

William the Silent and His Times

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“A *LIFE not merely in its externals, but in its influence on and part in the evolution of opinion which diametrically changes the civilization of the world, is the interesting and instructive thing in biography.”*

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

LIVES of great men have such close relation to their times that their histories can not be studied without also considering the events of their age. Men's biographies can not be separated from the world's history. History, in fact, as Carlyle has remarked, is but the biography of great men. "All things," he says, "that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realization and embodiment of thoughts that dwelt in the great men sent into the world; the whole world's history, it may be justly considered, were the history of these." And yet what we call *epochs*—times when there are certain outbursts of eventful acts on the part of great men producing social, religious, or political convulsions—are generally but results of long world-preparations. These convulsions may take men by surprise, as does the eruption of a volcano; but, as De Tocqueville said about the French Revolution, they are "only the completion of travail most prolonged, the sudden and violent termination of a work on which generations had been laboring." There always has been a long burning and boiling and rumbling in the crater before the lava is belched forth.

The operation of general causes, however, does not alone account for the events of history. "Especially," as it has been said, "if a revolution in long-established opin-

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ions and habits of feeling is to take place, there must be individuals to rally upon; men of power, who are able to create and sustain in others a new moral life which they have first realized in themselves." A revolution can not be carried on and out unless some one man is raised up around whom the people gather, and who has force in himself to mold common destinies. For "it is characteristic of great historical movements to begin with individuals, and to expand gradually from them as centers, or to grow up from them as seeds, till they become at length world-wide phenomena."

William the Silent was pre-eminently such an individual. He was peculiarly a man of power, able to create and sustain in others a new moral life. His countrymen had at the beginning, and, indeed, for years after, little appreciation of the new life of individual political and religious freedom that was aroused in the Prince of Orange, who was, it has been said, two hundred years ahead of his times in ideas in this. Hence, his was the double task of first creating and then sustaining in them this new, untried life.

This was a task, too, that had meaning and importance not only for himself and Holland, but for the whole world. He battled for civil and religious liberty, "the establishment of the great principle of toleration in matters of conscience" in an age when "toleration was considered a vice." Instead of a vice, William looked upon it as the choicest of virtues, and, as Motley says, he had the manhood to cultivate it as such.

Rogers, in giving the story of Holland, wrote: "I hold it, that the revolt of the Netherlands, and the success of Holland, is the beginning of modern political science,

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and of modern civilization." He further says: "But the debt of modern Europe to Holland is by no means limited to the lessons which it taught as to the true purposes of civil government. It taught Europe nearly everything else. It instructed communities in progressive and national agriculture. It was the pioneer in navigation and in discovery and, according to the lights of the age, was the founder of intelligent commerce. It produced the greatest jurists of the seventeenth century. It was pre-eminent in the arts of peace. The presses of Holland put forth more books than all the rest of Europe did. It had the most learned scholars. The languages of the East were first given to the world by Dutchmen. It was foremost in physical research, in rational medicine. It instructed statesmen in finance, traders in banking and credit, philosophers in speculative sciences. For a long time that little storm-vexed nook of northwestern Europe was the University of the civilized world, the center of European trade, the admiration, the envy, the example of nations."

Americans more than any other people have occasion to be grateful for what the Netherlanders led by him whose life and times we are about to study, accomplished. In Holland our Pilgrim Fathers went to school in politics and religion before coming to America. We formed our government after a Republic not after a Monarchy. "The best part of the Constitution of the Dutch Republic lives in our own." Holland was the first to take formal action recognizing the United States of America as an independent nation. At Franeker the students illuminated the University in recognition of our independence. At Leeuwarden a medal was struck off to commemorate the inde-

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pendence of the United States. On one side of this medal was engraved a Frisian in ancient costume, holding out his right hand to an American, while with his left hand he rejects the peace offered by a Britain. During our civil war, Holland bought up in vast amounts the bonds of the United States, while the English were investing in confederate securities. "The blood shed at Haarlem and Zutphen and at Alkmaar, the starvation at Leyden, were for the United States of America as well as for the United Provinces of Holland. The red, white and blue flag of the little Republic behind the dykes stood for those principles which are now symbolized by the flowery flag which boasts forty-five stars. As one stands on the great dyke near Delfshaven, which was cut down to drown out the Spaniards who represented despotism in Church and State, and to relieve Leyden that stood for resistance to tyranny of priest and king, he realizes what America owes to Holland." And the man who above all others deserves to be held in grateful memory by Americans for inculcating and maintaining those principles, is William, Prince of Orange.

Next to the age of the birth of Christianity in interest and importance to the world is the epoch in history with which the illustrious name of the Prince of Orange stands inseparably connected. Despotism, sacerdotal and regal, was being met face to face by the spirit of rational human liberty. Deep-rooted, strongly fortified by precedence and experience, and hence confident and bold, was the former. New, untried, crude, undeveloped, inexperienced, and hence unconscious of its real value and strength was the latter. It, therefore, moved forward timidly and with hesitation. Was combat ever more important? Could

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any be more sacred? Hence the desperate nature of the struggle. We shudder at the sea of human blood through which the spirit of human liberty has always been called upon to wade in order to come to its right of being. The price, though great, was, however, not too high to pay for its supremacy. Nothing great or good for mankind has ever been accomplished without suffering. 'Tis a stern economy, but effectual. A man's usefulness to this world is often in direct proportion to the depths of sorrow through which he is called upon to pass. Gethsemanes are blood-marks in the way of the world's salvation.

"He who lifts a soul from vice,
And leads the way to better lands,
Must part his raiment, share his slice,
And oft with weary, bleeding hands,
Pave the long way with sacrifice."

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were marked by the birth of modern civilization. It was an era of remarkable inventions and discoveries. Gunpowder at this time "revolutionized the art of war by lifting the peasant to the level of the knight"; the ever present and visible magnetic compass took the place of the North Star often lost behind clouds, making mariners bold to launch out into far-stretching seas; knowledge was beginning to be widely diffused by the use of movable types. Columbus discovered a new Continent; Vasco de Gama rounding the Cape of Good Hope "opened a new highway for commerce"; the Copernican system of the universe revolutionized Astronomy, while Michael Angelo and Raphael gave a new impulse to art, and Duerer enthused a higher life in the fine arts by the choice of morally inspiring models.

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Politically, too, all Europe was undergoing a change. Feudalism was waning. Monarchy was gaining ascendancy. Kingdoms such as France, Spain and England were becoming consolidated. "The invasion of Italy by Charles VIII in 1494 commenced the wars of which Italy was at once the theater and the prize, and the conflicts of the European States for the acquisition of territory or of ascendancy over one another. To the intercourse of nations by means of commerce which had spread from Venice, Genoa and the towns of the Hanseatic League through the rest of Western Europe was added the intercourse of diplomacy. A State system was growing up in which the several peoples were more closely connected by political relations."

When the full effects of such far-reaching historical, political, social and religious commotions had not had time to be brought about,—indeed, during their most critical period, William the Silent was born.

CHAPTER II.

THE NETHERLANDS IN THE TIME OF WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE

NO country in Europe presented a more enviable condition, or was more prosperous in every department of State and society than the Netherlands in the time which we are studying. Its territory embraced what now constitutes the kingdoms of Holland and Belgium, and was divided into seventeen provinces, which, though having much in common, were independent States, having their own assemblies, their own courts of justice, considering citizens of one province foreigners in another, no foreigner being eligible to office. These so-called inalienable rights were strictly insisted upon and proudly maintained.

The seventeen provinces, however, had formed a bond in what they called the States-General—an assembly consisting of the clergy, the nobles and representatives of the towns from each of the provinces. This body had no legislative authority. No new taxes were to be imposed, and no war could be declared without the concurrence of all the estates. These estates alone were to regulate the currency, and if the Emperor required supplies from them he was to appear before them in person. These privileges and rights were granted to the Netherlands by Mary of Burgundy and were called the "*Great Privilege*"; they were, in fact, the *Magna Charta* of the Netherlands.

William the Silent

From the earliest period of their history, love of freedom was one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Netherlanders. Fifteen hundred years before the time of William the Silent the Batavians and Belgae, the ancestors of the Hollanders, fought for liberty against their Roman oppressors, aroused by such language as this from Claudius Civilis, the Prince of Orange of his day: "Confess, Batavians, we are no longer treated as formerly by these Romans, as allies, but rather as slaves. We are handed over to their prefects and centurians, who, when satiated with our plunder, and with our blood, make way for others, who, under different names, renew the same outrages. If even at last Rome deigns to send us a legate, he oppresses us with an ostentatious and costly retinue, and with still more intolerable pride. The levies are again at hand which tear forever children from their parents, brothers from brothers. Now, Batavians, is our time. Never did Rome lie so prostrate as now. Let not their names of legions terrify you; there is nothing in their camps but old men, and plunder. Our infantry and horsemen are strong; Germany is allied to us by blood; and Gaul is ready to throw off its yoke. Let Syria serve them, and Asia and the East who are used to bow before kings; many still live who were born among us, before the tribute was paid to the Romans. The gods are ever with the brave."

No nation of Germanic descent more faithfully preserved the ancestral spirit of love of freedom than did the Netherlanders. When the Batavians passed from history the Frisians succeeded them, and of these it is said that they are the only "German race which has developed a democracy in which nobles and royalty found no place."

The Netherlands

Their statute books read: "The Frisians shall be free as long as the wind blows out of the clouds and the world stands." Although accepting chiefs appointed by Charlemagne, they still reserved the right to be governed by their own laws. This right they always maintained, and even Charles V with all his prestige, power, tact and influence could not persuade the provinces to fuse. The best he could do was to be little more than the first citizen of the Netherlands, as head of a confederacy of small republics.

It was but natural for the Reformation to find a congenial soil among such a people. Protestantism took deep root there, and it was in vain endeavors to crush its spirit that Philip II of Spain found himself facing a struggle with which the name of William the Silent is conspicuously linked.

Commercially the Hollanders at this time were easily in the lead of all the world. The peculiar situation of the country almost forced the people to a commercial life. The canals intersecting the land everywhere brought about a facility of communication among their own and other countries that led to extensive trade. Their vessels visited Britain, bringing back wool to be woven into cloth, which was exported to France, Germany and other nations. Even in Persia and India goods from Flemish and Brabantine manufactories could be found. Merchant-ships naturally wintered in harbors of a country midway between the Mediterranean Sea and the West, and hence the Netherland towns became a meeting place of the traders of all nations, so that here Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, Germans, Britains, French, Swedes, Danes and all foreigners flocked with products.

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The city of Antwerp numbered one hundred thousand inhabitants, and was the *entre pot* of commerce, the mart of more business than any city in Europe. Some two or three hundred ships were often seen loading in its harbor in one day, and at times as many as eight hundred passed in and out in a day. Thousands and tens of thousands of men found lucrative employment here, and millions of dollars annually exchanged hands. Semi-annual fairs were held in which products of all sorts were exhibited. These fairs became so important a factor in the commerce of the world that even the merchants of the Hanseatic League, whom the Netherlanders had been able to defy, were compelled to visit them in the interests of their own trade.

The country was also rich in resources. The grain-bearing districts of Flanders, Henegeneau, Artois and Namur were able to support the whole country, while there was scarcely a town of any importance that did not have its peculiar branch of manufacture. Arts of weaving, cloth-making, dyeing, and all branches of industry were brought to a high degree of perfection. Oil-painting, painting on glass, and even pocket watches and sun-dials were, historians assert, invented in the Netherlands.

Holland educationally also took the decided lead of the world at this time. In spite of the artisan spirit and marked devotion to trade and commerce, the arts flourished, learning was cherished, and earnest endeavors were made for the improvement of the people along all lines of mental activity. They did not allow their material affluence to curb their ambition for the higher and nobler attainments in mental culture. They did not grow sordid. This spirit was found not only among certain

The Netherlands

classes that were privileged in social and money-standing, but among the people at large. Common schools as well as Universities were prevalent, "which had more thoroughly imbibed the modern humanistic spirit than any other." A contemporary historian wrote: "There was no country where learning and culture prevailed so widely as among us. Even in the Frisian fisherman's huts you might find people who could not only read and write, but discuss scriptural interpretations as if they were scholars."

Here, truly, is an interesting and important chapter in history; and as instructive as interesting. Industry, perseverance, a freedom-loving spirit,—these, after all said and done, make a people prosperous and progressive. The Netherlands," says D. Campbell in *'The Puritan in Holland, England and America,'* "took no great part in wars; since the dissolution of the Batavian Legion they had neither made nor unmade Emperors; but before the middle of the sixteenth century they had conquered almost all fields of industry and art. When the people of England were just beginning their wonderful career of modern progress, these men across the channel stood foremost of the world in agriculture, manufactures, commerce, engraving and music; while they had only parted temporarily with the crown of painting, which, adding that of learning, they were to resume after Holland had won her independence."

CHAPTER III.

THE INAUGURATION OF PHILIP II.

CHARLES V, the father of Philip II of Spain, had ruled the seventeen provinces of Holland with much tact, as well as with considerable moderation. As a native of Flanders, he had always shown more or less preference for the Netherlands. They, on their part, were proud to call him their countryman, and he rather enjoyed being thus called. He delighted to visit them. It was to him a relief from the Castilian formality and court-rule to move among a people of freer spirit and franker nature. His strenuousness in persecuting Protestants, however, was not on this account one particle abated. He shrank from no measures, no matter how merciless and cruel, in hunting down "heretics." His maintenance of the faith of the Roman Catholic Church was conducted in the most sanguinary manner. It was under his sovereignty that the odious inquisition was introduced into Holland. And yet, in spite of all this, the country was true to him, and no signs of revolt or serious discontent were known under his reign.

The time had arrived when he was to resign his sovereignty in favor of his son Philip. It was not because of old age, for he was but fifty-five years of age when he abdicated his throne. It was not because of discontent in any of his realm, for he was highly honored and deeply revered. It was rather on account of a combination of



PHILIP II OF SPAIN

The Inauguration of Philip II

personal circumstances, brought about by physical and mental ailments. Since his thirtieth year he had suffered with gout, which had grown so severe that he had about lost the use of his limbs. "The man who, cased in steel, had passed whole days and whole nights in the saddle, indifferent to the weather and the season, could now hardly drag himself along with the aid of his staff. For days he was confined to his bed; and he did not leave his room for weeks together."

Chafing under these distresses, his mind became disordered. In fact, this mental disorder was, to some extent at least, constitutional. He suffered intense melancholy. The cares of State became unbearable to him.

His son Philip was ready to assume the government. He had been educated with this end in view. He was now twenty-nine years of age. Preparatory to his receiving the sovereignty, Charles had conferred upon him the Grandmastership of the *toison d'or*, a military order of knighthood, the order of the Golden Fleece, the proudest and the most coveted order existing at that day.

The date chosen for the imposing ceremony was October 25, 1555; the place, Brussels. Thither Philip was summoned. The deputies of the provinces, the Flemish lords, high-dignitaries, counts and dukes,—all were present. A large stage had been erected in the great hall of the Royal Palace of Brussels; the walls were hung with expensive tapestry, the floor covered with rich carpets. On the stage was a throne for the Emperor. On the right was a beautiful chair for Philip. On the left was another for the Queen of Hungary, who was also to lay down her office as Regent of the Netherlands.

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It was an uncommon spectacle to be witnessed. The greatest monarch of the age, for none but personal reasons, was to resign the crown in favor of his son,—a son, too, whose name is black as night upon the page of history. The scene is thus described in a paper drawn up for preservation in the State Archives of the Netherlands: "When all were assembled and seated, which was about three o'clock, the Emperor entered the hall from the chapel, leaning on the shoulder of the Prince of Orange; the king and the queen (Mary of Hungary) followed, each accompanied by a large retinue of the principal native nobles and others, chevaliers of the order, in state array, wearing their grand collars, as did also their Majesties, the emperor and the king. * * * First Philibert de Bruxelles, Counsellor of State and of the Privy Council, made an address to the States-General in behalf of the Emperor, announcing his determination to abdicate, and his formal resignation of all his Netherland dignities and possessions to Philip. He recounted all the severe labors Charles had undergone, which had earned for him the right of repose, begged the states to be faithful to their new Sovereign, and above all to observe the placards regarding religion which Charles had published and which Philip promised to maintain."

Standing with right hand leaning on the shoulder of William, Prince of Orange, Charles then delivered his farewell address. He recounted in brief outline his forty years' reign, protesting his faithfulness, particularly in endeavors to maintain the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. He had always, he said, been willing to endure hardships necessary in order to be a worthy ruler. But he was no longer able to discharge his important duties,

The Inauguration of Philip II

and he now performed an act that had long been contemplated, and which, he was persuaded, was for the highest good of his devoted people. "I know well," he continued, "that in my long administration I have fallen into many errors, and committed some wrongs, but it was from ignorance; and if there be any here whom I have wronged they will believe that it was not intended, and grant me their forgiveness."

He then addressed Philip, begging him to conduct himself in the fear of God, and to maintain justice, law, and the Catholic religion in all their purity. "If my death," he concluded, "had placed you in possession of these countries, even in that case, so valuable a bequest had given me great claims on your gratitude. But now that of my free will I transfer them to you, now that I die in order to hasten your enjoyment of them, I only require of you to pay to the people the increased obligation which the voluntary surrender of my dignity lays upon you. Other princes esteem it a peculiar felicity to bequeath to their children the crown which death is already ravishing from them. This happiness I am anxious to enjoy during my life. I wish to be a spectator of your reign. Few will follow my example, as few have preceded me in it. But this my deed will be praised, if your future life should justify my expectations, if you continue to be guided by that wisdom which you have hitherto evinced, if you remain inviolably attached to the pure faith which is the main pillar of your throne. One thing more I have to add: May Heaven grant you also a son to whom you may transmit your power, by choice, and not by necessity."

When the oration was finished, Charles sank exhausted into his seat, the audience sobbing. Even Philip—stolid

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Philip—was moved to tears, falling upon his knees at his father's feet, reverently kissing his hand while receiving his paternal blessing. On rising Philip began his inaugural address with a statement of regret that he could not address his audience in their native language, but had chosen an honored personage to do this for him. The Bishop of Aras, Antony Perrenot, afterward known as the famous and nefarious Cardinal Granvelle, then proceeded in Philip's name to speak flattering but meaningless words, promising a respect for the laws and liberties of the Nation. Alas! that his promise was not kept!

The suspicion of the Netherlanders and their distrust of Philip even now may be judged from the terms of the oath they required him to take, being much more explicit, and far stronger than any ever taken by former sovereigns. It read as follows: "I, Philip, by the grace of God, Prince of Spain, of the two Sicilies, etc., do vow and swear, that I will be a good and just lord in these countries, counties, and duchies, etc.; that I will well and truly hold and cause to be held the privileges and liberties of all the nobles, towns, commons, and subjects which have been conferred upon them by my predecessors, and also the customs, usages and rights which they now have and enjoy jointly and severally, and, moreover, that I will do all that by law and right pertains to a good and just prince and lord; so help me God and all His Saints."

No prince ever came into more fortunate possessions, both as to present conditions and future prospects. Not only did the seventeen provinces of Holland, then in the zenith of their marvelous richness and prosperity fall to Philip's lot, but also Spain and her American Colonies, Milan and both the Sicilies, Burgundy, and the hereditary

The Inauguration of Philip II

family alliance of the German and Spanish Hapsburg interest. Opportunities unbounded lay before him. Prospects for a successful reign were unclouded; and had Philip not been the singular character he was, none can tell what the effects of his reign might have been to Spain in particular, and to the world at large.

In personal appearance Motley describes Philip as being "a small meager man, much below the middle height, with thin legs, a narrow chest, and the shrinking, timid air of an habitual invalid. * * * In fact, he was the living image of his father, having the same aquiline but better proportioned nose. In the lower part of his countenance the remarkable Burgundian deformity was likewise reproduced. He had the same heavy hanging lip, with a vast mouth and monstrously protruding lower jaw. His complexion was fair, his hair light and thin, his beard yellow, short and pointed. He had the aspect of the Fleming, but the loftiness of a Spaniard. His demeanor in public was still, silent, almost sepulchral. He looked habitually on the ground when he conversed, was chary of speech, embarrassed and even suffering in manner." Morose, grave, taciturn—he was scarcely ever known to smile, except when he received news that Alva and the Spanish troops had succeeded in torturing, pillaging, burning and murdering the brave Netherlanders whom they were pursuing with merciless and relentless ferocity. "There was," says Hauser, "not a single amiable or winning trait in his character." His religion was of a servile kind, because he conceived of God as One to be feared. Egotistic and selfish, he knew not what it was to treat any one with charity. Benevolence he had not. His impulses were cruel.

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“He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heaven
To serve the devil in; in virtue’s guise
Devoured the widow’s house and orphan’s bread;
In holy phrase transacted villainies
That common sinners durst not meddle with.”

Such a man would naturally not be attractive to any people, much less to the frank Netherlanders.

As early as 1548, when his father took him on a tour of the nation, so as to introduce him to the Northern Provinces, he had awakened a very unfavorable opinion of himself among the people by his coldness, his repelling bluntness, his gloominess, and his distressing want of frankness, so that in a diplomatic report of this journey it is stated that “he had found but little favor with the Italians, was quite repulsive to the Flemings and hateful to the Germans.”

It was but natural that two such persons as William, Prince of Orange, and Philip II of Spain should, circumstances favoring, come into irreconcilable conflict; that the despicable nature of the one should drive the noble nature of the other into correspondingly strong exhibitions and developments of worthy character.



MARGARET OF PARMA

From a Painting by Coello. Original in Museum at Brussels

CHAPTER IV.

MARGARET OF PARMA

PHILIP had two well-defined ideas in assuming the government of the Netherlands. Whatever else he might be led to do by circumstances or the exigencies of the time, he was determined in his innermost soul that nothing was to prevent him from carrying out these two ideas. They were: the establishment of Spanish absolutism, and the restoration of the full sway of the Catholic religion. Both of these ideas were the worst possible, alike for himself and the country, to be enforced in the Netherlands. The endeavor to do so was fruitless in all things, except to bankrupt himself and lead the brave Hollanders, amid a heroism and self-sacrifice such as history rarely records, to take their stand for political and religious liberty, and establish it for all time to come.

The first duty devolving upon Philip was to select a Stadt-Holder—one who should govern in his name. Upon the choice made, he well knew, as did also the Netherlanders, much depended. An aristocracy that had existed for generations had been placed over the country. Originally this aristocracy was a favored class of subordinates to the Emperor, with powers and obligations to rule the country, clothed with honors, enjoying the favor of princely incomes and royal recognitions whose titles and estates became hereditary. This class included such names as William of Orange, Egmont, and Horn. These by

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right considered themselves princes of the German nation, having, on the division of the Empire, at the death of Charlemagne, been brought under German jurisdiction. Philip from the first, and not without ground, suspected and feared them. He had no reason whatever to suspect their loyalty to their ruler, nor to fear rebellion against the government. They were true-blooded patriots—true to King and country. But he had every reason to fear them when it came to introducing innovations in the Netherland administration, and also when he began to establish means to force the Catholic religion into absolute supremacy. Even Charles V had failed in this latter.

If the Nation had been permitted to have a voice in the selection of regent, unquestionably one of these princes would have been chosen; in fact, the wish for this had been plainly expressed to Philip. But he never had any idea of complying with it. He needed one whom he could rule with an absolute hand. Such an one he found in Princess Margaret of Parma, the mother of the famous Alexander of Farnese. She was an illegitimate daughter of Charles V, whom her father had introduced into dynastic circles by means of a princely marriage. Margaret was entirely dependent upon Philip; and he chose her largely because he could at any moment dismiss her to obscurity, for she had no property of her own.

Her personal appearance was far from prepossessing. "The truth is," says Strada, "her spirit was not only great beyond her sex, but she was so habited and had such a garb as if she were not a woman with a masculine spirit, but a man in woman's clothes. Her strength was such that she used to hunt the stag and change horses upon the field, which is more than many able-bodied men can do.

Margaret of Parma

Nay, upon her chin and upper lip she had a little kind of a beard, which gave her not more of the resemblance than the authority of a man. She had a present wit, and in action could steer to all sides with wonderful dexterity."

The entrance upon her duties was not looked upon with favor by the people; and especially not by the aristocracy, distrust in whom she systematically encouraged on the part of Philip. Her position from the very beginning of her reign in Holland was exceedingly unenviable.

She was not in any way in sympathy with the country, not even speaking its language. Hence, even had she been gifted in other ways to govern with any degree of independence, she was on this account obliged to be governed by the influence of others, particularly by men chosen by her royal brother Philip. Her counsellors were Berlaymont, who proved to be a persistent enemy to his country under pretext of loyalty to his King; Viglius, the author of the famous persecuting act of 1550 under Charles V; the famous, crafty, unscrupulous, time-serving, shrewd Cardinal Granvelle; the ill-fated Egmont, and William, Prince of Orange. Of these, Granvelle had the greater power over Margaret, was most in sympathy with the spirit and despotical government of Philip, and stood in the closest confidential relations to him;—if such a relation was at all possible with one who betrayed the most important and sacred confidences, in a cruel and heartless manner.

Granvelle was adroit, able, well-informed, but most despicably unprincipled;—a man of energy, and capable of an immense amount of work, blindly, fanatically devoted to his master Philip, whose mere tool he seemed only too pleased to be. Being a man of supercilious na-

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ture, he assumed airs of superiority even over the hereditary princes; and this at once naturally awakened an antagonism to him; so much so, that they refused to attend the Council of State so long as he remained in it. They accused him of all the evil that befell the country consequent upon systematic efforts to crush the liberties of the Netherlands. It had not yet been learned fully that these efforts originated with Philip, who had succeeded in making the impression that they were due to his ministers, Granvelle in particular. Hence the brunt of their hatred fell upon him, which resulted in his removal in 1564.

Great rejoicing was felt at Granvelle's departure. Hopes for more favorable outlooks were in the hearts of all. But these soon were darkened when it became evident that not Granvelle, but the government itself was responsible for the troubles in which the country found itself—troubles that increased in proportion as Philip's policy became better known.

