

Romance of History:
The Netherlands

THE WORLD FREEDOM SERIES

MARY MACGREGOR

Romance of History: The Netherlands

By Mary MacGregor

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Romance of History: The Netherlands

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Preface

Holland had a great part in the making of the civilizations of Europe. By a very unusual training amid the elements of nature, the Dutch were educated to take a noble part in bringing about the modern world of ideas and force. To win first their own land from the waters, to make it habitable, and then to gain the dominion of the seas, were notable triumphs of mind over matter. To lead in intellectual liberty and freedom in religion, in the enlargement of the bounds of human knowledge…were surely great things to be done by a country so small in area and a people so few in number…

Every American should know the history of the Netherlands, the fatherland of millions of Americans and the storehouse of precedents in federal government from which those who made our nation borrowed most freely. Nowhere in Europe, except in England, can one fine the origin of so much that is deepest and best our national life—including the highest jewel of civilization, religious liberty—as in Holland, as John Adams and Benjamin Franklin long ago confessed…

Brave little Holland taught our fathers many things which the true historian of the American republic can no longer afford to ignore.

—Excerpt from William Elliot Griffis'
Young People's History of Holland

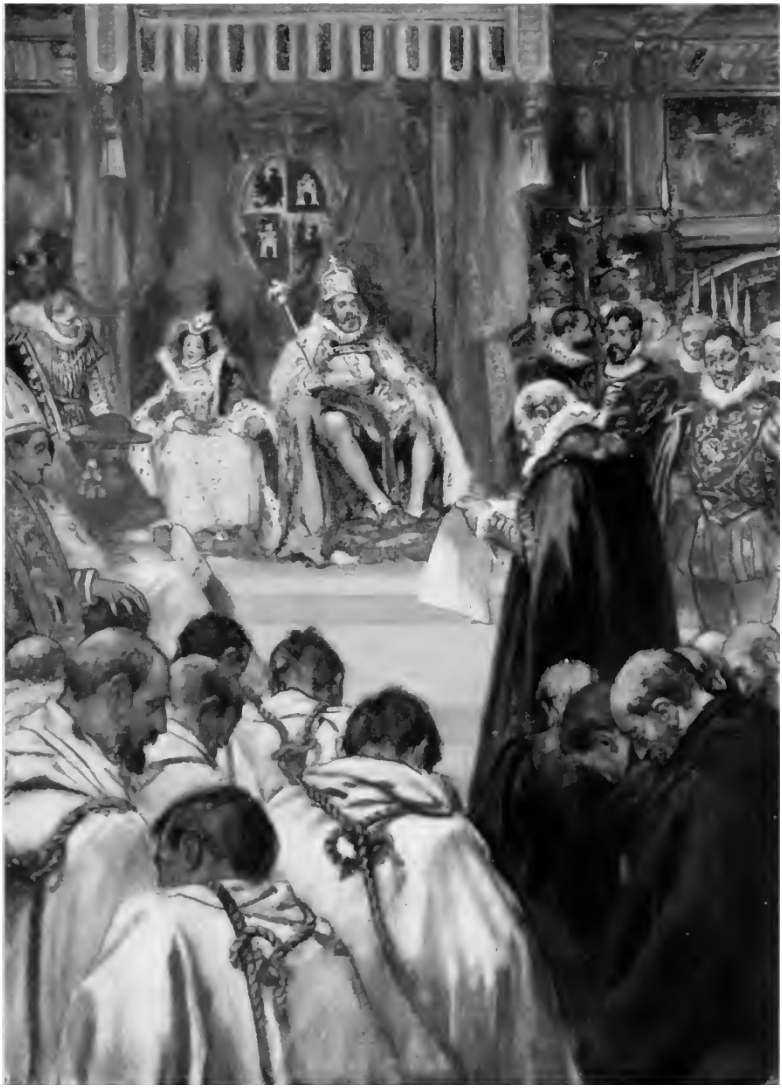
Romance of History

THE NETHERLANDS

By Mary MacGregor

Illustrations by A. D. M'Cormick





They were to humbly implore the Emperor’s forgiveness

NOTE

The facts for this history have been gleaned from Motley's Dutch Republic and Prescott's Philip II.

The picturesque setting of the facts has made it difficult to escape from the influence of these books, and it is to them that I owe all that is of worth in this volume.

MARY MACGREGOR.

INTRODUCTION

I believe there is no boy, the wide world over, who has not once upon a time set out in search of a hero, and found him, too, in many an unlikely corner. And thereupon he has set him up in a niche of the temple which he keeps for the most part locked, but which at rare moments he visits, reverently and with care.

I who write came one day to a little sea-swept land bound by great reaches of grass-tied dunes, and there, lingering to learn the history of the country, unawares I found my hero.

For the Romance of the Netherlands is in truth the life of William the Silent writ large. And in these pages, if the face of William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, does not look at you with living eyes, and if his voice does not vibrate in your heart in living tones, the glamour of the tale has been lost in the telling. You may shut the book in discontent.

But if you find a living man, baffled indeed and often beaten, yet one who struggles on through failure to victory, one who gives his time, his possessions, and his life for the sake of his country, then unlock the temple where your heroes stand, and in a niche apart place William the Silent, the father of his people.

And at rare moments look at him, listen to him, and, if it may be, imitate him.

MARY MACGREGOR.

CHAPTER I

The Early Struggles

Liberty! Clear as a trumpet call the word is heard echoing down through the centuries.

In no country rang the clarion voice more clear than throughout the provinces of the Netherlands. Brave and indomitable, the people of the Netherlands rose, even in the Dark Ages, to do battle for their rights.

Even thus in Friesland rose the pagan Radbod. Pagan he was, and yet well-nigh had he been forced to receive the Christian rite of baptism. "Where are my dead forefathers at present?" demanded Radbod, the Frisian chief, ere the rite could be performed. Rashly answered Bishop Wolfran: "In hell with all other unbelievers." "Mighty well," answered Radbod, "then will I rather feast with my ancestors in the halls of Woden than dwell with your little starveling band of Christians in heaven." Thereafter neither threats nor blows were of avail. Radbod would live a heathen to the day of his death.

Radbod would do what he might to win freedom of thought and action for himself, and for those who would follow him. All honour to the brave Frisian chief who struggled that his beloved Friesland might be in very truth a free land.

Yet many were the times when the doughty champions of freedom were crushed by tyranny, and yet as many were the times when they rose, true to the master passion of their lives, the love of liberty. The Netherlands, lying low among swamps, inundated by rivers, exposed to the ravages of the sea, was redeemed through the energy of her people. "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further," the great dykes seemed to assert and reassert in proud defiance as the ocean dashed itself vainly against the stalwart bulwarks. Bulwarks

these, reared by the prowess of the people who dwelt in the land. The destructive rivers which had overflowed the fields and destroyed the homes of the Netherlands were changed into countless canals and formed great highways for intercourse and commerce.

Thus as the years went by the morasses and the barren wastes of furze, with their miserable huts and hovels, disappeared, and villages and towns were dotted all over the country. Commerce grew strong and increased, till workmen, many thousand strong, tramped along the busy streets. Great guilds were formed for the protection of the different workers, guilds of silversmiths, armourers, silk-weavers, wool-weavers, tapestry workers, gardeners, and of many another. Centuries have passed since the defiance of Radbod, the Frisian chief. Through victories and defeats the Netherlander have reached a time of great commercial prosperity.

In the fifteenth century Holland, Flanders, Brabant, and other leading provinces were developing the resources of their country to the uttermost. The fisheries, the agriculture, the manufactures, all were in a prosperous and thriving condition. And now in 1437 Philip, the bad Duke of Burgundy, who yet was named "Philip the Good," had become through inheritance, but in part also through treachery, the possessor of the principal provinces of the Netherlands. Philip, while taxing the Provinces heavily, yet protected their commerce and manufactures, for he knew well that his power to exact the taxes he imposed depended on the prosperity of his subjects. Yet from the time of Philip the Good to the death of the Lady Mary that is, as long as the House of Burgundy ruled in the Netherlands was there but little liberty given to the true owners of the soil, to those who by their struggles and perseverance had redeemed the country from a dreary waste of flood and swamp.

With Philip's death Charles the Bold became head of the House of Burgundy. A restless, ambitious duke he, who would never rest satisfied with a dukedom; a kingdom would better become him, could he but gain a crown. In this vain desire for kingship he oppressed his subjects in the Netherlands. He seized their wealth, he crushed their freedom. He forced on the country a standing army, and removed the supreme court of Holland from The Hague to Mechlin, insults hard to be borne by a people who bad well-nigh won their way to liberty.

Charles the Bold did not gain the crown on which his heart was set, but he almost ruined the Netherlands in his effort to fulfil his ambition. He found them flourishing, self-ruling little republics. He left them with their trade and manufactures spoiled by his heavy exactions, and with the government of their Provinces destroyed. In 1477 he died, leaving the realms of Burgundy, an odd collection of provinces, duchies, and lordships, to his only child, the Lady Mary.

Charles dead, the Netherlander roused themselves as from an evil dream. Where was the freedom for which they had striven long and fiercely? A great desire for liberty sprang up once more in their undaunted hearts. Holland and Flanders and many other provinces met together at Ghent. The burghers forgot all smaller differences, and united in a determined effort to secure the freedom of their country. The Lady Mary was herself in difficulties, for Louis XL, King of France, had seized her Burgundian possessions, and demanded the heiress in marriage for his son. In her strait the Lady Mary appealed to her faithful subjects in the Netherlands. They rallied round their young mistress, resolved to resist the greed, and, if necessary, the force of Louis. Yet they did not fail to tell her plainly that the Province had been much impoverished and oppressed by the enormous taxation imposed upon them by Duke Charles from the beginning to the end of his life. They added, these brave burghers, that "for many years past there had been a constant violation of their charters, and that they should be happy to see them restored." They conferred together, the Lady Mary and her doughty burghers. She secured their allegiance and they gained from her the "Great Privilege," the Magna Charta of Holland.

What would Charles the Bold have felt could he have seen his daughter as she undid the work of his years of tyranny and oppression, the law he had wrested from the people restored again to their hands, his standing army disbanded, his taxes remitted Charles might well have wept tears of rage at the sight.

The Netherlander had wrung the "Great Privilege" from the Lady Mary, but not thus readily was their country secured in its privileges. Time and again the Magna Charta was violated, it was even abolished, vet in years to come with its recognition of the ancient rights of the Provinces it became the basis of the Republic.

Meanwhile, nowhere in the fifteenth century was there a country more free than the Netherlands with their "Great Privilege" formally confirmed.

The Lady Mary bethinks herself that now perchance it were well to negotiate with Louis XL, the king who had hoped to dispossess her of her Burgundian possessions, for she feels secure in her newly formed alliance with her faithful subjects of the Netherlands. The Estates or Provinces are sending envoys to Louis XI. The Lady Mary sees them before they set out and gives them secret instructions. She hopes to negotiate privately with the French king. The envoys Imbrecourt and Hugonet accept the secret commission, and thereby prove themselves traitors to their country. But Louis XI. rejects the Lady Mary's overtures, and, for purposes of his own, betrays the treachery of Imbrecourt and Hugonet to the Estates. In great wrath the members of the Estates order that the envoys be seized and conveyed to Ghent. Their trial takes place at that town without delay, and straightway they are condemned to be beheaded. And beheaded they are, for all the prayers of the Lady Mary. She dons a robe of black, and, with girdle unclasped and hair hanging loose, she goes to the Market-Place. Weeping bitterly she begs that Imbrecourt and Hugonet, who had obeyed her behest, may be pardoned.

But had the Lady Mary's negotiations proved successful it would have gone hard with the prerogative accorded to the citizens by the "Great Privilege." The possible dishonour to the Magna Charta, gained as it was after bitter oppression, steeled their hearts against all her entreaties, and punishment sharp and swift descended on the envoys. They were beheaded as traitors to their country.

On the 18th August 1477 the Lady Mary married Maximilian, the Archduke of Austria. A few years Inter she falls from her horse and dies, leaving her little son, Philip, who is only four years old, to succeed her. Thus, with Maximilian recognised by all the Provinces but Flanders as Governor and guardian during the little Philip's minority, the Netherlands passed from the House of Burgundy into the power of the House of Austria, and continued to be governed by that House until the Estates formed their country into the Dutch Republic.

At the age of seventeen, Philip, named the Fair, was prepared to

receive the allegiance of the Provinces. Then a strange event occurred, strange in this land where liberty was loved so well. The young Philip declared that all charters and privileges granted since the death of Charles the Bold would be considered as void. He would keep faith with none of them. Resistance stern and resolute would inevitably follow? No, incredible as it may seem, Holland, Zeeland, and the other Provinces accepted Philip the Fair as Governor, even after his reckless declaration, nor is there record of any struggle to retain the "Great Privilege" or other important charters. The Provinces, not always at one amongst themselves, were now united in a bond of common servitude. Unitedly they learned to regret the rights they had forfeited.

To the Netherlands the marriage of Philip the Fair to Joanna, Princess of Castile and Aragon, was an event of great importance; for their son, Count Charles II. of Holland, better known as Charles V., was destined to attempt to unite Spain and the Netherlands, and many another great and distant kingdom, under his single sway. The union of Spain and the Netherlands was likely to prove no easy task; it was beyond the power of even the clever and versatile Charles V. to cement any real friendship between the two peoples. From the outset they hated each other, the Spanish nobles with their haughty, arrogant airs, with their bigoted belief in only one form of religion, the Netherlander with their busy, vigorous life, their love of liberty in religion as in all else. The Provinces, with what power and wealth they still possessed, were now, under the Emperor's rule, treated as distant dependencies. Absorbed by the cares of empire, Charles V. found it necessary to appoint a regent to govern the Netherlands. His choice fell on his sister, Queen Mary of Hungary, who for twenty-five years ruled the Provinces, her efforts being directed rather to enforce Charles's orders than to develop the interests of the country. If the sturdy burghers in the different cities of the Netherlands had any doubt as to what treatment they would receive at the hands of the Emperor, their doubts were soon resolved. As he treated Ghent, so would he treat any other city or province which ventured to claim the prerogatives of the "Great Privilege" or of any more ancient charter. And Ghent, for that she was the freest and most liberty-loving city of all the liberty-loving cities of Flanders, had dared to

claim the provisions of the Magna Charta, although these had been legally disposed of by Philip the Fair when he received the homage of the States of the Netherlands.

