threatened to declare all such trade contraband, and vessels engaging in it lawful prize to English cruisers.

Burghley declared, with much excitement, to Canon, that he, as well as all the council, considered the conduct of the Hollanders so unjustifiable as to make them regret that their princess had ever embarked with a State which chose to aid its own enemies in the destruction of itself and its allies. Such conduct was so monstrous that those who were told of it would hardly believe it.

The Dutch envoy observed that there were thirty thousand sailors engaged in this trade, and he asked the Lord Treasurer whether he proposed that these people should all starve or be driven into the service of the enemy. Burghley rejoined that the Hollanders had the whole world beside to pursue their traffic in, that they did indeed trade over the whole world, and had thereby become so extraordinarily, monstrously rich that there was no believing it.

Caron declared his sincere wish that this was true, but said, on the contrary, that he knew too well what extreme trouble and labour the States-General had in providing for the expenses of the war and in extracting the necessary funds from the various communities. This would hardly be the case were such great wealth in the land as was imagined. But still the English counsellors protested that they

would stop this trading with the enemy at every hazard.

On the question of peace or war itself the republican diplomatists were often baffled as to the true intentions of the English Government. "As the queen is fine and false," said Marquis Havre, observing and aiding in the various intrigues which were weaving at Brussels, "and her council much the same, she is practising towards the Hollanders a double stratagem. On the one hand she induces them to incline to a general peace. On the other, her adherents, ten or twelve in number of those who govern Holland and have credit with the people, insist that the true interest of the State is in a continuation of the war."

But Havre, adept in diplomatic chicane as he undoubtedly was, would have found it difficult to find any man of intelligence or influence in that rebellious commonwealth, of which he was once a servant, who had any doubt on that subject. It needed no English argument to persuade Olden-Barneveld, and the other statesmen who guided the destiny of the republic, that peace would be destruction. Moreover, there is no question that both the queen and Burghley would have been truly grateful had the States-General been willing to make peace and return to the allegiance which they had long since spurned.

Nevertheless it is difficult to say whether there were at this moment more of animosity in Elizabeth's mind towards her backsliding ally, with whom she had so recently and so pompously sworn an eternal friendship, or towards her ancient enemy. Although she longed for peace, she hardly saw her way to it, for she felt that the secret movements of Henry had in a manner barred the path. She confessed to the States' envoy that it was as easy for her to make black white as to make peace with Spain. To this Caron cordially assented, saying with much energy, "There is as much chance for your Majesty and for us to make peace, during the life of the present King of Spain, as to find redemption in hell."

To the Danish ambassadors, who had come to England with proposals of mediation, the queen had replied that the King of Spain had attacked her dominions many times, and had very often attempted her assassination, that after long patience she had begun to defend herself, and had been willing to show him that she had the courage and the means, not only to maintain herself against his assaults, but also to invade his realms; that, therefore, she was not disposed to speak first; nor to lay down any conditions. Yet, if she saw that the King of Spain had any remorse for his former offences against her, and wished to make atonement for them, she was willing to declare that her heart was not so

alienated from peace; but that she could listen to propositions on the subject.

She said, too, that such a peace must be a general one, including both the King of France and the States of the Netherlands, for with these powers she had but lately made an offensive and defensive league against the King of Spain, from which she protested that for no consideration in the world would she ever swerve one jot.

Certainly these were words of Christian charity and good faith, but such professions are the common staple of orations and documents for public consumption. As the accounts became more and more minute, however, of Henry's intrigues with Albert, Philip, and Clement, the queen grew more angry.

She told Caron that she was quite aware that the king had long been in communication with the cardinal's emissaries, and that he had even sent some of his principal counsellors to confer with the cardinal himself at Arras, in direct violation of the stipulations of the league. She expressed her amazement at the king's conduct; for she knew very well, she said, that the league had hardly been confirmed and sworn to, before he was treating with secret agents sent to him by the cardinal. "And now," she continued, "they propose to send an ambassador to inform me of the whole proceeding, and to ask my advice and consent in regard to negotiations which they have, perchance, entirely concluded."