Before proceeding with our account of the difficulties, we must study the youth and education of William the Silent, who, more than any one else, clearly apprehended them, and wisely set about to remedy them.



WILLIAM THE SILENT, AGED 25
From a Painting by Key. Original in Museum at Kessel

CHAPTER V.

WILLIAM'S YOUTH AND EDUCATION

AS early as the fourteenth century, the ancestors of William, the house of Nassau, obtained possessions in the Netherlands. To these in the sixteenth century, the Princedom of Orange was added. William, falling heir to this Princedom, obtained his well-known title of *Prince of Orange*. It was situated in Southern France near Avignon.

The Prince was born at Dillenburg, belonging to the German Duchy of Nassau, on the 25th of April, 1533. Motley says that the past and present seemed to have gathered together riches and power from many sources in the summons to the high destinies, and to the heroic sacrifices the Prince of Orange was to make, not only for his own country, but for the world. Descended from the Nassau family, the Orange branch of which, as Groen van Prinsterer, one of Holland's great historians, says, was called of God to a task such as no other princely house ever had,—that of watching over and striving for the Gospel, liberty and right, not only in behalf of the Republic, but for all Christendom as well, he heired a prominent ancestry. The family had come into distinct notice in history as early as the middle of the eleventh century, exercising sovereignty before the house of Burgundy existed, having as ancestors the Othos, the Engleberts, and the Henrys of the Netherlands. They had for centuries

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held distinguished positions in Germany and the low countries. From one branch of them had come an Emperor of Germany.

The first eleven years of the Prince's life were spent in the old castle of Dillenburg, with his father and mother, where the boy had a home, with blessed and sacred home life, under the tutelage and loving care of pious parents.

When eleven years of age he fell heir to all the titles and estates of his cousin Henry, first Prince of Orange from the Nassaus, who was killed in a campaign against the French. These estates included a large domain in Holland, a still richer possession in Brabant, together with the inheritance of Chalons, and the principality of Orange.

From a human point of view the destiny of this boy, so suddenly enriched by titles and wealth, seemed none other than to enter the Emperor's court for education in lines that would bring him military adventures, embassies, vice-royalties; or, perhaps, just as likely the peculiar temptations to enervation following in the wake of luxury and magnificence, making but meager chances for him to do his age or people any particular or distinctive good service. But in the providence of God, which he himself so humbly and sincerely recognized, his destiny lay in different ways. This destiny, under God, was largely pre-determined by his noble mother, Juliana of Holberg. Frederic Harrison writes of her as "the Puritan saint in the martyr family of Nassau." And Motley says: "She was a person of most exemplary character, and unaffected piety. She instilled into the minds of all her children the elements of that devotional sentiment which was her own striking characteristic, and it was destined that the seed sown early should increase to an abundant harvest." Late in life,

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after three of her sons had already perished in the war that Spain had brought upon the Netherlands, when overtures for a false peace were being made to William, she wrote to him: "My heart longs for certain tidings from my lord, for me thinks the peace now in prospect will prove but an oppression for soul and conscience. I trust my heart's dearly beloved lord and son will be supported by divine grace to do nothing against God and his own soul's salvation. 'Tis better to lose the temporal than the eternal." Thus throughout her long life did her faith, courage, love and watchfulness help her children to stand strong and heroic. For 'tis true that

"The mother in her office holds the key
Of the soul, and she it is who stamps the coin
Of character, and makes the being who would be savage
But for her gentle care, a Christian man."

William's parents were Lutherans. But the Emperor, Charles V, discerning in their son the making of an influential and powerful man, had no inclination to have him brought up and educated other than in the Catholic faith. Accordingly he was in his twelfth year removed to Brussels, where he was under the care and brought up in the family of Mary of Hungary, sister of Charles, Regent of the Low Countries. Here he received a princely education, under the tuition of Jerome Perrenot, a brother of the famous Cardinal Granvelle. With the latter he grew into bitterest enmity. William wrote and spoke with ease French, German, Flemish, Spanish and Latin, and was in every particular an educated gentleman. He was always a favorite of the Emperor, so that at the age of fifteen years he was a trusted page in the family of

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Charles, who recognized his superior qualities by making him all but a confidential friend, permitting him to be present when he held private interviews with highest dignitaries and upon the gravest affairs. The Emperor frankly admitted that the young prince had often made wise suggestions, such as had escaped his own sagacity.

When he was not yet twenty-one years of age, Charles appointed him General-in-Chief of the army on the frontier of France, and a few years later he entrusted to him the distinguished honor of bearing the imperial crown to Ferdinand.

Thus early was this Moses of the Netherlands put to school where he had admirable opportunities to develop his natural keenness and depth of mind in an exercise that made him peculiarly capable of filling the position he was destined to occupy.

Philip from the very first not only distrusted but feared William. Schiller writes: "Philip II saw quickly and deeply into a character which, among good ones, most resembled his own. If he had not seen through him so clearly, his distrust of a man, in whom were united nearly all the qualities which he prized highest, and could best appreciate, would be quite inexplicable. * * * In him Philip had to deal with an antagonist who was armed against his policy, and who in a good cause could also command the resources of a bad one. And it was exactly this last circumstance which accounts for his having hated this man so implacably above all others of his day, and his having had so supernatural a dread of him." Philip knew that William was master alike in reading and winning men's hearts, and that he was not lacking in resources



ANNE OF EGMONT
First Wife of William the Silent

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to fathom his sinister plots, and he constantly feared that he would thwart his plans.

At the early age of eighteen William married Anne of Egmont, one of the richest heiresses in the Netherlands. After seven years of affectionate wedded life she died. Two children, Philip and Mary, were born to them. It is scarcely worth while to pause here long enough to mention the calumny which at a later day was trumped up that he had murdered her. A large number of letters remain which William had written to his wife expressive of a tender, affectionate regard for her, often expressing regrets that his duties as a soldier in the field prevented his being at home with her. Such expressions as this occur in his letters to his wife: "All in the world I have is yours." "I received today two of your letters and assure you that nothing more agreeable could happen to me than to have tidings from you and to be advised of your health." "If we are disbanded, I will take you, please God, the news myself, and I wish that could be today rather than tomorrow, for I can not express in writing my longing to see you." As Motley says: "The ridiculous tale was not even credited by those who reported it; but it is worth mentioning as a proof that no calumny was too senseless to be invented concerning the man whose character was from that hour forth to be the mark of slander, and whose whole life was to be its signal, although often unavailing, refutation."

During these early campaigns William was active more as a diplomat and counsellor than as a soldier. He never was a great soldier. His field was not in battle, but on grounds of statesmanship. Here he was sagacious, courageous, indomitable, withal winning, and he everywhere won

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his way into the confidence of all classes. Even Philip, although he feared and disliked him, perhaps for this very reason, promoted him constantly, and the life of the young prince was full of care and responsibility. He was in the plenitude of favor and worldly possessions. He lacked not in opportunities to gratify his fondness for the chase, falconry and tournaments, and the social pleasures of dancing, masquerading and entertainments. He lived in . . . magnificent state at Brussels, showing extensive hospitality to rich and poor, and by unfeigned frankness and kindness to all classes became the most popular and beloved prince in the land. Pontus Payen, a devout Catholic and an opponent of William, wrote this: "Never did arrogant or indiscreet word issue from his mouth, under the impulse of anger or other passion; if any of his servants committed a fault, he was satisfied to admonish them gently without resorting to menace or to abusive language. He was master of a sweet and winning power of persuasion, by means of which he gave form to the great ideas within him, and thus he succeeded in bending to his will the other lords about the court as he chose; beloved and in high favor above all men with the people, by reason of a gracious manner that he had of saluting, and addressing in a fascinating and familiar way all whom he met."

This popularity had not escaped Philip's notice. His hatred of William rose in proportion to the latter's gain in the love and the confidence of the people. However much Philip endeavored to conceal his true feelings toward William, he could not deceive him. In fact, when the prince, in company with other nobles, had gone to Flushing to bid Philip farewell on his embarkation for Spain, Philip acrimoniously accused William of being the

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author of the troubles in the country, William answered in his usual calmness that the provinces had acted upon their own suggestion, and according to their vested rights. Philip, seizing William's hand, and shaking it violently, said: "No, no, not the Provinces, but you! you! you!" Unperturbed, but deeply affected, and with thoughtful brow, William, not waiting for the King's departure, wishing him a safe journey, left for his home in Brussels.

Although Philip hated him, yet he felt forced, for policy's sake, to recognize him in his appointments, among the important ones of which was an embassy to France to negotiate the treaty of Cateau Cambresis that was to close the war between Spain and France. The treaty was concluded on the 3d of April, 1559.

William was selected by Henry of France as one of the hostages for the due execution of the treaty. It was at this time that he learned of the secret scheme of Henry II of France and Philip II of Spain for the extirpation of Protestantism. While hunting with the royal company one day, the French king and the prince found themselves alone, separated from the rest of the company. The king's heart was full of the designs of himself and Philip, in which they had solemnly bound themselves to massacre all the converts to Protestantism in France and the Netherlands. The king, thinking that William was a party to the plot, or, at least, would be in full sympathy with it, spoke freely with characteristic French enthusiasm and volubility to him about it, minutely describing the manner in which all the heretics, whether of high or humble station, were to be discovered and killed at a most convenient moment. The king explained how necessary it was,

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in order to carry out the plot in the Netherlands, that Spanish troops be retained in the country.

The whole thing came to the Prince like a flash of livid light direct from hell; his noble blood was fired with intense indignation; he was horror-stricken at the revelation made, yet his countenance changed not; not a word escaped his lips that for a single instant could give the king the least suspicion of the enormous blunder he had made in giving a "warning of inestimable value to the man who had been born to resist the machinations of Philip and of Alva." This silence won for him his historical name, *William the Silent*.

In his famous *Apology*, written twenty years later, he says of this incident: "I confess that I was deeply moved with pity for all the worthy people who were thus devoted to slaughter, and for the country, to which I owed so much, wherein they designed to introduce an Inquisition worse and more cruel than that of Spain. I saw, as it were, nets spread to entrap the lords of the land as well as the people, so that those whom the Spaniards and their creatures could not supplant in any other way, might by this device fall into their hands. It was enough for a man to look askance at an image to be condemned to the stake. Seeing all this I confess that from that hour I resolved with my whole soul to do my best to drive the Spanish vermin from the land; and of this resolve I have never repented, but believe that I, my comrades, and all that have stood with us, have done a worthy deed, fit to be held in perpetual honor."

Here, then, was a disclosure that proved as Frederic Harrison says, "a great epoch in William's life—it is hardly too much to say in the history of his age."

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After a few days he obtained leave to visit the Netherlands. Here he informed his fellow-princes of what he had learned, and at once began measures to excite opposition to the Spanish troops remaining in the country.

Thus did this man come to take up his life-work—a work that cost him continual self-denial and sacrifice. He was now twenty-seven years of age. Rich, surrounded by dazzling luxury, living, as says a historian, “among the primrose paths.” He was powerful. He held sovereign rank. He was influential. He was nominally a Catholic, adhering to its outward rites and ceremonies, although not particularly interested in any questions of theology or religion. It was the only thing for a personage of high rank at that time to do, in order to maintain a standing, for “it was only tanners, dyers and apostate priests who were Protestants at that day in the Netherlands.”

Why, then, did he take upon himself the self-sacrificing task, which he must have known would cost him dear, of protecting these from suffering for a religion that he himself did not adhere to? The answer to this question opens up to view the true greatness of heart of this really great man. Though he had avoided thinking much upon religious doctrines, and though having as yet little if any sympathy for the Reformers, so far, at least, as the mere religious aspect of their position was concerned, yet he could not, as he said afterward, “but feel compassion for so many virtuous men and women thus devoted to massacre”; and his great heart led him to endeavor to save them if he could; cost what it might.

There is a safeguard and a glowing inspiration to any person whose heart has within it,—be it but in germ,—what has been felicitously called “the enthusiasm of hu-

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manity." It is this that leads men to take up unpopular tasks,—undertakings that the world may call Quixotic, and may laugh at a man for attempting to do, but which above all need to be done, and once undertaken lead to a glorious good for mankind. "It is," writes one, "a calumny on men to say that they are aroused to heroic action by ease, hope of pleasure, recompense, sugar plums of any kind, in this world or the next." No, but it is "an enthusiasm of humanity" that fires all great souls to heroic deeds, and sustains them in their attempts to accomplish them, even though a Gethsemane and a Cross stand in the way.

It certainly was not ease, hope of pleasure, recompense either in this world or the next, that led the Prince of Orange to take up his work. 'Tis true, perhaps, that when he first undertook it he little knew what it would really lead to. But he soon learned what it was to be. And, realizing its importance to the world, he was fired with noble determination to carry it on till death would relieve him, although from the hour that he began his work, his character was to be the mark of slander, and he was to be misunderstood and misinterpreted. He remarked at one time during his career, with pathos, and not without truth: "It seems to me that I was born in this bad planet that all which I do might be misinterpreted." Notwithstanding this, his zeal was not abated, nor did it deter him one moment from pursuing his determined course. "To be great," says Emerson, "is to be misunderstood." And yet how afraid men are of this! They trim, they cater, they apologize, they hesitate, for fear of it. To quote Emerson once more: "Misunderstood! It is a right fool's word. Is it so bad, then, to be

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misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood; and Socrates and Jesus and Luther and Copernicus and Galileo and Newton and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh." To a truly great soul the misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the world are not to be feared so much as being untrue to *oneself* and to his God.

Philip II misunderstood and misinterpreted the Prince of Orange, and hence used every endeavor possible,—bribery, flattery, threatening, deceit, to cause him to swerve from his purpose. But, even though the people whom he served, at immense personal sacrifice, often misinterpreted him, yet he remained true to his high task—aye, grew stronger and broader in it, until what was for and to him at the beginning but a feeling of compassion for some virtuous men and women devoted to massacre, had grown into a stand for religious and civil liberty, not for his age and people alone, but for all ages to come, and for the world. Even to the very last, with rock-like firmness, he stood almost alone in the great struggle, the Provinces again and again having faltered, although he knew that his stand meant a continuation of hostilities. The Prince learned to know "what no man else appeared fully to comprehend at that epoch—that the mortal combat between the Inquisition and the Reformation was already fully engaged. The great battle between divine reason and right divine, on which the interests of unborn generations were hanging, was to be fought out before the eyes of all Christendom on the plain of the Netherlands." Therefore, war or peace, he must not give up his principle. He would not pay the price demanded for peace—the giving over a people to religious and civil thralldom,

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and giving up a principle he had come to see was an invaluable boon to humanity.

He has been accused of keeping up the long-continued bloody contest in the Netherlands. Yet he was not warlike by nature. He was gentle. He was kind. He was tender-hearted, as indeed, every truly valiant man is. Nothing could be more tender than the final parting of the Prince and Egmont, when the former hung about the neck of the latter and wept like a child. Nothing could bespeak his tender heartedness more than when he was found in the most frank, honest, natural way conversing with workmen and fishermen, who offered him drink out of their own coarse cups; who invited him into their humble houses; who allowed him to settle their personal differences, and even submitted family quarrels to him, which he wisely settled, re-establishing peace in the household. Everywhere he was called by the people: "*Father William.*"

Peace, however, he knew, meant suffering and oppression worse than war in its most cruel form. Above all was his love of principle. *That* must stand. He recognized that it could not stand without a struggle. Therefore, he braced himself—ironclad—to endure, aye, if necessary, to inaugurate the contest.

On the 6th of October William's father died, and he wrote a letter to his brother Louis expressing his grief, and bespeaking on the part of his brother an honorable course, "to live together in good friendship and accord, and to take no step without due consideration, otherwise our House, whose reputation has always been so good, will deteriorate." In a postscript to this letter occurs this clause: "As to the journey which you were to make with

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the Count of Schwarzburg, for the business you know of, I beg you to tell me what your plans are."

This "business" was important and significant in more than one regard. It was concerning his marriage to Anne of Saxony. He had now been a widower nearly two years, and it was not to be supposed that a young grandee should remain unmarried. Previous negotiations had been opened before for his marriage, first with Madame de Touteville in France, and then with Renee of Lorraine. Both of these plans had failed, the second principally through the private interference of Philip. Hence, when he turned his attention to Germany and made overtures to Anne of Saxony, he acted in an independent, almost defiant manner. It was characteristic of the man to do so, although he knew that it would tend to widen the breach between Philip and himself, which had been definitely begun by his request to have Spain's troops removed from the Netherlands.

It was not without difficulties that the marriage was consummated. It took some two years of negotiation, plotting, and planning, in which Granvelle, Philip II, Philip of Hesse, Augustus and William engaged. In it, Harrison says, "the Bishop is subtle, far-sighted, politic; Philip is suspicious, hostile, but timid; the Elector is blunt, practical, and secretly anxious to get his niece off his hands and out of the Empire; the landgrave is bigoted, obstinate, and angry; the Prince is diplomatic, astute, eloquent, and resolute."

Anne was the only daughter of the Elector Maurice. "She was not beautiful, being indeed slightly misshapen, and was very headstrong, even at an age when young girls are not supposed to evince any will. Her inheritance

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from her father and maternal grandfather had left a marked impress on her character. They were two of the most headstrong men in Europe, and it was against nature to expect a child of their joint race to be the heir of only the traits of the gentle dames among the ancestors. The very qualities that gained intellectual leadership for the landgrave, and had made the elector a masterful soldier, rendered poor Anne miserable and jealous at not being first, though nature had failed to give her the power of shining in the rank she desired."

She had been brought up at the court of Augustus, who had succeeded his brother Maurice as Elector of Saxony. Naturally he favored the match since it would remove any danger of his being unseated, should Anne marry some enterprising, ambitious German prince, who would raise a claim for her to his position. But strong objections came from other sources. Maurice, Anne's father, had offended Charles V, Philip's father, and Philip of Hesse, Anne's grandfather, a rampant Protestant, had been made to suffer at the hand of Charles. Hence Philip II was hardly expected to favor the marriage. And besides that, William of Orange was a Catholic—nominally at least—and a servant of the foremost champion of Catholicism among all the crowns of Europe, and Anne's grandfather on that account most obstinately refused to give his consent for his grandchild to marry the prince. The approval of Philip II was, however, in a quasi way, obtained by William's declaration that he had at heart the cause of "the true religion," and would look after its interests.

So with Philip's sanction and Augustus' approval and, what was more to the point, the willingness not only, but



ANNE OF SAXONY
Second Wife of William the Silent

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the eagerness of Anne herself to marry the Prince of Orange, whose high position, graceful speeches and courtly manners fired her imagination, completely fascinating her, and the full determination of William to marry her, the marriage plans were consummated in spite of the grandfather's opposition.

William was intent upon it, not so much from the affection-side of the matter, as from the political aspect of it. He saw great advantages in an alliance with the great powers of Central Germany. His negotiations in the affair are, therefore, to be judged from a diplomatic and statesmanlike point of view, rather than from a theological or religious side. "Throughout he acted as politician, not as theologian. He was a diplomatist, not a reformer; a statesman, not a preacher; a man of the world, not a saint."

Motley has spent much space in his *"Rise of the Dutch Republic"* in defending William's conduct in this affair. But it is not necessary to hide the fact that to him at this time the religious aspect of the case did not materially appeal. Anne's relatives, pronounced religionists, and intent on doing nothing that would jeopardize the cause of Protestantism, wrote strong letters, urging William to do nothing that would interfere with the religious life and education of Anne. (She was only seventeen years of age.) He replied that in his opinion she would better read romances than theology, and be learning the newest dances than to sit sewing and knitting. It was easy for him, therefore, to make non-committal promises, both to Philip on the one hand, and to Anne's relatives on the other. He had not yet grown into the strong religious character that was afterward developed in him, amid his remarkable ex-

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periences all calculated to cause him to grow in religious conscientiousness and spiritual nature.

The wedding occurred at Leipsic, in August, 1561, amid great feasting, regal in appointments and in entertainments. It is estimated that six thousand guests were present. "Every guest was requested to bring his own cooks and butlers, tableware and kitchen utensils, but they were hospitably assured that cheer should be provided." William was accompanied to Leipsic by a large retinue, although he was disappointed in not having the Netherland nobles present. Margaret had refused any except Montigny to go. He was appointed to represent Philip II, who further showed his approval, as a matter of policy rather than genuine sympathy, by sending three thousand crowns for the purchase of a ring for Anne.

After three days of feasting and tournaments, the bridal party departed for Breda, the home of the young couple. The bride wrote back that she was "as happy as a queen." Alas! that she could not stay so.

Matters of state soon engrossed William's attention, so that he had neither time nor opportunity for a lengthened honeymoon.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGINNINGS OF REVOLT

THE revolt in the Netherlands against the Spanish Government was slow in taking definite shape, and did not do so until the troubles became so complicated and so serious that the Netherlands were forced to it.

The position in the new Government under Philip II in 1559 was such that protests, dissensions, and the beginnings of revolt could not but take place. Charles V had not hesitated to enforce the Inquisition with sternness and sanguinary spirit; and it soon became evident that Philip II would not less but more vigorously and cruelly press it. And yet this had not brought about revolt. It may seem strange, as Campbell suggests, that such a people as the Netherlanders should submit so long to religious persecution before revolting against it. But he well writes: "A little reflection, however, suggests the answer. In the first place, they were pre-eminently a peaceful race, engaged in commerce and manufactures, and for many years unused to war, while their ruler commanded the largest and best disciplined armies of the world. Next, those who suffered from the Inquisition under Charles V were all from the poorer classes, and the death of a few thousand scattered peasants or artisans made but little impression on any community three centuries ago. There was no concert of action among the victims or their

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friends, and they were in a small and weak minority. In addition, the excesses of some of the early reformers excited the fears of the timid, and in the religious excitement of the times many of the supporters of the established church became as zealous in its reformation and defense as were the Protestants in their opposition to it."

The circumstances of Philip's reign were, from its very beginning, different from those under Charles V. Charles was a great favorite of the people; Philip was soon despised, suspected, feared. Charles gave every evidence that he desired to conciliate the nation; Philip from the very first could not conceal feelings that were the very reverse of this.

The appointment of Margaret as Regentess had been a bitter disappointment to the aristocracy. Yet they were inclined to submit peaceably. But when Philip, in spite of remonstrances, persisted in garrisoning the country with hated Spanish troops, the discontent assumed serious aspects. Not only because it was opposed to the spirit of all their privileges, which freed them from the compulsory burden of sustaining foreign troops, but the country had suffered a famine the year before, and it was an intolerable burden to have these men to support, whose presence in the country was uncalled for, and for whose stay no good reason could be given. The discontent became popular and universal. Some declared they would all rather perish, with families and property, in the sea, than to submit to the ravages of these hungry soldiers. So serious became the outlook that Margaret and Granvelle both counselled Philip to dismiss the soldiers. Accordingly the troops were withdrawn. But secret preparations were hastened



*Antonius Perenot Cardinael van Granvelle
eerste Aertsbisschop van Mechelen.*

The Beginnings of Revolt

to invade the country with a new and better equipped army, that would soon, as Philip thought, quell all revolt.

Another measure was proposed that awakened violent opposition on the part of the Netherlanders: There were three Bishoprics in the country. The king proposed ostensibly for the betterment of the spiritual condition of the people, but really so as to be enabled the better to carry out his inquisitorial plans in extirpating heretics, to appoint twelve. Universal opposition against this arose at once. The nobility saw in this increase of Bishops a strengthening of royalty in the diet; the abbots and monks that they would be curtailed in their incomes for the support of the new Bishoprics; the Protestants, of course, feared such a strengthening of the Catholics. Hence, dismay seized all classes of people. They cried out that their liberties were being invaded; that they were to be in perpetual surveillance of the Roman See. "Who," it was asked, "will after this venture to raise his voice in Parliament before such observers, or in their presence dare to protect the rights of the nation against the rapacious hands of the Government? They will trace out the resources of the Provinces, and betray to the crown the secrets of our freedom and our property. They will obstruct the way to all offices of honor; we shall soon see the courtiers of the king succeed the present men; the children of foreigners will, for the future, fill the Parliament, and the private interests of their patron will guide their venal votes." To this the monks added: "What an act of oppression to pervert to other objects the pious designs of our holy institutions, to condemn the inviolable wishes of the dead, and to take that which a devout charity has deposited in our chests for the relief of the unfortunates, and

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make it subservient to the luxury of the bishops, thus inflating their arrogant pomp with the plunder of the poor."

Thinking that Granvelle had been the principal cause of these movements, the nobles had refused to attend the Council of State so long as he remained a member. When he was recalled they returned, only to find that measures, instead of being made better, were more hatefully increased in evil to the country. Violent speeches were made in the Council. William of Orange made such a powerful address that it occasioned the president of the Council, Viglius, an attack of apoplexy which nearly proved fatal.

It was decided that a message should be sent to Philip apprising him of the critical condition of affairs. The debate in the Council was as to the instructions that should be given to the envoy. Viglius had prepared a paper wherein nothing definite was said. When William was called upon to vote, he spoke at length, with tremendous eloquence. There was to be no utterance of glittering generalities; no mincing of matters; the time had come to speak out in unequivocal terms; the plain truth was to be told. The king was to be informed just how the free Provinces felt on the matter of the Spanish Inquisition being introduced among them; and of the new bishoprics; and also that the decrees of the Council of Trent, abhorred by all, could not and would not be allowed to be enforced in the Netherlands.

Count Egmont, who was greatly esteemed by the people, a bold, unsuspected patriot, a soldier who had rendered the king valiant service, was chosen as the message-bearer. He was instructed to positively inform the king that the Inquisition, more bishoprics, edicts and execu-

The Beginnings of Revolt

tioners were no longer tenable, and must go, or the hour for the abolition of the government as it had been was come.