Ghent was a great city surrounded by strongly built walls. Its citizens were amongst the most wealthy and active in the country, and they had spared neither expense nor energy to beautify their town. Round ancient castle and stronghold clustered stories of the long-ago days. Churches and other public buildings, whose stories were yet to be told, adorned the streets and squares of the town. Above all towered the well-loved belfry, topped by a dragon, wherein swung Roland, the famous bell, which from generation to generation had called their sires to arms. Roland was known, not alone in Ghent, but throughout the land. By the burghers of each generation the bell had been beloved. Its tongue vibrated with the story of the city, its struggles and its victories.

Charles V. had demanded from Flanders a subsidy of 400,000 florins. Three members of the province willingly, or more probably unwillingly, decided not to oppose the payment of this subsidy, large as it was. But Ghent, through its member, was vehemently opposed to any payment being made, and urged that if the four members of the province were not agreed no subsidy could be granted. The citizens therefore deputed one named Lievin Pyl to carry their refusal to the Queen Regent. He, however, basely betrayed his fellow-citizens, promising in the name of the burghers of Ghent that the subsidy should be paid. For this treachery Pyl was seized, tortured, and beheaded, for the burghers, when roused, did not hesitate to strike. And roused they were in very truth; it needed only the tongue of Roland, loud and clamorous, and the citizens crowded to the square in angry guise. Soon they were in open rebellion. Rather than pay the enormous subsidy which Charles V. demanded in order to carry on his foreign wars, the Ghenters determined to make overtures to France. But Francis I. had no wish to offend the powerful Emperor. He rejected the advances made by the citizens of Ghent and betrayed them to Charles. Then the Emperor decided that the insurrection must be put down and the city punished. He left Brussels with an enormous train on the 9th February 1540. Lancers, archers, halberdmen, musqueteers formed his bodyguard, a force armed to the

teeth, and meant to intimidate the rebellious citizens of Ghent. Cardinals, archbishops, bishops, dukes, earls, and barons surrounded the Emperor, dressed these in their most gorgeous dress of office, that their magnificence might impress, if it could not cow, the obstinate burghers. An imposing spectacle, thought Charles, as his brilliant cavalcade moved slowly along.

On the 14th February they reached Ghent, but for a month he dallied with the fears of the inhabitants, a month in which they knew not what fate awaited them. The stroke fell on the 17th March, when nineteen burghers, believed to be ringleaders of the rebellion, were beheaded.

Yet another month passed ere the fate of the city was announced. Then in the public hall, thrown open to all who chose to come, Charles, supported by the Queen Regent and the officials of Church and State, made known his will. Nevermore need Ghent appeal to her charters or privileges. All charters, privileges, laws, were annulled. Public property was confiscated, as likewise all that the traders or corporations possessed in common. And Roland was doomed. Never again would the great bell be heard from the belfry of Ghent. It was to be removed without delay. As for the 400,000 florins which had actually caused the revolt, it would be claimed from the provinces of Flanders, while from Ghent itself would be demanded an additional sum of 150,000, and 6000 florins a year for ever after. Nor was this all, for on a day to be appointed by the Emperor, the senators, with their clerks, thirty distinguished citizens to be named by the Emperor, the great dean and second dean of the weavers, all dressed in black robes, without their chains of office, and bareheaded, were to appear at the palace. They were to be accompanied by fifty members from the different guilds and another fifty chosen at random from the multitude of rebellious citizens. These latter were to be clad only in sheets, and on their necks they were to wear halters. Thus arrayed, as representatives of their city, they were to fall upon their knees before the Emperor and confess their sorrow for their disloyal conduct. Promising never again to transgress, they were to humbly implore the Emperor's forgiveness for the sake of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The fateful day was fixed for the 3rd May. The streets were lined

with troops. Well did Charles know that nothing but force would keep the angry and humiliated city from taking vengeance. Slowly the gloomy procession, senators in their black robes, burghers in white sheets with halters round their necks, moved from the senate hall to the palace of the King. On his throne sat Charles V., the Queen Regent by his side. His safety was secured and need was there to secure it by his bodyguard of archers and halberdiers. The senators and burghers entered and knelt before the King, while one of their number read aloud the prescribed words of penitence. "What principally distressed them," we are told, "was to have the halter on their necks, which they found so hard to bear, and if they had not been compelled, they would rather have died than submit to it."

The Emperor was in no hurry to ease the mind of the sullen suppliants. "He held himself coyly for a little time, without saying a word, as though he were considering whether or not he would grant the pardon for which the culprits prayed." At length the Queen Regent, as the King had privately commanded, turned to him, urging him to forgive the city since it had the honour of being his birthplace. Thereupon the Emperor turned to the suppliants, who still knelt before him, saying that he was a "gentle and virtuous Prince, who loved mercy better than justice," and therefore, for the sake of their penitence, he would grant his pardon to the citizens of Ghent. The city, forgiven but despoiled, bowed its head in silence. Gloom and consternation reigned throughout the Provinces. The Netherlander realised that they were in the hands of an oppressor.

Nor did Charles limit his oppression to the extortion of large sums of money, or to the abolition of the political privileges of the land. Himself a Roman Catholic, he had determined to crush out all those who did not conform to the religion of Rome, and to attain this end he shrank from no cruelty. He introduced the Inquisition into the Netherlands, and with it his terrible "placards" or edicts, which were in reality veiled inquisitions. Thousands were burned, strangled, beheaded, or buried alive, as the edicts of the Emperor ordained, for reading the Bible, for refusing to bow to an image, or for meeting together to preach and pray.

Yet the struggle for freedom was never extinguished. Now with the dawn of the sixteenth century it had become more keen and

determined than ever, for into the struggle there had grown the bitterness wrought of religious persecution.

By the middle of the sixteenth century the little country of the Netherlands was standing at bay, defying those who, with the aid of inquisitions and edicts, were trying to stamp out all who would not subscribe to the Roman Catholic faith. The fight was long and desperate, but it was fought to the death by the Provinces, under the leadership of the hero and liberator of the Netherlands, William of Orange.

CHAPTER II

The Abdication of Charles V.

On the 25th October 1555, Brussels, the fair capital of the province of Brabant, was all astir. Banners were streaming and drums were rolling. Flags were waving from windows adorned with flowers, and garlands were swinging from every doorway. In the streets prosperous citizens in holiday attire pushed their way towards the palace gates. Conspicuous among the crowd were the famous guilds of armourers, whose suits of mail no musket-ball could pierce, the guild of gardeners, whose flowers were the wonder of the world, and the guild of tapestry workers, who wove magic colours into their fine-spun fabrics.

A gala day indeed was the 25th of October in the year 1555. Yet for no mere festival was the gay city of Brussels thus bedecked, but for an event of world-wide interest and importance.

Count Charles II. of Holland, better known as Charles V., King of Spain, Sicily, and Jerusalem, Duke of Milan, Emperor of Germany, ruler in Asia, Africa, and over half the world besides, had fixed this day for the abdication of his possessions in the Netherlands. He had determined that the event should be celebrated in a manner worthy of its importance. It should be a spectacle imposing and magnificent, that should be spoken of in long after years.

The ceremony was to take place in the great hall of the palace. The walls were hung with gorgeous tapestry, and a profusion of flowers and garlands gave it a festive appearance. At one end of the hall a platform had been erected. Above the centre of the platform hung a huge canopy, and beneath it was the throne. On either side of the throne were two gilded chairs. To the right of the platform

were ranged seats, covered with richly coloured tapestry, and reserved for the nobles and knights among the guests. Seats were also provided for members of the three great councils which governed the Netherlands. Beneath the platform the benches were already filled with those who had come to represent the different provinces. Magistrates were there, weighty with importance, robed in their gowns and chains of office; officers of State were there, resplendent as befitted the occasion.

The body of the hall was crowded with those of the citizens who had secured admission. At the door stood the archers and halberdiers to preserve order. Within, all was eagerness and expectation, without, the crowd still surged expectant.

Meanwhile Charles V. was signing the document by which his son, Philip II., was to become sovereign over the Netherlands. He then attended Mass in the chapel, and when the service was over, accompanied by a numerous retinue of knights and nobles, he walked towards the great hall, where he was so eagerly expected.

It was three o'clock when at length the Emperor arrived, leaning on the shoulder of a tall, handsome lad of twenty-two, whose face was already grave and thoughtful. The youth was William of Orange. Behind the King came Philip II. and the Regent, Queen Mary of Hungary, and following them were the knights and nobles, escorted by a glittering band of soldiers. Charles seated himself on the throne, Philip and the Queen Regent on either side. The knights and nobles took the places allotted to them. The vast crowd rose to its feet as the Emperor entered, with involuntary homage, but Charles, acknowledging their greeting, bade them be seated. The eyes of all were fixed on the throne. There, amidst the brilliant throng of courtiers, sat Charles, a strange, grave figure dressed in black. The face was known to all, the blue eyes, broad forehead, sharp pointed nose, the large mouth and protruding jaw, characteristic these latter of the Burgundian race. But in this sombre and gloomy figure, bent and crippled by disease, the burghers found it hard to trace a likeness to the Emperor they had known. He had been a brave and gallant soldier, who, laughing at danger and fatigue, himself had led his army forth to victory. He had been the muscular athlete, of whom the Spaniards told the tale that, single-handed, he had vanquished a bull

in their great national sports. But he, the grave, sombre figure on the throne, was already, at the age of fifty-five, a feeble, diseased old man, needing for support a crutch and an attendant's arm.

Already, as the assembly gazed, the document transferring to Philip II. all the realms of Burgundy, in which were included the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands, had been read, and a long speech by one of the nobles of the land had come to an end.

Charles, leaning on his crutch, and supported by William of Orange, now rose amid breathless silence. He spoke of his love for the Netherlands, this Emperor who had wrung from them vast sums of money to enable him to carry on his foreign wars, and who in doing so had crippled the resources and industries of the Provinces. He spoke of his affection for his people, this Emperor who had planted the Inquisition in their midst, and who in doing so had put to torture and to death many thousands of their countrymen. And still the vast assembly listened breathlessly as he told them of the great achievements of his reign, achievements which seemed at the moment to shed some reflected glory on themselves and on their land. "I know well," he concluded, "that in my long reign 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 it was not intended, and grant me their forgiveness."

Overcome by his emotion the Emperor, half fainting, sank back on his throne, while the silence was broken by the sobs of the great assembly. For the moment the people forgot their injuries. The memory of industries hampered by extortion, of charters ruthlessly ignored, slipped from their minds, even as did the terrors of the Inquisition. For the moment they remembered only that Charles belonged to them by birth, that he could talk to them in their own language, that he was dear to them for his friendly, familiar ways. He had joined in sport with the Flemish nobles, and bent his crossbow with Antwerp artisans; he had even drunk and jested with the boors of Brabant. By these easy, popular ways he had won a place in the people's hearts, despite his ofttimes cruel deeds. Therefore it was that the people sobbed as the farewell words of the Emperor ceased. Even his son, Philip II., usually cold and haughty, was moved, and, dropping on his knees before his father, seized his hand and kissed it.

Solemnly Charles placed his hands on his son's head, then, making over him the sign of the Cross, he blessed him in the name of the Holy Trinity.

Philip rose and turned to the great assembly. Before them they saw their future lord. Like his father in features, having all the Burgundian characteristics, he looked a Fleming, yet was haughty as a Spaniard. With none of his father's popular ways, unable even to speak the language of his new subjects, Philip failed at the outset to win the hearts of the Netherlanders. Through his interpreter, the Bishop of Arras, he addressed his people, telling them of his gratitude to his father for entrusting to him these great possessions, promising also to do his utmost to carry out the wishes of Charles in the ruling of the Provinces. Thereafter Queen Mary of Hungary rose to resign the Regency, which she had held for twenty-five years. Speeches followed, in which the Queen Regent's resignation was accepted and Philip was congratulated on his new possessions.

At length the ceremonies were over. Charles V., still leaning on the shoulder of William of Orange, left the Hall, followed by the whole Court. The citizens dispersed, chatting volubly of the great event, perhaps wondering, as their excitement lessened, what had moved them to tears, perhaps remembering the taxes and the Inquisition which threatened to crush their liberty, and mocking at the tears they had but lately shed.

Some months later, Charles, now no longer monarch, left the Netherlands. On the 13th September 1556, bidding Philip an affectionate farewell, he sailed from Flushing with a fleet of fifty-six ships, and an escort of one hundred and fifty courtiers, whom he had chosen out of the royal household. He had selected for his retreat the monastery of Yuste, where he purposed to spend his life in quiet, and in the observances of the Roman Catholic religion.

CHAPTER III

Philip, the Prince

Philip, who at twenty-eight years of age had been made sovereign of the Netherlands, was born at Valladolid on the 21st May 1527. The birthday of the little Spanish prince was hailed with delight, not only by Charles V., but by the whole Spanish nation, for surely never before had babe been born to a more splendid inheritance. The country hastened to show its pleasure, and preparations to celebrate the event went on apace. These were, however, deferred by news that startled not only Spain, but Europe itself. The Pope, the great head of the Church, had been captured! Europe was ringing with the news. Home had been sacked by the Spanish troops! Europe was holding her breath in horror as she listened to the tale. No time this for rejoicing on Spanish soil, even over the birth of so illustrious a prince, a time rather for shame over the brutalities of the Spanish soldiery, and for repentance at the insult to Holy Church and sacred city.

But not for long would Spain be baulked of her welcome to the little prince. Eleven months later, in the year 1528, the country found her opportunity. The occasion was the recognition of the heir as lawful successor to the throne, and the ceremony was to take place at Madrid, where the Cortes, or Parliament, was used to assemble. Carried by his mother, the Empress Isabella, and accompanied by the Emperor, the royal babe was brought before the nobles, clergy, and commons, who hastened to take the oath of allegiance to their future lord. Thereafter the nation gave itself up to rejoicings. Towns and villages were lit up with brilliant illuminations, bonfires blazed on every hill. Throughout this land of quick-changing passions, sports and pastimes had their way.

The festivities were barely over when Charles V. left Spain, called away by the cares of his great possessions, nor did he see his little son again until he was seven years old. During his absence the Prince was in the care of his mother, and wisely and lovingly did she guard her boy; but when the Emperor at length returned, he formed a separate home for the Prince, that he might be under the immediate influence of the two tutors who were to direct his studies. With one, Siliceo, Philip learned Latin and Greek, and in these languages he could soon write, not only correctly, but with ease. French and Italian he also studied, but with these he never became familiar, nor did he, even in later days, often venture to converse in aught but Spanish. Siliceo was not long in winning the affection of his royal pupil, nor did he ever lose his goodwill, for in after days Philip raised him from the position of a humble clergyman to be one of the greatest dignitaries of the Church.