She further informed the republican envoy that the king had recently been taking the ground in these dealings with the common enemy; that the two kingdoms of France and England must first be provided for; that when the basis between these powers and Spain had been arranged, it would be time to make arrangements for the States, and that it would probably be found advisable to obtain a truce of three or four years between them and Spain, in which interval the government of the provinces might remain on its actual footing. During this armistice the King of Spain was to withdraw all Spanish troops from the Netherlands, in consequence of which measure all distrust would by degrees vanish, and the community, becoming more and more encouraged, would in time recognise the king for their sovereign once more.

This, according to the information received by Elizabeth from her resident minister in France, was Henry's scheme for carrying out the principles of the offensive and defensive league, which only the year before he had so solemnly concluded with the Dutch republic. Instead of assisting that commonwealth in

waging her war of independence against Spain, he would endeavour to make it easy for her to return peacefully to her ancient thralldom.

The queen asked Caron what he thought of the project. How could that diplomatist reply but with polite scorn? Not a year of such an armistice would elapse, he said, before the Spanish partisans would have it all their own way in the Netherlands, and the King of Spain would be master of the whole country. Again and again he repeated that peace, so long as Philip lived, was an impossibility for the States. No doubt that monarch would gladly consent to the proposed truce, for it, would be indeed strange if by means of it he could not so establish himself in the provinces as to easily overthrow the sovereigns who were thus helping him to so advantageous a position.

The queen listened patiently to a long and earnest remonstrance in this vein made by the envoy, and assured him that not even to gain another kingdom would she be the cause of a return of the provinces to the dominion of Spain. She would do her best to dissuade the king from his peace negotiations; but she would listen to De Maisae, the new special envoy from Henry, and would then faithfully report to Caron, by word of mouth, the substance of the conversation. The States-General did not deserve to be deceived, nor would she be a party to any deception, unless she were first cheated herself. "I feel indeed," she added, "that matters are not always managed as they should be by your Government, and that you have not always treated princes, especially myself, as we deserve to be treated. Nevertheless, your State is not a monarchy, and so we must take all things into consideration, and weigh its faults against its many perfections."

With this philosophical—and in the mouth of Elizabeth Tudor, surely very liberal—reflection, the queen terminated the interview with the republican envoy.

Meantime the conferences with the special ambassador of France proceeded. For, so soon as Henry had completed all his arrangements, and taken his decision to accept the very profitable peace offered to him by Spain, he assumed that air of frankness which so well became him, and candidly avowed his intention of doing what he had already done. Hurault de Maisse arrived in England not long before the time when the peace-commissioners were about assembling at Vervins. He was instructed to inform her Majesty that he had done his best to bring about a general alliance of the European powers from which alone the league concluded between England, France, and the Netherlands would have

derived substantial strength.

But as nothing was to be hoped for from Germany, as England offered but little assistance, and as France was exhausted by her perpetual conflicts, it had become necessary for the king to negotiate for a peace. He now wished to prove, therefore, to the queen, as to a sister to whom he was under such obligations, that the interests of England were as dear to him as those of France.

The proof of these generous sentiments did not, however, seem so clear as could be wished, and there were very stormy debates, so soon as the ambassador found himself in conference with her Majesty's counsellors. The English statesmen bitterly reproached the French for having thus lightly thrown away the alliance between the two countries, and they insisted upon the duty of the king to fulfil his solemn engagements.

The reply was very frank and very decided. Kings, said De Maisse, never make treaties except with the tacit condition to embrace every thing that may be useful to them, and carefully to avoid every thing prejudicial to their interests.

The corollary from this convenient and sweeping maxim was simple enough. The king could not be expected, by his allies to reject an offered peace which was very profitable, nor to continue a war which, was very detrimental. All that they could expect was that he should communicate his intentions to them, and this he was now very cheerfully doing. Such in brief were the statements of De Maisse.

The English were indignant. They also said a stout word for the provinces, although it has been made sufficiently clear that they did not love that upstart republic. But the French ambassador replied that his, master really meant secretly to assist the States in carrying on the war until they should make an arrangement. He should send them very powerful succours for this purpose, and he expected confidently that England would assist him in this line of conduct. Thus Henry was secretly pledging himself, to make underhand but substantial war against Spain, with which power he was at that instant concluding peace, while at the same time he was abandoning his warlike league with the queen and the republic, in order to affect that very pacification. Truly the morality of the governing powers of the earth was not entirely according to the apostolic standard.