It may be well imagined how Philip would look upon such a message. He was duly informed what to expect. He, therefore, planned accordingly. Though looking upon the whole matter with utmost aversion, he received Egmont cordially, feasted him, listened with apparent interest and deference to what he had to say, giving him profuse promises that the matters complained of would be remedied as speedily as possible, and made his journey one flattering, joyous holiday, from which he returned, as he himself wrote, "the happiest man in the world." Philip had reckoned well with his guest. Egmont's frankness and cordiality were proverbial, and he was as vain as he was frank. Hence the king could easily dupe him into a feeling of the brightest hopefulness for the future.

But what was the king's real state of mind? He assembled a conclave of ecclesiastics to whom, after stating the condition of affairs in the Netherlands, he put the question as to what their opinion of the matter was. They supposed that the king desired to shift the responsibility from himself upon them in allowing what seemed inevitable, and, therefore, answered him that "considering the critical situation of Flanders, and the imminent danger, if thwarted, of its disloyalty to the crown, and total deflection from the Church, he might be justified in allowing the people freedom of worshipping in their own way." They had missed the mark. Philip sternly replied that he had not called them to learn whether he *might* grant this to the Flemings, but whether he *must* do so." The prompt answer was: "No." Then, prostrating himself

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on the ground before a crucifix, he exclaimed: "I implore Thee, divine Majesty, Ruler of all things, that Thou keep me in the mind that I am in, never to allow myself to become or to be called the lord of those who reject Thee for their Lord."

Just what meaning was to be attached to the promises that he sent by Egmont may be learned from this strongly expressed statement in sealed instructions brought to Margaret the Regent, by a messenger from Spain, soon after Egmont's departure: "I would rather lose a hundred thousand lives, if I had so many, than allow a single change in matters of religion." The instructions were for a stricter enforcement of the edicts, although even Margaret begged that the king be lenient. Not a word did he say about reforms or concessions.

None better than William of Orange understood how completely the king had deceived Egmont. And the people soon after discovered this when an express command from Spain caused the Council of State to enjoin that the decree of the Council of Trent, the edicts, and the Inquisition should be promulgated in every city and village of the Netherlands every six months. In the edicts "it was forbidden to print, copy, keep, hide, buy, or sell any writing of Luther, Zwingle, Aeculampadius, Bucer, Calvin, or of any other heretic; to break or to injure any image of the Virgin or of the saints; to hold or to attend any heretical conventicle. Laymen were prohibited from reading the Scriptures, or taking part in conferences upon disputed points of doctrine. Transgressors, in case they should not recant, were, if they were men, to be beheaded; if women, to be buried alive. If obstinate, they were to be burnt alive, and, in either case, their property

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was to be confiscated. To omit to inform against suspicious persons, to entertain, lodge, feed, or clothe them was to be guilty of heresy. Persons, who, for the reason that they were suspected, were condemned to abjure heresy, were, in case they rendered themselves again suspicious, to be dealt with as heretics. Every accuser, in case of conviction, was to receive a large share of the confiscated goods. Judges were absolutely forbidden to diminish in any way the prescribed penalties. Severe penalties were threatened against any who should intercede for heretics or present a petition in behalf of them."

The effect of all this upon the country was deadening to commerce. The foreign merchants fled. Marts of trade, especially Antwerp, were deserted. Consternation, followed by indignation, stirred the people to violent measures.

Definite shape was given to the revolt against the despotism of Philip by the nobles, when, joined by wealthy merchants, they signed an agreement to withstand the oppression. The signatures of some five hundred nobles were obtained to this agreement. A "Request" was prepared by them to be presented in a body to Margaret. William of Orange did not take any part in this. He thought the action useless and premature. He simply counselled them after the "Request" had been decided on as to the language of the document. His great desire was, as he wrote to a friend at this time, to save his country from ruin, "and so many innocent persons from slaughter. But when I say anything in the Council I am sure to be misinterpreted. So I am greatly perplexed since speech and silence are equally bad."

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Indeed, though now but little past thirty years of age, he was growing prematurely old. He was no longer "the brilliant and careless grandee" that he was when he began housekeeping in Brussels. His sleepless nights, his careworn days began, even as early as this, to show themselves in his face and figure. "They say that the Prince is very sad," wrote Morillon to Granvelle, "and 'tis easy to read as much in his face. They say he can not sleep."

The "Request" prepared by the nobles called for the withdrawal of the edicts and the Inquisition, and that the States-General should have the management of affairs in the country.

On the 5th of April, 1566, the Confederates appeared before the Regent. "It was a fine sight," writes Pontus Payen, a Catholic historian, "to see this band of gentlemen, most of them beardless, but as cultivated and accomplished as any to be found in Europe. Many, besides being skilled in the use of arms, were well versed in literature, though completely ignorant in matters of state, owing to their extreme youth." There were about three hundred in line. At their approach Margaret was so agitated that she could scarcely control herself. Brederode read the address. During the reading Margaret grew more and more excited and her spirit became saddened.

She promised an answer after she had consulted her counsellors.

The nobles retired. The petition was at once discussed by the Council. Orange counselled a due and honorable consideration of the "Request" since the petitioners were not a set of wild conspirators, "but dignified, earnest, well-meaning and well-born gentlemen, who

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knew the temper of the land." Berlaymont, noticing the Regent's nervousness and perturbation, said: "How, Madame, can it be that your Highness is afraid of these beggars? By the living God, if my advice were taken, their petition should have bastinados as sole commentary, and they should be made to go down the palace steps much quicker than they came up."

Margaret gave an evasive answer to the "Request," stating that she would refer the matter to the king. 'Twas all she could well do under the circumstances. To accede to the request was as much out of the question as was the peremptory ignoring of it.

The nobles soon after this met in their regular session, followed by a banquet. It was here that the new movement in the Netherlands was christened with the name that has come down into history, and which became full of terror and significance to the Spanish soldiery. Miss Putnam quotes Payen's full account of this meeting:

"When they were at table, the goblets came into play and the guests merrily emptied the great beakers of gold and gilded silver full of good wine, without forgetting to drink to the health of the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont. After the wine had heated their brains, Brederode, who was one of the cleverest, made a sign to the guests to be quiet.

"This done, he began to relate aloud the remarks that Berlaymont had made about the confederates and the fine and reverend name of 'beggars' he had applied to them. 'So,' he continued, 'since we are beggars, there is good reason for us to carry wallets and drink out of wooden cups,' and at the same instant one of his pages brought him a wallet, which he put on like a monk's

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scapulary, and then he took in both hands a great common beaker, or wooden bowl, full of wine, and, having valiantly emptied it at one gulp, had it refilled and passed it to his neighbor, crying aloud: 'To the health of the Beggars!' His neighbor put on the wallet and emptied the cup as Brederode had done and, as he drank, all the company cried at the top of their voices, 'Long live the Beggars!'

"Each of the guests did the same in turn, each taking an oath to maintain their confederation, to live and die for each other, with the most foolish and absurd ceremony I ever heard of. For the person who had the wallet, holding the wooden cup in his hand, threw some salt into the wine, repeating at the same time this doggerel couplet:

" 'By the salt, by the bread, by the wallet, too,
The beggars will not change, no matter what they do.'

"Then you might have seen wooden bowls and platters trotted out on the table, instead of gold and silver cups, and if my gentleman pages were busy at filling them, their masters were still more valiantly at emptying them, not forgetting to cry at every draught, 'Long live the Beggars.' * * * * At a late stage of the supper the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont and Count Horn, who had supped with the Count of Mansfield, dropped in and drank once to the company, who meanwhile made the words, 'Long live the king,' 'health to the beggars,' etc., echo so loud that one could not have heard God thunder."

The term "Beggars" was everywhere adopted by the people and spread throughout the country. The nobles dressed themselves and their families in plain gray clothes—the garb of the mendicant monks—and fastened in their



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caps a little wooden porringer. A coin was struck off called the "Beggar's Penny," with the image of the king on one side and two hands holding a beggar's wallet on the other. This medal was hung about people's necks.

This movement of the nobles naturally nerved the people to make demonstrations of enthusiastic resistance to the Inquisition. Large gatherings were held wherein the situation of affairs was freely discussed. The authorities endeavored to disperse these meetings, but regular encampments were formed and armed resistance was offered; men guarding the congregation "with guns, pike and sword in hand, listening to the eloquence of impassioned preachers."

Margaret was helpless. People cared little for edicts and she could not even order or persuade the militia of Antwerp to be called out to her aid in dispersing the people.

None watched all this with wiser interest and deeper solicitude than did William of Orange. He persuaded the Regent not to interfere with field-preaching so long as the worshipers did not invade the towns.

But it was impossible for this preaching to continue to be peaceful and dignified. Excesses must needs come. And come they did at Antwerp on August 18, 1566, just four months after the "Beggars" had presented their petition. It was occasioned by a large procession of Catholic Clergy, making a pompous display, greatly annoying the Protestants. The procession carried around the city a small image of the Virgin Mary, which was done every year on this date. People jeered at the procession, crying out: "Mayken, Mayken (little Mary, little Mary),

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thine hour has come. This is the last time thou shalt walk abroad. The city is tired of thee."

The following morning a mixed multitude was gathered around the Cathedral. That day the rabble excited a tumult in the church, which, however, was quelled before night. But the next morning the crowds again surged to the Cathedral. Motley thus describes the day: "The same taunts and imprecations were hurled at the image of the Virgin; the same howling of the Beggar's cry resounded through the lofty arches. For a few hours no act of violence was committed, but the crowd increased. A few trifles, drifting, as usual, before the events, seemed to indicate the approaching convulsion. A very paltry old woman excited the image-breaking at Antwerp. She had for years been accustomed to sit before the door of the Cathedral with wax tapers and wafers, earning a scanty subsistence from the profits of the meager trade and by the small coins she sometimes received in charity. Some of the rabble began to chaffer with this ancient huckstress. They scoffed at her consecrated wares; they bandied with her ribald jests, of which her public position had furnished her with a supply; they assured her that the hour had come when her idolatrous traffic was to be forever terminated, when she and her patroness Mary were to be given over to destruction together. The old woman, enraged, answered threat with threat, and gibe with gibe. Passing from words to deeds, she began to catch from the ground every offensive missile or weapon which she could find and to lay about her in all directions. Her tormenters defended themselves as they could. Having destroyed her stock in trade, they provoked others to appear in her defense. The passers-by thronged to the

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scene; the Cathedral was soon filled to overflowing; a furious tumult was already in progress."

The magistrates, having been informed of this, hastened to allay the troubles and had almost succeeded, when, neglecting to lock all the doors of the Cathedral, they gave an opportunity for the rabble to enter. Once within, the work of destruction began amid wild yells. Images, pictures, statues, ornaments were ruthlessly broken into thousands of pieces; sledge-hammers, clubs, axes, ropes, ladders—all were used. "Every statue was hurled from its niche, every picture torn from the wall, every wonderfully painted window shattered to atoms, every ancient monument shattered, every sculptured decoration, however inaccessible in appearance, hurled to the ground";—and thus long into the night did the iconoclastic work proceed, until one of the most magnificent churches then in existence was made a wreck.

Other places, hearing of the destruction of the images at Antwerp, also entered upon the work of demolition. In Brabant and Flanders alone more than four hundred churches were plundered.

Margaret was in fear and utmost distress and was about to flee from Brussels. William of Orange, Egmont and Horn restrained her and induced her to publish the armistice, known as the Act of the 25th of August, by which preaching was allowed and the Inquisition was, for the time, at least, abolished.

Upon this the nobles endeavored to pacify the people. William succeeded in Antwerp. Egmont, using harsh measures in Flanders, disappointed the people and was not successful in establishing quiet.

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Boundless rage filled the heart of Philip when the reports of the iconoclasm reached him. With characteristic craftiness, however, he endeavored to conceal it, writing letters of moderation and even giving promises of visiting the country in person, expressing a wish to re-establish order by means of grace and mercy. On this Schiller says: "To curb the overgrown power and insolence of the nobility, there was no expedient more natural than the presence of their master. Before royalty itself, all secondary dignities must necessarily have sunk in the shade, all other splendor dimmed. Instead of the truth being left to flow slowly and obscurely through impure channels to the distant throne, so that procrastinated measures of redress gave time to ripen ebullitions of the moment into acts of deliberation, his own penetrating glance would at once have been able to separate truth from error; and cold policy alone, not to speak of humanity, would have saved the land a million citizens. The nearer to their source, the more weighty would his edicts have been; the thicker they fell upon their objects, the weaker and the more dispirited would have become the efforts of the rebels. It costs infinitely more to do an evil to an enemy in his presence than in his absence. Philip's appearance in Brussels would have put an end at once to this juggling. In that case the rebels would have been compelled to act up to their pretense, or to cast aside the mask, and so, by appearing in their true shape, condemn themselves. And what a relief for the Netherlands if the king's presence had only spared them those evils which were inflicted upon them without his knowledge and contrary to his will! What gain, too, if it had only enabled him to watch over the expenditure of the

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vast sums which, illegally raised on the plea of meeting the exigencies of the war, disappeared in the plundering hands of his deputies!"

But Philip had neither the wisdom nor the slightest inclination or intention of visiting the Netherlands. His promises were made so as to give him more time to prepare to invade the country with an army; and they deceived all but William of Orange. Remembering his conversation with Henry of France, in regard to the settled policy of Philip, he had established a system of espionage over every act and word spoken and written by Philip, regularly receiving copies of all Philip's most secret dispatches. He, therefore, knew that instead of mercy and grace, of which the king had written, they could expect only the most cruel and merciless revenge. And he had learned that this revenge was to be specially wreaked upon himself, Egmont, and Horn. Communicating this knowledge to Egmont, he urged him to join him in flight or in armed resistance to the expected invasion by a Spanish army. But Egmont was blind to all danger, and sided with the government. Horn, weary of the strife, discouraged with losses of property, retired into solitude. William was left alone, misunderstood, but none the less resolved that he would do what he could to save his country. He knew full well that to go blindly forward, as matters were now wildly shaping themselves, would be as useless as it would be fatal.

Beside this, all public officers were at this time required to take a new oath of allegiance, by which they bound themselves to implicit obedience to all orders of the government, everywhere and against every person without distinction. This the Prince of Orange would

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not do. To make blind pledges was utterly repugnant to him, and especially pledges to a king, such as he had learned Philip to be, and in matters such as he knew were determined upon by the government. But the alternative was: either take the oath or resign all offices. He unhesitatingly did the latter and made preparation to retire to his possessions in Germany. Not, indeed, as fleeing from danger or leaving a sinking cause to its fate, but with a full knowledge that to remain in the country would disable him to serve the cause he had espoused; whereas, away from danger, amid which he would have been helpless, he could devise some means of help.

He made one more attempt to rescue his friend Egmont from his suicidal infatuation, but in vain. Egmont protested his faith in the king's clemency and goodwill to him. William replied: "Alas, Egmont, the king's clemency, of which you boast, will destroy you. Would that I might be deceived; but I foresee too clearly that you are to be the bridge which the Spaniards will destroy so soon as they have passed over it to invade our country." This was at their last meeting on earth. After the Prince had said this he affectionately threw his arms around him, and tears rolled down the cheeks of both.

A story is told—but Motley doubts its truth—that at parting Egmont insinuated that William, in fleeing, showed a want of courage. What was he to do, however, but to flee for a time. He knew full well that extensive preparations had been made and were about to be consummated for a Spanish invasion of the country that meant complete subjugation, and that the nobles were first to be taken. It was less than a month after William's



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retirement that Alva embarked for the Netherlands. Egmont had refused to join him in preventing this intended invasion by armed resistance. Horn had retired. The confederacy of nobles, whose meetings had been little else than a series of noisy banquets, was now broken up. He knew it would be suicide to remain; no possible good could come from his doing so, and much probable harm. Hence, he wisely and for the good of his country retired to his old home at Dillenburg in Germany.

With William's departure matters in the Netherlands took a somber aspect. Thousands and tens of thousands—indeed, it is estimated that over one hundred thousand people—left the country with their possessions. The Inquisition was again reinstated with renewed vigor and cruelty. Fugitives were ruthlessly sought out, pursued, murdered. "Hardly a village so small but that it could furnish one, two, or three hundred victims to the executioner. The new churches were leveled to the ground and out of their timbers gallows were constructed." Hopelessness settled over the homes of the Netherlanders. Hopefulness brightened the sky of the government of Spain. The Spanish army, all ready for marching orders, it was thought would soon completely establish permanently the present favorable condition of things, when all rebellion seemed to have been quelled, the confederacy of nobles broken up, the sects extirpated, the Roman Catholic worship fully restored, the rebels imprisoned, and the towns securely garrisoned with troops.

William was thirty-four years of age when he left the Netherlands. Once away from the scene of conflict, reflecting upon what it was all leading to, and what had caused the state of affairs; having broken with the

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Catholicism that was responsible for the condition of things; facing the more serious questions of doctrine involved, he was naturally led to turn to an earnest study of theology. The following letter from him to William of Hesse is dated June 13, 1567. "We would like, from the bottom of our heart, to occupy ourselves in strengthening our character and conscience, and rendering them more sturdy, by studying the Scriptures, during the time that we remain here outside of our Netherland estates. For we, without blazoning the matter, bear a warm affection to Christian zeal, and therefore we would like to have an honest, learned, well-bred, good man, and one used to the world's ways, about us. I have heard of such an one named Nicholas Zell, of Treszen, in Hesse, etc."

William of Hesse agreed to let him go to Dillenburg for half a year to instruct the Prince. At the same time books expounding the Lutheran theology were placed in his hands. Thus was he preparing to take his stand intelligently on the side of the Reformers, and thus was he led into forming firm religious convictions that stood him in good stead in the struggles still before him; troubles which very soon after his departure from Holland came upon those whom he always called his people.



ALVA

From a Painting by Mar. Original in Museum at Brussels

CHAPTER VII.

ALVA'S ARRIVAL.

WHEN, on Egmont's return from his fruitless mission to Spain, Philip had an ordinance passed that every six months the decrees of the Council of Trent, the edicts and the Inquisition should be publicly read, William of Orange whispered to his neighbor in the Council that passed the decree that before long the most extraordinary tragedy would begin that the world's history had ever recorded. The prophecy began soon to be fulfilled.

The king, contrary to the advice of Margaret, and some of his most loyal Spanish counsellors, determined to send an army into the Netherlands that would once for all bring the Provinces into full subjection. To this he had been urged by the Duke of Alva, who thirsted for the blood of the Netherlanders. The king decided to send him at the head of a picked army, the flower of the Spanish soldiers.

Alva had won for himself, under Charles V, an honorable name as a soldier; indeed, he was considered the greatest general of his age, and was pronounced by friend and foe alike the greatest military genius Spain had produced in that age of remarkable soldiery. Such he has been considered until late researches prove that he was not capable of conducting great operations, however skillful he was in leading small forces.

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Philip chose him as a leader of this expedition because he was his exact counterpart. He, like Philip, was an implacable bigot, heartily detesting "heretics." Like Philip, he was heartless in the extreme, treacherous, knowing no mercy, caring little for justice if only he could be revenged upon those whom he had come to chastise. As Frederic Harrison says, he remains in the history of Europe the type of all that is bloody, pitiless and false.

It was on the tenth of May, 1567, that Alva, at the head of ten thousand veterans, thoroughly organized, embarked for their bloody work in the Netherlands. The march was orderly and terminated with no unusual incidents. In August the army arrived at Luxemburg.

Margaret dreaded Alva's coming. She knew only too well that it meant subjugation on her part and she had knowledge enough of the people to fear that his coming would only fan into larger flames the spirit of revolt that had been subdued, but by no means quenched. The people were struck with horror, the more because Alva distributed his troops—"detested vermin," in the language of the Hollanders—throughout the cities and towns. Their presence was made the more obnoxious by insolence added to cruelties. Thousands of the best citizens fled. The arts and manufactures that had made the country rich and powerful were taken away with the emigrants, and everywhere, especially in Brussels, where Alva made his headquarters, gloom and desolation fell upon the land.

Alva had received secret instructions from Philip. The first work to be undertaken by him was to arrest the leaders in the late disturbances and forever make them safe from doing any more mischief, then to ferret out every suspicious and guilty person among the people and force

Alva's Arrival

the wealth of the country into the state treasury and to the support of the troops.

The Duke of Alva had all along, with Philip, believed that the difficulties in the Netherlands were due largely to the nobles of the Provinces, particularly William of Orange, Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten. Their idea was that if these were executed, the people could easily be brought into subjection. Alva's first remark on arriving in the country was: "I, who have tamed people of iron, shall soon manage these people of butter!" It cost Philip and Alva dear to become undeceived as to their task!

Their first object, therefore, was to arrest these leaders and without much ceremony execute them. Alva was disappointed to learn that Orange was gone. But Egmont was at hand. Alva met him with blandishments and deceived him with all manner of kind words. Egmont, never suspecting the poisonous fangs under the smooth tongue, received him with great cordiality. Horn was still in retirement. It was not easy to coax him out of his resting place. But kind letters, profuse flatteries, promises of important commissions that would secure him both honor and riches, at last enticed the prey. Hoogstraaten and Orange were safe in Germany.

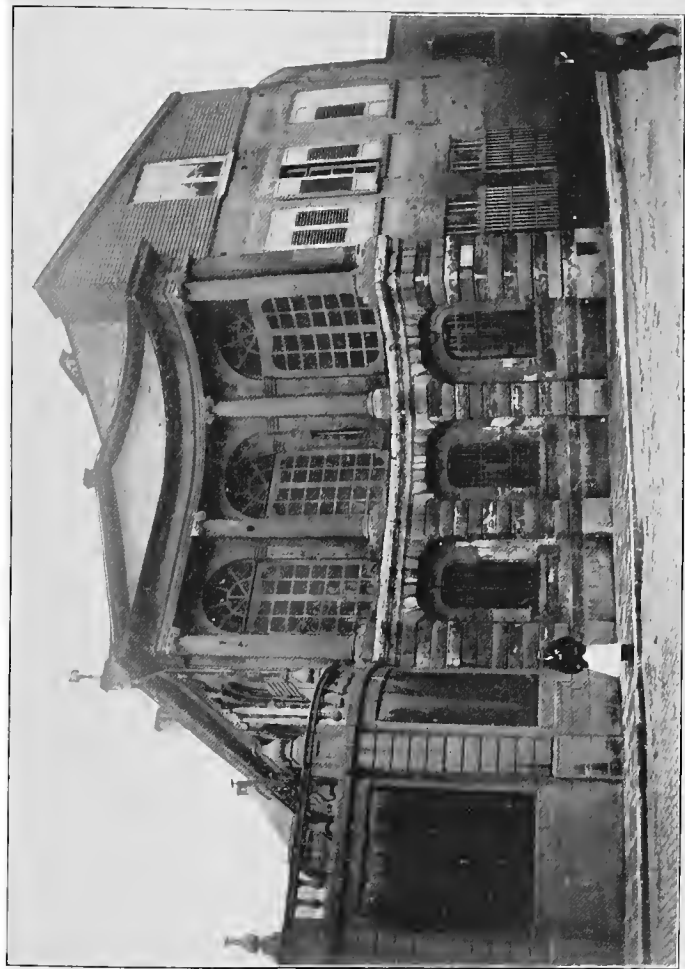
The plans for the arrest of Egmont and Horn were well laid. A banquet had been prepared to which they were invited. Egmont had been repeatedly warned against the entrapment. The evening before the arrest a Spaniard sent an earnest message urging him to flee from Alva before morning. Unheeding of it, he attended the banquet the next day. During the feast orders came from Alva for Egmont and Horn to meet him to plan with him

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concerning fortifications at Antwerp. Don Ferdinando, the host, at this time whispered to Egmont: "Leave this place, Signor Count, instantly; take the fleetest horse in your stable and make your escape without a moment's delay." He now began to be aroused to a sense of danger. Noircames asked him the cause of his agitation. He told him what he had just heard. "Ha! Count," said he, "do not put lightly such implicit confidence in this stranger, who is counselling you to your destruction. What will the Duke of Alva and all the Spaniards say of such a precipitate flight? Will they not say that your excellency has fled from the consciousness of guilt? Will not your escape be construed into a confession of high treason?" These questions settled Egmont's fate. He and Horn went to Alva's house and, while they were looking over the plans of the contemplated fortifications, their dwellings were being searched, papers and valuables confiscated, secretaries arrested; and in the evening, when they were about to leave, they found themselves under arrest and securely imprisoned. The plot had been admirably planned and successfully executed. Alva had not given the slightest intimation that this perfidious treatment awaited them. On the contrary, he had treated them with the utmost confidence and courtesy. Indeed, Alva on the morning of the arrest had ridden one of the horses presented to him by Egmont.

Other arrests were made on the same day—a day when horrors were begun that cause amazement, both at the power of endurance of brave men, and the hard-hearted, demon-like cruelty of a despot.

Joy reigned supreme in Philip's heart because of Alva's acts. At Rome, too, there was great rejoicing. Gran-



PALACE AT BRUSSELS

Where Egmont and Horn were imprisoned by Alva

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velle, however, was not so jubilant when he heard that William of Orange had escaped. He remarked that since *he* was not arrested, nobody had been taken; and that "his capture would have been more valuable than that of every man in the Netherlands."

On the other hand, great consternation filled the Provinces at the arrest of Egmont and Horn. In consequence of it emigration increased so rapidly that Alva was compelled to institute means to stop it. With the thousands and tens of thousands already gone, and thousands more going, it looked as though the country would soon be depleted.

And yet the story of suffering, disappointment, cruelty, surprises, perfidy, bloodshed, appalling to tell, was but just beginning to be written in the blood of the brave Netherlands.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLOOD COUNCIL AND ITS WORKS

THE business for which Alva had come began in earnest immediately upon the arrest of Egmont and Horn. The Council of State, existing in the Netherlands at this time, Alva well knew was not subservient enough to his will, having among its members a number who sympathized with, if they did not lead, in the spirit of liberty among the people. Hence the first thing to be undertaken was to reorganize it. This was done. It was, however, more of a supplanting than a reorganization that was effected.

The ostensible object of the Council under Alva was to investigate fully all the disturbances through which the country had passed, ascertain the causes, and bring the authors of them to punishment. But in reality it was to make a wholesale slaughter of all who in the remotest degree sympathized with the national spirit of independence. It was originally called: "*The Council of His Excellency*"; but this name was soon changed to "*The Council of Tumults*." The people called it more rightly "*The Council of Blood*." With this name it has come down in history.