Of far different type was Don Juan de Zuniga, the tutor who taught Philip to fence, to ride, and to take part in the tilts and tourneys of his day, and who also urged his pupil to take part in the chase, believing the hardy exercise would strengthen his constitution. But neither then, nor when he grew older, was Philip fond of such recreations. Belonging to an ancient family, Don Juan de Zuniga was a courtier, with all the polish belonging to one familiar with courtly ways, and he was therefore fitted to teach the Prince the duties belonging to his royal station. But he could do even more for his pupil by the direct influence of his character, for, knowing well the power to be gained by flattery, Zuniga had yet never lost his love of truth, nor did he trifle with her, as the way of courtiers was.

Thus Philip, flattered on all sides, was never flattered by his courtier guardian. From him he heard only the truth, which, being unaccustomed to plain speaking, he was not always quick to appreciate. To the Emperor, however, Zuniga's honesty was his best qualification for the post to which he had appointed him, and he wrote to his son to honour and reverence his truth-speaking guardian. "If he deals plainly with you, it is for the love he bears you. If he were to flatter you he would be like all the rest of the world, and you would have no one near you to tell you the truth."

Thus under the influence of the gentle Siliceo, and the stronger

influence of the truth-speaking Zuniga, Philip grew. A strange, unboylike boy, slow to speak, yet wise beyond his years when speech was necessary. No buoyant, generous prince winning the hearts of all who served him, but a cautious, reserved lad, serious, and at times almost melancholy, but already self-possessed and rarely off his guard.

When Philip was twelve, his mother, the Empress Isabella, died, and from that time the Emperor surrounded his young son with statesmen, that even thus early the Prince might gain some insight into the vast system of government which one day he would have to control. The Emperor being frequently called away from Spain, it became necessary to appoint a Regent to carry on the affairs of State. In 1541 Philip was appointed to this important post, which he held under a council of three, the Duke of Alva, whose very name in later years became a terror to the Netherlander, being on this select council.

Charles, writing to his son of the new responsibilities which awaited him as Regent, refers to the Duke thus: "He is the ablest statesman and the best soldier I have in my dominions; consult him, above all, in military affairs, but do not depend on him entirely in these or in any other matters. Depend on no one but yourself. The grandees will be too happy to secure your favour, and through you to govern the land. But if you are thus governed it will be your ruin. Make use of all, but lean on none. In your perplexities ever trust in your Maker. Have no care but for Him."

Philip, despite his grave and serious ways, had been indulging in the pastimes and pleasures of his age. Charles had heard of these indulgences, and his letter continues: "On the whole I will admit I have much reason to be satisfied with your behaviour. But I would have you perfect, and, to speak frankly, whatever other persons may tell you, you have some things to mend yet." The Emperor in distant lands, with the care of empires on his shoulders, was yet desirous to influence his son's still pliant character.

In 1542 Philip was engaged to Maria, the Princess of Portugal. A year later, the bride and bridegroom both being sixteen years old, arrangements for the wedding were completed. Maria set out from her father's palace in Lisbon for the ancient city of Salamanca, for it was there that the ceremony was to be performed. A splendid train,

led by the most powerful lord in Andalusia, met the Princess on the borders of Spain. Even the mules which drew the litters were shod with gold. At Badajoz a palace was gorgeously adorned for the reception of the bride. Not only were the countless draperies of golden cloth, but sideboards and couches were of burnished silver. Thus sumptuous as the entrance into fairyland was the entrance into Spain of the young Princess. As she approached Salamanca a long procession came out to greet her. The University sent her rector and professors in their academic gowns; the judges followed in their robes of office crimson velvet, with hose and shoes of spotless white; while gayest of all were the military in their glittering uniforms. Thus escorted, to the sound of music and the shouts of the populace, Princess Maria arrived at the gates of Salamanca.

Philip, meantime, with a burst of rare impatience, had sallied out of the palace, with a few attendants disguised as huntsmen. Five or six miles from the city they had met the procession, and Philip, with a slouched hat and face well hidden by a gauze mask, mingled with the crowd and pressed close to the side of the Princess. Thus, unknown to all, he caught his first glimpse of his bride, and, keeping pace with the procession, followed it to the gates of the city. The following day, November 12, the marriage was solemnised. Thereafter for a week the cloistered quiet of Salamanca was invaded by laughter and merriment. Tourneys and tilts of reeds were the fashion of the day, banqueting and dancing the order of the night. On November 19 Philip and his bride left the ancient city to its wonted tranquillity and proceeded to the palace at Valladolid. Here, two years later, was born the celebrated Don Carlos, and Maria died, leaving Philip, himself but a lad, alone with his infant son.

Meanwhile the Emperor, after a hard but successful career abroad, had withdrawn to Brussels. For six years he had seen but little of his son, and he now desired not only to see him, but to introduce to the Netherlander the prince who would one day be their ruler. Instructions were therefore sent to Philip to come to Flanders after having reorganised his household on the Burgundian model. This would, Charles believed, flatter the Flemings, who had been accustomed to the pomp and grandeur of the former princes of that house. In obedience, therefore, to the orders of the Emperor, Philip

remodelled his household, creating new positions, and placing in them nobles of the highest rank, filling even the more simple posts in his household with men of rank. Formerly he had dined alone, but now he dined in public and in great state, surrounded by nobles and attended by celebrated musicians and minstrels. But this change was pleasing neither to Philip nor to his Spanish nobles, to whom the simple customs of the Castilians were dearer than the grandeur and formality of the Burgundian court.

It was, then, in the autumn of 1548 that Philip began his journey, accompanied by a brilliant retinue. A Genoese fleet awaited the Prince at the nearest port, commanded by the veteran of many a battlefield, the world-famed Andrew Doria. Over the fifty vessels riding at anchor, the imperial flag flaunted gaily in the breeze. The passage to Genoa was accomplished in safety, though the fleet encountered stormy weather. A magnificent galley, in which were the doge and principal senators, came out beyond the port to welcome Philip. He landed amid the jubilation of the Genoese, and was lodged in the palace of the Dorias, a palace famous for the beauty of its architecture. While here, he received from the Pope, who foresaw in him a true champion of the Church, the gift of a consecrated sword, and also a hat worn by his Holiness on Christmas Eve.

A fortnight later Philip and his retinue resumed their journey. They crossed the battlefield of Pavia, where Francis I. had yielded himself a prisoner, and where the fortune of the day had been decided by the sally of a Spanish ambuscade crossed it exulting in the generalship of their Emperor and the valour of his troops. From Pavia Philip passed on to Milan. Along a road spanned for fifty miles by triumphal arches the people thronged to meet the Prince. Nearer the town a special escort of two hundred gentlemen met him, clad in complete armour of the finest Milanese workmanship. After some weeks spent in festivities, but little pleasing to Philip, he said farewell to Milan and set out for the North.

In Germany he was joined by a body of two hundred mounted arquebusiers, wearing his own yellow uniform, and commanded by a Netherland noble, the Duke of Aerschot. These had been sent as an additional escort by his father. Everywhere along the route, by Munich, Trent, Heidelberg, multitudes crowded, anxious to catch at

least a glimpse of the young prince who would one day wield the mightiest sceptre in Europe. After a journey of four months Philip at length reached Brussels. Here the enthusiasm of the people was unbounded. The expectant crowds vented their excitement in shouts and cheers, while amid the roar of cannon, the ringing of bells from every tower and steeple, Philip made his first entry into the land of the Netherlands.

Not till the public reception was over were Charles and Philip free to embrace. The separation between them had been a long one, and the father noted with pleasure the changes time had wrought on his son. Philip was now twenty-one, below medium height, slight and well-built. His likeness to his father was marked, though his features were of a less intellectual type. He had a fair, even delicate complexion at this time, blue eyes with eyebrows closely knit together, and with hair and beard of light yellow. His dress was suitable to his position, though devoid of ornament. In manner he was still, as in his boyhood, grave arid ceremonious, and indeed his demeanour seemed to suit his slow, deliberate nature. And Charles, noting all these things, was well pleased with the appearance and manner of his successor.

After a long residence in Brussels, Philip prepared to carry out the object of his journey to the Netherlands. This was to make a tour through the Provinces, to receive proofs of the people's loyalty to him as to their future lord, and himself to learn something of their characters and country. There was indeed no lack of loyalty in the welcome accorded to the Prince. The Provinces vied with each other in the splendour of the reception they offered him. The joyous entrance prepared for him into Antwerp surpassed in outlay and in magnificence the welcome of all other towns save Brussels.

Philip, already surfeited by these displays, from which he was naturally averse, could not but be aware of the unparalleled efforts made by the citizens of Antwerp to welcome their future sovereign. A company of magistrates and notable burghers, "all attired in cramoisy velvet," and attended by pages in gorgeous liveries, followed by four hundred citizens and soldiers in full uniform, went forth from the city to receive him. In streets and squares triumphal arches, hung with fruit and flowers, abounded, and every possible form of respect and

affection was lavished on the Prince and on the Emperor, who accompanied him. Charles V. responded with the cordiality which was well known and well loved by the people, but Philip's icy manner never thawed, nor did his haughty glance soften as he acknowledged these and similar transports of joy.

The result of the tour was not to add to Philip's popularity. The more the Netherlanders saw of him, the less did they like him; indeed there were those who could only speak of him as "detestable," as they compared his scornful manner with the easy familiarity of his father. And Philip encouraged the feeling of dislike which had been engendered, by obtruding on every occasion his foreign taste. His thoughts were Spanish, and were spoken aloud in that language. His friends and counsellors were of his own race, and he did not hesitate to let it be known that he found his absence from Spain disagreeable. There was therefore but little regret when the time came for Philip to leave the Netherlands.

He again sailed in the fleet of the famous Doria, and landing at Barcelona in July 1551, he hastened to Valladolid, there to resume the government of the country that was dear to him. His return was gladly welcomed by the Spaniards, to whom Philip was endeared by those traits which were characteristic of the national type.

Three years later, in 1554, the Prince again left Spain. He journeyed to England that the marriage arranged for him by Charles V. with Mary Tudor, Queen of that country, might be solemnised. Urged by the Emperor and Queen Mary of Hungary, Philip laid aside the cold and haughty air that had impressed the Netherlander so unfavourably, and showed such "gentleness and humanity" on his journey to England that he charmed all whom he met. After landing at Southampton, Philip was escorted by the Earl of Pembroke and a body of English archers to Winchester. As they proceeded the rain fell in torrents, and through the storm a cavalier was seen riding at full speed towards them. He brought a ring for Philip from Queen Mary, and an entreaty that he would not travel farther till the storm had spent itself. The Prince, not understanding English, and fearful of evil in a country where he was disliked by the populace, believed the cavalier had ridden to warn him of impending danger. He instantly drew up and consulted with the Duke of Alva and Egmont, who

attended him. Seeing his dismay, one of the English courtiers rode up and explained the Queen's message. Relieved of his alarm, Philip no longer hesitated, but with his red cloak wrapped closely round him and a broad beaver slouched over his eyes, pushed doggedly forward in spite of the tempest, and that evening he met Mary for the first time. Two days later they were married in the Cathedral at Winchester, the ceremony lasting nearly four hours.

After a few days of feasting and merriment, Philip and Mary made their public entry into London. Philip, still with his conciliatory manner, gained greatly on the goodwill of the people. But his spirit, haughty as ever, could not easily brook the subordinate part which he was compelled to play in public to the Queen; for, despite Mary's wishes, the Parliament had never yielded so far as to consent to Philip's coronation as King of England. Nor was it without difficulty that he suited himself to the tastes and habits of the English. The effort to do so grew daily more irksome. For these reasons Philip, as also his followers, who cared as little as their master for the strange customs of the English nation, hailed with pleasure a summons from the Emperor to join him in Flanders. Mary prevailed on her husband to linger yet a few weeks in England. Thereafter, with a heavy heart, she accompanied him down the Thames as far as Greenwich, where they parted. Philip reached Flanders in safety, and proceeded to Brussels, there to be present at the abdication of the Emperor. It was at this great ceremony, as we have seen, that Philip became sovereign of the Netherlands. Nor was it long before the youthful ruler received from Charles V. the whole of his vast possessions.

Philip, ruler of the Netherlands, became also King of Spain and of both Sicilies. As to the father, so now to the son, belonged the arrogant title, "Absolute Dominator" in Asia, Africa, and America. He became Duke of Milan and both Burgundies, and if he had not the responsibilities of kingship, he had at least the title of King in England, France, and Jerusalem.

CHAPTER IV

Philip in the Netherlands

As sovereign of the Netherlands Philip's first act was to visit the Provinces to receive from them their oaths of allegiance. He was but little known to his new subjects, for it was now seven years since he had first visited the Provinces, damping the enthusiasm of the people by his cold, ungracious manner. The impression of disappointment had been renewed by Philip's unfortunate reserve and inability to speak to the people in their own language on the occasion of Charles V.'s abdication, which had just taken place. In spite of this his tour through the Provinces was prepared for with an eagerness which might well have gratified the new ruler.

But once again enthusiasm was met by indifference. Philip rode through the streets of the different Provinces shut up in a carriage, seemingly anxious to escape from the gaze of his subjects, while their demonstrations of loyalty served only to annoy him; and it was scarcely surprising that as the tour was drawing to a close the enthusiasm of the Provinces waned. Slowly they realised that they, with their country, had passed into the hands of a foreigner, to whom their nature and their customs were alien.

On his return to Brussels Philip proceeded to appoint a Regent in the place of Queen Mary of Hungary, who had resigned the post on the abdication of Charles V. His choice fell on the Duke of Savoy, a vagrant cousin of his own, who was yet a brave and experienced soldier, having indeed been beloved by the Emperor as one of his most successful commanders. War being his element, his adventurous spirit had but little love for peace. Yet at the moment of his appointment to the Regency of the Netherlands peace reigned. For Charles,

who had waged war all his life, thinking to make his son's career more smooth than had been his own, attempted, as the last act of his reign, to procure peace among the nations. By his efforts a treaty of truce, rather than of peace, had been signed on the 5th February 1555, a truce of five years by land and sea for France, Spain, Flanders, and Italy, and for all the dominions of the French and Spanish monarchs. Unfortunately those who signed the treaty had no intention of keeping it longer than was convenient.

Meanwhile, however, the Netherlands especially rejoiced that at last peace reigned. And they had reason to do so. For to furnish money and soldiers had been their part throughout the long campaigns of their Emperor, and even victory when it came had brought them little benefit.