The interviews between the queen and the new ambassador were, of course, on his part, more courteous in tone than those with the counsellors, but mainly to the same effect. De Maisse stated that the Spanish king had offered to restore every place that he held in France, including Calais, Brittany, and the Marquisate of Saluces, and as he likewise manifested a willingness to come to favourable terms with her Majesty and with the States, it was obviously the duty of Henry to make these matters known to her Majesty, in whose hands was thus placed the decision between peace or continuation of the war. The queen asked what was the authority for the supposition that England was to be included by Spain in the pacification. De Maisse quoted President Richardot. In that case, the queen remarked, it was time for her to prepare for a third Spanish armada. When a former envoy from France had alluded to Richardot as expressing the same friendly sentiments on the part of his sovereign and himself, she had replied by referring to the sham negotiations of Bourbourg, by which the famous invasion of 1588 had been veiled, and she had intimated her expectation that another Spanish fleet would soon be at her throat. And within three weeks of the utterance of her prophecy the second armada, under Santa Gadea, had issued from Spain to assail her realms. Now then, as Richardot was again cited as a peace negotiator, it was time to look for a third invasion. It was an impertinence for Secretary of State Villeroy to send her word about Richardot. It was not an impertinence in King Henry, who understood war-matters better than he did affairs of state, in which kings were generally governed by their counsellors and secretaries, but it was very strange that Villeroy should be made quiet with a simple declaration of Richardot.

The queen protested that she would never consent to a peace with Spain, except with the knowledge and consent of the States. De Maisse replied that the king was of the same mind, upon which her Majesty remarked that in that case he had better have apprised her and the States of his intentions before treating alone and secretly with the enemy. The envoy denied that the king had been treating. He had only been listening to what the King of Spain had to propose, and suggesting his own wishes and intentions. The queen rejoined that this was treating if anything was, and certainly her Majesty was in the right if the term has any meaning at all.

Elizabeth further reproachfully observed, that although the king talked about continuing the war, he seemed really tired of that dangerous pursuit, in which he had exercised himself so many long years, and that he was probably beginning to find a quiet and agreeable life more to his taste. She expressed the hope,

however, that he would acquit himself honourably towards herself and her allies, and keep the oaths which he had so solemnly sworn before God.

Such was the substance of the queen's conversations with De Maisse, as she herself subsequently reported them to the States' envoy.

The republican statesmen had certainly cause enough to suspect Henry's intentions, but they did not implicitly trust Elizabeth. They feared that both king and queen were heartily sick of the war, and disposed to abandon the league, while each was bent on securing better terms than the other in any negotiations for peace. Barneveld—on the whole the most sagacious of the men then guiding the affairs of Europe, although he could dispose of but comparatively slender resources, and was merely the chief minister of a scarcely-born little commonwealth of some three million souls—was doing his best to save the league and to divert Henry from thoughts of peace. Feeling that the queen, notwithstanding her professions to Caron and others, would have gladly entered into negotiations with Philip, had she found the door as wide open as Henry had found it, he did his best to prevent both his allies from proceeding farther in that direction. He promised the French envoy at the Hague that not only would the republic continue to furnish the four thousand soldiers as stipulated in the league, but that if Henry would recommence active operations, a States' army of nine thousand foot and two thousand horse should at once take the field on the Flemish frontier of France, and aid in the campaign to the full extent of their resources. If the king were disposed to undertake the siege of Calais, the Advocate engaged that he should be likewise energetically assisted in that enterprise.