The Board consisted of twelve criminal judges, who were to try and pronounce sentence upon any and all whom they might see fit to summon before them, irrespective of age, standing, office, condition, or place of

The Blood Council

residence. Here was at once merciless cruelty and a violent infringement upon the liberties of the country, whose laws provided that no person was to be tried outside of his own Province. Besides this violation of vested rights, Alva put on the Bench open and avowed enemies of the country, choosing as leading member a Spaniard by birth, Vargas, a disreputable character, who had been cast out of his own country as a plague spot.

Alva assumed the presidency himself. The Court began its sitting on the 20th of September, 1567. Alva spent from six to nine hours a day in its meetings. Its rulings were violently arbitrary. It had not even a nominal authority from any source. It ignored all laws, charters, civic and provincial privileges, and all courts of justice. There was no appeal from its decisions. "Not only citizens from every province, but the municipal bodies and even the sovereign provincial estates themselves were compelled to plead, like humble individuals, before the new and extraordinary tribunal." The rich were arrested on the slightest pretense, so as to make good the promise Alva had made that he would make streams of gold flow into Spain from his expedition into the Netherlands. The poorer classes were taken so as to be made examples of, and thus the easier to bring about a speedy subjection. Slaughter went on apace. Every town, village and city furnished its doomed victims. Where could they not be found when it was considered by this Council a crime worthy of death to have innocently or sportingly sung a "Beggar's Song," to have attended a Calvinistic funeral even years before, to have had an infant baptised with Calvinistic rites, for speaking lightly of an image of the Virgin Mary, for expressing a sentiment that men

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ought to obey God rather than man, for even daring to say that the Reformed doctrines would spread in Spain? "Madame Juriaen, who, in 1566, had struck with her slipper a little wooden image of the Virgin, together with her maid-servant, who had witnessed without denouncing the crime, were both drowned by the hangman in a hogs-head placed on the scaffold."

There was one member of the Council held in particular esteem by the Duke of Alva. This was the Flemish Councillor Hessels, valued, as Motley says, not for his talent or learning, but specially for his cruelty. "Being allowed to take but little share in the deliberations, Hessels was accustomed to doze away his afternoon hours at the council table, and, when awakened from his nap, in order that he might express an opinion on the case then before the court, was wont to rub his eyes and to call out, 'Ad patibulum, ad patibulum' (to the gallows with him, to the gallows with him), with great fervor, but in entire ignorance of the culprit's name or the merits of the case."

So numerous did the cases grow that the Council could not attend to individuals, and hence whole companies—at one time five hundred innocent people in one crowd—were sent to the gallows by one sentence. *On the 16th of February, 1568, a death sentence was passed upon all the inhabitants of the Netherlands, with but a few individual exceptions.* In order to facilitate matters, Philip had provided Alva with a trunk full of blank sentences which he had officially signed.

The effects of all this upon the country were beyond description. Ruin stared the frightened people in the face at every turn. Hatred and despair filled all hearts.

The Blood Council

Alva cared not, but went on for years with his destructive work. With him "to rule was to massacre." He was in full accord with his sovereign, who had said that "it was better to have a kingdom ruined by war, if it remained true to God and the king, than to keep it unspoiled by war for the benefit of Satan and his followers, the heretics."

It was becoming evident to the people that but one of two things remained for them to do: either meekly to submit to be tyrannized over by a foreign prince, who cared nothing for the welfare of the country so long as the people obediently followed his arbitrary will in religion and in politics; or, rise in bold revolt to free themselves from the destructive tyranny. Possessed of the spirit of independence as they were, they would certainly perish if they did not revolt; they could but die if they did; and, if perish they must, they would rather die heroically defending their country, their homes and their children than without resistance see the decree of cruel execution enforced.

The great struggle for liberty of the Netherlands, therefore, began in earnest. No nation ever before or after passed through more desolate and remarkable scenes than now awaited brave little Holland for years to come.

CHAPTER IX.

WILLIAM'S EFFORTS AT RELIEF

THE Blood Council had summoned the one man to whom the people were beginning more and more intently to look for help, and whom Alva and his coadjutors increasingly feared—*William, Prince of Orange*. He was charged with treason; of leading the rebellion; and with seven other counts of less importance. He was to appear within forty-two days from the date of the summons or he would be banished perpetually and his estates confiscated. His reply was bold and positive, withal manly. He stood upon his rights, which he knew to be far above Alva's unauthorized and illegal "Blood Council." Were he summoned before the just and legal courts, said he, to which a Knight of the Golden Fleece, of which high order he was a member, was subject, he would consent to appear.

William had not yet broken with the Government. He still expressed allegiance to the king, though most unequivocally repudiating any connection with or allegiance to Alva. His contention was not with his Majesty, but with the cruel and illegal usurpation of the Duke. This position, however, he could not long maintain. Full well did he know this. But he also foresaw that it would be to his advantage in gaining followers and would be of help to him in securing aid from neighboring governments and the Catholic patriots in the Netherlands to hold it as long as possible.

William's Efforts at Relief

Matters grew worse daily and more and more serious, so that he could not but be driven into open revolt to Philip II.

At this time his eldest son was kidnaped and taken to Spain, where he was held as hostage for William's good behavior. He was at the time attending the University of Louvain. It was without doubt a serious fault on the part of William to have left him there; as Harrison says, "one of the few imprudences of his life," for it might easily be foreseen that the young man would be captured. William "seems to have hoped thus"—by leaving his son in the country—"to avert or mitigate the confiscation of his estates, take from himself the imputation of being a refugee, or enable the Spaniards to accept the boy as his successor."

This fresh outrage, added to his proscription, drove him to declare himself as the persecuted, death-doomed nation's champion. Nor was this any presumption on his part; for what else could he do, finding himself an outlaw, his property confiscated, and all the while conscious that the country looked to him under God for deliverance? The Rubicon was crossed, and henceforth every energy was bent to regain the liberty of his people.

His first effort was to secure troops. He issued commissions to his brother Louis, a brave soldier and an able general, to Hoogstraaten, and others, to gather armies for the defense of the ancient liberties of the Provinces of the Netherlands. He called upon the cities of Holland to furnish funds. He himself staked all upon the venture—his property, his prospects, his station, his family, his honor—even selling his jewels, plate, tapestry, and furniture, all of princely richness. It was planned that three

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separate armies were to invade the country—one from the southwest, one from the east, and one from the north, while the Prince was to remain with a reserve force on the lower Rhine.

It was fitting that among the time-honored, liberty-loving Frisians the standard of revolt should be first raised, and that the first blow for liberty should be there struck. Accordingly there Louis entered the country with an army of some 3,000 horse and foot, having emblazoned on his banners this inscription: "*Freedom for Fatherland and Conscience.*" Such a motto was as new as it was startling to the world.

The other armies were easily defeated with overwhelming slaughter, but the engagement of Louis with 4,000 Spanish troops was successful. The Spaniards were completely routed. But on this battlefield, on the banks of the Ems, the first offering of the Nassau family was made. Adolph, a younger brother of William and Louis, was killed.

Alva's rage was unbounded. He was already beginning to learn that the people whom he called when he entered the country "men of butter" were, in fact, men of carefully welded steel.

To strike terror among the people and to rid himself of a possible source of revolution, before he himself headed a force to retrieve the losses occasioned by the victory of Louis, he hurried the Council to try Egmont and Horn, who had for seven months been held prisoners. With heartless cruelty they were beheaded, Alva mercilessly refusing to refund any property to Egmont's widow, whom he left in absolute beggary with her large family of helpless children. On the eve of the execution, Egmont wrote

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two letters—one to Alva and one to Philip II. The following is the letter to the king:

"Sire: This morning I have heard the sentence which your Majesty has been pleased to pass upon me. Far as I have ever been from attempting anything against the person or the service of your Majesty, or against the only true, old and Catholic religion, I yet submit myself with patience to the fate which it has pleased God to ordain I should suffer. If, during the past disturbances, I have omitted, advised, or done anything that seems at variance with my duty, it was most assuredly performed with the best intentions, or was forced upon me by the pressure of circumstances. I, therefore, pray your Majesty to forgive me, and, in consideration of my past services, shew mercy to my unhappy wife, my poor children and servants. In a firm hope of this, I commend myself to the infinite mercy of God.

Your Majesty's most faithful vassal and servant,

LAMORAL COUNT EGMONT.

Brussels, June 5th, 1568, *near my last moments.*"

This letter was given in charge of the Bishop who attended Egmont during his last hours, and a copy was also given to State Councillor Viglius, who, it is said, without doubt actually delivered it to the king. In spite of the dying plea for unhappy wife and children, it was not until years afterward that the family of the Count was reinstated in all the rights and property that had been taken from them at the execution.

Not only were Egmont and Horn dispatched, but eighteen or twenty other nobles of less fame were also

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executed. Their lives were the price they paid for efforts to protect themselves and their country from tyranny.

With a boldness goaded on by rage and chagrin, Alva hastened to the army of Louis in Friesland. Two fierce encounters took place, in which the forces of Louis were completely routed, he himself escaping, crossing the Ems by swimming. In a letter from William to Louis we learn the situation of affairs, while at the same time we get a glimpse of William's courage and determined, undaunted spirit. He writes:

July 31st.

My Brother: Today I received your letter by Godfrey, and have also heard what you commissioned him to say. As to the first point, be assured that I have never felt anything more than the pitiable success which you met on the 21st of the month, for many reasons which you can easily understand. This defeat increases the difficulty of the levy which we have on foot, and has greatly chilled the hearts of those who might otherwise have given us aid. * * * With God's help, I have determined to push ahead, and hope on the 8th of August to be on the spot for muster, at the place you agreed on with M. Aldegonde. I have written to the same effect to Count Joost de Schauenberg, desiring him to report there with his thousand horse, although I do not know exactly where he is at present, and fear, after what has happened, that he can not easily arrive soon. In case you know his whereabouts, tell him of this plan as soon as possible, since delay affects us all. As the report is current that the Duke of Alva wishes to keep us from our muster, I pray you remember to advise me whether he be still in Friesland, and what



"GRAND PLACE" AT BRUSSELS
Where Egmont and Horn were executed

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are his forces. In case you hear that he is going to the said place, please at once advise Belthasar von Wolffven, whose house is not far from Lippe, and also Otho of Maulsburgh, and this you may always do with any advices, for, by sending me word first, intelligence might reach them too late. I can not counsel you about your own plans, as I am ignorant of your resources and information, and what naval forces the enemy may have. * * * *
I can only say, if you think you can achieve anything, why, do it in God's name, but I can not heartily approve your risking your person on the water. * * * *

Commenting on this letter, Miss Putnam says: "Considering how our gentle Washington swore at St. Clair's defeat, owing to his having disregarded the last cautions of his chief, the kindness and consideration of this letter are very remarkable. Every present plan, each future movement, was hampered by Louis' misfortune, but the Prince uttered no word of reproach."

With fresh courage, Alva returned to Brussels to renew his executions, so that all the prisons, of which large numbers had been built immediately upon his arrival in the country, were overcrowded with the accused. Daily the hanging, burning, beheading and general murdering proceeded, the rich especially being ferreted out. Many wealthy merchants with their hands tied to their backs, were dragged at the horse's tail to execution, as if they were despicable vagabonds, for no other reason than that the money coffers of Alva might be filled.

This horrible work kept on until autumn, when Alva's attention was called to the advancement of William of Orange, who was marching into the country from Germany at the head of an army he had succeeded in raising.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM'S PERSEVERANCE AMID DIFFICULTIES

THOUGH the citation of the Blood Council was still in force, and though, when Louis was defeated and Alva's reign of terror was striking fear into every heart, and the cause of the Patriots of Holland seemed hopelessly lost, the one man in all the world who did not abate his hope or lose courage was William the Silent. Friends discouraged him and tried to dissuade him from continued efforts to save the country. "Your Highness must sit still," said the Landgrave William. Augustus of Saxony said the same. The German Emperor said: "You must move neither hand nor foot in the cause of the perishing Provinces. * * * You have nothing to do but to keep quiet."

Ah! but he had responded to what he became more and more convinced was a call from God; and he had the conviction that God Almighty had endowed him with genius, power, fortitude, rank, and fortune for no other purpose than to use them to liberate the souls and bodies of millions of his fellowmen, and to fight out, in the name of God, whether winning or losing, the great battle between despotism and human liberty. This was not a rashly formed notion of an unbalanced enthusiast, but the calmly-formed conviction of an earnest, thoughtful, cautious soul. And the Prince, once realizing his responsibility, went on to its full and final discharge, whatever the

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cost. His enemies became more and more defiant and emboldened; his friends more and more weakened in courage and hope. The Provinces themselves were cowed with fear, and seemed paralyzed under the violent measures of Alva. Help looked for in Germany was withheld. Indeed, Maximilian, the Emperor, had issued an order for the Prince to lay down his arms and no longer persist in carrying a war against Spain under penalty of forfeiting all rights, fiefs, privileges, endowments, and incurring the heaviest disgrace, punishment, and penalties of the Empire.

But he was undaunted. Having become thoroughly convinced that the God of truth and of nations had destined him to spend his life in endeavors to rescue his people from civil and religious tyranny and to establish liberty of conscience and of religion, this high purpose nerved him amid all his discouragements and trials; aye, this made the difficulties he encountered to appear to him but as the natural consequence of his chosen course. For he well knew, what every man who undertakes valiantly for God and fellowmen learns sooner or later in his career, that to establish new and untried truths and convictions means a bid for opposition from established forms and conditions.

Having undertaken this thankless and self-sacrificing task, a deep change had gradually come over him religiously. He had amid the duties and great work in which he was now with heart and soul engaged, learned that the Reformation stood for the truest principles of Christianity; and he conscientiously espoused these principles, becoming a thoroughly religious man, realizing that the course with which he had identified himself was of God; and henceforth one of the firmest and most conspicuous

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traits of his character was implicit reliance upon God. From now on he walked by faith in the Almighty, and this faith supported him amid sorest trials, defeats and discouragements from friends and foes. His religion was not a mere sentiment, but a matter of earnest conviction, and a principle of soul and life. Private letters, discovered after three centuries had elapsed since they were written to nearest friends, testify to the sincerity of his trust and prove that his professions were not assumed as a cloak, or a design to delude others, and thus to further personal interests, but were honestly a support to him amid his distresses. In the letter to his brother Louis, after the latter's defeat, so disastrous, by Alva, from which extracts have already been given, occurs this sentence: "Nevertheless, since it has thus pleased God, it is necessary to have patience and to lose not courage conforming ourselves to His divine will, as for my part I have determined to do in everything which may happen, still proceeding onward in our work with His Almighty aid." To his wife, Anne of Saxony, he wrote: "I go tomorrow, but when I shall return, or when I shall see you, I can not, on my honor, tell you with certainty. I have resolved to place myself in the hands of the Almighty, that He may guide me whither it is His good pleasure that I should go. I see well enough that I am destined to pass this life in misery and labor, with which I am well content, since it thus pleases the Omnipotent, for I know that I have merited still greater chastisement. I only implore Him graciously to send me strength to endure with patience."

The secret of William's perseverance, says Groen van Prinsterer, was to be found in this unwavering trust in

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God, coupled with prayerful action. In all ages and at all times will this secret unlock stores of moral courage and consecration to one's life-work. Carlyle, who can not be charged with uttering meaningless religious sentiment, has said: "At all turns, a man who will *do* faithfully needs to believe firmly." And again: "A man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. * * *

The thing a man does practically believe (and this is often enough without asserting it even to himself, much less to others), the thing a man does practically lay to heart and know for certain concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest."

It is eternally true that no soul can ever grow strong and healthy and valiant feeding only upon negatives. No race of men has ever grown up to do valiant deeds without the cultivation of positive convictions. A man without these latter lacks energy, reality, motive, inspiration. He is "like the cold light that plays in the wake of an ocean steamer. It is pretty to look at; it keeps you wondering for hours what it is, and why it is, but, if you draw up a bucketful of foam on which it shines, you find that you couldn't strike a spark of living fire from all that quivers on seas and oceans." Goethe says in *Faust*: "The devil is an everlasting *no*; — the spirit of negation. Man is satisfied when he is asserting and confirming, not when he is contradicting and denying; for even a child glows with greater pleasure if he can only construct something than when he indulges in mere destruction."

In writing of the character of William the Silent and the Dutchmen who made such remarkable history at this

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time, justice will not be done unless their intense, positive, intelligent faith in God is fully taken into account. With all due credit to Motley for telling the story in an incomparable style and with dramatic effect, yet, in so far as he ignores or slurs over the religious motive of William and the people, he fails to portray the most powerful force that upheld them in their strife. It was a deep, an earnest study of the Bible, an inquiry into the divine Word, regarding first of all their duty toward God, and then of the relations of man to man, and ruler to ruled, that made possible the beginning of the struggle against Spain for freedom and to keep it up for eighty long years,—dreary, often utterly hopeless, years.

The Prince of Orange answered Maximilian's order with due deference and respect, but yet with most decided terms, in which he stated that he could not obey them. He published documents in which he called upon his countrymen to assist him with men and money. But with little effect. Small contributions were received from scattered and poor congregations, and only ten or twelve thousand crowns came from the rich merchants and leading nobles of Holland. They had promised three hundred thousand crowns.

He succeeded, however, in raising a considerable army and proceeded to attack Alva. With boldness and great risk, in moonlight, the army crossed the river Meuse. It was a daring adventure and produced serious apprehensions among the Spaniards. Alva would not believe the report. "Is the army of the Prince of Orange a flock of wild geese," said he, "that it can fly over rivers like the Meuse?"



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From a Painting by Miereveldt. Original in Museum at Amsterdam

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The army moved bravely on toward Alva's encampment. But the latter had resolved not to risk an open combat. His policy was to avoid a meeting, knowing that William had little resources, no base of supplies, and an uncertain army of mercenaries, who would mutiny at the first signs of inability of the Prince to pay them. On the other hand, he was himself secured with means of a living and with money to pay his troops; and, although the people sympathized with the Prince, yet he knew that they would not dare to assist him. He had every chance to succeed in overcoming the Prince by a refusal to fight, while he ran a risk of losing the battle by attempting an open conflict, doing which would be disastrous to him. Hence, do what he would, William could not bring on an engagement. He changed his encampment twenty-nine times, followed by the Duke in closest and most exasperating nearness. The Prince's army, as Alva had predicted, became discontented. The country people, fearing Alva, refused to relieve or assist William. Hence, worried with mutinous demonstrations in his army, during one of which the Prince's sword was shot from his side, and with almost unmanageable soldiers, William again crossed the Meuse, Alva following him. Seizing opportunity, he attacked William's rear-guard and destroyed 3,000 men. Saddened, disappointed, defeated, William dispersed his troops, selling his remaining plate and mortgaging his last domain to pay his mercenaries.

The first campaign for the country's relief had failed.

William betook himself to France, where his brothers Louis and Henry had entered into military service with the Huguenots under Conde. He, however, did not remain there. Just where he did go is not known to this

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day. This flight his enemies claimed was cowardice and a hopeless desertion of his cause; but his subsequent movements prove that it was prompted from a sense of prudence, knowing that he was being pursued everywhere by assassins seeking his life, and that it would be useless to risk his life in the fierce struggle in which the Huguenots were engaged.

However defeated and saddened he may often have been, he never was hopeless or in despair. He was not so even now, although in this, one of his darkest hours, together with the political and war defeats he had met, he was called upon to pass through most distressful domestic troubles. His marriage with Anne of Saxony in 1561 had proven to be most unfortunate and unhappy for him. She was not only not in sympathy with him in his endeavors to free his country, but was a positive hindrance to him. She was intemperate, eccentric, quarrelsome, profane, immoral, and violent of temper; so much so, that she beat her servants and attendants and made attempts upon her own life as well as the lives of her servants, and also of Count John of Nassau, who hospitably sheltered her when William, his brother, fled from Alva, and put her and her children in his care at Dillenburg. While here she was sullen and contemptible in her behavior, ungratefully fleeing to Cologne, where she lived in most shameful vices. She refused to heed entreaties or threats or commands to return. William's most earnest appeals were contemptuously spurned. Why, he asked, had she refused to return to him as he had so often begged her to

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do? When a man is sunk in troubles, he went on to say to her, there is no consolation so sweet as that which a wife can give—to see her patiently bearing the cross which the Almighty has given her husband to bear, and all the more when he is suffering to advance the glory of God and purchase the liberty of his country. Would that in his misery he might have the pity of his wife, and not be left to strangers!

But all to no avail. She lived on in open adultery—a child being the result of it—with Rubens, the father of the painter, who confessed his guilt and for some years was imprisoned for his crime. Anne became more and more violent, a complete lunatic, and was by her own relatives confined in a cell, with no company except a minister, who attended her daily, reading and expounding the Bible to her.

Amid all his troubles William always found comfort and strength in the love and help of his brother John of Nassau, who lived in the ancestral castle at Dillenburg. This home was ever open to him, and here he found a refuge when an outlaw and when wandering perforce from place to place to escape danger and to devise means for the deliverance of his country from tyranny and oppression. Here, too, lived his noble mother, whose counsels and prayers were ever a source of blessing to him, and whose letters were not the least among the elements that made up the inspiration of his heart to continue firm in the struggle in which he was engaged. She constantly held up before him the fact that it was not merely a political

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combat, but essentially and pre-eminently a religious struggle, which affected not only one nation, or one class of people, but touched the deepest interests of all humanity. She lived until 1580 and passed away in her seventy-seventh year, leaving an inspiring memory to a long line of descendants of European princes, kings and queens, reaching even unto the present day.

CHAPTER XI.

ALVA'S INCREASED CRUELITIES

ALVA returned with triumphant spirit from his success in defeating William of Orange. In spite of the fact that the people did not share in his joy, he still ordered a long-continued festival in honor of his victory, and, in the arrogance of his spirit, had the effrontery to erect an imposing statue of himself in a conspicuous place in Antwerp.

It need not be said that he did not diminish, but he rather increased his persecutions. These were made the easier for him, since the people were thoroughly disheartened. Mercy was not to be shown upon whatever plea sued for. Motley gives detailed incidents of the merciless treatment the brave Hollanders received at Alva's hand. One is that of a poor man condemned to death because he had fellowship with a persecuted sect. He was pursued by an officer. Crossing a frozen lake, the fugitive reached the opposite shore in safety. His pursuer, however, sank through the ice. His cries for help were heard by none but the one he was endeavoring to overtake. Touched with compassion, the poor man, risking his own life in doing so, recrossed the dangerous ice and rescued the officer. The officer was ready to release his prisoner, but was not permitted to do so, and the merciful man was burned to death, suffering lingering tortures. And thus hundreds, and even thousands, of blameless persons were murdered in cold blood.

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Such a policy could not but have a most deadening effect upon the country, paralyzing all trade, destroying all ambition, and driving from their homes and work any who could manage to get away in safety. All ancient rights, held sacred by the people, seemed forever destroyed. The population had been decreasing rapidly. Money was taken out of the country. All factories and shops had ceased activities, so that what was but a short time before the most prosperous and busy commercial country in Europe began to show signs everywhere of decay and ruin.

Yet all this had no effect upon Alva. He had no thought as to the welfare of the country or the good of the people. He was insanely intent upon gaining the millions made by the peaceable hand of honest industry for Spain and the army. And to accomplish this the sooner he conceived the idea of instituting a system of taxation, by which a levy of the one hundredth penny, or one per cent, was laid upon all property, real or personal; a perpetual tax of five per cent upon every transfer of real estate, and ten per cent "upon every article of merchandise or personal property to be paid as often as it should be sold." Such an impoverishing scheme could not help but excite most violent opposition. Alva's own friends endeavored to dissuade him from enforcing it. But he persisted. Finding, however, that he could not execute it, he consented to postpone it for two years.

Groaning under the burden of all this, an appeal was made to the king. This resulted in what is called an act of "Amnesty," but had very little clemency about it. The only favor that was granted in this act was that those who had not been accused of anything might be freed from

Alva's Increased Cruelties

punishment, *provided that within a prescribed time they sued for mercy and were absolved by the Church!* Whoever had been accused, justly or unjustly, were to have no mercy shown them. And yet Philip imagined that this "would stop the mouths of many people," because they would see that he had their good at heart! On the contrary, it only made the complaints and opposition to him all the stronger.

William of Orange had long been convinced of what was now becoming evident to the people, viz., that nothing in the way of relief could be expected from the Government; that nothing but continued persecution and increased oppressions awaited them; and that the only possible hope—though it, they felt, was but dim—was in armed resistance, preferring "to hasten the end by terrorism to seeing terrorism without end." Hence, Alva surprisingly found himself more and more boldly opposed; so much so that even he began to believe that his mission would fail. He now began to long to be permitted to resign his office. Meanwhile, he went on all the more furiously with his murders, hanging, burning, strangling, and pillaging.

He was suddenly arrested in this by news that from an unexpected quarter light had dawned upon the cause of the patriots. The "Sea Beggars" had taken Brill on the 1st of April, 1572. "Brill" in Dutch is the word for spectacles. Soon throughout the country this pun spread:

"Op den eersten April
Verloor Alva zyn bril."

(On April's first day
Alva's spectacles were taken away.)

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Caricatures, too, were seen everywhere of the leader of the Sea Beggars stealing the eye-glasses from Alva's nose. Griffis, in his readable little book, "Brave Little Holland," says: "Brill was the Dutchman's Lexington in his war for independence."

CHAPTER XII.

THE SEA BEGGARS

AFTER having been defeated by Alva, William the Silent had gone to France, where, especially among the Huguenots, he had succeeded in arousing sympathy and aid. Meanwhile he had kept up a correspondence with leading persons in the Netherlands, encouraging, directing, and counselling them.