Antwerp, whose trade had suffered greatly during the long wars of Charles V., believed that with the truce her troubles would be over. Her rebound from depression to rejoicing was, as ever, exuberant. Oxen were roasted whole in her streets, barrels of wine were freely distributed to the citizens, and triumphant arches adorned the pathways. And while the Netherlands were, as was their way, feasting and ringing merry bells and lighting bonfires, Philip, knowing well how unstable was the treaty, had even now begun to revolve new military schemes; schemes which would once more plunge his unconscious subjects into the horrors of war. Vain indeed were the rejoicings of the Netherlanders, for a year later the truce was broken by the French King Henry.

Philip, finding his expectation of war realised, crossed to England, there to cajole the Queen, and if possible to browbeat her ministers to join with him in war against France. He spent three months in England, and, as a Spanish historian tells us, did more than any one could have believed possible with that proud and indomitable nation. He caused her to declare war against France with fire and sword, by sea and land. Queen Mary, always willing to gratify Philip, and on this occasion supported by her Parliament, sent an army of 8000 men to join in the war against France. These cavalry, infantry, and scouts were all clad in blue uniform.

Philip meanwhile returned in haste to the Netherlands, and at once gave orders to organise a large army, composed mainly of troops

belonging to the Netherlands. With some German auxiliaries, the army of 35,000 foot and 12,000 horse assembled under the Duke of Savoy, who, as Governor-General of the Netherlands, held the chief command. All the well-known nobles of the Provinces were present with the troops, Orange, Aerschot, Berlaymont, Meghem, Brederode; but conspicuous among them all was Lamoral, Count of Egmont, the life and soul of the army.

In the thirty-sixth year of his age, handsome and valiant, Count Egmont was eager to win new laurels in the campaign that was just beginning. Prompt in emergency, bold almost to rashness, he was accounted one of the most distinguished generals in the Spanish service as he took his place at the head of the King's cavalry in 1557. But as a statesman he was singularly unsuccessful, being vacillating and vain, and easily led by those who understood the weakness of his character.

In the beginning of the campaign the tactics of the Duke of Savoy were to deceive the enemy. The real point of attack being Saint Quentin, the army was directed to make a feint upon the city of Guise, in order that the enemy might draw off their forces from the real point of danger. Montmorency, the Constable of France, was not, however, deceived by this expedient. Knowing that Saint Quentin was the most dangerous point on the enemy's route towards Paris, he was convinced that it was the city which was in reality to be attacked. And his conviction was correct, information reaching him from the well-known Admiral Coligny that the Spanish army, after remaining three days before Guise, had withdrawn and invested Saint Quentin with their entire force.

Saint Quentin, standing on a height, protected on one side by a great stretch of morass, through which flowed a branch of the river Somme, was a wealthy city, whose inhabitants were thriving and industrious. A detachment of the Dauphin's regiment, commanded by Teligny, was in the city. Both Teligny and Captain Brueuil, commandant of the town, informed Coligny of the urgent need of reinforcements, both of men and supplies, if the city were to be able to sustain a siege.

Coligny, knowing well that dire indeed would be the consequences should Saint Quentin fall, and the enemy be thus left free to

march unopposed on Paris, determined to go to the help of the besieged city. Without delay he set out, but it was too late to introduce help by the route he had taken, for it was already occupied by the English, who had joined the Duke of Savoy and were now in the camp before Saint Quentin. Coligny, however, in his anxiety had ridden in advance of his army, and thus he, with the few troops which had followed him closely, was able to gain an entrance into the city. Having done this he resolved either to effect her deliverance or to share her fate. The presence of the Admiral inspired in the inhabitants of the beleaguered city a confidence which he did all in his power to increase, but which he could not share; for, gazing over the country from one of the highest towers in the city, he tried in vain to discover fords across the morass by means of which supplies might be introduced.

Meanwhile the garrison was daily growing weaker. Coligny ordered those not engaged in active defence to leave the city, while the women he ordered to be lodged in the Cathedral and other churches, where they were locked in, lest by their tears they should weaken or depress the garrison. At the same time the defences of the city were strengthened and all that was possible was done to confirm the resolution of the inhabitants to withstand the siege. Still affairs were growing desperate, and the Admiral wrote to Montmorency that without relief the city could not hold out more than a few days, while at the same time he told him of a route he had discovered by which it might yet be possible to relieve the city. This route was across the morass, which at certain places was traversed by a few narrow and difficult pathways, usually under water, and by a running stream which could only be crossed in boats. No sooner did Coligny's information reach the Constable than he set out at once with 4000 infantry and 2000 horse. Halting his troops at a small village, Montmorency himself walked to the edge of the morass to view the ground and prepare his plans. Thereafter his decision was to attempt to introduce men and supplies by the plan suggested by the Admiral, who had undertaken to provide the boats that were necessary to cross the stream.

On the 10th August 1557 the Constable had advanced far enough to see that his project would have to be carried out in full

view of the enemy, for the Spanish army, under the Duke of Savoy, was encamped near the morass, and their white tents stretched far beyond the river. On Montmorency's right stood a windmill, commanding a ford of the river which led to the Spanish camp. The building was in the possession of a small company of the besieging troops, and while it was held by them it was impossible for the Constable to advance. The mill accordingly was secured, and Montmorency, placing a detachment under the Prince of Conde at that point; felt he might safely proceed; for in the meanwhile a cannonade directed upon the quarters of the Duke of Savoy had torn his tent to pieces, and he had been forced to abandon his position and to withdraw his camp three miles farther down the river. Taking advantage of his success, Montmorency at once began to move his soldiers across the morass. It was then that the real difficulties of the passage were apparent. Many of the soldiers lost the narrow and submerged pathways and fell floundering into the morass, while the boats promised by Coligny for the passage across the stream did not appear until two hours had elapsed. The delay was serious, and even when they at last arrived, the boats were so small that each as it left the shore was overcrowded by the eager soldiers and in imminent danger of being swamped. In the middle of the stream, the risk being apparent, some of the soldiers jumped out to lighten the load. Many were drowned, and those who reached the opposite shore were unable to land owing to the steep and treacherous nature of the bank. Some of the boats stuck fast in the marshy water, and while trying to free themselves were subjected to the fire of Spanish troops stationed on an eminence that commanded the stream. In the end there were few who entered the town, but among those who did were Andelot, the brother of Coligny, and about five hundred of his troops.

Meanwhile in Count Egmont's tent, to which the Duke of Savoy had hastily retreated, a council was being held. Should the Constable be allowed to retire with the army he had failed to introduce into Saint Quentin, or should an engagement be risked? Amid the deliberations and the indecisions of the officers, Egmont's voice was heard. Vehement and eloquent as ever, the Count urged an immediate encounter. The Constable, on a desperate venture, had placed himself and the bravest troops of France in their grasp. Could they dream of

letting them depart unhindered? His fiery words had the desired effect, and it was determined to cut off the Constable's retreat.

Montmorency, finding it impossible to throw the body of his troops into the besieged city, and realising the danger of his position, had resolved to withdraw. Remembering, however, a narrow pass between steep and closely hanging hills where it would be easy to intercept his retreat, the Constable, who, when advancing, had merely guarded the spot with a company of carabineers, now determined to further safeguard it, and for this purpose he sent forward the Due de Nevers with four companies of cavalry.

But his act of caution came too late. Egmont's quick eye had already detected the narrow defile, and immediately 2000 of his cavalry had been sent to occupy the narrow passage. The Due de Nevers, reaching the fatal spot, found it already occupied by the Spanish troops. His first impulse was to order a headlong charge, which indeed might possibly have cleared the pass and left an exit for the Constable had he followed up the movement by a rapid advance. But his orders had been strict, that no engagement was to be risked, and as he hesitated the passage was completely blocked by fresh troops of Spanish and Flemish cavalry, while the Due was forced to fall back on the mill where the Prince of Condé, with the light horse, had been stationed. Here they were joined by the Constable with the main body of the army. Having failed to secure the pass, Montmorency knew that escape was well-nigh impossible; the morass was behind them, in front and on either side the enemy. No sooner had they come in sight of the pass than the signal of assault was given by Count Egmont himself. The camp followers in the French army, a motley, undisciplined crew, fled at the sight of the foe, and in their flight carried confusion throughout the army. The cavalry was nearly destroyed at the first onset, while that part of the infantry which still held firm and attempted to continue its retreat was completely annihilated. The defeat was complete, the Constable himself being wounded and taken prisoner, most of his officers also being in the same plight. The Due de Nevers and the Prince of Condé had escaped in some miraculous way, though the Spaniards apparently did not believe in their safety; for when Nevers sent a trumpeter, after the battle was over, to the Duke of Savoy to petition the exchange of

prisoners, the trumpeter was called an impostor and the letter a forgery, so hard did the victors find it to believe that Nevers still lived.

Philip II. might well be proud of his army, of whom but fifty had lost their lives. He arrived in camp the day after the battle was won, the Duke of Savoy hailing him as victor, and laying at his feet the banners and other trophies of the fight. Philip cordially congratulated the General on his success, and at the same time acknowledged the promptness and bravery of Count Egmont, to whose readiness and insight the success was mainly due. The victory had saved the Flemish frontier, and this was enough to account for the unmixed joy with which it was hailed by the Netherlanders. "Egmont and Saint Quentin!" The name of the brave Hollander rang throughout the Provinces. "Egmont and Saint Quentin!" the names were shouted henceforth as the battle-cry of the army.

Among the Spanish officers there was not a doubt that the victory would be followed up by an immediate march upon Paris, but they had forgotten to take into account the lack of enthusiasm and the abundance of caution possessed by their King. The city of Saint Quentin, although defended by only 800 soldiers, was still untaken. Philip feared to leave it behind. He also feared that the Due de Nevers, who was in front with the wreck of the French army, might organise fresh troops and intercept his army in its victorious march upon Paris. Thus timidly the fruits of Count Egmont's great triumph on the battlefield of Saint Quentin were lost.

And Coligny, shut up in the city, was still holding out bravely, knowing that every day the siege lasted gave his nation a day longer to recover from the heavy blow that had been dealt her. Yet the condition of the besieged was desperate. Toil and exposure, with but a scanty supply of food, had done its work and left them feeble and despondent. In spite of failures, Coligny still talked hopefully of resources at his command. If any should hear him even hint at surrender, he gave them leave to tie him hand and foot and throw him into the moat; while, should he hear so much as a whisper of surrender, he himself would tie the whisperer hand and foot and throw him into the moat. But if the Admiral's words were brave, so likewise were his deeds, for, learning from a fisherman of a submerged path, he succeeded in bringing into the city by means of it 150 soldiers. The

pathway being covered several feet deep in water, it was true that the soldiers entered the city unarmed and half drowned; yet even thus they were greeted gladly as more fit to fight than were many of the city's well-nigh starved defenders. Mining and countermining were now resorted to, and for a week a steady cannonade was directed against the wall of the city.

On the 21st of August, eleven breaches having been made, an assault at four of these openings was commanded. Citizens were stationed on the walls, soldiers manned the breaches, resisting every attack with the greatest bravery, inspired by the spirit of the heroic Admiral. The contest was short but severe. Suddenly an entrance was gained by the Spaniards through a tower, which, being strong, had been left unguarded. Coligny, rushing to the spot, fought almost single-handed, but was overcome and taken prisoner. In the streets the fight raged fiercely, Andelot, Coligny's brother, resisting to the last. Half an hour from the time the Spaniards had effected an entrance, resistance had ceased. The town was won, and Philip, arriving in the trenches by noon, in complete armour, with his helmet carried by a page, was told the city was his own.

A terrible scene followed. The victorious troops spread over the town, killing and torturing all whom they met, till women and little children fled in terror, hiding themselves as chance served them in cellar or garret, anywhere to escape the soldiers. Fire breaking out in the city added to the horror of the situation, but nothing could daunt the troops in their eager search for booty. Heedless of danger, they dashed through the flames to secure were it only some broken image which might be converted into coin. For nearly three days the fires blazed and the soldiers plundered, and when at length the flames were extinguished and the soldiers under discipline, the city was well-nigh ruined. Many of the women and children who had again sought shelter in the Cathedral were crouched together anxiously awaiting their fate. On the 29th August they were driven by Philip's orders into French territory, for Saint Quentin, which seventy years before had been a Flemish town, was to be re-annexed, every single man, woman, or child who could speak the French language being banished from the city. Few, if any, were the men who had escaped the siege or the sack of the city, but 3500 women, starving, desperately

wounded, and for the most part husbandless, fatherless and brotherless, were escorted by a company of armed troopers out of their native city. Children between two and six years of age were alone transported in carts, the rest of the homeless multitude having to make the journey on foot.

After Saint Quentin had fallen, time was wasted in the siege of a few unimportant places, and in September Philip disbanded his army and returned to Brussels. The campaign of 1557 was ended.

In January of the following year the French were again in the field, with a large army under the Duke of Guise. But Philip was now anxious to conciliate Henry, that together they might wage a warfare against a common foe, even against heresy, which Henry held in horror, and which Philip himself believed was the arch-enemy of France and Spain, and indeed of the whole world. With the hope, therefore, of furthering Philip's desire for reconciliation with France, the Bishop of Arras, on behalf of the King of Spain, met the Cardinal de Lorraine, the representative of the French King. Before they separated, the Bishop had convinced the Cardinal that peace with Spain would advance, not only the glory of his country, but his own house. He accordingly returned to France resolved to use his influence on the side of peace; resolved, too, to induce Henry to join in a crusade with Philip against all heretics to be found in their dominions.

Before these plans had time to ripen, a new campaign and fresh disaster to France predisposed Henry to move in the direction desired by his Cardinal. The battle of Gravelines, in July of the year 1558, won by the Dutch hero Egmont, was of so decisive a nature as to settle the fate of the war. It also placed Philip in a position from which he could dictate terms of peace.

With King Henry tired of defeat, and Philip eager to begin his battle with heresy, with the Duke of Savoy now in favour of peace, and the people of the Netherlands clamouring for it, the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis was readily signed in 1559. The Prince of Orange and the Duke of Alva were among the commissioners who acted for Philip on this occasion, and were also, along with the Duke of Aerschot and the Count of Egmont, hostages with the King of France for the execution of the terms of the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis. During the negotiations Philip lost both his father, and his wife Mary

Tudor, Queen of England. But while Philip mourned, his subjects in the Netherlands were once again rejoicing at the prospect of peace. Once again joybells were ringing, while for nine days business was suspended that the populace might join in the national enthusiasm; and once again Philip found himself in but little sympathy with the mood of his subjects. Peace had been made not that the industrious citizens should leave their industries and ring their joybells and strew their flowers along the streets. It had been made for other and sterner reasons, as the people would soon learn. Peace would leave Philip free to combat heresy, and to crush it in its strongholds, which were at present to be found in his own dominions, notably in the provinces of the Netherlands. Peace would also leave him free to return to Spain, and of this he was speedily to take advantage, believing that from his distant Cabinet he could better carry out his designs against the religious freedom of his Netherlander subjects.