Nor was it suggested in case the important maritime stronghold were recovered that it should be transferred, not to the sovereign of France, but to the dominions of the republic. That was the queen's method of assisting an ally, but it was not the practice of the States. Buzanval, who was quite aware of his master's decision to conclude peace, suggested Henry's notion of a preliminary and general truce for six months. But of course Barneveld rejected the idea with horror. He felt, as every intelligent statesman of the commonwealth could not but feel, that an armistice would be a death-blow. It would be better, he said, for the States to lose one or two towns than to make a truce, for there were so many people in the commonwealth sure to be dazzled by the false show of a pacification, that they would be likely, after getting into the suburbs, to wish to enter the heart of the city. "If," said the Advocate, "the French and the English

know what they are doing when they are, facilitating the Spanish dominion in the provinces, they would prefer to lose a third of their own kingdoms to seeing the Spaniard absolute master here."

It was determined, in this grave position of affairs, to send a special mission both to France and to England with the Advocate as its chief. Henry made no objections to this step, but, on the contrary, affected much impatience for the arrival of the envoys, and ascribed the delay to the intrigues of Elizabeth. He sent word to Prince Maurice and to Barneveld that he suspected the queen of endeavouring to get before him in negotiating with Spain in order to obtain Calais for herself. And, in truth, Elizabeth very soon afterwards informed Barneveld that she might really have had Calais, and have got the better of the king in these secret transactions.

Meantime, while the special mission to France and England was getting ready to depart, an amateur diplomatist appeared in Brussels, and made a feeble effort to effect a reconciliation between the republic and the cardinal.

This was a certain Van der Meulen, an Antwerp merchant who, for religious reasons, had emigrated to Leyden, and who was now invited by the cardinal archduke to Brussels to confer with his counsellors as to the possibility of the rebellious States accepting his authority. For, as will soon be indicated, Philip had recently resolved on a most important step. He was about to transfer the sovereignty of all the Netherlands to his daughter Isabella and her destined husband, Cardinal Albert. It would, obviously, therefore, be an excessively advantageous arrangement for those new sovereigns if the rebellious States would join hands with the obedient provinces, accept the dominion of Albert and Isabella and give up their attempt to establish a republican government. Accordingly the cardinal had intimated that the States would be allowed the practice of their religion, while the military and civil functionaries might retain office. He even suggested that he would appoint Maurice of Nassau his stadholder for the northern provinces, unless he should prefer a high position in the Imperial armies. Such was the general admiration felt in Spain and elsewhere for the military talents of the prince, that he would probably be appointed commander-in-chief of the forces against Mahomet. Van der Meulen duly reported all these ingenious schemes to the States, but the sturdy republicans only laughed at them. They saw clearly enough through such slight attempts to sow discord in their commonwealth, and to send their great chieftain to Turkey.

A most affectionate letter, written by the cardinal-archduke to the States-General, inviting them to accept his sovereignty, and another from the obedient provinces to the united States of the same purport, remained unanswered.

But the Antwerp merchant, in his interviews with the crafty politicians who surrounded the cardinal, was able at least to obtain some insight into the opinions prevalent at Brussels; and these were undoubtedly to the effect that both England and France were willing enough to abandon the cause of the Netherlands, provided only that they could obtain satisfactory arrangements for themselves.

Van der Meulen remarked to Richardot that in all their talk about a general peace nothing had been said of the Queen of England, to whom the States were under so great obligations, and without whom they would never enter into any negotiations.

Richardot replied that the queen had very sagaciously provided for the safety of her own kingdom, and had kept up the fire everywhere else in order to shelter herself. There was more difficulty for this lady, he said, than for any of the rest. She had shown herself very obstinate, and had done them a great deal of mischief. They knew very well that the King of France did not love her. Nevertheless, as they had resolved upon a general peace, they were willing to treat with her as well as with the others.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Auction sales of judicial ermine
Decline a bribe or interfere with the private sale of places
Famous fowl in every pot
Fellow worms had been writhing for half a century in the dust
For his humanity towards the conquered garrisons (censured)
Historical scepticism may shut its eyes to evidence
Imagining that they held the world's destiny in their hands
King had issued a general repudiation of his debts
Loud, nasal, dictatorial tone, not at all agreeable
Peace would be destruction
Repudiation of national debts was never heard of before
Some rude lessons from that vigorous little commonwealth
Such a crime as this had never been conceived (bankruptcy)
They liked not such divine right nor such gentle-mindedness
Whether murders or stratagems, as if they were acts of virtue

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