But, before going to France, he had given commissions to certain sea-faring persons, headed by De La Marck, to cruise against Spanish commerce. These men had formerly been peaceful, industrious citizens; but they had, by persecutions of Alva, been led to actual beggary and had only one source left, namely, to pillage. Accustomed to the sea, inured to hardships, and now bent on vengeance, they were a terror to the patriots as well as to the Spaniards. William had, however, cautioned them against unlawful plundering, even sending a chaplain with them, who was to instruct them in religious principles and hold services among them. Their leader, William De La Marck, a relative of Egmont, was a fierce character. He had sworn to let his hair and beard grow until his country was free and Egmont's death had been avenged. These cruisers called themselves "*Beggars of the Sea.*"

With characteristic foresight, William the Silent saw that he could make valuable allies of these "Sea Beggars,"

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and therefore had given them commissions to harass the Spaniards. In fact, they were about the only persons he now could look to for assistance. From France he had again gone to Germany, knowing that his cause was in a thoroughly forlorn condition. Yet with utmost confidence that the combat in which he was engaged was as sacred as truth, and with heart fixed upon the God of truth, he kept up a most unparalleled courage, although now he was an outlaw, pursued by the enemy with an intense hatred and finding but little sympathy even among those whom he was befriending and defending. His money, too, was all but spent. It is said that his two expeditions of 1568 and 1572 placed him in debt for 2,400,000 florins. He who had formerly been surrounded by luxury and pomp, commanding large numbers of servants, now was reduced to a condition where he was himself compelled to do the work of a groom and valet. At this time he wrote: "Send by the bearer the little hackney given me by the admiral; send also my two pair of trunk hose; one pair is at the tailor's to be mended, the other pair you will please order to be taken from the things which I wore lately at Dillenburg. They lie on the table with my accoutrements. If the little hackney be not in condition, please send the grey horse with the cropped ears and tail."

The "Sea Beggars" had been driven from the shores of England. They contemplated a visit to their native land. They landed before the town of Brill, an important seaport that was a key to the capture of all the Northern provinces. Their fleet numbered twenty-four vessels. Alva had not been as careful in fortifying himself in the North as he had in the South. Hence this town had no

The Sea Beggars

garrison of Spanish soldiers. The "Beggars," though numbering but three or four hundred, demanded an unconditional surrender of the town. The officials, believing the fleet to be a large one, surrendered to La Marck, who assumed authority of the town as Admiral of the Prince of Orange.

Little did these fierce three hundred men realize that they were the first to lay the foundation-stone of the Dutch Republic. And yet this was the significance of their wild adventure.

Light for the patriots' cause was coming just when the darkness was the deepest. Long had the frightened spirit of freedom been chased hither and thither, but now this weary spirit, "so long a fugitive over earth and sea, had at last found a resting-place, which rude and even ribald hands had prepared."

None knew what blessed significance this capture of Brill had to the cause of liberty of conscience and religion as well as of civil freedom. Even William of Orange lamented this move, believing it premature. His absence from the country, his ignorance of the full extent of the hostile feeling that Alva's last atrocities, the taxation, and the disappointing "Amnesty" had aroused in the people, led him to believe that harm rather than good had been done by La Marck's fierce adventure. He learned afterward that it was the first step to final emancipation.

Alva was just about to vent his rage upon the butchers, grocers, and bakers in Brussels by hanging them in their front doors, because they refused to furnish supplies on account of the imposing taxation, when the news of the capture of Brill reached him. He stormed with rage. The entire country, on the other hand, rejoiced.

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He dispatched ten companies of veterans to reclaim Brill. But the dykes, faithful allies of the patriots, were opened, the transport-ships of the Spaniards were burned, and the soldiers compelled to retire.

The citizens of Brill who had fled at De La Marck's entrance returned to their homes and declared themselves, by solemn oath, for Orange as Stadt-Holder for Philip II of Spain. For the persecuted people had not yet a thought of renouncing the king, although none would recognize Alva. Yet after all this was the first step that inevitably led to a declaration of independence.

Following the example of Brill, the citizens of Flushing overcame the Spanish garrison and proclaimed for William of Orange. This act was soon followed by all the important cities of Holland, Zealand, Gelderland, Overysel, and the See of Utrecht. By popular vote new boards of magistrates were established, and, though Philip was nominally king, William, Prince of Orange, was everywhere looked upon as the actual ruler of the country. An oath was required of all in which fidelity was pledged to the king of Spain, and the Prince of Orange as his Stadt-Holder, while the same oath swore resistance to the Duke of Alva, the new taxation, and the Inquisition; and it was further pledged in the oath "to support every man's freedom, and the welfare of the country; to protect widows, orphans, and miserable persons, and to maintain justice and truth."

To prove that this oath was not a dead letter, but would be carried out as long as life lasted, may be mentioned the fury with which a Spaniard was looked upon by the people. Motley gives as example of this: "On one occasion a surgeon at Veer cut the heart from a Spanish pris-

The Sea Beggars

oner, nailed it on a vessel's prow, and invited the townsmen to come and fasten their teeth in it, which many did with savage satisfaction."

Under this new administration Diedrich Sonoy, as Lieutenant Governor, was instructed by William to "see that the word of God was preached, without, however, suffering any hindrance to the Roman Church in the exercise of its religion; to restore fugitives and the banished for conscience sake, and to require of all magistrates and officials of guilds and brotherhoods an oath of fidelity." Matters were now beginning to look more hopeful.

CHAPTER XIII.

WILLIAM'S SECOND CAMPAIGN

THE Prince of Orange was still in Germany raising troops. This was not difficult to do now, for the tide was turning in favor of the Patriots. Meanwhile he ordered the details of affairs in the Netherlands. There, too, recruits poured in for the army from the North. Even from England volunteers offered themselves for the cause. William's brother, Louis, who had for some time after his defeat not been heard from, and consequently had been thought to be quieted, also produced a great surprise by heading an army of French Huguenots and, by a brilliant move, seizing the city of Mons, the capital and principal town of the Southern Provinces of the Netherlands.

Scarcely had Alva received this astonishing news, when he was startled with the report that, as a Spanish fleet was passing Flushing, the "Sea Beggars" had captured it. It had the pay for the Spanish soldiers, together with much ammunition, jewelry, and richest merchandise.

Blow upon blow thus rained upon the bewildered head of Alva. Sending his son to reclaim Mons, he himself set about to pacify the Provinces. He summoned the Estates of Holland to meet at The Hague on the 15th of July, 1572, promising them that, if they would raise a supply of two million florins, he would abolish the tax.

But it was too late. Instead of meeting at the summons

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of Alva, the Estates met at Dort, at the call of William of Orange. The object of the meeting was to assist him in raising money to secure trained troops to repel Alva, whose jurisdiction the Estates now repudiated, while enthusiastically accepting that of William the Silent, whose policy they accepted without question. A satisfactory arrangement was made in regard to raising money, and William, on the 27th of August, began his march with an army of twenty-four thousand men. His first object was to relieve his brother Louis, who was besieged by Don Frederic, and was in imminent peril. The march was a triumphant one. Everywhere the Prince was received with joy. City after city, with but few exceptions, opened their gates to him.

At last the clouds seem to have dispersed from his long o'er-shadowed sky. For the first time all seemed bright with well-founded hope. France had promised him aid. The Prince was positively assured that in a few days a juncture would be effected with him of an army of twelve thousand infantry and three thousand cavalry. Nothing but an earthquake, it was said, could now prevent freedom from gaining victory over tyranny. Even prudent, careful William the Silent exclaimed enthusiastically: "The Netherlands are free! Alva is in my power!"

But alas! the unexpected came. St. Bartholomew's night, black, ominous, deadening, came like a death-pall to close the bright sunshine of Orange's day. In spite of protestations of friendship for the Reformed, by which Admiral Coligny and many of the most eminent of the Protestants had been allured to Paris; and in spite of the peace of St. Germain-en-Loye, concluded in 1570 between Catholics and Reformed, Charles IX, King of France,

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goaded on by his infamous mother, Catherine de Medici, ordered a long-contemplated massacre of all the Huguenots, to be begun on the night of the 22d of August, 1572, the king having exclaimed, "Let all the Huguenots be slain, till not one remain to give us trouble." The king himself fired from his palace upon those who were fleeing past. Not only in Paris, but throughout the provinces of France, the murdering went on until at least thirty thousand—some authorities put the figures as high as seventy thousand—persons were killed.

All expectation of aid from France was now gone. William wrote to his brother John: "Our one hope of human aid was France. By all earthly calculations we should have been today masters of Alva and had him at our mercy. It can not be told how this has ruined and thrown me back, for I trusted to the 12,000 arquebuisiers that the admiral promised me." The Prince knew that without this aid it was a hopeless task to deliver Mons. Don Frederic had been reinforced by Alva; the Spanish troops were securely entrenched. The Prince endeavored in vain to bring on a conflict. Alva refused, knowing that, as in William's first campaign, he needed to risk no battle to gain the victory. He was well aware of the despair of the Huguenot soldiers in Mons on account of the Paris massacre; he could not doubt that William's mercenaries would soon mutiny.

On the night of the 11th and 12th of September, however, Alva considered it opportune to make an onslaught upon the Prince. The sentinels were killed and the army routed. The Prince himself came near being taken. He was fast asleep in his tent. When it was approached his guards were asleep. But a little spaniel that always slept

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upon William's bed, barking furiously, meanwhile scratching his master's face, aroused him just in time to effect his escape. It is said that William ever after this owned a spaniel and kept it in his bedroom.

After this the army refused to move any further. The Prince was once more compelled to disband it. Alone, his own and his country's fortunes lost, the southern cities that had declared for him fallen off in terror, he wended his way to the Northern Provinces, which stood firmer than ever. He confidently expected to perish with them. He wrote: "Behold how the wickedness of man endeavors to work against God's great grace. May He do all to the glory of His Holy Name. I go to Holland and Zealand to see what His will is. I will hold matters together there as long as I can; there I seek my grave."

And yet he was not without hope. He had placed himself in the hands of the Almighty. He had espoused a cause he knew to be right and, true hero that he was, he went forward trusting in God, praying for grace, to endure with patience whatever was in store for him, and to remain true to his trusts until death should relieve him. Can you utterly dishearten such a man? He determined to stand by Holland, little knowing that what had been endured and experienced was but a prelude to what was to follow. All that had gone before was but to prepare for a series of wars, but also for what an historian has called "One of the most important revolutions known in history"; a revolution that not only established a free Republic in Europe, but was the corner-stone of the Temple of civil and religious freedom, at whose shrine millions, the world over, have ever since found peace and inspiration; a revolution that Hausser says "was the open wound

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of Spain, which bled and festered to the end of the century; this was the abyss into which Spain gradually cast her armies, her wealth, and her fleets, and, in the end, the despised rebel became free, rich, and powerful, and mighty Spain was ruined."

CHAPTER XIV.

ALVA'S LAST DAYS IN THE NETHERLANDS

AFTER William's army had been dispersed, Louis was forced to capitulate at Mons. He made terms by which the soldiers were to be permitted to leave peaceably, and the city was to receive protection. But scarcely had he gone when most atrocious murders and cruelties were perpetrated by Don Frederic's soldiers. Men, women and children endured frightful suffering and death.

Alva was in sore need of money. To get it he conceived of the project of sacking Mechlin, a beautiful, rich town. He did this under pretext of an example to frighten the people from further espousals of William's cause. For three days and nights churches, monasteries, homes, business houses were ransacked and pillaged; lust, murder, rapine reigned supreme.

Alva went to Nymegen and from there to Amsterdam, which city he still held. From here he operated to reclaim the Northern Provinces. To that end he sent his son, Don Frederic, with strong troops, who, having like wild beasts, been aroused by the fate of Mechlin to a fierce thirst for blood and plunder, to the cities of Zutphen and Naarden, where they enacted brutalities too horrible to mention; men were killed, women outraged at the altars, in the streets, and in their blazing homes; the soldiers, says Motley, "becoming more and more insane,

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as the foul work went on, opened the veins of some of their victims and drank their blood as if it were wine." Not a man, woman or child was safe. A few escaped by the payment of a heavy fine. And yet, as was the case with the burgomaster, Heinrich Lambertszoon, after paying the fine they were foully murdered. Lambertszoon, by express order of Don Frederic himself, was, after paying a large sum of money for his protection, "hanged in his own doorway and his severed limbs afterward nailed to the gates of the city."

These diabolical deeds but roused the patriots to all the more valor. These last attempts of Alva discovered to the world a hardihood, a heroism, a devotion to God, and a self-sacrifice on the part of Holland such as the world's history no where else records. And the one man who alone encouraged them, upheld them in spirit, was William the Silent, who himself pre-eminently displayed these traits of character. He was now engaged in going from city to city, advising, encouraging, and planning for the last struggles that were to decide whether tyranny should hold sway or the reign of freedom be inaugurated.

The struggle in its fiercest opened with the siege of Haarlem. This was a large and beautiful city, about ten miles from Amsterdam, and was considered by Alva as the key to the present situation. If it could be taken, South and North Holland would be cut in two.

Don Frederic boasted that in a very short time he could conquer the city. He accordingly laid plans to besiege it. Before the siege proper began, a scene occurred that stands forth amid all the appalling background in ludicrous light. A small fleet of vessels had become frozen in the ice before the city. Don Frederic dispatched some soldiers

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to attack the imprisoned vessels. Suddenly, gliding over the ice on their skates, sallied forth a number of brave patriots, surprising the Spaniards, who, on the slippery ice, were no match for them. The Spaniards were readily vanquished. Alva wrote: "'Twas a thing never heard of before today, to see a body of arquebuisiers thus skirmishing upon a frozen sea." Not to be outdone, Alva ordered seven thousand pairs of skates, and the soldiers soon learned to use them.

Although the victory of the skaters somewhat encouraged the city, yet, with an army of 30,000 trained men besieging them, and a garrison within the city of but 400, it was a hopeless outlook. With great courage, however, men, women, and even children became defenders of the city. A band of brave women numbering three hundred were regularly organized. All worked heroically at the battered walls. As fast as the besiegers approached they were met with a resistance that could not be overcome. Missiles of all kinds were hurled from the walls upon the heads of approaching soldiers; stones, boiling oil, coals of fire, and burning hoops smeared with tar were an utter discomfiture to the Spaniards. This resistance continued day after day, and month after month. The Spaniards had endeavored by subterranean passages to gain an entrance into the city, but were surprised to meet the patriots, who, by countermining, met them and fought bravely in the bowels of the earth.

The enemy found that the only way to overcome these brave people was by starvation.

William did all he could to relieve the city. By letters sent by carrier pigeons, he kept up the courage of the people. He had prepared a fleet to be sent for their relief

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at the first opportunity. But the Spaniards had overpowered it.

Nothing daunted the besieged held out bravely. One day a thousand heroically sallied forth, and, burning three hundred tents, captured seven cannon, nine standards, and wagon loads of provisions.

But brave though they were, and invincible in battle, against famine they were no equals. The month of June witnessed intense suffering. Ordinary food was all gone. The people lived on linseed and rape-seed. That being exhausted, they ate cats, dogs, rats, mice; boiled the hides of horses and oxen; they even ate shoe-leather, and, plucking the grass from the graveyards and the weeds from between the stones of the pavement, they endeavored to live until the promised help and relief should arrive. "Men, women, and children fell dead by scores in the streets, perishing of starvation, and the survivors had hardly the heart or the strength to bury them out of their sight. They who yet lived seemed to flit like shadows to and fro, envying those whose sufferings had already been terminated by death."

William had all the while been doing all he could to relieve the dying people. A last attempt was made by an army composed of a mass of burghers, who, with unbounded enthusiasm and unquestioned patriotism, marched to the relief. Had their military training been commensurate with their patriotism and enthusiasm, some hopes of success might have been held. But the Prince of Orange knew well that enthusiasm alone was no match to the training of a regular army, and especially a Spanish army of that day. Nevertheless he proposed to accompany them. He was, however, wisely dissuaded from going.

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Unfortunately two carrier pigeons sent to convey the plans of the patriots into the city were captured by Don Frederic, and hence the Spaniards were ready to thwart them. Thus was the last hope fled. The doomed people, forming the women, the children, the sick, and the aged in a square, surrounded them with the only able-bodied men left, resolving thus to make one last desperate fight to pass through the ranks of the Spanish troops. Don Frederic, hearing of this, and actually fearing its effects, sent a dispatch inviting a surrender, with a solemn pledge that only such of their number should be punished as the citizens themselves should condemn.

The proposal was accepted. Motley thus describes the scene that met Don Frederic's eye as he rode into the city after its surrender: "Everywhere was evidence of the misery which had been so bravely endured during that seven months' siege. The smoldering ruins of houses, which had been set on fire by balls, the shattered fortifications, the felled trunks of trees, upturned pavements, broken images, and other materials for repairing gaps made by the daily cannonade strewn around in all directions, the skeletons of unclean animals from which the flesh had been gnawed, the unburied bodies of men and women who had fallen dead in the public thoroughfares, —more than all the gaunt and emaciated forms of those who still survived, the ghosts of their former selves, all might have induced at least a doubt whether the suffering inflicted were not a sufficient punishment, even for crimes as deep as heresy and schism. But this was far from being the sentiment of Don Frederic. He seemed to read defiance as well as despair in the sunken eyes which glared upon him as he entered the place, and he took no thought

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of the pledge which he had informally but sacredly given." A massacre was ordered. Eleven hundred of the citizens were murdered the day after the surrender, and, because the work of butchering the poor wretches did not proceed quickly enough, large numbers of the victims were tied back to back and pushed into Haarlem Lake!

Thus ended a siege that for ghastliness, for suffering, voluntary and enforced, stands unparalleled. Alva himself began to believe that the people were unconquerable. For seven long months the Spaniards had encamped before the city of Haarlem, twelve thousand of his bravest soldiers had there met their death, and yet this was one of the weakest of the cities for defense. He, therefore, made overtures of pardon and offers of relinquishment of the odious taxes, if the cities would return to their allegiance to him. No reply was made to these overtures, and it became evident that the scenes and incidents of Haarlem were to be re-enacted before the war was to cease. He knew well that this, though it might mean utter desolation to the Netherlanders, meant also deeper financial ruin for Spain. He was, therefore, thoroughly sick of his "May-day sport" in training these "men of butter," as he called them at the outset of his expedition. He longed to relinquish the whole loathsome business. This longing was not only increased but became a positive and settled determination when Don Frederic, after conquering Haarlem, was compelled to raise a siege he had begun before Alkmaar.

This little city, having a garrison of but 800 soldiers, and 1,300 burghers that could bear arms,—the rest of the population consisting of a few refugees with women and children,—in six weeks had utterly baffled the troops of

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Spain, numbering sixteen thousand veteran soldiers. Odds were, of course, entirely against the town. It was especially during this siege, and in these darkest of all dark hours of the Netherlands, that the marvellous enthusiasm, the unbounded trust in God, and the true heroism of the Prince of Orange were made manifest. All eyes were turned toward him. "If your princely grace," wrote the despairing Northern Provinces to him, "have made a contract for assistance with any powerful potentate, it is of the highest importance that it should be known to all the cities in order to put an end to emigration and to console the people in their affliction." His answer is memorable. He urged them not to despair. He appealed to their manly courage. True, Haarlem had been conquered, "but," said he, "as, notwithstanding our efforts, it has pleased God Almighty to dispose of Haarlem according to His divine will, shall we, therefore, deny and divide His holy word? Has the strong arm of the Lord thereby grown weaker? Has the Church, therefore, come to naught? You ask if I have entered into a firm treaty with any great king or potentate; to which I answer that before I ever took up the cause of the oppressed Christians in these provinces, I had entered into a close alliance with the King of Kings; and I am firmly convinced that all who put their trust in Him shall be saved by His Almighty hand. The God of armies will raise up armies for us to do battle with our enemies and His own."

Here is a sample of the Puritanism of his day, that in many quarters is derided; and yet it is that sort of Puritanism that "rejuvenated the world"; a Puritanism that would not come amiss in our own age of agnostic doubt, to restore confidence in the hearts of men who are anx-

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iously and with disquieting apprehensions viewing the troublous times of our day and are in vain trying to read and interpret the apocalypse of the skies, crying: "Whither, O God, are we drifting?"

Green, in speaking of the moral force of Puritanism, says this: "However ill-directed that force might be, however erroneously such tests were often applied, it is to this new force that we owe the restoration of liberty and the establishment of religious freedom." And Matthew Arnold, speaking to and of Americans, said in regard to the Puritan principle, which we as Americans possessed more entirely and more exclusively than England: "As a stage and a discipline, and as a means for enabling that poor, inattentive and immoral creature, man, to love and appropriate divine ideas on which he could not otherwise have laid or kept hold, the discipline of Puritanism has been invaluable; and the more I read history, the more I see of mankind, the more I recognize its value."

If history teaches us any one thing, it certainly is this: that only which is of value to man as the world's epochs unroll, is confidence in an All-wise, over-ruling Father—one who, though often hid within the shadow, still constantly "keeps watch above His own"; and that any one who, like a Moses, a William the Silent, a Washington, a Lincoln, moves forward "as seeing the invisible" is certainly nerved to suffer and endure unto the end and achieve the world's progress. Such an one does not depend upon adventitious impulse to reach his goal, but "does his duty, and keeps doing it, and follows that method up year after year, with nothing to hold him to it but the moral sense on his part that it is the thing to do—like an eight-day

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clock that runs, ticks, strikes, and keeps time at the swing of its own pendulum and the pull of its own weight."

It was such a spirit that held William courageous, and made him daring during the gloomy days of Alkmaar's besiegement. The people, encouraged by him, with super-human courage, had thrice driven back the trained troops; men, women, and even children fighting with hand to hand conflicts upon the ramparts of the city, the latter constantly supplying their fathers and brothers with ammunition. One of the Spaniards, who had mounted the wall and looked into the city, reported that he had seen neither "helmet nor harness," only "some plain looking people, generally dressed like fishermen."

A breathing spell came to the Netherlands after Don Frederic had raised the siege before Alkmaar, during which William busied himself in endeavors to enlist the sympathies of England. He, however, relied principally upon the efforts of Louis, who was negotiating with the king of France, who, realizing that he had sadly overreached himself in his dastardly St. Bartholomew night, was ready to make amends.

The Prince of Orange had now become thoroughly identified with the Reformed Church, that to him, as Protestantism had formerly done, stood for the principles for which he had suffered, fought, and sacrificed all. Accordingly, in October, 1573, he publicly joined the church at Dort.

He was not yet fully understood. His religious tolerance especially was misread. Catholics accused him of having aroused the Reformed to excesses against them. Protestants thought him not fully enough in sympathy with them because he insisted upon giving the Catholics

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unlimited freedom in matters of faith. The world at large had not yet grown accustomed to seeing a man devote fortune, honor, fame, even his very life-blood to the establishment of principles of civil and religious freedom. Hence neither he nor his work were fully appreciated by any class. He was, moreover, constantly accused of having been led into his course by a spirit of self-aggrandizement. This, however, was the furthest removed from his mind. "You know," he wrote to his brothers, "that my intention has never been to seek my private advantage. I have only aspired for the liberty of the country in conscience and in polity which foreigners have sought to oppress. I have no other articles to propose, save that religion, reformed according to the word of God, should be permitted, that then the commonwealth should be restored to its ancient liberty, and, to that end, that the Spaniards and other soldiery should be compelled to retire." In this lofty purpose there certainly appears no selfishness.

Alva at this time called a meeting of the Estates of the Netherlands at Brussels. The Prince of Orange seized this opportunity to publish a document appealing to the patriotism of the people. He recalled the struggles through which they had passed asked them how they could longer endure the murders and tyranny of the Duke of Alva; he begged the Southern Provinces to join with Holland in endeavors to rescue the fatherland and restore its ancient rights and glory. "If," said he, "the little Province of Holland can thus hold at bay the power of Spain, what could not all the Netherlands—Brabant, Flanders, Friesland, and the rest united—accomplish?"

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About the same time he sent forth a document called "*An Epistle, in the form of supplication, to his royal Majesty of Spain, from the Prince of Orange and the Estates of Holland and Zealand,*" which made a profound impression upon Christendom. In this he called attention to the folly of the accusation of crime that the Duke of Alva had made against the people. "We take God and your Majesty to witness"—thus he wrote—"that if we have done such misdeeds as are charged in the pardon, we neither desire nor deserve the pardon. Like the most abject creatures which crawl the earth, we will be content to atone for our misdeeds with our lives. We will not murmur, O merciful king, if we be seized one after another, and torn limb from limb, if it can be proved that we have committed the crimes of which we have been accused." The document then closed with these brave words, indicating what determination filled the hearts of the patriots: "The tyrant would rather stain every river and brook with our blood, and hang our bodies upon every tree in the country, than not feed to the full his vengeance, and steep himself to the lips in our misery. Therefore we have taken up arms against the Duke of Alva and his adherents to free ourselves, our wives, and children from his blood-thirsty hands. If he prove too strong for us, we will rather die an honorable death and leave a praiseworthy fame, than bend our necks and reduce our fatherland to such slavery. Herein are all our cities pledged to each other to stand every siege, to dare the utmost, to endure every possible misery, yea, rather to set fire to all our homes and be consumed with them in ashes together, than ever submit to the decrees of this cruel tyrant." This language was not braggadocio. It was the sincere ex-

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pression of hearts surcharged with a patriotism that, rather than see fatherland enslaved and tyrannized over, lays itself upon the altar in noble sacrifice.

Shortly after Alkmaar's successful resistance, another victory of the patriots was added to gall the already embittered heart of Alva. A sea-fight in the Zuyder Zee resulted in the demolition of a Spanish fleet.