CHAPTER V

Philip Leaves the Netherlands

There was much to be done ere Philip could leave the Netherlands. Early in 1559 he began the necessary preparations.

The Duke of Savoy, who by the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis had regained his duchy, was no longer able to act as Regent of the Provinces, and it was necessary for Philip to find a successor. Passing over both Egmont and William of Orange, either of whose appointment would have pleased the country, Philip's choice alighted on the Duchess Margaret of Parma. Perhaps one reason for his choice was that the Duchess was known to Philip as a loyal Catholic, and one who felt a greater horror of heretics than of any other evil-doer. She looked upon the edicts or placards which ordained that all who were convicted of heresy should suffer death "by fire, by the pit, or by the sword," as divinely inspired, and there would be little doubt that she would enforce these terrible edicts according to Philip's zealous decrees. Her accomplishments, save in the art of horsemanship, were not remarkable, her appearance was masculine, her manner not devoid of fascination. The appointment of the Duchess was not distasteful to the people of the Netherlands, for by birth she was their countrywoman, and her early years had been lived among them.

To assist the new Regent there was a Council of State, a Privy Council, and one of Finance. The Council of State was the most important of these, and among its members were the Bishop of Arras, the Prince of Orange, and Count Egmont. In reality there was one man who possessed at that time more power than either the Regent or any of the three councils, and he was Anthony Perrenot, Bishop of Arras.

Meanwhile peace had not brought entire satisfaction to the Provinces; indeed, there was a growing murmur of dissatisfaction against Philip, caused by the presence of a foreign force of about four thousand men, which was still detained in the country and placed in garrisons throughout the frontier, where the treaty had rendered their presence unnecessary. Not only were these soldiers fed on the substance of the country, and their wages drawn from her treasury, but their rough and boorish manners made them a terror to the people among whose homes they were quartered. Yet it was perhaps the fear that Philip's purpose in detaining them was that he might one day use these foreign troops in the battle which they knew was before them, the battle for religious and political freedom, perhaps it was this growing fear that made the whispers against the retention of the troops ever louder and more ominous.

The Provinces, convoked by the King, met at Ghent in August 1559 to receive his parting instructions and farewell. The sturdy burghers who came thither met in a temper but little favourable to the King. When Philip, followed by Margaret of Parma, the new Regent, and a stately retinue, had entered the council chamber, the Bishop of Arras, the King's interpreter, arose and addressed the States-General. In his easy, eloquent manner he told them that Philip had called them together to bid them farewell before he left the Netherlands, the country so dearly loved by him; that he would gladly have remained in it had it been possible to do so. The silence of the assembly left the specious untruth without comment. The Bishop, then proceeding to business, reminded the Provinces that all the money that had been taken from their coffers had been spent for their protection. For this reason Philip earnestly hoped that the States would grant the "request" which was now laid before them.

Margaret of Parma was then introduced, the Bishop adding that he believed the States would find her faithful both to the interests of the King and to those of the country. But for Philip the point of his speech lay in what was to follow, for it dealt with what he believed to be his mission in life. There were many in the country, Arras reminded them, called heretics, and every new sect of these, following in the footsteps of his father, Charles V., Philip was determined to destroy. He had therefore commanded the Regent, Margaret of

Parma, for the sake of religion and for the glory of God, "accurately and exactly to cause to be enforced the edicts and placards first proclaimed by the Emperor, and renewed by his present Majesty, for the extirpation of all sects and heresies." All holding office in the land were ordered also to do their utmost to help to accomplish this, the great mission of Philip's life. The address ended, the deputies adjourned to consider the "request."

The next day the chairman of the province of Artois spoke, referring to the extreme affection the province had for his Majesty. It was willing, so said the eloquent deputy, to expend not only its property, but to give its lives in his service.

Philip, standing with his arm on Egmont's shoulder, looked well pleased as he listened to these expressions of loyalty. But the deputy chairman was still speaking. As compensation for its devotion to the royal service the province of Artois earnestly entreated Philip forthwith to order the departure of all foreign troops, the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis having fortunately made their presence unnecessary. Deputy after deputy of the different provinces had voted their share to the "request," but each one had made the withdrawal of the troops a condition prior to payment. But at the mention of the foreign troops Philip threw himself violently into his chair of state, deeply offended with the language addressed to him, nor did he attempt to conceal his rage. Already angry, he entirely lost control of his temper when a formal remonstrance on the same subject, which had been signed by the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont, and many other leading nobles in the Netherlands, was presented to him. Casting aside his usual mask of reserve, he arose and rushed from the assembly, shouting to the members as he went. Was he, too, being a Spaniard, expected immediately to leave the land and to give up his authority over it?

But the burst of ill-humour over, Philip regained his usual reserve, and skilfully dissembled his displeasure in a letter written to the expectant States-General. If they thought from the tenor of the letter that they had gained their request, that the King was indeed yielding to their wishes, they had yet to learn more of the character of their King. He promised the speedy departure of the troops, and even said that had he known the wishes of the States-General he would have been glad to carry the foreign troops to Spain in his own fleet. As it

was, he would pay for their support himself, and remove them in the course of three or four months at the latest, and in the meanwhile he had chosen the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont to take command of them a paltry trick this to reconcile the nation to the presence of the hated troops in the land.

Determined to be gracious, Philip, in spite of the violent scene that occurred, took leave of the assembly with apparent cordiality. His displeasure, which he could not altogether conceal, and which in the end once again caused him to betray his resentment, was directed against the nobles, especially against the Prince of Orange.

The arrangements at length completed, the King proceeded to Zeeland, where, in the Port of Flushing, a gallant fleet awaited him. A large body of Flemish nobles escorted him to the royal ship, among them William of Orange. As Philip stepped on to the ship which was to carry him for ever from the Netherlands, his eye lighted upon the Prince. With angry face he turned to him and bluntly accused him of being the true source of all the opposition he had met with in the recent meeting of the States. William quietly answered that what had been done had been done through no individual act, but by the united act of the States. "No," rejoined the incensed monarch, seizing him by the wrist and shaking him violently, "No, not the Estates, but you, you, you!"

After this public insult the Prince of Orange did not venture on board the King's vessel along with the other Flemish nobles, but awaited the departure of the fleet from the wharf. The voyage was a stormy one, but Philip landed in safety on the 8th September 1559.

The following year, 1560, amid all the splendour and stateliness of a royal wedding, Philip was married for the third time, his young bride, Elizabeth of France, daughter of Catherine de Medici, becoming more popular in the country than any queen of Castile.

In 1563 Philip finally established his capital at Madrid, which, according to the Castilian boast, was "the only court in the world."



“No, not the estates, but you, you, you.”

CHAPTER VI

Granvelle and Orange

Margaret, Duchess of Parma, entered on her duties as Regent with enthusiasm, but from the outset she was beset with difficulties. She had indeed little more than the show of power, the Bishop of Arras, Vigilius, and Berlaymont, her chief advisers, having been imposed on her by the King, with secret instructions that she was to be guided by them on all important occasions. In reality this inner Cabinet of three was composed of only one, for it was the Bishop whose mind conceived and whose will carried out all the serious projects of the State. William, Prince of Orange, and Count Egmont were also members of the Council, having been elected by Philip on account of their great influence with the people. Yet so seldom were they consulted by the inner Cabinet, that their presence on the Council of State was of but little service to the country.

Anthony Perrenot was made Bishop of Arras when only twenty-three years of age. He had been the favourite confidant of the Emperor, and had determined to gain the trust of the Emperor's son. He had succeeded in making himself indispensable to Philip during the four years that the Prince had spent in Brussels, and he never after lost the influence he had then gained. The Bishop had learned the great art of managing men. While appearing to obey he governed them, while giving advice he seemed only to be receiving it. Thus it was that Philip, unconsciously to himself, was ruled and guided by the Bishop of Arras. A firm opponent of the national rights of the Netherlander, he had opposed the assembling of the States-General before Philip left the country, and had his advice been followed his master would have been spared the remonstrances of that body. Throughout Philip's reign he never ceased to decry any attempt of

the State to interfere with the subsidies which were demanded.

It was by this Churchman's advice that the cruel edict of 1550, edict of blood and fire, was re-enacted as the first measure of Philip's reign. That the people should suffer did not trouble him, for his contempt for them was complete. Grasping at riches, he was never easily satisfied, and as early as 1552 the Emperor had rebuked his greediness. But of indolence the Bishop could never be accused by his worst enemies. He wrote with his own hand fifty letters a day. He corresponded with Philip on all matters of State, and all despatches and letters passed through his hands before they reached the Regent, or were discussed by his colleagues on the Council. Supporting with his influence the King's decision to increase the number of bishoprics in the Netherlands, he was rewarded by receiving the see of Mechlin, and shortly afterwards became Cardinal Granvelle. So great was the opposition to the new bishoprics, and so bitter the hatred incurred by Granvelle because he supported their introduction into the country, that while willing to give his life and fortune to ensure the success of the measure, he was yet forced to cry in the bitterness of his spirit, "Would to God that the erection of these new sees had never been thought of!"

It was not surprising that many of the nobles should resent Granvelle's usurpation of power, and should determine to thwart the ambitions of the priest who well-nigh controlled the springs of government. In the forefront of the dissatisfied nobles stood Egmont and William of Orange. Egmont, the popular hero of Saint Quentin, was known and beloved throughout the country, where his vanity and the weakness of his nature were but imperfectly known. William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, was a man of stronger fibre, a man whose influence from this time told with daily increasing power on his countrymen.

William was born in 1533, and when he was but eleven years of age had come into the possession of a large domain in Holland, and a still larger property in Brabant. The splendid inheritance of Chalons and of the principality of Orange were also his. He was educated in Brussels, under the care of the Emperor's sister, Mary of Hungary. When only fifteen he became a page in the royal household. The Emperor, with his usual insight into character, quickly recognising

the remarkable intelligence of the lad, treated him as an intimate and almost as a confidential friend; nor was the young Prince allowed to withdraw, even during interviews upon the gravest matters of State. Here, during his early days at court, William had time to study men, and ponder over their actions and motives.

The Emperor's regard for the Prince increased as the years passed. His appointment, when only twenty-one years of age, as General-in-Chief of an army of 20,000 on the French frontier was, while surprising to many, justified by the way he acquitted himself while in command. On the occasion of his abdication Charles commended his favourite to Philip, who, after the French war, sent him as one of the four commissioners to negotiate in the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis. He remained in France as hostage, along with the Duke of Alva, for the carrying out of the conditions of the treaty, and it was during that time that he made the astounding discovery which affected all his future life.

While hunting with King Henry in the forest of Vincennes, the Prince found himself alone with the monarch. Henry's thoughts were not with the hunt, but with the great scheme which he and Philip had secretly planned, by which heresy was to be crushed out of the realms of France and of the Netherlands. The Duke of Alva knew of the scheme, was indeed to conduct the necessary arrangements for its furtherance, and King Henry, thoughtlessly concluding that the Prince of Orange was also privy to the plot, spoke to him without reserve of the whole subject. Horror-stricken, but outwardly composed, the Prince listened while the King told him that his conscience would never rest till his realm should be delivered from the "accursed vermin," for such to him were all heretics; listened while the King piously told how, by the favour of Heaven and the aid of the Spanish king, he hoped soon to wipe the rebels off the face of the earth. Then before his still silent companion, King Henry proceeded to lay the details of the royal plot, in which all heretics, whether high or humble, were to be hunted out and massacred at the earliest opportunity. It was to aid in this scheme that Philip was desirous to keep the Spanish regiments in the Netherlands.

The Prince, gaining thus his well-known name of William the Silent, betrayed neither by word nor gesture aught of the horror and

indignation that were burning fiercely in his heart.

But from that hour his purpose was immovably fixed: he would deliver his country from the doom overhanging it. And to this end he was no sooner back in the Netherlands than he used all his influence to excite opposition to the presence of the Spanish troops, of which forces he, along with Count Egmont, had been appointed to take command. It was not at this time sympathy with the faith of the Reformers that caused his action, rather it was, as he himself said, "compassion for so many virtuous men and women thus devoted to massacre," that stirred him to do all in his power to save them.

On Philip's departure from the Netherlands William had received instructions to execute the edicts with absolute rigour. The King had even supplied him with the names of several "excellent persons suspected of the new religion," and commanded him to have them put to death. This, however, the Prince of Orange not only omitted to do, but gave them warning so that they might escape, "thinking it more necessary to obey God than man."

While the King was in the Netherlands, William had been living in Brussels in princely style. He entertained for the monarch, who thought himself too poor to perform his own duties of hospitality. Guests crowded to the hospitable mansion of the Prince, and were welcomed with so charming a grace that even those of less exalted rank were immediately at ease. Both parties, indeed, united in admiration of William's courtesy. "Never," says a Catholic historian, "did an arrogant or indiscreet word fall from his lips. Even to his servants he was gracious, and however much they might have been in fault, he reproved them always without menace or insult." But his lavish hospitality and his indulgence in the chase, particularly in the knightly sport of falconry, were a drain on even his princely fortune, and he was already deep in debt. He wrote thus carelessly of the fact to his brother, Louis of Nassau: "We come of a race who are somewhat bad managers in our young days, but when we grow older we do better."

And William the Silent was indeed to do better as the years rolled by. The struggle in which he was now engaged was but in its infancy, yet as it grew to vast proportions the Prince braced his manhood for the tremendous contest, and stood alone, erect, a leader, head and

shoulders above all others, in his country's struggle for religious freedom. Never capable of the dashing exploits which had made the name of Egmont famous, perhaps one of the chief sources of his greatness was his caution; indeed, "the counsel of Orange, the execution of Egmont," had already become a proverb among the people. The genius of the Prince was denied by none, not even by his most persistent enemies, who were forced to bow before the keenness of his intellect and his marvellous insight into human nature. In spite of his surname, "The Silent," William in years to come proved himself eloquent beyond others on many great public occasions, and in private his conversation made him a delightful companion.

Such was the Prince of Orange, who now, with Egmont and other of the Flemish nobles, stood opposed to the growing authority and control exercised by the Bishop of Arras in the government of the Netherlands.

CHAPTER VII

Orange Opposes Granvelle

Four months had passed since Philip's departure from the Netherlands. In spite of his promise that the Spanish troops should be removed before that interval had passed, they still occupied their quarters on the frontier, and no preparations were being made for their removal.