Alva's cup of disappointment was now full to overflowing. He had repeatedly written to the king, making piteous appeals to be relieved from service in the Netherlands and to have a successor sent to take his place. He realized how thoroughly he was despised and hated by all. Even his soldiers took unwarranted license, and mutinies and plots of treason and revolt were many. "Never before," wrote Alva, "in all the forty years of my service have I suffered such grief as by these mutinies. I will go to the troops and deliver myself up as a hostage"; and tells Philip that matters are as bad as they can be. He was heavily in debt, broken in health, and had no credit, and had lost all self-confidence. He called himself a "dead man," but added, "dead as I am, I can feel the ingratitude of the king for all my services." Stay he could no longer. Even his cabinet counsellors hated him. Motley gives a specimen of the expressions of hatred against Alva that were penned at that time:

"Our devil, who dost in Brussels dwell,
Curst be thy name in earth and hell;
Thy kingdom speedily pass away,
Which has bloated and blighted us many a day;
Thy will never more be done,
In heaven above nor under the sun;
Thou takest daily our daily bread;

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Our wives and children lie starving or dead;
No man's trespasses thou forgivest;
Revenge is the food on which thou livest;
Thou ledest all men into temptation;
Unto evil thou hast delivered this nation;
Our Father in heaven which art,
Grant that this hellish devil may soon depart,
And with him his Council, false and bloody,
Who make murder and rapine their daily study;
And all his savage war-dogs of Spain,
Oh! send them back to the devil, their father, again.—
Amen.”

This was called the *Ghent Paternoster* and was addressed to Alva. In spite of its seemingly blasphemous nature, it expresses the genuine feeling of an heroic people. But it seemed as if he could not leave without one last act of inhuman cruelty. Uitenhove, a nobleman prisoner, was condemned to be roasted to death before a slow fire, the process of which he himself superintended. The torture was so great that the executioners and his helpers ended it by thrusting him through with their swords. For showing this mercy they received the disapprobation of Alva.

On the 18th of December, 1573, during the night, so as to escape his creditors, Alva fled from the country. His parting advice to the king was “to burn down every place in the country not actually occupied by the royal troops even if it were to need eight or ten years for the land to recover. It was idle to attack the cities one after another; the only practical plan was one general destruction.” He returned to Spain, was imprisoned for a dastardly act of his son, Don Frederic; was released to perform one more military enterprise; having accomplished

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which he was taken with a fever which so reduced him physically that he was "kept alive by milk which he drank from a woman's breast." He died on December 12, 1582, his memory despised in all ages following.



CHAPTER XV.

ALVA'S SUCCESSOR

MUCH depended upon Philip's choice of successor to Alva. The one to be chosen had no enviable position to fill. At best it would have been fraught with grave difficulties. But with the signal failure of Alva's administration, not only in that he had not subdued heresy, nor quelled revolt, but in that he had left the country commercially in a deplorable condition, the difficulty was greatly increased. His wild course of coercion had produced the very opposite effects from what was contemplated. Instead of subduing the brave patriots, he had only forced them into boldest heroism. He thought that arms and money were all that was necessary to accomplish his purposes and never could see, what very soon became evident to his more sagacious successor, how it was that the Hollanders could continue to maintain the war. Requesens wrote to Philip soon after his arrival in the country: "Before my arrival, I could not comprehend how the rebels contrived to maintain fleets so considerable, while your Majesty could not maintain one; now I see that men who are fighting for their lives, their families, their property, and their false religion, in short, for their own cause, are content if they only receive rations, without pay."

Patriot and enemy alike were wearied of the strife. Even Philip himself began to wish the whole matter over;

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for if continued it meant complete bankruptcy for him. Yet it was to him out of the question to cease his determined policy of re-establishing the Catholic religion in the Netherlands, no matter what it might cost him.

Hence he sent Don Louis de Requesens, Grand Commander of Castile, and late Governor of Milan, to continue the war without the least concessions.

Requesens found, however, that it would be wise to adopt more conciliatory measures than Alva had done; and herein William of Orange saw great danger to his cause. For he knew full well that this was meant to lull the people into a false feeling of security. Therefore, he did all he could to keep the people in a hostile spirit. He would gladly have brought about a peaceful spirit among the people; but now he knew it would mean to them danger of losing what they had gained, and besides, a punishment for what they had done, that would be much worse than a continuance of the war.

The strife did continue. It proceeded, too, with aspects of brightness for the cause of liberty of conscience and religion. The struggle had long since ceased to mean simply an attempt of a people to free themselves from massacres and political tyranny; it meant a struggle to gain freedom of conscience in matters of religion. It was not, either, a mere religious faction striving to maintain its peculiar sentiments or dogmas of religion; it was a nation, actuated by a noble religious principle, rising to establish that principle once for all for all generations to come. When, therefore, Requesens proposed a pardon, provided the people would in penitence return to the Church of Rome, it was summarily rejected. Hence he found that it was as uninviting as it was useless for him

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to endeavor to establish peace. He soon found himself confronted with but one thing to do, and that was to continue the war with redoubled earnestness and energy.

His first business was to relieve Middleburg, besieged by the patriots. To do so a sea-fight was necessary. Here the Hollanders were easily superior to the Spaniards, and hence Middleburg was forced to surrender. The sea-coast was now entirely in possession of Holland and Zealand.

On land, however, the Spaniards were far superior soldiers. Leyden was besieged. To relieve it, the Hollanders needed help. Accordingly, Louis levied troops and supplies in France and Germany, and early in the spring of 1574 was on his way to relieve Leyden. A juncture was to be effected with his brother, William of Orange, which would make a victory over the enemy quite certain; for the Spanish army, poorly paid, largely in arrears with pay, and the Netherlands refusing to give supplies, were mutinous and Requesens found himself seriously embarrassed.

Louis and two other brothers of William of Orange were in the army on their way to Holland. Great hopes had been awakened in William's heart, as he marched to meet his brothers. But alas! the hour had not yet come for him to have his faith crowned with victory. On the 14th of April a murderous battle took place resulting in a complete victory for the Spaniards. Louis and his two brothers were lost in this battle. This left the prince alone and desolate. He had always looked to Louis, a brave, competent soldier, for relief and help. He even called him his "right arm." It was a sad blow to him when Louis fell and his faith was severely tried by this renewed

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dashing of his hopes. But read his words: "I scarcely know what I am doing on account of grief. Nevertheless, we must always submit ourselves to the will of God, remembering that He who shed the blood of His Son to establish His church will do nothing but what is to His honor and for the protection of His church, although to the world it appears impossible, and, if we all come to die, and if these poor people were all murdered or dispersed, we still should be confident that God will never forsake His own."

After this victory the siege of Leyden was pushed with great vigor. The story of it tells one of the most important, as well as the most pathetic, events of the long-drawn war.

Leyden was one of the most beautiful cities in the Netherlands. Broad streets, handsome churches, imposing public buildings, and elegant homes adorned and enriched the city. Its canals, lined by trees of luxuriant growth, were spanned by one hundred and forty bridges, mostly of hammered stone. Its spacious squares furnished bright breathing places for the people.

On the 26th of May, 1574, eight thousand Spanish soldiers encamped beneath its walls, being continually reinforced. Within the city there were no soldiers, except a few so-called "free-booters" and five companies of the burgher guard. To all appearances the siege could not last long. The city was poorly provisioned. It was next to impossible to get relief to the people. The Prince of Orange sent word that, if they could hold out three months, he would be able, as he thought, to rescue them. Meanwhile Requesens offered pardon, of course, with terms of return to the mother church. The offers were

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heroically rejected. The people were placed upon allowances of food, so as to be enabled to endure the continuance of the siege. The only possible manner in which relief could be given was by inundating the country. But the sea was fifteen miles away, and many of the dykes were protected by the Spaniards. The inundation, too, meant destruction of property, a ruin of farms and growing crops. But the self-sacrificing people willingly staked all upon the venture. The dykes were cut. But contrary winds blew. The inner dykes resisted the flowing waters, and on the whole it began to look like an impracticable matter even thus to relieve the suffering city. A flotilla containing provisions for the starving people, manned by intrepid Sea-Beggars, was organized, and this followed the sea in its slow movement toward the city.

The three months dragged themselves along to four. The inhabitants of the city began to grow desperate. The suffering became appalling. Every green thing had been consumed. Dogs, cats, rats, mice, and other vermin were delicacies. Men grew so weak that with difficulty they stood watch and on returning home found their wives and children starved to death. Infants starved to death on the breasts of their famished mothers. Thousands died. To add to the horror a plague set in and eight thousand people succumbed to its ravages. Day by day the wretched citizens climbed the famous tower of Leyden to watch for the oncoming sea. The Spaniards taunted them. They sent back this reply: "Ye call us rat-eaters and dog-eaters and it is true. So long, then, as ye hear dog bark or cat mew within the walls, ye may know that the city holds out. And when all has perished but ourselves, be sure that we will each devour our left arms, retaining our

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right to defend our women, our liberty, and our religion against the foreign tyrant. Should God, in His wrath, doom us to destruction and deny us all relief, even then will we maintain ourselves forever against your entrance. When the last hour has come, with our own hands we will set fire to the city and perish, men, women, and children together in the flames, rather than suffer our homes to be polluted and our liberties crushed."

Their bravery was at last rewarded. After seven long, dreary, wasting months, the Sea-Beggars had succeeded in coming within sight of the city wall, but could not proceed further because of the shallow water and the opposition of the Spaniards. But now the wind began to blow strongly toward the city, driving the water from the sea over the country, and with its rising the rescuers began a midnight fight. "Terrific was the struggle on land and water. Amid tree-tops and over house roofs and above submerged farms, blood and water mingled together in the horror of battle." Whatever signs of hope there might be to those who watched the fight were nullified because the strong Lammen fort, held by the Spaniards, still stood in the way of their progress. However, the crisis had come. On the morrow a last, despairing effort would be made by the garrison, and either they or the fort would be taken. The Spaniards, too, were preparing for a desperate struggle when suddenly, to the amazement of both parties, part of the wall of Leyden, having been undermined by the inflowing waters, fell with an alarming crash. The Spaniards, thinking that this meant an attack by the patriots, fled in dismay, while the latter imagined that the Spaniards were rushing upon them. When morning dawned and the garrison approached the

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fort, they did not hear a sound—the fort was evacuated! The fleet of the Sea-Beggars speedily swept past the fort into the city with the long-looked-for relief. Bread was freely distributed.

After hunger had been somewhat appeased, a procession was formed, and the people marched to the Cathedral to bow in gratitude to the God of nations. Prayers were offered. Psalms of thanksgiving were sung as the Dutch alone can sing them, in strong, rich, solemn, albeit, slow, hearty voice. But in the midst of a verse, a sudden hush fell over the congregation,—the organ pealed forth its tones, but only the deeper, though silent, sound of falling tears of joy and praise was heard by the God of deliverances.

During the last week of the siege, William of Orange had been confined to his bed with a fever, dangerously ill; and no wonder, as Van Prinsterer says, with all his cares, difficulties, anxieties, and labors pressing upon him so that he had not a moment's rest. But even during his sickness he dictated letters and messages, encouraging the people.

The day after the deliverance, although peculiarly in danger of contracting disease on account of his weakness in body, the Prince insisted upon entering the city to rejoice with the people and to further counsel with them.

To commemorate the heroic courage of the people, the Prince suggested that an Academy or University be at once established and be thoroughly equipped with means and facilities in the way of professors and apparatus, that would make it one of the most famous and useful of the age.

Thus and at such a time was founded the renowned University of Leyden, which, says Campbell, marks "an

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epoch in the intellectual history of Holland and of the world." Niebuhr called the senate chamber of the University of Leyden "the most memorable room in Europe in the history of learning." This University for two centuries was the most famous in Europe. In the seventeenth century it was more renowned than Oxford, Cambridge, or Paris, and enrolled students from all countries.

Requesens now saw that neither military onslaughts nor negotiations would prove effectual. The Prince and his party insisted upon liberty of conscience as the one only condition of amnesty. Spain as strenuously insisted upon the authority of the king and unquestioning submission to the Catholic church. It was, therefore, useless and a waste of time to negotiate. But an effort was still made particularly to bring about a reconciliation of the Prince of Orange with the king. Although the country and the Prince had not yet renounced allegiance to Philip, yet this allegiance hung upon a very slender thread. The outline of a new Protestant state was gradually being formed and William was its Stadt-Holder.

One of two things Spain now saw must be done, either William must be put out of the way, or he was to be won over to the king. The latter seemed out of the question. He cared not for promises nor threats. Personal preferment he did not seek. Adversity he shunned not. Hence, plans were inaugurated by which he was to be assassinated. As for the king's power, he replied "that he knew his Majesty to be very mighty, but that there was a King more powerful still,—even God the Creator, as he humbly hoped, was upon his side."

'Twas this spirit that William communicated to the people of Holland and Zealand. And the recent victory

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at Leyden had encouraged them. In April, 1575, the New Constitution of Holland and Zealand was formed, and in July the Prince formally accepted the Government. He was made Commander-in-Chief. A monthly grant was conceded to him for the expenses of war. This grant amounted to nearly as much as Alva had been able to extort annually from the whole country.

During these years of care and anxiety for his country, a matter of personal concern was looked after by him. It was his third marriage. After Anne of Saxony had deserted him, William was practically homeless for seven long, dreary, laborious years. His brothers had fallen in battle. He was in constant danger. He was domestic in his tastes. He was a man who craved the sympathy and helpfulness of a happy home life. As it was he had no confidential companions, scarcely ever even seeing his own children, who were lovingly cared for by his brother John at the old home in Dillenburg. It is not strange, therefore, that he should seek one who would make for him and his children a home.

Such an one he found in Charlotte of Bourbon. In youth she had been forced to become an abbess. Her convictions were Protestant, and hence her life as an abbess was odious to her. At the age of twenty-five she renounced the abby, incurring the wrath of her father, the Duke of Montpensier, and all her Catholic relations, with the curses of the entire Catholic church following her. She placed herself under the protectorate of the Elector Palatine at Heidelberg. It was here that William first met her.

True, Anne of Saxony was still living, but convicted of adultery, and, having wilfully and maliciously deserted

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him, William felt in conscience justified in securing a divorce and marrying again. His announcement of his intention to do so produced a veritable hurricane of remonstrances, threats, ridicule, and criticisms. Even his own friends felt scandalized, perhaps not so much because he intended to marry again, as that he had chosen a renegade nun! But William was nothing daunted. "I am acting," said he, "according to a clear conscience and am doing hurt to no man. For my conduct I will answer to my Maker." To his brother John he wrote: "It has been my rule, ever since God vouchsafed me any understanding, to take no heed of words or of threats in any matter which I felt able to carry through with a whole conscience, where I was doing no wrong to my neighbor, above all where I had assurance of a lawful call and the express ordinance of God. And truly, if I had chosen to take account of the talk of men, the threats of Princes, and such difficulties as stood before me, I never should have plunged myself into a struggle so dangerous and so odious to the king, my former lord, and so contrary to the counsels of my friends and relations. * * * I say the same of my marriage; a step I have taken with a clear conscience before God and without cause of reproach from men."

The marriage was consummated on the 12th of June, 1575. Time proved that he had acted wisely. Charlotte was in every way helpful to him in the most trying days of his life and in the most critical years of his country's struggle. She made for him a most helpful, happy, blessed home, bringing acknowledged good to his family and to his country's cause. Catholic and Protestant alike in time conceded the wisdom of the choice, and she also be-

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came reconciled to her father and even to the Catholic princes of her house. It is also of interest to note that her eldest daughter was the direct ancestress of the House of Hanover and of nearly all the royal houses of Europe, Queen Victoria being the ninth in descent from William the Silent, "and thus is nearer to him than any other royal personage in Europe."

During the year of his marriage to Charlotte, the patriots suffered a reverse which led ultimately to a renunciation of Philip. The island of Schouwen was besieged and its capital, Zierickzee, was captured, thus once more giving the Spaniards a foothold on the seacoast.

It now became evident that the fiction of loyalty to Philip could no longer be maintained; that if matters were to end it must be by the Netherlands seeking the help of some foreign country, either Germany, France, or England.

The Prince summoned a meeting of the Estates on the 1st of October, 1575, and formally proposed "either to make terms with the enemy, and that the sooner the better, or else, once for all, to separate entirely from the king of Spain and to change their sovereign, in order, with the assistance and under protection of another Christian potentate, to maintain the provinces against their enemies."

A few days were taken to consult the city governments and the constituents of the Estates, after which it was unanimously resolved by the nobles and the cities "*that they would forsake the king* and seek foreign assistance; referring the choice to the Prince, who, in regard to the government, was to take the opinion of the Estates."

William at once began negotiations with foreign powers. To unite with Germany seemed most feasible; yet

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grave difficulties were in the way. Royal family ties between Austria, Spain, and Portugal prevented any hopes of a cordial union between Holland and Germany against Philip II.

England at this time was very poor. And even if Elizabeth had had resources at command to carry her through a war, yet the precedent of encouraging revolting people might act disastrously. Dreading to incur the wrath of Philip, and equally fearing the consequences that might result to England if France acquired power in the Netherlands, and yet not being able to ignore the appeals of William entirely, she adopted her characteristic plans—that of intriguing. But William understood her and soon saw that he could not rely upon England for help.

On the other hand, none dared trust the treacherous court of France, particularly after the frightful experience on St. Bartholomew night. Its perfidy and enormous crimes were well known. However, William diplomatically aroused the jealousy of England against France, while anxiously endeavoring to learn what was best to be done.

But all failed. Help came from no source. Money was scarce. By the fall of Zierickzee Holland and Zealand were separated. Matters seemed to have disastrously culminated. It is at this time that William is said to have resolved to carry out a project he had for some time been contemplating, should he be driven to his last resort. The plan was this: He was to transport the people to a new settlement somewhere in the old or new world, by loading the men, women and children of Holland and Zealand in ships, set fire to the windmills, cut open the dykes, and permit the ocean to flow over the ground that

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had by infinite toil and heroic labor been originally taken from it and had been hallowed to them as the place where their fathers had suffered and fought in brave efforts to free themselves from ecclesiastical and civil tyranny, and where the soil was consecrated by the graves of their heroic dead.

Groen van Prinsterer discredits the story and nothing of it is to be found in the documents of the times to substantiate it, except that a contemporary historian reports it as coming from a responsible person. But whether the plan had been contemplated or not may be in doubt; that it was not to be carried out was decided by an event that changed the condition of things. A violent fever suddenly and unexpectedly prostrated Requesens, and on the 5th of March, 1576, he died, being in the prime of life, just when he was looking for supplies and money from Spain that would have given him a new impetus to battle and that gave every promise, as he thought, of bringing the war to an immediate close. His death caused a pause in affairs, during which, while Philip II became more and more procrastinating, William of Orange busied himself very actively in getting ready to meet what might occur.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE INTERIM

THE death of Requesens came very untimely for Philip II, while it was the most fortunate circumstance that could have occurred just now for William the Silent. Holland and Zealand, though one in spirit, and loyal to the Prince of Orange, were unfortunately cut in two by the Spaniards, who had gained possession of Zierickzee. Amsterdam, too, the important capital of Holland, had not yet joined the Union.

Requesens had a firm hold upon the South. William plead in vain for aid from abroad. Without it he could do but little. The country was in a deplorable condition. And no wonder. Dykes had been cut open; lands desolated; commerce necessarily declined; the people hunted down; estates had been confiscated; money had been freely used in repairing waste places and restoring the dykes; and, though the people were willing, they were unable to give William the help he needed. Had Requesens lived one can not tell what the course of events would have been. As it was, his death gave the two provinces of Holland and Zealand time to recuperate. For Philip, with remarkable,—even for him,—dilatoriness, deferred the appointment of a successor to the Grand Commander. Added to this came the mutinies of the Spanish troops. They had seriously embarrassed and harassed Requesens, since they had long suffered arrearages in pay. And now

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that their leader was gone, it was not long before they took matters in their own hands. They had for some time in their mutinies deposed their leaders and appointed one of their number as temporary chief, called *Eletto*, held counsels, and determined upon action.

The mutinies now broke out in all the fury that the instructions of Alva had taught them. Their wild cry was: "Money or a city!" Neither could be given. They formed in regular disciplined forces to seize and sack whatever rich city they could take. Their first attempt was upon Brussels. Failing to secure an entrance there, they seized Aalst. The plunder gained at Aalst did not satisfy them. Their eyes were turned toward Antwerp, the richest city then existing. Its capture and sacking forms the most horrible story of the whole series of cruel events through which the Netherlands had yet passed. For three days and nights what is known as the "Spanish Fury" reigned. Houses were sacked and burned; their inmates tortured, outraged and murdered irrespective of religion, sex, age or condition. Wherever it was suspected that money was to be obtained, there the furious soldiers entered and by torture compelled it to be brought forth. An illustration of the fury and the fiendishness of the mutinies is given in the inhuman treatment of a young gentle-woman who, with her mother and other ladies of the family had hid themselves in a cellar. The doors were burst open, and, stepping over the dead mother, who had been killed by the falling of the heavy door, the soldiers seized the daughter and demanded of her to expose treasures. She earnestly protested ignorance of any. But this was met by torture. She was hung to a beam and let down just before life was extinct. This was done several

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times, when, satisfied that nothing was to be gained, they let the poor creature hang. She was discovered by a servant of the family just in time to save her life. But her life was worse than death. Her tortures had crazed her brain. All her life she wandered aimlessly from room to room in her home or else digging in the earth for the hid treasure she had been tortured to reveal.

The city was left desolate. Two hundred palaces were ruined. Eight thousand persons were put to death and some twelve millions of dollars worth of property destroyed or taken. It is stated that at Antwerp and other cities during these mutinous days twelve thousand citizens lost their lives, and millions upon millions of dollars worth of property was destroyed.

The effect of this state of affairs gave the Prince of Orange an admirable opportunity to arouse a spirit of opposition to Spain in the southern Provinces. These had not affiliated with the North. In fact, they little sympathized with their brethren in their suffering and struggles. They had continually congratulated themselves upon the happy escape from the devastations that had come upon their neighbors. William pointed out to them that they never would be safe from danger, so long as the Spanish troops were permitted to remain in the country, and so long as they did not arouse themselves to an assertion of their ancient political rights. They felt the force of this. They effected the outlawry of the mutinous troops. But this made the soldiers all the more desperate and furious.

William further urged upon them the necessity, if they desired permanent relief from danger, to join a confederacy with Holland and Zealand for the defense of the country. To embolden them to take this step he recalled

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to them how the two provinces, without help, had withstood the tyranny. How easy would it be if *all* united in the effort! "Nothing," he wrote, "remains to us but to discard all jealousy and distrust. Let us with a firm resolution and a common accord liberate these lands from the stranger. Hand to hand let us accomplish a just and general peace. As for myself, I present to you, with very good affection, my person and all which I possess, assuring you that I shall regard all my labors and pains in times which are past well bestowed, if God now grant me grace to see the desired end. That this end will be reached, if you hold fast your resolution and take to heart the means which God presents to you, I feel to be absolutely certain."

He had already adroitly told them that they had committed themselves in declaring the army to be rebels. This was decisive. It meant punishment. "You have armed," said he, "and excited the whole people against them, even to the peasants and the peasants' children, and the results and the injuries thus received, however richly deserved and dearly avenged, are all set down to your account. Therefore, it is necessary for you to decide now whether to be utterly ruined, yourselves and your children, or continue firmly the work which you have begun boldly, and rather to die a hundred thousand deaths than to make a treaty with them, which can only end in your ruin. Be assured that the measure dealt to you will be ignominy as well as destruction. Let not your leaders expect the honorable scaffolds of Counts Egmont and Horn. The whipping-post, and then the gibbet, will be their certain fate."

Having no idea of looking to Madrid for relief, they could not but accept; nay more, they went so far as to ask the Prince of Orange for aid!

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Resulting from this was the famous gathering at Ghent, where the nobles of Flanders and Brabant met with the Prince of Orange and representatives from the North, and on the 8th day of November, 1576, signed what is known as the "*Pacification of Ghent*." This was one of the most important documents William had so far been enabled to have passed for the good of his country.

Seven things were agreed upon in this the first common bond that united the Netherlands against Spain.

1. The past was forgiven, and a close alliance formed for the future.

2. The Spanish troops should be expelled from the country.

3. The religious affairs of Holland and of Zealand should be regulated by the States-General, that was to be convoked on the same basis as at the Emperor's abdication, and the fortified places were to be surrendered.

4. There was to be complete freedom of trade and commerce between the United Provinces.

5. The edicts against the heretics were to be suspended until the decision of the States-General.

6. The Roman Catholic religion shall be left free from molestation.

7. The Prince of Orange was to be Stadt-Holder of Holland and Zealand until the States-General should declare otherwise.

It was an attempt to restore the former prosperous, free condition of affairs and was hailed with great delight throughout the country. Cannons boomed; bonfires blazed; psalms of thanksgiving were sung; rejoicing filled all hearts.

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Added to this glad news came the message that the Spaniards had been forced to abandon Zierickzee, thus leaving the entire North once more in possession of the patriots.

This "master-piece of diplomacy," as the "*Pacification of Ghent*" was called, was a great success on the part of William. It was a success he had for years been laboring to attain, viz:

1. *Liberty of Conscience in religion.*

The treaty provided that neither Catholics nor Protestants were to be interfered with in their worship. Although the Catholics of the South lost nothing by this, the Protestants everywhere gained much.

2. *A concert of action.*

The Southern Provinces had all along been bitter in their opposition to the Reformed movement and this led to political estrangement as well. Hence, constant jealousies and conflicts had existed between the Southern and the Northern Provinces, the former prevailingly Catholic, the latter Reformed—and Calvinistic at that! William had now succeeded in uniting these two sections on a basis of protection to the whole country. Alas! that this spirit of union did not last. Had the temper of isolation not constantly thwarted William in his movements and imperiled the interests of the cause of liberty, the war would not have been prolonged to so devastating a length, the final independence would have been on a broader scale, and the Dutch Republic would not have declined as soon as it did, if at all.

3. *The inquisition was forever abolished and a united effort was made for the expulsion of Spanish troops from the country.*

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4. And the fourth result attained—which William may or may not have been contemplating as yet—was that *it would now be but a step to the complete independence of the country from Spanish tyranny.*

In all this the unselfish nature of William was made manifest. In it all he sought no personal preferment. He had an admirable opportunity to do so; but it is certain that in all these movements he did not seek self-elevation. Indeed, he was at this very time seeking some sovereignty to accept the guardianship which was now being urged upon him. He had not made it his task to crown himself by discrowning Philip. Had he done so his name would not now stand high in honor. But his labor and anxiety had all along been to abolish the cruel Inquisition, to free the Hollanders from the galling yoke of the Spanish soldierly, and to re-establish the ancient liberties of the people so ruthlessly trampled upon by Philip, and latterly also—and not least—to establish freedom of worship. He desired to serve, not rule over, his people. To him mastery meant service. A prince rules the better the more he serves his country. And if any prince ever ruled well because of useful service, it was William, who gave himself, his all, to the service of the people. His secretary, Bruinynck, wrote to the Prince's brother John that his master was so "overwhelmed with business, griefs, cares, and toils that from morning to night he had scarcely leisure to breathe."

He was faithful not only in his official duties, but he was a companion of the people, bearing many of their homely burdens, so as to lighten their hearts. He had become, as it were, a father to them. Pity 'tis that because of suspicion, misunderstanding, and misjudgment of mo-

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tive he should have met with so many disappointments and rebuffs. The feebleness of the real sympathy with him and his cause; the jealousy of the Catholics of the Southern Provinces of the progress of the Calvinists and Lutherans in the North; their suspicion that these latter might, if ever they came in power, become as intolerant as they themselves were; and the displeasures of the proud aristocracy of Brabant at seeing the Prince of Orange invested with so much authority over them, all made the "*Pacification of Ghent*" lose much of the good result it should have had and certainly would have had but for this condition of things.

Meanwhile news came that Don John, the newly appointed Stadt-Holder, had secretly arrived. He had traveled as a slave to a Spanish cavalier. His sudden arrival gave a new complexion to the state of affairs.

CHAPTER XVII.

DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA

THE history of Don John reads much like a story of knight-errantry. He was half-brother to Philip II. His mother was a washer-woman of such termagant nature, but withal of such force of character, that she worried even such a man as Alva by her presence in Ghent, where she had made her home and where she lived until she was forced by her son to move after his arrival in the Netherlands. He had been educated with Don Carlos and Alexander of Parma, the Regentess Margaret's son. Philip had designed him for the priesthood, but soldiery was his taste and he exhibited such determination to become a soldier that Philip at last consented to it.

When but twenty-six years of age he made himself famous in the defeat of the Turks in the battle of Lepanto. This aroused his romantic blood and filled him with great and daring schemes. His first thought was to create for himself a kingdom in Tunis. But Philip thwarted his plans. He next turned his attention to England. The release of Mary, Queen of Scots, imprisoned by the "heretic" Elizabeth, afforded him a fit field for knight-errantry, as well as held out to him alluring temptations for an adventure that would set him upon a throne. He determined to invade England, subdue Elizabeth, release Mary, marry her, and establish himself upon England's throne! He gained the Pope's assent to the scheme. And, as



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though a kind Providence favored the idea, he found himself appointed Governor of the Netherlands. What more propitious! He would soon quiet the discontents in Holland, and then, having ten thousand Spanish troops, the bravest soldiers in the world, he would sail into England and win his crown!

He was now but thirty years of age, flushed with the victory of Lepanto, filled with bright hopes of gaining a crown that glittered with glory. He was a handsome, winsome man, of attractive personality—a striking contrast to his half-brother, the repulsive Philip II.

His policy was not that of cruelty, like Alva's, although he could be cruel enough when it served his cause. He expected by a few master-strokes of conciliatory measures to entrap the Netherlanders into peace. But it would have been a peace that would afford him an opportunity to enslave them. Hence, his first measures were endeavors to win over the leaders by pleasing and promising words. In fact, these had been the instructions of Philip. He was to be conciliatory, but to concede nothing.

He made earnest efforts to bring about a pacification. Had it not been for one man, and that man one whom the people had learned to cling to in loving trust, his plans might have succeeded. But William the Silent could not be deceived. He very well knew that such peace as Don John offered meant a continuance of cruel suffering not only, but meant a giving up of all that had been gained in the way of relief and freedom by years of strife, loss, and death.

He, therefore, addressed letters to the States-General, imploring them not to treat with John, unless the "*Pacification of Ghent*" was fully accepted and unless the Span-

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ish troops were sent out of the country. The States sent a deputation to confer with John. They presented a paper expressing their demands; the Spanish and foreign troops were to be immediately removed; all prisoners were to be at once released; the Ghent treaty was to be maintained; the ancient rights were to be restored, and Don John was to take an oath to maintain all charters and customs of the country.

Here truly was a strange sight! When Alva came to the Netherlands demands were all made by the king. Now all the demands were made by the people. William pointed out to them that had the king of Spain not begun to see and feel his weakness, he would never have come in the attitude in which he had sent Don John, bringing offers of peace, asking the Estates to make peace. He said: "If we understand how to make proper use of the new Governor's arrival, it may prove very advantageous to us; if not, it will be the commencement of our total ruin."

This first conference was without definite result. Meanwhile, on the part of the patriots, early in January, 1577, the "*Union of Brussels*" was signed. This document provided for the removal of all troops, the execution of the Ghent Pacification, and a union on the part of the people to defend their fatherland, with the promise that the Catholic religion and the king's authority should be maintained. This "Union" was signed enthusiastically both in the North and in the South. It, however, effected little permanent result. But it brought about this one needed good: a temporary union of the whole country in one vital point, viz: the expulsion of the hated Spanish soldiers once and forever from the land.

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After considerable fencing and warm debates, Don John conceded to the demands and the document was signed. The soldiers were to depart never to return except in case of foreign war; all prisoners should be released except the son of William the Silent, who, however, was to be set free as soon as his father agreed to the treaty; the Ghent treaty was to be maintained, and the free institutions of the Netherlands were to be restored and defended.

It now looked to the people as though peace would at last be realized. But Don John and Philip knew better. *So did William of Orange.* He would not enter the treaty. He had confidence neither in John nor in the Government. His distrust was founded upon the past perfidious treatment of Philip, upon the fickle nature of the Southern nobility, and especially upon intercepted letters from which he learned that designs were formed to keep possession of all the strongholds of the country, so as to conquer and subdue the patriots. He believed, using his own language, "that the only difference between Don John and Alva or Requesens was that he was younger and more foolish than his predecessors, less capable of concealing his venom, more impatient to dip his hands in blood."

He persuaded Holland and Zealand not to enter into this agreement.

Don John now used his utmost endeavors to win the good-will of William. Without his sanction the "*Union of Brussels*," he well knew, would go for little. He wrote to Philip: "The name of your Majesty is as much abhorred and despised in the Netherlands as that of the Prince of Orange is loved and feared. I am negotiating with him and giving him every security, for I see that the

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establishment of peace, as well as the maintenance of the Catholic religion and the obedience to your Majesty depend now upon him. Things have reached that pass that 'tis necessary to make a virtue of necessity. If he lend an ear to my proposals, it will be only upon very advantageous conditions, but to these it will be necessary to submit rather than to lose everything."

Accordingly bribes, flatteries, profuse promises of restoration of property, place in the Government of the king, high dignities,—all were tried, but none had effect to cause him to swerve one inch from his patriotic purpose of securing the full freedom of his country.

In this William of Orange stands forth in bold and refreshing relief from the fickle, time-serving, greedy Flemish nobles. Personally he had nothing to gain and the prospects were that he was to lose still more and more by his adherence to the patriots' cause. Don John said to him: "You can not imagine how much it will be within my ability to do for you." This was true. "The ban, outlawry, degradation, pecuniary ruin, assassination, martyrdom,"—all these he could escape, he well knew, if he would betray his cause, if he would be untrue to his past history, if he would unman himself. He thanked the Governor with what seemed "a grave irony," says Motley, for the offers to make life easy and prosperous for him; but the good of his people and the prosperity of his nation were of paramount importance to him, "having always placed his particular interests under his foot, even as he was still resolved to do, as long as life should endure."

Don John seemed to have acted in good faith in the matter of expelling the troops; for he secured the arrear-

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ages of their pay and arrangements were made for their departure. In April, 1577, the "Spanish Vermin" that had preyed upon the country for years was seen departing amid great rejoicing of the people.

On the first day of May, amid great festivities, Don John entered Brussels. He joined with marked cordiality in the feasts, although his heart was filled with hatred for all the Netherlanders, and with a feeling of repugnance toward his position, and all the while, as is learned from his letters bearing date of this time, having designs to defeat the liberties of the country. To accomplish this it was necessary to get rid of William of Orange. Won he could not be. Hence instructions were given to find means of assassination.

Matters were daily growing worse and worse for Don John. He hated the Netherlands and was fully aware that his position was the most unenviable. His hopes of invading England had long been given up and he had no taste for the life he was now living. He believed himself beginning to be despised by the people, and knew himself to be helpless before William of Orange, who, as he wrote, had *bewitched* the people. "They love him, they fear him," said he, "and wish to have him for their master. They inform him of everything and take no resolution without consulting him."

Although orders had been received to find means to assassinate William, Don John endeavored to negotiate with him. He sent deputies to him, but William was inexorable. He held that the Government did not mean to maintain good faith in its dealings; as a matter of fact, had not done so. He pointed to the fortifications of Antwerp, Ghent, Namur, which had not been destroyed and

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could and doubtless would be used against the liberties of the country. The German troops were still in the land; and confiscated estates had not been restored.

"What," asked a deputy of Don John, "is the point which touches you most nearly? What is it that your Excellency most desires? By what means will it be possible for the Government to give you contentment?" The Prince answered: "I wish the full execution of the Ghent Pacification. If you regard the general welfare of the land, it is well, and I thank you. If not, 'tis idle to make propositions, for I regard my country's profit, not my own."

'Twas, indeed, useless to try to win the Prince over to what he knew would be a false peace. Don John gave up the attempt. He began to realize that continuance of war was inevitable. But Philip, who, while writing soothing and flattering letters to him, was nevertheless intriguing to ruin him, did not send help or definite counsel.

Don John's position became daily more precarious. He was fully aware of this. Hence he fled to Namur, a stronghold of which, by a bold, murderous act, he took possession, and from there attempted to secure Antwerp. He was frustrated in this by the arrival of some Zealand vessels. Seeing these the cry was raised: "The Beggars are coming." At this the soldiers fled in dismay and confusion. Not only was Antwerp not taken, but the citizens rushed upon the citadel of the city and demolished it. Finding in it the statue of Alva, they turned it into cannon, so that it once more became what it was before Alva had formed it into his statue.

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William of Orange was now in the ascendancy. He visited throughout the provinces, being hailed wherever he went with the glad cry: "Father William is come!" Kind, tender, loving, helpful, condescending without being patronizing, he was every one's favorite.

"He was so human; whether strong or weak
Far from his kind he neither sank nor soared;
But sat an equal guest at every board.
No beggar ever felt him condescend,
No prince presume; for still himself he bare
At manhood's simple level; and where'er
He met a stranger, there he left a friend."

Helpful, without being self-interested, he won the people to him. His power over them came from the fact evident to them that in a disinterested way he sought not theirs, but themselves. No power is stronger to win men than disinterestedness. His visit emboldened the people; gave them more and more confidence in their sacred cause.

William had not visited Brussels for eleven years. In fact, not since, having warned Egmont of his danger, he had wisely eluded the snare of Alva. He was now invited to the city by the States-General to counsel and assist them! After carefully assuring himself that it was safe to do so, he accepted the invitation. He passed through Antwerp, where he was received with great enthusiasm. At Brussels the joy at his presence knew no bounds. Thousands of people escorted him into the city. Motley says: "It was the proudest day of his life. The representatives of all the Provinces, supported by the most undeniable fervor of the United Netherland people, greeted 'Father William.' Perplexed, discordant, hating,

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fearing, doubting, they could believe nothing, love nothing save the 'tranquil' Prince. *His presence at that moment in Brussels was the triumph of the people and of religious toleration."*

He at once recommended that all negotiations with Don John cease until he had quitted Namur castle, had dismissed the German troops, and, in fact, complied with the Pacification of Ghent and the "Perpetual Edict," as his last agreement with the States-General was called.

A quarrel ensued between the Estates and Don John, to whom it now became evident that peaceful measures would not avail. The Estates published the correspondence and spread it broadcast before all Christendom.

With all the enthusiasm of the people toward William, there lurked in the hearts of the Catholic nobles of the South a conspiracy against him, which resulted in an invitation to Archduke Rudolph to become Governor of the Netherlands instead of Don John. He accepted. William met him at Antwerp and with consummate skill made himself master of the situation, so that as little mischief as possible would come to the patriots' cause. He was appointed Ruward of Brabant, which made him, although not dictator in power, yet all but universal in authority.

Matters were again tending toward an outbreak of war. On the 7th of December, 1577, the Estates-General deposed Don John from his governorship, declaring him to be a disturber of the peace he had sworn to maintain. It was further declared that all who should show him favor or loyalty would be considered and treated as traitors and rebels.

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This was soon followed by the adoption of the new "*Union of Brussels*" on December 10th, in which Catholics and Protestants agreed to respect and protect each other in their religions, and mutually guaranteed to help each other battle against all enemies. Here was a great step gained. It would have been a step in a direction of perpetual and secure union had not the nobles in the South persisted in their destructive jealousy of William. But, even as it was, it proved to be that by which the subsequent Dutch Republic was brought into existence and though but for a short time, yet it afforded the world the spectacle of a whole nation aspiring to religious toleration, in an age of the most decided intolerance, marking one of the most important mile-stones in human progress.

Matthias was now made Governor-General. But with the Prince of Orange as Ruward of Brabant, and in full authority in Holland and Zealand, having also been appointed Lieutenant-General for Matthias, he was simply *de jure* ruler, while William was such *de facto*.

On the 25th of January, 1578, Don John declared war, a fresh army of twenty thousand veterans from Italy and Spain having arrived. Having as his lieutenants such men of renown and bravery as Alexander of Parma, Mendoza, and Mansfield, his hopes had revived and his courage had been renewed.

An equal number of men, among them Scotch and English volunteers, had been raised to join the army of the Estates. Desiring to win the good-will of the Flemish nobles, William entrusted important offices to them. The trust was accepted, but unfortunately not well kept.

The battle was pitched in Gamblours. The desperate bravery of Alexander of Parma decided the battle in favor

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of the Spaniards. Saying: "Tell Don John of Austria that Alexander of Parma has plunged into the abyss to perish there or to come forth again victorious," he dashed through the mire and water of a dangerous swamp, surprising the enemy. The patriots were entirely routed, almost completely annihilated, while the Spaniards lost but ten or eleven men.

Following up this victory, Don John soon came in possession of many towns. Brussels, however, remained true to the Prince. It became evident from what had happened that if the country was ever to be saved from ruin it *must* be through closer union. The people, therefore, rose *en masse* in remonstrance to the nobles for their manifest want of sympathy with William of Orange, who was now looked up to as the only one who could lead on to safety.

Amsterdam, too, at this time entered the Union. This was a great compensation for the defeat of Gamblours; for now, with Utrecht, Haarlem, and Amsterdam gained, the two northern Provinces were entirely freed from the foreign domination.

Thus nothing daunted, nay, with renewed courage, William proceeded to raise money and troops for further action. Queen Elizabeth had also by this time been led to lend aid to the patriots, believing that it would be well to do so for her own security. William had for some time dealt with France in a manner to arouse the jealousy and fear of Elizabeth, keeping her from showing sympathy with Philip.

Don John prepared for fresh war. Soon the two armies were again marching to combat. The Spaniards numbered about thirty thousand, nearly all veterans. The patriot

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army mustered scarcely eighteen thousand foot and two thousand cavalry troops. In spite of the disparagement in numbers, the enemy was driven back and Don John, discouraged, retreated to his castle in Namur.

The Duke of Anjou, for whom the Prince had a just contempt, by the instigation of the nobles now offered his services with ten thousand French soldiers. The offer was formally accepted in August, 1578. The Duke was called: "The Defender of the liberties of the Netherlands against the tyranny of the Spaniards and their adherents." But Anjou was not a man to be relied upon for great service. The French allies, however, were a great inspiration and help to the Netherlands, while they were a cause of anxiety to Philip and a spur to Elizabeth to show favor to William the Silent, since it was poor policy for her to let France gain too much power with the Netherlands.

But the impoverished condition of the States prevented them from making use of these favorable conditions. Had Philip, therefore, given Don John the support he should have sent, he might have gained signal victories at this time. John was, however, virtually deserted by his brother; for Philip had become more and more bent upon his ruin. He was jealous of his military honors.

Harassed in body and in mind, hopes blighted, conscious of the fact that he was outwitted by William of Orange, whom he called "the odious heretic of heretics," wearied and sad, he wrote to John Andrew Doria: "I have besought his Majesty over and over again to send to me his orders. If they come they shall be executed, unless they arrive too late. They have cut off our hands and we have now nothing for it but to stretch forth our heads

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also to the axe. I grieve to trouble you with my sorrows, but I trust to your sympathy as a man and a friend. I hope you will remember me in your prayers, for you can put your trust where in former days I never could place my own." Shortly before his death he wrote to another friend: "His Majesty is resolved upon nothing; at least, I am kept in ignorance of his intentions. Our life is doled out to us here by moments. I cry aloud, but it profits me little. Matters will soon be disposed, through our negligence, exactly as the Devil would best wish them. It is plain that we are left here to pine away till our last breath. God direct us all as He may see fit: in His hands are all things."

Two weeks later in a hovel which had long been used as a pigeon-house, but now was made to look as much as possible like a room in a palace by the use of emblazoned tapestry, amid fevers, delirium, and wild tossings, he expired on the first of October, 1578. During a lucid period of his fever, he appointed his nephew, Alexander of Parma, as his provisional successor.

Don John's administration had developed favorably for the patriots, instead of being an advance movement for Philip. His anxiety for peace—perhaps more that he might be free to carry out his designs upon England than from any considerations of good-will for the poor Netherlanders, for whom he had soon after arriving in the country formed a dislike that developed into hatred—gave William an opportunity to strengthen the courage of his people, especially when he made it clear to them that the offers of peace were made, not really because peace was desired by Philip, but came the rather because he saw that he could not force the people into submission.

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Meanwhile the situation religiously was growing more promising. For we must not forget that William by this time had become fully convinced of the far-reaching importance of the struggle in which he was engaged. It had to him long ceased to be a matter that concerned merely the political rights and condition of his own country or generation. His defeats, the strange developments in the struggle, and deep study as to the real meaning of it all, had led him to a seriousness of spirit and development of religious character that caused him to look upon the whole matter as one upon which the future welfare of all civilization depended. To him, true Christian statesman as he had become, the religious element in the struggle was *the* important one. This he wanted broad, true, worthy, a safe basis for the formation of the State. Hence, though misunderstood, criticised and hindered because of it, he persisted in endeavoring to bring about a liberty of conscience that should not be interfered with, no matter by whom exercised. At a meeting of a synod of Reformed Churches held in June, 1578, William had formulated a system of provisional toleration that would, at least for a season, bring this about. "The brave, tranquil, solitary man," says Motley, of this period of his life, "still held his track across the raging waves, shedding as much light as one clear human soul could dispense yet the dim lantern so far in advance was swallowed in the mist ere those who sailed in his wake could shape their course by his example." Now, this was a tolerance that was just, that was safe; the tolerance of the banks of the river that give it liberty to flow in safe, albeit often winding courses onward to the ocean, preventing it from spreading in destruction of itself and all it covers by uncontrolled and

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undefined streams. William realized what Carlyle has forcibly said in speaking of Knox: "Tolerance has to be noble, measured, just in its very wrath, when it can tolerate no longer. But, on the whole, we are not altogether here to tolerate! We are here to resist, to control, and to vanquish withal. We do not tolerate falsehoods, iniquities. When they fasten on us we say to them: 'Thou art false and unjust.' We are here to extinguish falsehoods and to put an end to them in some wise way."

In this William was far in advance of his age. But history, whose course he markedly helped shape by his work and life, has proven the wisdom of his way, and has shown that he did not over-estimate the value of religion in State-building. It has been said by Prof. J. W. Burgess, a writer on *Political Science*, that the "Unbiased political historian will not only not dispute this proposition, but he will teach that the State was brought through the earliest and most difficult periods of its development by the power of religion and in the forms of religion. * * * The first and most fundamental principle concerned in the development of the State is that of piety; i. e., reverence and obedience. Unless the character of the mass of the population be moulded by this principle the reign of law can never be attained."

The condition of the world in our day religiously and politically urges us carefully to study well the Supreme Ruler's methods of dealing through such men as William the Silent in matters pertaining to State-building. Professor Burgess has written: "The church is still today the chief hand of unity between the masses and the throne, and should we examine carefully enough into the sources of that readiness to obey law which has characterized the

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true American citizens of this Republic, we shall without doubt find ourselves ultimately face to face with the religious discipline of New England."

Nor does this mean that Church and State should be united. It does mean, however, most positively that *religion* and state should never be separated. State life as well as individual life, in order to be secure, enduring, and progressive in all that makes for peace, comfort, happiness, must be actuated and energized by morality. With modern nations as well as with ancient Palestine it is true, as Carlyle has said, that God's judgments will overtake them if the hearts of the people are not set on righteousness. Froude has said that you may go "to the past history of the world and prove diverse theories from its ample pages according to your disposition. But one lesson, and one lesson only, history repeats with emphatic distinctness and without the least ambiguity. There is no possibility of diverse theories here, and that lesson is that the world is built on moral foundations, that in the long run it is well with the good, and in the long run it is ill with the wicked." Dr. John Lord, in his "Old Roman World," quotes Charles Kingsley approvingly when he says that "foremost of great elementary truths stands a law which man has been trying in all ages, as now, to deny, or at least to ignore and that is that as the fruit of righteousness is wealth and peace, strength and honor, the fruit of unrighteousness is poverty and anarchy, weakness and shame; for not upon *mind*, but upon *morals* is human welfare founded. Science is, indeed, great, but not the greatest. She is an instrument, and not a power. But her lawful mistress, the only one under whom she can truly grow and prosper, is Virtue, the likeness of Almighty

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God—an ancient doctrine, yet one ever young, and which no discoveries in science will ever abrogate.”

The great forces that underlie and control the world's development are not intellectual alone and hence, in the language of Kidd, “it is not improbable, after the sanguine expectations which have been entertained throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century as to the part which the intellect is destined to play in human evolution, that one of the most remarkable features of the age upon which we are entering will be the disillusionment we are likely to undergo in this respect. There has been for long abroad in the minds of men an idea which finds constant expression (although it is not always clearly and consistently held) that this vast development in the direction of individual, economic, political, and social enfranchisement which has been taking place in our civilization, is essentially an intellectual movement. Nothing can be more obvious, however, as soon as we begin to understand the nature of the process of evolution in progress around us, than that the moving force behind it is not the intellect, and that the development as a whole is not in any true sense an intellectual movement. Nay, more, we may distinguish, with some degree of clearness, the nature of the part taken therein by the intellect. It is an important part, certainly, but it is also beyond doubt a subordinate one, strictly limited and circumscribed. The intellect is employed in developing ground which has been won for it by other forces. But it would appear that it has by itself no power to occupy this ground; it had not even any power to continue to hold it after it has been won when these forces have spent and exhausted themselves.”

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The Prince of Orange was, therefore, right, and as wise and far-seeing as right, when he placed the greatest possible emphasis upon the religious side of the struggle for liberty in which he was engaged. *That* was the element in it, he knew, which after all was to decide the future welfare not only of his own country and time, but for all nations and all ages to come.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ALEXANDER OF PARMA

THE first ruler of the Netherlands under Philip's administration, Margaret of Parma, had a son who had from his very childhood shown a war-like disposition. When but a young man he had an opportunity to display his courage—though in many respects there was very little valiancy in it—more a species of foolhardiness—at the famous battle of Lepanto, where in an encounter with a treasure-ship of the Turkish fleet, he sprang aboard and cut his way through the enemy, making himself master of the ship.

Not only was he a daring and great soldier, but he was also in many respects an accomplished statesman. His personal appearance was attractive. Handsome, winsome in manners, having an excellent judgment of men, he easily won his way into the confidence and good-will of those whom he desired to gain. He was the very sort of man Philip needed in the Netherlands at this time. He was in full sympathy with Philip's ideas; a strict religionist, but with no morality; bigoted, but politic. "He had no scruple in deceiving, lying, assassinating, and even less scruple in saying and swearing that he had done none of these things"; and Rogers, from whom this sentence just quoted is taken, adds: "Men whose creed is that they have an indefeasible right to the lives and fortunes, and even to the consciences of their subjects, as



*Alexander Farnesius, Hertoch van Parma ende
Playsrance, Gouverneur der Nederlanden*

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they call them, are seldom scrupulous. Now such men, if they possess military genius in time of war, and diplomatic skill in times of peace, are and always will be (for the type exists, though the manner is changed) the worst enemies of the human race."

The time for assuming the reign in the Netherlands was for Alexander peculiarly favorable. The Southern nobles were easily won over. The Duke of Anjou was plotting for the sovereignty and was a weak, vacillating character, actually deserting the cause in 1578, disbanding his troops, many of whom went over to the so-called *malcontents*, a class of men which was made up of a party of unreliable nobles, ever looking for gain, unscrupulous, and without patriotism. John Casimer, another pretender on the field, together with the strife between Catholics and Protestants, only added to the complications which made it easy for Alexander to plot for and work his way into favorable positions. Alexander was the prince of bribers. He at once began to buy up the greedy nobles and made himself master of the Walloon provinces. The city of Ghent was the center of interest at this time. William exerted himself to the utmost to gain it, but failed, and this failure, caused by the jealousies of rival nobles, by unscrupulous demagogues, and the perfidy of military leaders, forever divided the Netherlands, making it evident that all hopes of ever uniting the whole of the Netherlands in alliance were vain. The Southern provinces could not be relied upon.

Rather, however, than not have a Union at all, negotiations were entered into to form one between the Northern provinces. As a result of this the famous *Union of Utrecht* was effected, in which Holland, Zea-

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land, Utrecht, Overysel, and Groningen banded together for mutual protection against the enemy, pledging support of each other during war by contributing to a common military treasury; a common currency was to be used by the Confederacy; the Provinces were to meet by deputies in council, where all treaties of war or peace were to be formed, the separate states not to have power to do this; the internal affairs, both political and religious, of each state, were not to be interfered with by the Confederate Diet. The *Union of Utrecht*, according to Motley, differed from the American Federal Commonwealth in that it was establishing merely a confederacy of sovereignties, not a representative Republic. Its foundation was a compact, not a constitution.