The four months had passed into fourteen and still the troops remained, being quartered now in Walcheren and Brill. So exasperated grew the Zeelanders at their presence that they absolutely refused to begin the repairs necessary to the great sea-dykes at that season. Rather than have their soil longer profaned by the presence of the hated foreign troops, of whose insolence they were weary, they would let their land be forever sunk in the ocean. Men, women, children, they swore to perish together in the waves rather than endure longer the outrages which the soldiers daily inflicted.

To trifle with the determined temper of the Zeelanders was impossible, and it was evident to the haughty Bishop, as also to the Regent, that the troops would no longer be tolerated. Accordingly, at a meeting of the Council of State, held in October 1560, the Bishop represented to the Regent the necessity for the final departure of the troops. Vigilius, knowing the character of the Zeelanders, seconded the proposal without hesitation, and Orange briefly spoke in the same terms, declining to serve any longer as commander of the troops, a post he had accepted only upon Philip's pledge that they should be withdrawn in four months. Letters were therefore written in the name of the Regent to the King, with undoubted reasons for the withdrawal of the hated troops.

Not a stiver would be paid into the treasury while they remained. That, indeed, would hit Philip hard in the embarrassed state of his finances. Should the troops, however, actually set sail, the necessary amount to cover arrears would be immediately paid to the Government. Surely an unanswerable argument this for their withdrawal.

Even more strongly wrote the Bishop. "It cuts me to the heart to see the Spanish infantry leave us, but go they must. Would to God we could devise any pretext, as your Majesty desires, under which to keep them here. We have tried all means, humanly possible for retaining them, but I see no way to do it without putting the Provinces in manifest danger of sudden revolt."

Necessity being thus laid upon him, Philip found a reason for employing the troops elsewhere, and thus for a short time the Netherlands was free from the presence of foreign mercenaries. But the Bishop's difficulties did not decrease, while the hatred already felt towards him by the populace daily grew stronger.

To the four bishoprics already existing in the Netherlands, Philip had resolved, by the advice of the Bishop it was believed, to add thirteen. As each Bishop was himself to be an inquisitor of his diocese, with two others serving under him, the change was regarded as part of a great scheme for introducing the Spanish Inquisition into the country. All the hatred stirred up by the new arrangement fell upon Arras, and so bitterly did he feel the position that we find him writing in 1561, "Would to God the creation of these bishoprics had never been thought of!" In spite of this outbreak of despair at the position of danger in which he felt the King had placed him, he worked faithfully to introduce the bishoprics into the country. Philip, from his palace in Spain, did not scruple to take measures to secure information regarding heretics in the Provinces. Frequently he sent lists to the Bishop, with the names of the humblest individuals in the Netherlands, and, stating their names, ages, personal appearance, occupation, and residence, demanded their immediate execution. The Bishop assured the King of his zeal in carrying out his instructions, but bewailed the lukewarmness, even the coldness, with which the inquisitors and judges did their share of the work. Vigilius and Berlaymont indeed were commended, but as for the Council of Brabant, it was "for ever prating of the constitutional rights of the

Province, and deserved much less commendation."

If the Bishop's zeal in persecution increased the hatred felt towards him, so also did the new dignity of Cardinal to which he was now raised, through the influence of Margaret, the Regent. For with his new title the prelate assumed a more insolent manner. He was already in relations which were far from cordial with his colleagues in the Council of State, and from this time he began openly to take the control of affairs more entirely into his own hands, with the result of still further alienating Egmont and Orange; for they, while ignored in all important consultations, were yet held responsible for the actions of the Government. Egmont had little thought of submitting to the bland insolence and air of authority assumed by the Cardinal, while Granvelle himself felt a contempt for the Count which was obvious in his manner, and which showed itself in his private letters to the King.

Causes were not wanting to develop the impetuous Count's dislike. He requested appointments for his friends. They were already, through Granvelle's influence, bestowed elsewhere. He asked for lands for his needy relatives. Granvelle, by the King's permission, had already added them to his own possessions. In his presence or behind his back Egmont did not scruple to express his aversion of the prelate. Once, exasperated beyond bearing at the polished insolence with which his violent language was received, Egmont drew his dagger in the presence of the Regent, and would, in his passion, have killed the Cardinal had not the Prince of Orange forcibly restrained him.

No report of scenes such as these was received by the King. Granvelle still wrote of the amicable relations existing between himself and the nobles, for as long as it was possible to avoid it, he had little wish that the King should question his power of governing the Council.

But if the Cardinal could treat the headstrong Egmont with disdain, he needed to employ other methods in his treatment of William of Orange. In him Granvelle had met his match, and he had the wisdom to recognise the genius of his opponent. The intellect of the Prince was as keen, his temper as controlled, and even more haughty, than that of Granvelle, and the prelate knew it. He wrote of William to the King "as a man of profound genius, vast ambition,

dangerous, acute, politic." And the Cardinal was giving no cursory judgment of the Prince of Orange. He had thought it worth while to cultivate friendship with one who from his boyhood had been a favourite of the Emperor, and whose talents and rank marked him out as one likely to hold a position of trust in Philip's reign, and he knew the man. There had been intimacy between them, but the friendship had gradually been strained to the last degree, and as Granvelle arrogated more and more power to himself it altogether ceased to exist.

The Prince was roused to active hostility by the election, without his knowledge, of magistrates for Antwerp, of which city he was burgrave. When the nominations for new members came before the Regent, she arranged the whole matter in the secret Council of Three, without the knowledge of William, and in a manner opposed to his wishes. The appointments made however, a list of the new magistrates was sent to the Prince, and he was told that he, along with Count Aremberg, had been commissioned to see that the appointments were carried out. But not thus easily was the Prince to be thwarted. Sending back the Regent's messenger, he informed her that he was no lackey whom she might send on her errands. His words were repeated in the Council of State, and a fierce quarrel ensued, Orange asserting that it was unbearable that this matter, as well as every other affair of State, should be settled by the secret Council, of which Granvelle was chief. Furious at such direct opposition, Granvelle hurriedly left the Council, hurling bitter reproaches at Orange. Calling for the Chancellor of Brabant, he asked him to secure the services of some humble gentleman to carry out the commission refused by the Prince and Aremberg.

A few weeks later, in July 1561, Count Egmont and the Prince of Orange wrote to the King complaining bitterly of their exclusion from all business of importance in the State Council, while yet they were held responsible by the people for the measures in which they had had no share. Reminding him that this was contrary to his assurance when they accepted office, they begged the King to accept their resignations, or to give orders that no business should be transacted without the attendance of the whole Council.

Philip's answer was to thank the nobles for their zeal in his

service, and to promise that Count Hoorn, who was returning to the Netherlands shortly, should bring with him an answer to their complaint.

Prejudiced by Granvelle, the King had but little liking for the vehement and quick-tempered Count, who had even ventured, so said the Cardinal, to oppose the scheme for introducing new bishoprics into the Provinces, a scheme dear to the King's heart. Accordingly Hoorn, who had accompanied Philip to Spain, and was now returning to the Provinces, was received ungraciously by the King, while his expressions of sympathy with the nobles in the Netherlands were listened to with impatience. But when, in answer to the King's questions, he spoke of the aversion inspired by Granvelle's greed and insolence, the King interrupted, crying out fiercely, "What, miserable man! you all complain of this Cardinal, and always in vague language. Not one of you, in spite of all my questions, can give me a single reason for your dissatisfaction." Thereupon so fierce was his wrath, that Hoorn left his presence in dismay, with no further satisfaction for the expectant nobles in the Netherlands.

And Philip's wrath was never allowed to cool, for always it was artfully fanned by the Cardinal, who even ventured to suggest to his Sovereign the terms in which he might answer a letter which would soon reach him from the Prince of Orange and the Marquis of Berghen. The letter was one of remonstrance on the subject of the bishoprics. Remonstrances from great nobles or from doughty burghers, these would never interfere with the execution of Philip's grand scheme to extirpate all heretics. Of this scheme the new bishoprics formed an important part.

Nevertheless opposition, while it could not move, could irritate Philip, and his hatred for his opponents grew more and more deadly. "'Tis no time to temporise," he wrote to Granvelle; "we must inflict chastisement with full rigour and severity. These rascals can only be made to do right through fear, and not always even by that means." At the same time any very active measures to enforce Philip's policy were hampered by the difficulty of obtaining money. Granvelle complained bitterly that the States would still interfere with the expenditure of money, and were tedious and slow in granting subsidies.

It was at this critical point in the affairs of the Netherlands that

the Prince of Orange, who had been a widower since 1556, proposed to marry Anna of Saxony. The fact that she was a Lutheran caused Philip at first to oppose the match; he, however, withdrew his objections, and as a sign of his favour asked the Regent to purchase a ring worth 3000 crowns and to present it as his gift to the bride. The wedding was fixed for the 24th August 1561, and took place at Leipzig.

During the Prince's absence in Germany, Granvelle proceeded to make his entry into the city of Mechlin as Archbishop. But in the city were found none to welcome the Archbishop to his new see. The nobles were absent, the people silent.

In Brabant, too, the new bishoprics were established, and now, with each bishop head inquisitor in his diocese, and with two special inquisitors under him, it seemed that at length Philip would be able with some show of success to carry out his scheme of killing all heretics.

CHAPTER VIII

The Inquisition

The Inquisition! Its very name was fraught with horror. It was indeed a tribunal from which there was no escape. Its familiars haunted every household, plumbing the secrets of the unconscious inhabitants. Its proceedings were reduced to a horrible simplicity. Wherever suspicion was aroused, arrests followed, and on arrest, torture—torture which never ceased till it wrung confession from its victim, who was then punished by death.

Midnight, and gloomy dungeons dimly lighted by torches! It was at such times and in such places torture was carried on. To add to the horror of the scene, the executioner was wrapped from head to foot in a long black robe, while his eyes gloated over his victim through holes cut in the hood which covered his face.

Among all the inquisitors in the Provinces the name of Peter Titelmann was perhaps the most dreaded. Throughout Flanders, Douay, and Tournay his name was feared and his presence loathed. Noiselessly and swiftly he descended upon these, the most thriving and populous districts of the Netherlands.

Remorselessly, like a great bird of evil omen, he swooped down upon the inhabitants, bringing with him grim terror and agony worse than death. The trembling peasants offered little or no resistance as they were dragged from their firesides or their beds and thrust into the dungeons, where torture, strangling, or burning awaited them. The paralysis of fear was on the country, and Peter Titelmann knew it right well.

Walking along the highroad one day, a sheriff, who, from the colour of the wand he carried, was called Red-Rod, called to the



The Inquisition! Its very name was fraught with horror

inquisitor, "How can you venture to go about alone, or at most with but one or two attendants, arresting people on every side, while I dare not attempt to execute my office save at the head of a strong force, armed in proof, and then only at the peril of my life?"

"Ah, Red-Rod," answered Peter Titelmann, "you deal with bad people. I have nothing to fear, for I seize only the innocent and virtuous, who make no resistance and let themselves be taken like lambs." Thus out of his own mouth stood Titelmann condemned.

But while many were terrified, there were others, men, women, and children these, who were inspired with a courage that enabled them to face the inquisitor right nobly. Hearing of a schoolmaster who was "addicted to reading the Bible," Titelmann had the culprit arrested and charged with heresy. The schoolmaster demanded that, if he were guilty of any crime, he should be tried before the judges of his own town.

"You are my prisoner," cried Titelmann, "and are to answer me and none other."

It did not take long to convince the inquisitor that the schoolmaster was indeed a heretic, and he forthwith ordered him to recant. The schoolmaster refused.

"Do you not love your wife and children?" asked his tormentor.

"God knows," answered the victim, "that if the whole world were gold and my own, I would give it all only to have them with me, even had I to live on bread and water in bondage."

"You have then only to renounce the error of your opinions," answered Titelmann.

"Neither for wife, children, nor all the world can I renounce my God," answered the prisoner.

Thereupon Titelmann sentenced him to the stake. He was strangled and then thrown into the flames.

There was need to be vigilant, thought the executioner, lest any should escape his toils. Though indeed of that there seemed little chance.

A simple weaver of Tournay, copying hymns of the Reformed faith from a book printed in Geneva, was seized. There was no possible escape for such a heretic. He was condemned by Titelmann to be burned alive.

A year later the same inquisitor ordered Robert Ogier, his wife and two sons to be arrested. They were quiet citizens living in the province of Flanders. Their crime was one of both omission and commission. They had neglected to attend Mass, and they had worshipped God in their own house.

"What rites have you practised in your home?" demanded Titelmann.

One of the sons, a mere boy, answered: "We fall on our knees and pray to God that He may enlighten our hearts and forgive our sins. We pray for our Sovereign, that his reign may be peaceful and prosperous, and his life also peaceful. We pray too for the magistrates and others in authority, that God may protect and preserve them all."

Titelmann had placed the case before the civil tribunal, and the lad's simple words drew tears from the eyes of some of the judges. Nevertheless, the father and elder son were condemned to the flames. "O God," prayed the boy as he was bound to the stake, "Eternal Father, accept the sacrifice of our lives in the name of Thy beloved Son."

"Thou liest, scoundrel!" fiercely interrupted a monk, as he stooped to light the pile, "God is not your Father, and ye are the devil's children."

As the flames rose above them the boy cried out once more, "Look, Father, all heaven is opening, and I see ten hundred thousand angels rejoicing over us; let us be glad, for we are dying for the truth."

"Thou liest, thou liest!" screamed the angry monk; "ten thousand devils shall receive your souls."

Such were the scenes enacted throughout the Netherlands after Philip, with Granvelle's aid, had established the new bishoprics, and with them the increased number of inquisitors. Little wonder that the Cardinal, to whom the people attributed the whole infamous machinery of persecution, should be not only unpopular, but already in 1562 hated of all men. In the Council of State, Vigilius and Berlaymont, it is true, were still his followers; the other members, to whom there had been added Glayon, Aerschot, and Hoorn, however, sympathised with the popular hatred felt towards Granvelle. Even the Regent had begun to feel that she was but a plaything in the hands of her chief adviser, and to dislike him accordingly.

The Cardinal, however, was not deterred either by the popular clamour or by the opposition of the nobles from resolutely endeavouring to carry out his master's intentions. For this purpose he did all that was in his power to increase the zeal of his underlings, yet heresy spread like wildfire, and both judges and executioners began to quail before the signs of hatred and defiance that were meted out to them.

If Granvelle had expected to crush the people without resistance, he was now to discover his mistake. In the autumn of 1562 two ministers, Fareau and Mallart, had been condemned for preaching the new doctrines to their disciples. They were avowed heretics, and, moreover, had been accused of working miracles. In reality their offence consisted in reading the Bible and explaining its meaning to a few friends in the city of Valenciennes. The Governor, Marquis Berghen, was of set purpose constantly absent from the province, for he hated with his whole soul the cruel system of persecution inflicted by the Inquisition. In his absence it was difficult to have the sentence passed on Fareau and Mallart carried out, owing to the increasing hesitation of judges, and even inquisitors, to face the rage of the populace. Granvelle sent express orders to Berghen to return at once to his province, and meanwhile perpetually denounced him to Philip.