Although in form allegiance to Philip was still kept up, yet in this Union the Constitution of the Dutch Republic was virtually made. This, 'tis true, was not premeditated; but in the formation of nations, and in all great movements, the full issues can not by those engaged in bringing them about be known. Here were a few Provinces banding together for mutual self-protection against a foreign oppressor; and yet, guided by the statesman-like instinct of the Prince of Orange, the bond of union was formed in such a masterly recognition of and distinction in external and internal interests of each separate state that from this time, as Hausser says, this distinction has been the great characteristic of every federal constitution. Had all the seventeen Provinces, instead of only seven, joined in this Union, many years of struggle and of bloodshed would doubtless have been avoided. But such was not to be. Somehow, in the inscrutable Providence of God, the tree of Liberty, in order not to

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dry up and wither, needed to be moistened with more human blood.

Alexander's first attempt was to seize Antwerp. Failing in this, he attacked Maestrich. The Prince of Orange made a last earnest effort to save the Walloon Provinces, but in vain. Blind to their own interests, deceived by the flatteries of Parma, they once for all broke with their brethren; and henceforth the Northern Provinces could no more depend on them.

Meanwhile Maestrich was conquered by the enemy. Mechlin also was betrayed into the hands of Parma by the treachery of its commander, De Bours, and to add to difficulties the Governor of Friesland treasonably handed over the capital, Groningen, to the enemy.

Personally, also, matters were getting serious for the Prince. He was being suspected, and these three charges were brought against him:

1. His tolerance of the Catholics was a willful favoring of the Roman Church as against the Protestants.

2. His dealings with Anjou meant a treasonable deliverance of the country to France.

3. Refusing to conclude a peace meant a desire to make himself master of the country.

At the fall of Maestrich the Prince was also blamed for its defeat and the death of hundreds connected with it. As a matter of fact, however, it was largely due to the lukewarmness of the States Assembly that defeat had come. They had refused aid for Maestrich even though the Prince had plead for it from them almost upon his knees. A libelous letter against William was sent to the Assembly. The clerk faltered in its reading. The Prince himself then calmly read it aloud from beginning to

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end. In replying to it, he said that if the Assembly agreed with the letter in its statement that he was the obstacle to honorable peace, he was ready at any moment to leave the country and never open his lips or stir his hands in regard to the troubles of his nation. In the presence of all the States assembled, the Prince declared that no one desired peace more than he, and that the above rumor was a simple calumny. The deputies of Brabant, Flanders, Holland and Zealand, Tournay, Tournaisie, Utrecht, and Groningen affectionately assured his Excellency of their trust and begged him to pay no attention to such calumnies and false rumors, but to continue to aid the generality both in peace and war. He was further assured in earnest protestations that he had too strong a hold on their affections ever to be ruined by slanderers. The Assembly unanimously joined in hearty assurances of unfeigned loyalty to him.

The next step on the part of Alexander was an endeavor to buy over William. How little had his enemy learned his true character! Indeed, he was a mystery to all, friend and foe alike. He was a unique personage—one of the outstanding characters of history. Bribe *him!* Don John had attempted it, but failed. Philip had tried it to no avail. One last effort was now made. A deputation waited on him. "He was distinctly given to understand," says Motley, "that 'there was nothing he could demand for himself personally that would not be granted.' All his confiscated property, restoration of his imprisoned son, liberty of worship for himself, payment of all his debts, reimbursement of all his past expenses, and anything else which he could desire, were all placed within

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his reach." But these offers had absolutely no effect whatever upon him. *He could not be bought.*

It was clearly evident that the only way to get rid of him was to murder him. The indefatigable Granvelle was largely instrumental in persuading Philip that it was both expedient and safe to proclaim a ban against William. Groen van Prinsterer says that a letter written by Philip to Parma touching this matter was undoubtedly dictated by Granvelle. The letter read: "It will be well to offer thirty thousand crowns or so to any one who will deliver him dead or alive. Thus the country may be rid of a man so pernicious; or at any rate he will be held in perpetual fear and therefore prevented from executing leisurely his designs."

Accordingly, in June, 1580, Philip issued a proclamation in which William was declared an outlaw and rebel, laying all the blame upon him for the revolt of the Netherlands, and the consequent shedding of blood by the Spaniards, for the introduction of liberty of conscience, and charging him with organized conspiracy against the government in bringing about the "*Union of Utrecht*" and similar crimes, the "ban" concluding with these words: "For these causes we declare him traitor and miscreant, enemy of ourselves and of the country. As such we banish him perpetually from all our realms, forbidding all our subjects, of whatever quality, to communicate with him openly or privately—to administer to him victuals, drink, fire, or other necessities. We allow all to injure him in property or life. We expose the said William Nassau as an enemy of the human race—giving his property to all who may seize it. And if any of our subjects or any stranger should be found generous enough of heart to rid

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us of this pest, delivering him to us alive or dead, or taking his life, we will cause to be furnished to him immediately after the deed shall have been done, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns in gold. If he have committed any crime, however heinous, we promise to pardon him; and if he be not already noble, we will enoble him for his valor."

To this the Prince answered in a public document known as "*The Apology of the Prince of Orange*"—which Motley calls "one of the most startling documents in history." In it William appealed to all Christendom, recounting the atrocities of Philip, the cruelties of Alva, the loyalty of the people, the reasons they had for resisting the tyranny exercised over them, and the perfidy in the ruthless destruction of their ancient rights and charters. He looked with disdain upon the threat of assassination, as if that could deter him from the path of duty! "I am," he said, "in the hand of God; my worldly goods and my life have been long since dedicated to His service. He will dispose of them as seems best for His glory and my salvation." He closed his "Apology" with this remarkable, heroic language: "Would to God that my perpetual banishment, or even my death, could bring you a true deliverance from so many calamities. Oh, how consoling would be such banishment—how sweet such a death! For what reason have I exposed my property? Was it that I might enrich myself? Why have I lost my brothers? Was it that I might find new ones? Why have I left my son so long a prisoner? Can you give me another? Why have I put my life so often in danger? What reward can I hope after my long services and the almost total wreck of my earthly fortunes, if not

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the prize of having acquired, perhaps at the expense of my life, your liberty? If, then, my masters, you judge that my absence or my death can serve you, behold me ready to obey. Command me—send me to the ends of the earth—I will obey. Here is my head, over which no prince, no monarch, has power but yourselves. Dispose of it for your good, for the preservation of your Republic; but if you judge that the moderate amount of experience and industry which is in me, if you judge that the remainder of my property and of my life can yet be of service to you, I dedicate them afresh to you and to the country.”

Of course, such a man was not told to leave the country. The people knew that it was absurd for Philip to accuse William of being the cause of all the troubles. The world knew that *he* himself had been the main cause. Carlyle has a good word to say *à propos* here, when speaking of the wars that followed the Reformation: “Great talk and crimination has been made about these. They are lamentable, undeniable; but, after all, what has Luther or his cause to do with them? It seems strange reasoning to charge the Reformation with all this. When Hercules turned the purifying river into King Augea’s stables, I have no doubt the confusion that resulted was considerable all around; but I think it was not Hercules’ blame; it was some other’s blame!” Surely, when Philip’s tyranny stirred up the revolt in the Netherlands, William was not to blame!

Little occurred during the remainder of 1580 and the half of 1581. But on the 25th of July, 1581, the Deputies of the United Provinces, solemnly assembled at the Hague, issued the *Declaration of Dutch Independence*.

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The Rubicon was now crossed. The fiction of allegiance to Philip was now forever renounced. The "*Act of Abjuration*," as the Declaration was called, began with these statements: "All mankind know that a prince is appointed by God to cherish his subjects, even as a shepherd to guard his sheep. When, therefore, the prince does not fulfill his duty of protector; when he oppresses his subjects, destroys their ancient liberties, and treats them as slaves, he is to be considered not a prince, but a tyrant. As such the Estates of the land may lawfully and reasonably depose him and elect another in his room."

The declaration then proceeded to recount the wrongs endured by the people under their ruthlessly despotic sovereign, recounting in an earnest but unimpassioned manner the various steps in the course of events that had led up to their present act, dwelling particularly upon the perfidious, murderous rule of Alva, the duplicity of Don John, and the evident desire on the part of Philip not to seek the good or peace of the country, but only to bring about a forced submission to tyranny that was as galling to the people as it was blighting to the national spirit that had made the Netherlands the prosperous and strong State it was before the Spaniards had all but ruined the country. All this, they declared, justified them in renouncing their king, and declaring themselves independent, free from all further allegiance to Philip.

On the 29th of July the Assembly passed the following oath of abjuration, which all persons were to take in the adoption of the *Declaration of Independence*: "I solemnly swear that I will henceforward not respect, nor recognize, the King of Spain as my Prince and master; but that I renounce the King of Spain, and abjure the

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allegiance by which I may have formerly been bound to him. At the same time I swear fidelity to the United Netherlands:—to-wit, the Provinces of Brabant, Flanders, Guelders, Holland, Zealand, etc., etc., and also to the National Council established by the Estates of these Provinces; and promise my assistance according to the best of my abilities against the King of Spain and his adherents.”

In this act the people did not mean to form an independent nation, but only expected to make a change of sovereigns. But, as a matter of fact, they did establish an independent Republic, which stood for two centuries.

Here, too, we meet with the first attempt in history where an appeal on the duty of rulers to their people was made. These Hollanders were also the first, as Rogers says, “to assert that human institutions and human allegiance to governments are to be interpreted and maintained by their manifest utility. They were the first to assert and prove that men and women are not the private estate of princes, to be disposed of in their industry, their property, their consciences, by the discretion of those who were fortunate enough to be able to live by the labors of others. They were the first to affirm that there is and must be a contract between the ruler and the people, even though that contract has not been reduced to writing, or debated on, or fought for; and, strangely enough, the idea which lay under this doctrine was derived from that which had now become the principal instrument of oppression and wrong doing.”

William was urged to accept the sovereignty of the United Provinces; but he refused, fearing that his acceptance might give the enemy cause to work up a feel-

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ing against him as conspirator and an ambitious, self-seeking intriguer, which he knew would work for ill to the country. This man, who by some has been charged with insincerity of motive in all that he did and suffered for the Netherlands, and with seeking self-glory and promotion, would surely not have rejected an offer of sovereignty earnestly and enthusiastically tendered to him had he not the good of his nation only at heart. But besides fearing that it was not best for the country to lay himself open to these charges, he believed that the Republic could not maintain itself without the aid of a foreign state. Accordingly he insisted upon making Anjou sovereign. His choice of Anjou was made largely because he thus hoped to enlist France in the cause of the country, which, wrote John of Nassau, "he believes will be of more benefit to the country and to Christianity than if a peace should be made with Spain, or than if he should himself accept the sovereignty, as he is desired to do."

It was finally arranged, however, that for the present, at least, William was to rule in Holland and Zealand during the war. Meanwhile efforts were made to establish Anjou as sovereign over the rest of the United Netherlands, Holland and Zealand positively refusing to accept him as a ruler. It was with difficulty that William persuaded the reluctant Provinces to accept of Anjou. But he persisted because he firmly believed that the King of France would come to the assistance of his brother, Anjou, if he were elected, as he had promised to do.

Anjou at this time was in England enacting a ridiculous farce of courtship with Queen Elizabeth. At his election he left England, accompanied by the Earl of Leicester and

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numerous lords and high personages, and was with due pomp and honors inaugurated at Antwerp.

It was but natural that the ban of Philip against William should be followed by attempts at his murder. On Sunday, the 18th of March, while the Prince was leaving the dinner table, a young man of vulgar mien offered him a petition, and, while he was reading it, shot at the head of William. "The ball entered the neck under the right ear, passed through the roof of the mouth, and came out under the left jaw bone, carrying with it two teeth." The Prince's life was saved, however, because the flame from the pistol, which had been held close to his head, had cauterized the wound.

This attempted murder caused intense excitement and commotion among the people. Rumors spread that Anjou had been an accomplice in the act. Upon examination, these were, however, found to be false. The would-be assassin was forthwith executed. Upon his body was found a dagger, which no doubt he would have used had not the pistol accidentally shot off his thumb. Numerous sorcerer's charms were found in his pockets—a crucifix, prayer-books, and writing tablets upon which were written vows and invocations. The poor wretch had been made to believe that by killing William a highway to Heaven would be open to him; he had actually been led to believe further that after accomplishing the deed he would become invisible!

For a long time the Prince was in a precarious condition. At one time the wound opened and he would have bled to death but for the device of the physician, who had a number of attendants, relieving one another constantly pressing the thumb upon the wound to staunch

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the flow of blood. Fasts were observed and the churches were thronged with eager and earnest petitioners at the throne of mercy for the life of the beloved Prince. An account of these days, given at the time of the meetings, says that "never within men's memory had such crowds been seen in the churches, nor so many tears been shed."

The Prince recovered; thanksgivings and praises were solemnly rendered to God for his restoration. Joy reigned supreme. But this joy was o'ershadowed by grief when, on the 5th of May, three days after the thanksgiving for her husband's recovery, the Princess of Orange, Charlotte of Bourbon, the faithful and devoted wife of the Prince, for seven years having shared his labors and sorrows, died of a violent fever that seized her on account of the intense anxiety and the long watching at William's side, hardly having left his bedside during the eighteen days of dreadful uncertainty as to his recovery. This sorrow to the Prince, it was feared, would cause a relapse; for he loved her dearly and she had been to him a help and consolation. "She was a woman of rare intelligence, accomplishment, and gentleness of disposition." Count John wrote in 1580 concerning William: "His Highness is in excellent health, and, in spite of adversity, incredible labor, perplexity, and dangers, is in such good spirits that it makes me happy to witness it. No doubt a chief reason is the consolation he derives from the pious and highly intelligent wife whom the Lord has given him—a woman who ever conforms to his wishes and is inexpressibly dear to him."

On receiving the news of the Prince's assassination, thinking him dead, Alexander sent letters to the cities, promising them pardon if they would return to allegiance



HOME OF WILLIAM THE SILENT AT DELFT
Where he was assassinated



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to Philip. He soon found, however, that he was mistaken and learned that, even had the news of William's death been true, such a return was not likely to be made. This renewed outrage of Spain upon the life of their revered leader incited the people collectively and individually to become all the more resolute in their defiance.

It now became evident to William that in order to embosom the people with continued confidence and courage, and waiving any scruples he might still have in regard to a possible misunderstanding as to his motives and ambitions, he accepted the countship of Holland and Zealand, without limitation.

Meanwhile Parma recalled the dismissed Spanish troops and captured a number of important towns. And to make his plans of continuous success the more sure to be carried out, he hired an Italian and a Spaniard to poison William and Anjou. It was at the festivities of the inauguration of Anjou at Bruges that the attempt was made; but it failed. It developed during the trial of the would-be assassins that the younger son and namesake of the Prince's special, ill-fated friend Egmont was an accomplice to this foul plot. With characteristic magnanimity, however, William pleaded for his life, and the young nobleman was saved.

All had gone well between the Prince and Anjou until the latter, regardless of his oaths, tried to take possession of the Flemish towns. He had been instigated to this by the whispers of the French nobles, who made him restive under his constitutional limitations. The plot failed. The Prince, strange to relate, still believed that Anjou should be retained. Accordingly he submitted to the effronteries, and recommended the United Provinces to

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effect an honorable reconciliation with him. The negotiations, however, were tardy and heartless. Anjou, disappointed, wearied of a work for which he was fitted neither by nature nor by acquirements, left the country on the 28th of June, 1583, never to return again.

The United Provinces once more urged the sovereignty upon William. But he still refused to accept. At the same time he would not accept a proffered sovereign Dukedom of Brabant.

These refusals were based mainly upon his fears lest the cause he had espoused, viz., the freedom of religion in his country, might be injured by even a seeming verification of the calumnies of his enemies, that he had been actuated by personal ambition in what he had done. 'Tis possible that here he made a mistake. Indeed, it is very likely that had he been willing to take these high offices the whole trend of subsequent Netherland history would have been different. There would in all probability have been a more unanimous policy among the various Provinces and districts of the confederation—a stronger *national* spirit.

Whilst his spirit was being cheered by the confidence the people at large were manifesting toward him, William's heart was unexpectedly pierced by his brother-in-law, Count van den Berg, who treasonably plotted against him by engaging to deliver the principal cities of Gelderland and Zutphen into the hands of Philip. In Flanders, also, intrigues were going on. The Governor, Prince of Chimay, eldest son of the Duke of Aerschot, assisted by the infamous Champagny, had entered into negotiations with Parma to surrender Flanders to Philip. They had so far succeeded that the government of Ghent had

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passed a resolution by which these negotiations were to be ratified. But, being earnestly warned by word and deed of friends of the Union, by William, and particularly by the secret attempt of the demagogue Imbize to play into the hands of Parma, carrying with him the city of Dendermonde, the negotiations were closed, and a final resolution bound the government of Ghent to the Union.

With these unexpected and annoying developments, William did not know what the Provinces had better do. However offensive to the people, he saw nothing better to be done than to recall Anjou from France. It is improbable that this would have been effected, even had it not been prevented by the death of Anjou.

Hope grew dimmer and dimmer for the country. Parma with sword and false promises had won over a number of cities in Brabant and Flanders. And, added to this, came the deep sorrow and distress of William's murder.

CHAPTER XIX.

LAST DAYS OF WILLIAM

ON the 22nd of July, 1584, having on the 12th of April of the previous year married Louisa, widow of de Coligny, the Prince of Orange had moved from Antwerp to Delft. This was a delightfully quiet and homelike city, of which there were many in the Netherlands. Here on one of the thoroughfares, with the canal lined on both sides with lime trees, affording by their fragrant and light blossoms a most delightful shade, the Prince had chosen his home. The house was a plain, two-story brick building, situated opposite the "old kirk" in an open court.

William had been a domestic man all his life. He loved his home. Early in life he made it the scene of great and constant festivity. Multitudes of guests, rich and poor, were always welcomed at his house and board and were made to feel at home. His manners were those of a born gentleman. He always showed "the good breeding which comes from the heart." The richness and elegance of his entertainments were noted. For a cook to have belonged to his establishment had been enough recommendation to ensure employment anywhere. His home always was made by him a delightful spot—a trysting place from the cares and burdens of life. There he was always cheerful, and inspired his friends with hopefulness. Even a most bitter Catholic historian wrote: "Never



LOUISE DE COLIGNY
Fourth Wife of William the Silent

Last Days of William

did an arrogant or indiscreet word fall from his lips. He upon no occasion manifested anger to his servants, however much they might be at fault, but contented himself with admonishing them graciously, without menace or insult. He had a gentle and agreeable tongue, with which he could turn all the gentlemen at court any way he liked. He was beloved and honored by the whole community."

Six futile attempts had been made to assassinate William. The seventh was successful.

At the death of Anjou in France, a messenger was dispatched to convey the news to William at Delft. Before arising from his bed on Sabbath morning, July 8th, 1584, he read the dispatches. Desiring to learn the particulars of Anjou's last illness, he summoned the carrier into his room. He found this man to be one whom he had formerly protected on the plea of being the son of a martyred Protestant. "A pious, psalm-singing, thoroughly Calvinistic youth he seemed to be, having a Bible or a hymn-book under his arm whenever he walked the street, and exemplary in his attendance at sermon and lecture. For the rest, a singularly unobtrusive personage, twenty-seven years of age, low of stature, meagre, mean-visaged, muddy complexioned, and altogether a man of no account—quite insignificant in the eyes of all who looked upon him. If there were any opinion in which the few who had taken the trouble to think of the puny, somewhat shambling stranger from Burgundy at all coincided, it was that he was inoffensive, but quite incapable of any important business. He seemed well educated, claimed to be of respectable parentage, and had considerable facility of speech, when any person could be found who

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thought it worth while to listen to him; but on the whole he attracted little attention."

For seven years this man had planned the murder of the Prince of Orange. All arrangements had now been made by Parma as to pay. The reward was to be given to him if he escaped, to his family if he perished. No favorable opportunity had thus far offered itself. At last it had come! He was actually summoned into the bed-chamber of William! But he was not just now armed for the deed. Hence he could not now execute his murderous will. Loitering around the house, an officer inquired as to his intentions. He replied that had he fit clothes he would join the congregation worshiping in the church across the way. The Prince was informed of this and at once ordered a sum of money to be given him. On Monday morning he purchased a pair of pistols with this money, to be used by him to murder the donor! On Tuesday, as the Prince, with his wife at his side, was passing to dinner, this man presented himself, asking for a passport to return to Paris. The Prince ordered one to be given him and proceeded to dinner. His wife had been impressed with the peculiar appearance of the fellow and had remarked to her husband that she "had never seen so villainous a countenance." The Prince assured her that it was none other than one who had come for a passport, and spent the dinner hour with his usual cordiality and cheerfulness.

The meal over, the Prince led the way upstairs. He had gone but a few steps up the stairway, when Balthazar Gerard—this was the name of the murderer—sprang from behind an archway and fired a pistol at the Prince's heart, three bullets piercing his body. William feebly exclaimed: "I am wounded! O, my God have mercy



ROYAL TOMB IN CHURCH AT DELFT
Burial Place of William the Silent

Last Days of William

upon my soul! O, my God, have mercy upon this poor people!" His sister asked him: "Do you commend your soul to Jesus Christ?" He answered: "Yes." This was his last word. A few more questions were asked him, but he could not speak. Tender hands gently carried him into an adjoining room and he soon expired.

Gerard was caught, tried, and executed.

Intense excitement reigned throughout the country. Philip rejoiced. The Netherlands wept. For one month the body lay in state. People flocked, not out of idle curiosity, but with heartfelt sorrow, to look upon the calm, peaceful countenance of him who had been their inspiration amid perilous years, their guide in troublous times, shedding tears of gratitude for his life, mingled with tears of gloomy apprehension for the future, now that their great leader was gone.

The funeral was kingly. Not so much, perhaps, because attended by magistrates and councils and Princes, as because *all*, the poor, the rich, the learned, the unlearned, the old, the young, followed the casket with equal sorrow and because all with equal sincerity and love called him "Father William."

The casket was borne by twelve gentlemen. The cords of the pall were held by four nobles. "The Prince's horse followed, splendidly caparisoned and led by a groom; and there was seen in the middle of the cortege of nobles a youth of eighteen years, whose hands were to receive the glorious heritage of the dead; who was destined to humiliate Spanish armies, to constrain Spain to plead for truce, and recognize the independence of the United Provinces. That youth was Maurice of Orange, the son of William."

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William died at the age of fifty-one years and sixteen days. A German historian says that William did not die too soon either for his country or his fame. Perhaps not. But, thank God, he lived long enough to lay a foundation deep and lasting, which none but one endowed as he was, with composure, cool sagacity, and moderation, could have done. His task was most difficult. His was the work of not only creating in his countrymen an appreciation of the necessity of individual, political, and religious freedom, but also of encouraging, sustaining, and directing this new and untried life. And as Campbell says: "As the founder of religious toleration, which, largely through the influence of Holland, has developed into religious liberty, the peculiar glory of the United States, every American, at least, should revere his memory."

His was a true leadership; a leadership that young men may well in all ages covet. For it had a high, a lofty, an unselfish, an altruistic purpose.

"Honor and blessing are on his head,
While living; good report when dead,
Who, not too eager for renown,
Accepts, but does not clutch the crown."

Appendix A

It may be of interest to read what Frederic Harrison has to say regarding the future of the family of William.

“Gloomy as were the prospects of William’s family as they followed his body to the tomb in the great church in Delft, the future had in store for them much that was beyond all hope in the dark hour of their bereavement. The forlorn widow, left destitute in a strange land with her infant of barely six months and ten young step-children, the only son a lad at College, bravely set herself to her overwhelming task. For thirty-six years more she lived, toiled, protected and guided that large household, a pattern of all wisdom, goodness, and grace. She lived to see and to be the help of her step-son Maurice, and her own son Frederick Henry, as they carried on heroically to triumphant issue the work of their slaughtered father, both amongst the foremost soldiers and statesmen of their time. She married eight out of the nine daughters of the Prince into the most illustrious houses of Europe, Charlotte Brabantina alone remaining unmarried as the Catholic Abbess of Poitier. Philip William, the kidnapped and perverted son of the Prince, ultimately returned to his native land and was partly reconciled to the family from which he had been alienated so long. And to-day the nation which William founded by his sweat and blood three centuries ago is flourishing and honored; his granddaughter in the eleventh degree sits on the throne of Holland; the blood of the greatest of the Nassaus runs in the veins of almost every royal house in Europe, and amongst his descendants may be counted for three centuries some of the most valiant soldiers and some of the ablest chiefs whose deeds adorn the history of Europe.”

Appendix B

William left three sons :

1. *Philip William*, (by Anne of Egmont, his first wife), born in 1554 and died in 1618 without leaving issue.

2. *Maurice*, (by Anne of Saxony, his second wife), born 1567 and died in 1625. He never married.

3. *Frederick Henry*, (by Louise de Coligny, his fourth wife), born 1584 and died in 1647. He had nine children, of whom one son and four daughters married and left descendants. The son William II, StadtHolder of Holland was born in 1626 and died in 1650. He married Mary, daughter of Charles I of England, and their son William III, StadtHolder of Holland, married Mary, daughter of James II, and was King of England 1689-1702. Having no children the male line of descent of William the Silent came to an end.

The headship of the House of Orange was later settled on John William Frisco the grandson of Albertina Agnes, granddaughter of Frederick Henry. His son William IV StadtHolder of Holland, was the father of the last StadtHolder of Holland, William V (born 1757 died 1802.) In 1815 his son was made King William I of the Netherlands. His son was King William II, who was the father of King William III, the father of the present Queen Wilhelmina. With the death of William III the male line of the Orange-Nassau family became extinct.