"The Marquis says openly," he writes, "that it is not right to shed blood for matters of faith. With such men to aid us your Majesty can judge how much progress we can make."

Six or seven months passed and still the ministers were lying in the dungeons into which they had been cast in the autumn. Day and night the streets of the city were thronged by muttering crowds, who pressed about the prison windows, hurling threats of defiance at the authorities, and encouraging the prisoners with promises of rescue should an attempt be made to carry out their sentence.

At length Granvelle's patience was exhausted, and he sent down imperative orders that the two ministers should suffer immediate death by fire. On the 27th April 1562 Fareau and Mallart were accordingly taken out of prison and brought to the market-place to be burned. As Fareau was being tied to the stake he exclaimed, "O Eternal Father!" A woman in the crowd at the same moment took off her shoe and flung it at the cruel pile. It was the signal that had been arranged. On the instant the crowd was in motion. Some dashed

upon the barriers surrounding the place of execution, while others seized the already flaming faggots and scattered them in every direction. To carry out the sentence was impossible, but the guards succeeded in carrying the condemned ministers again to prison. The authorities were in dismay, the inquisitors furious, shouting, "We will put them to death in prison and throw their heads out on the streets." But the people, who had been marching along the streets singing the Psalms of David, had at last determined to act. In a body they directed their steps to the prison, and so vigorous was their onslaught that the prisoners were rescued and succeeded in escaping from the city.

But Fareau continued to preach and heal, and a few years later was again seized and put in prison. "He was then," says the chronicler drily, "burned well and handsomely" in the very place from which he had formerly been rescued.

The Government at Brussels was furious when informed of all that occurred, and vengeance sharp and swift descended on the unfortunate city. On the 29th April 1562 the military were marched into Valenciennes. The prisons were crowded with men and women suspected of taking part in the tumult. On the 16th May the executions began. Some were burned, others were beheaded, and only when all had suffered death did Government feel that the demands of justice were fulfilled.

CHAPTER IX

Granvelle's Downfall

As the result of the vengeance taken on the citizens of Valenciennes, torrents of abuse were showered upon Granvelle by the populace. The nobles, too, openly showed their hostility, Orange, Egmont and Hoorn having already sent complaints of his conduct to the King. Their dislike to the Cardinal was soon still further intensified.

Civil war having broken out in France, Philip sent to her aid troops from both Italy and Spain, at the same time ordering the Duchess of Parma to despatch immediately two thousand cavalry from the Netherlands. When the King's order was read in the Council of State the uproar was long and fierce. It was intolerable that the troops, who for the most part would be in sympathy with the Huguenots, should be asked to fight against them. It was intolerable that troops necessary to guard the frontier at home should be demanded for foreign service. With angry voices and with fierce determination the nobles refused to comply with the order of the King.

In sore dismay, Margaret wrote to Philip that it was impossible to send the troops. Meanwhile Philip, impatient at the delay, had written again to Margaret, wrathfully bidding her furnish the required soldiers immediately. The Duchess was plainly in a dilemma, from which she escaped only by having recourse to a trick suggested by the Cardinal. A private letter of the King was read to the Council, with alterations inserted by Granvelle, to the effect that while the King was exceedingly annoyed with the delay in sending the troops, he was willing that a sum of money should be furnished in place of the

cavalry, as at first demanded. This compromise the Council, though not without a heated debate, accepted, while the Regent wrote to Philip explaining and apologising for the deception. The King, adding the disobedience of the Council to the day of reckoning, was perforce obliged to accept the money which was offered instead of the troops he had demanded, and the resources of the Netherlands were drained to enable the King to pay the fifteen thousand troops he had sent to the assistance of the French.

The dissatisfaction of the country was too evident to be entirely ignored, and the Regent resolved to send an envoy to Spain that the King might more clearly understand her difficulties. Montigny, the brother of Count Hoorn, was chosen for the mission. While a friend to Orange, he was one of the Cardinal's bitterest foes, and Granvelle, well aware of these facts, took care to prepare Philip for the visit of the envoy, as also to instruct him how to deal with Montigny's complaints.

In June 1562 the ambassador reached Spain, where he was graciously received by Philip, who gravely heard his account of the condition of his country and of the misunderstanding which existed between Granvelle and the nobles. The King did not fail to speak reassuringly. Montigny must tell his subjects in the Netherlands that it was not his intention to introduce the Spanish Inquisition into their land. He must also tell them that the bishoprics had been appointed solely for their own good, and to lead them back to the true fold, and that it was he, the King, and not his minister, with whom the plan had originated.

But Montigny was not influenced by these assurances. Was there not already in the Netherlands an Inquisition "much more pitiless than that of Spain"? Was not the Cardinal, even if guiltless of introducing the new bishoprics, the man who took daily and personal pains to see that the edicts were enforced and the horrors of the Inquisition carried out in all their rigour?

At their parting interview the King encouraged Montigny to speak frankly, and he, forgetting caution, told the King of the Cardinal's greediness and cruelty and his belief that at the root of the popular discontent were three evils: Granvelle, the Inquisition, and the new bishoprics. In days to come Montigny had to pay heavily for

his plain speaking.

Late in December 1562 the envoy was again in his own country. The Council received his report with great dissatisfaction, having no belief in the fair words of the King, while Orange was convinced that the plot revealed to him by Henry II. in the wood of Vincennes was still dear to the heart of the Spanish King.

It was clear that the Government could not be carried on longer in its present condition. Either Granvelle or the nobles must give way, and the Prince of Orange was resolved that the Cardinal should fall, or that he himself would withdraw from any share in the government of the country. In this decision he was supported by Egmont, Hoorn, Montigny, Berghen and other of the leading nobles. Accordingly on the 11th March 1563 a letter was again written to the King by Orange, Egmont and Hoorn, renewing their complaints against Granvelle and asking plainly for his dismissal.

Philip was in no haste to answer the letter, but on the 6th June he briefly acknowledged their zeal and affection, and suggested that one of them should go to Madrid to confer with him on the subject of their letter.

Meanwhile the Regent, overwhelmed by her position between Granvelle and the nobles, determined to send her own secretary, Armenteros, to Spain to consult with the King. He reached Philip on the 15th September, and was at once granted an audience, which lasted for four hours. Margaret, in the letter presented by Armenteros, spoke of the miserable state of the finances, the failure of the edicts to check the spread of heresy, and of the quarrel between Granvelle and the nobles. While assuring the King of the minister's devotion and merits, she yet ventured to assert that to keep him in the Netherlands against the will of the nobles would be to court an insurrection.

Philip, both alarmed and puzzled, sought the advice of the Duke of Alva, and he, a man prompt to act, did not hesitate. "Cut off the heads of the leaders, as they deserve," he cried, but feeling that at present such action was scarcely practicable, he added that it would be well meantime to conceal their intention and try to divide the nobles by gaining Egmont to the King's side.

Thus in Spain the King dallied with the situation which in the

Netherlands was fast approaching a crisis, a crisis hastened on even by the follies and revelries of the festive season. For it chanced that on December 15 Egmont, Berghen, and Montigny were at a banquet in Brussels. During dinner the conversation turned upon the grandeur displayed by the nobles, particularly in their liveries, the ostentation of the Cardinal in this connection being ridiculed with much zest. On the spur of the moment it was resolved that the guests present should set the example of a simple style by adopting a plain livery, and by some symbol added to the costume show their contempt for the regal splendour of Granvelle's followers. The dice were thrown, and it fell to Egmont to plan the device.

Accordingly in a few days he and his servants appeared in doublet and hose of the coarsest grey, with long hanging sleeves without ornament of any kind, save that upon each sleeve was embroidered a monk's cowl or a fool's cap and bells. That the device ridiculed the Cardinal ensured its popularity, and thousands appeared in the novel costume. The Regent at first laughed with the rest, perhaps not sorry to see one whom she had learned cordially to dislike made the subject of a jest, and carelessly accepted Egmont's excuses on the matter. Owing to its widespread adoption, however, the Regent tardily suggested a change in the badge, the cowl or fool's cap being accordingly replaced by a bundle of arrows, which emblem was supposed to signify that the wearers were bound together in dutiful obedience to their sovereign.

Meanwhile Philip had slowly made up his mind that in spite of Alva's advice Granvelle must be sacrificed. On January 23, 1564, Armenteros returned from Spain bearing Philip's answer to the Regent's letter. The King expressed his displeasure at the missive received by him from the nobles, and added, that as they had sent no definite complaint regarding Granvelle, he must deliberate further before withdrawing him from the post. But Armenteros was at the same time the bearer of a despatch addressed to the Cardinal himself, containing a letter headed, "By the hand of the King, Secret." In this letter Philip's double dealing was evident.

Expressing his regret at the ill-will shown to his minister in the Netherlands, he added: "For these causes I have thought it would be well, in order to allow the hatred which they bear you to grow calm,

and to see how they will remedy matters, that you should leave the Provinces for some days in order to see your mother, and that, with the knowledge and permission of the Duchess of Parma, you should beg her to write to me to obtain my approbation. In this manner neither your authority nor mine will be touched."

A week later, on March 1, a courier arrived from Spain, bringing the King's long-delayed answer to the nobles who had asked for Granvelle's dismissal. The letter briefly ordered the nobles to resume their seats in the Council of State, and said that with regard to Granvelle the charges against him must be proved, and time given to consider the matter. In this way Philip hoped to remove the Cardinal without any one but Granvelle himself knowing that his dismissal came from the King. He succeeded, for Granvelle had for some time seen that his day was over, and loyally bowed to his master's decision. He departed on March 13 to visit his mother, whom he had not seen for nineteen years.

The public rejoicing at his departure was undisguised, and despite the mystery that surrounded his going, there were few who did not believe that he had been recalled by the King, and would never again be permitted to return to the Netherlands.

And indeed such was the case, the Cardinal living long in retreat in Burgundy, and thereafter being employed on the King's business in Rome.

So deep-rooted had been the hatred to him that his absence did not cause it to decrease, more than a year after his departure Berlaymont asserting that the nobles hated the Cardinal more than ever, and would eat him alive if they caught him.

CHAPTER X

The Inquisition Resisted

Granvelle had fallen, and with his fall oppression and tyranny would come to an end! So thought the people as they exulted over the absence of the Cardinal. The nobles returned to their seats in the Council of State, and Orange and Hoorn again wrote to the King expressing their desire to serve him.

But to serve the King faithfully was no easy task, for Granvelle had left behind him a corrupt Government. Justice there was none, bribery was rampant in the land. For gold, crimes were pardoned, passports given, offices of trust sold. For gold there was immunity from law, while those who had no money awaited its terror helplessly, unable to avert stripes, imprisonments, or the sterner sentences of the faggot and the sword.

Amid the corruption and bribery stood William the Silent, his honour untarnished. It was true that the Cardinal had accused him of being in difficulties on account of his enormous debts, but he had never been able to suggest that the Prince had eased his load of debt by helping himself from the public treasury. The cares of his country were already pressing on William heavily, and causing him more anxiety than could his own private affairs. Though but thirty years of age his face was already lined with care. "They say the Prince is very sad," wrote a courtier to Granvelle, "and 'tis easy to read as much in his face. They say he cannot sleep." And the King in his distant capital feared Orange, but yet for a little while was content to watch and to use him.

Meantime the people in the Provinces were learning that the removal of Granvelle meant no cessation of the horrors of the

Inquisition. In Flanders unheard of barbarities were inflicted, not upon evildoers, but usually upon those whose lives were spotless and whose conduct none could condemn. Petitions were showered upon the Regent. The burgomasters, senators and council of the city of Bruges did not, however, stop to petition; they protested, in language none too smooth, for Peter Titelmann was daily in their midst, dragging people from their houses, and even from the sacred shelter of their churches, to torture and to death. And this, though always done under the pretext of heresy, was often but the inquisitor's revenge for some fancied slight or injury committed against himself. At the same time the four Estates of Flanders sent to the King an account of Titelmann's cruelties, and demanded that they should be suppressed. The enormities were committed, indeed, in direct violation of their ancient charters, which he had sworn to support.

The appeal to Philip was vain, save as it supplied his heretic-hunting mind with pleasure. Verily Peter Titelmann was doing work to the King's liking. As for the Duchess, who in truth was herself in mortal fear of the terrible inquisitor, and never dared to refuse the interviews he demanded, her reply to the city of Bruges was of little comfort. She could do nothing without the King's permission, though meanwhile she had charged Titelmann to be both "discreet and modest" in his duty, which charge had no effect in checking the infamous course of the inquisitor.

The King, as the Regent very well knew, was more than ever determined to destroy all heretics in his dominions. He had written that the Council of Trent, which would establish yet more firmly the power of the Pope, was to be proclaimed and received as law throughout the Netherlands, and at the same time the edicts were to be more thoroughly enforced. The Regent, feeling that the King had not realised the fierceness of the opposition that now existed against the religious persecution, determined once again to send a special envoy to Spain, and Count Egmont was selected for the difficult task. Vigilius prepared the Count's instructions and laid the rough copy before the Council, but it lacked the directness necessary in dealing with the King, and thereby roused the Prince of Orange. Egmont was being sent to the King that he might learn the truth. Then let him be told that the edicts, scaffolds, new bishoprics, hangmen and

inquisitors must be at once and for ever abolished, for the Netherlands were free provinces, and were determined to assert their ancient privileges. Thus spoke William the Silent with an eloquence and vehemence never before heard from his lips.

And his words carried conviction. The instructions for Egmont were again drawn up, this time in plainer terms, and the Count set off for Madrid early in January 1565. He was received graciously by Philip, who not only feasted and flattered the ambassador, but loaded him with gifts, sparing no pains to win the esteem of the weak and vacillating Count. And Egmont was deceived. Philip was the most generous and clement of princes, and having eight daughters and many debts, the Count accepted the royal bounty of one hundred thousand pounds in all good faith. But flattery had turned the vain Count's head, and he had little inclination for the public matters which had brought him to Madrid. The negotiations between the monarch and the ambassador were of the slightest. The King professed his readiness to yield on other questions, but on the subject of religion he stood firm. And if Egmont was deceived as to Philip's intentions, as he afterwards complained, it seems but too evident that the deception was self-imposed. As for the affair of the livery, designed by Egmont to ridicule the Cardinal, the King was given to understand it was but a foolish jest, and with a gentle rebuke for the past, and an order to discontinue the livery henceforth, the subject was apparently dropped and forgotten.

By the end of April Egmont was again in Brussels, and early in May he met the Council, conveying to them his impression of the clemency and goodwill of the King towards the nation. But letters which arrived from Spain not long after showed that Egmont had either mistaken the King's meaning, or had been himself deceived by his words; for, as regarded the Inquisition at least, no concession was to be expected from Philip.

The indignation of Orange and his followers was extreme. The royal word could not be trusted, they asserted, since so soon after Egmont's departure the King was able to write despatches in a tone very different to the one he had used in his conversations with the envoy. In vain the Duchess attempted to soothe the nobles, while Egmont was furious that he had allowed himself to be duped. But his

rage was merged in grief when Orange reproached him to his face with having forgotten while in Spain the best interests of his country. So real was his distress that for a long time he forsook the gaieties of the court, which were pleasant to his sunny nature, and lived in gloom and seclusion.

In the autumn of 1565 the country was full of apprehension, which was but slightly relieved by the wedding festivities of Baron Montigny, and the more brilliant celebration of the marriage of Alexander, son of Margaret of Parma. The wedding was solemnised on the 11th November. A week earlier the Regent had received despatches from Spain, which she felt were of such evil import that she decided to keep them private till the ceremony was over. On the 14th she dared delay no longer, and laid the fatal missive before the Council. It was the King's final and authoritative answer to the reiterated demand of the nobles. The apprehensions of the country were about to be fulfilled. The strict execution of the edicts by all governors and magistrates was commanded. The power of the Council of State could not be extended, while the request that the States-General might be summoned was sternly denied. Proclamation of the Inquisition and of the Decrees of Trent was to be made in every town and village in the Netherlands. As they listened the nobles felt that there was now no choice but between obedience and rebellion. "We shall see the beginning of a fine tragedy," the Prince of Orange is said to have whispered to his neighbour.

The Regent, terrified at the probable consequences, yet feeling it was impossible to disobey the deliberate decree of the monarch, ordered the proclamation to be made in every town and village of the Provinces at once, and every six months for ever after. But the decree carried out, curses, low-murmured yet, but ere long to burst into a howl of execration, filled the land. Many of those in authority openly refused to enforce the edicts in their provinces, the Marquis Berghen, Mansfeld, and Baron Montigny being conspicuous among these. Brabant, after a fierce and conclusive appeal to her ancient charters, was declared free from the Inquisition, but no other province could claim her peculiar privileges. They did not, however, accept their humiliation without protest. Petitions were nailed on all the great houses in Brussels, especially on the mansions of Orange and Egmont.

Earnest remonstrances and passionate pleas were thrust into the hands of the Duchess, but she, utterly bewildered by the passions that had been roused and let loose on the land, was helpless.

To add to her discomfiture a league was formed among the lesser nobles for the purpose of fomenting the spirit of resistance. Foremost among these were Louis of Nassau, William's brother, Sainte Aldegonde, and Brederode. At secret meetings these and other nobles drew up a document, known as the Compromise, which they scattered broadcast throughout the land. Since the document stated the evils of the Inquisition and the determination of the league to banish it from the land, signatures to the number of over a thousand were speedily affixed to it, and a ray of hope spread through the country.

The Compromise, though thus popular in the country, met at first with but little encouragement from the great nobles. Its methods were too rash to commend it to the cautious spirit of Orange, though of his own position he had written plainly to Margaret. "I should prefer," he said, writing on January 24, 1566, "in case his Majesty insists without delay on the Inquisition and the execution of the edicts, that he place some other person in my place, who understands better the humours of the people, and that has more skill than I have in keeping them in peace and quietness, rather than run the risk of staining the reputation of my family, should any harm accrue to the country, through my government and during my tenure of it."

The Leagues meanwhile had decided that a petition should be drawn up by Louis of Nassau, to be presented to the Regent, and to this Orange consented, though reluctantly, and only on condition that the language of the petition was less overbearing than had been at first intended. On April 3, 1566, therefore, about two hundred of the confederates entered the gates of Brussels. They were all on horseback, with pistols in their holsters, while at their head rode the noisy and audacious Brederode. The procession, greeted with loud applause by the citizens, slowly wended its way to the mansion of William of Orange, where Brederode and Count Louis alighted, while the other confederates dispersed to seek quarters in the town. Two days later the members of the League marched to the palace, and entered the Council Chamber, where the Regent sat on the chair of

State, surrounded by the highest nobles in the land. Their martial array filled her with an alarm which, as she graciously received them, she did her utmost to conceal.

Brederode, who had been chosen to present the request, advanced, and begged the Duchess to despatch an envoy to the King on their behalf, who should humbly implore his Majesty to abolish the edicts. In the meantime the request entreated Margaret to stay the power of the Inquisition until his Majesty's further pleasure was known, and until new decrees made by his Majesty, with the advice and consent of the States-General, which it was demanded he should at once convoke, should be made known. The request concluded with expressions of great respect and loyalty.

Margaret, still alarmed, and fully aware of the seriousness of the crisis, turned to her councillors for aid. It was in vain that the Prince of Orange tried to calm her fears, reminding her that the confederates were no rebellious subjects, but loyal gentlemen who desired to help their country. It was then that Berlaymont uttered his gibe, "What, madam," he cried, "is it possible that your Highness can entertain fears of these beggars?" From that day the confederates were known as "Beggars," and "Long live the Beggars" became their well-known party cry.

The Regent, had she dared, would have followed Aremberg's advice, which was to order the confederates to leave Brussels without delay, but not venturing to do this, she met them the following day, April 6, to answer their request. She had no power, so she said, to suspend the Inquisition or the edicts, but she promised that the severities of the persecutions should be mitigated until the King himself sent an answer to their demands.

Serious business being now at an end, Brederode resolved that the confederates should end their visit to Brussels by a great banquet at the Hotel Culemberg. Hoogstraaten, who had come on a commission from the Regent, was persuaded to stay to the carousal, and Brederode seized the opportunity to speak to him of the request and of the offensive term flung at him and his companions by Berlaymont. "Indeed," he added loudly, "we would gladly become 'Beggars,' if need were, for the sake of King and country." The excited assembly took up the words, and the vast hall resounded with shouts of "Long live

the Beggars! Long live the Beggars!" Brederode, who had slipped from the room, now suddenly appeared at the head of the table with a beggar's wallet suspended from his neck and a wooden bowl in his hand. Filling the bowl, he drank to the good cause and to the health of all present. Then, as the bowl was passed from hand to hand, each guest drank, pledging himself to be loyal to his friends and to the League.

That night, as Orange, Egmont and Hoorn were passing the Hotel Culemberg, on their way to attend the Council, they heard the revelry of the noisy banqueters, and determined to enter and, if possible, persuade them to disperse quietly. As they entered, the company surrounded them, urging them to remain, but Orange was firm in his refusal, while Hoorn, who disliked Brederode, was but a few moments in the banqueting-room. They left the hotel, having failed to hasten the departure of the confederates, who still drank the health of the great nobles, and sent after them deafening shouts of "Long live the Beggars!" This short and well-meant visit of the leading nobles was in days to come made into a ground of accusation against them.

On April 8 the confederates left Brussels, many of them adopting a costume of coarse grey material, and carrying the emblems of their beggarhood, the wallet and the bowl, at their girdles or in their hats.

Meanwhile the Regent, supported by the Council, decided to send envoys to Philip, fully exposing to him the dangerous state of the country, and begging him either to visit the Provinces himself, or to allow the envoys to return with such concessions as would avert the impending storm. The Marquis of Berghen and the Baron Montigny were the chosen ambassadors. Montigny left Brussels on May 29; Berghen, owing to a slight accident, some time after.

Through Granvelle's false representations and through the report of Philip's spies in the Netherlands, neither Montigny nor Berghen was in favour with the King. When he reached Paris, Montigny was warned of the King's wrath, and entreated to feign illness or to invent an excuse for avoiding his mission. The Marquis, however, paid little heed to the warnings he received, and proceeded to Madrid, which he reached on June 17, 1566. Berghen was unable to leave Brussels till July 1.

Philip received Montigny with apparent cordiality, and assured the ambassador that, whatever reports had reached him, he felt no dissatisfaction with the actions of the nobles. But Montigny's mission was eventually of no avail. He had been sent to procure the abolition of the Inquisition, at the very time that Philip was writing to the Regent that he was determined to maintain both the Inquisition and the edicts in all their rigour.

The early summer of 1566 was marked in the Netherlands by a temporary lull in the persecutions. Encouraged by this, and by the apparent success of the confederates at Brussels, the Reformers came boldly out of their hiding-places, and, meeting together, sang their hymns and listened to their preachers in the open air. These conventicles, or meetings, were at first held in the woods, or in some inaccessible spot, but, gradually growing bolder, the Reformers ventured into the open country by day, then into the villages, and at last into the environs of the great towns. At Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, and above all at Antwerp, thousands came out to hear the new preachers, arms in hand. The meetings over, bands of men paraded the streets, chanting psalms and shouting lustily, "Long live the Beggars!" Proclamation after proclamation was sent forth by the Duchess. She forbade the armed assemblies, she demanded the arrest of the preachers. It was of no avail.

Of what avail indeed to order even the trained bands of the city, the crossbow men, the archers or the sword-players to suppress the preachings? They would themselves be present at the very meetings which they were ordered to prevent.

Margaret wrote to Philip, "Everything is in such disorder that in the greater part of the country is neither law, faith, nor king." The majority of the members of the Council of State wrote demanding that the States-General should be summoned immediately, and still Philip delayed to answer, and dallied with the fears of the Regent and her advisers, who saw nothing but ruin staring them in the face.

The great commercial city of Antwerp was the scene of the chief disturbance. Business was at a standstill, while bands of armed men, in defiance of the magistrates, thronged to hear the doctrines of the new faith from the lips of some popular preacher. The arrival of Meghem and Brederode within the city only added to the confusion,

the royalists looking to Meghem, the revolutionary party to Brederode, the leader of the "Beggars," as their champion. In despair, the magistrates appealed to Margaret to save the city from destruction by sending thither their burgrave William. It was he alone who could help them.

The Prince, urgently entreated by the magistrates and people of Antwerp, and by the Regent herself, consented to make the visit so earnestly desired. On the 13th July he arrived at the gate of the city, where thousands of the inhabitants were assembled to greet him. Wild shouts of welcome were mingled with cries of "Long live the Beggars!" these party cries being at once sharply rebuked by the Prince. For weeks William remained in the town, skilfully managing the turbulent citizens, till at last they were persuaded to lay down their arms, on condition that their worship, though excluded from the city, should be permitted in the suburbs.

Margaret in her relief wrote letters full of gratitude to the Prince, while Philip also sent to him messages of confidence and respect. He at the same time distinctly refused to grant the request William had again made to be allowed to resign his offices. But the Prince was not deceived by these assurances of gratitude. He knew that in their hearts neither Philip nor Margaret wished to believe in his loyalty.

Meanwhile the confederates were holding enthusiastic meetings, of which Louis of Nassau was the leader. They resolved again to approach the Regent, this time by a deputation of twelve, with Louis at their head. In their grey costumes and with the beggar's emblems suspended from their necks, they presented themselves before her on June 26. The attitude of the deputation was far from humble. They did not ask forgiveness for anything they had done. How should they crave forgiveness for seeking the good of their country? They even hinted that were their demands that Orange and Hoorn should be nominated to safeguard their interests refused, they would call in foreign aid.

The Duchess was furious. "I understand perfectly well," she said bitterly, "you wish to take justice into your own hands and to be king yourself." It was evident that the deputation had accomplished little, and had given rise in the mind of the Regent to suspicions that would not be easily allayed.

At Madrid, meantime, Montigny and Berghen were still treated with the outward signs of courtesy; they even seemed to have wrung some concessions from the King, though, as was only too soon to be proved, he was but playing them false till he was in a position to maintain his intentions by force. In a letter addressed to the Regent on July 31, Philip, incredible as it may seem, consented to abolish the Inquisition, and promised toleration as far as that was consistent with the Catholic faith. He also promised to grant a general pardon to all whom the Regent should deem deserving. He wrote almost affectionately to Orange and Egmont. On one point only he was still inflexible. The States-General should not be summoned with his consent.

Was it any wonder that the ambassadors congratulated themselves and their country? That they could do so was but a proof of their guilelessness. Even while they rejoiced, Philip, in the presence of the Duke of Alva and ten notaries, was signing a fateful and disastrous deed. It declared that the promise of a general pardon had been wrung from him, and that therefore he did not feel bound to keep it; while but three days later he wrote to his ambassador at Rome to inform the Pope that his abolition of the Inquisition was a mere form of words, as he well knew it was useless without the sanction of the Pope. This sanction, Philip concluded, he had no wish to obtain. And still the ambassadors in their guilelessness rejoiced.

And now the Regent, who was growing more and more dependent on the one strong man in the country, wrote to Antwerp to recall the Prince. His presence in Brussels, she averred, was imperatively needed. William warned her that the city was still in so unstable a condition that it would be imprudent for him to leave, but Margaret would not be denied. He must come to Brussels, and that immediately.

The day of his departure happened to be the day dedicated to the great festival of the Assumption of the Virgin. The procession of priests, carrying the image of Mary, was unmolested, owing largely to the fact that the Prince was still in the city. The procession over, the image was placed in the small chapel, rather than conspicuously in the cathedral, there to receive during the week the adoration of the faithful. And in the chapel they deemed her safe. But on the evening

following, some boys found their way into the chapel, and, mocking at the Virgin, asked, "Art terrified so soon? Hast flown to thy nest so early? Dost think thyself beyond the reach of mischief? Beware, little Mary, thy hour is fast approaching."

One of the lads then mounted the pulpit, and began mimicking the tones and gestures of the Catholic preacher. A young sailor, zealous for his faith, sprang upon the lad and flung him headlong down the steps of the pulpit. His comrades rushing to the rescue, a struggle ensued, the crowd which had gathered also for the most part attacking the sailor, while those who tried to protect him were bruised and beaten before they could carry him out of the chapel. It was with difficulty the keepers expelled the crowd and closed the doors for the night.

The magistrates of the town, having lost the Prince, were hopelessly bewildered. They wrangled late into the night as to whether it was necessary to take precautions against further disturbances, and finally they took none.

The scene in the chapel had roused the people, and the following morning a body of men, women and children remained in the cathedral after vespers. They began to sing the Psalms of David, and then, obeying a common impulse, rushed to the chapel and dragged forth the image of the Virgin. Some tore off her embroidered robes, some rolled her in the dust amid the shouts of those who looked on. Was she not, after all, but a dumb idol? The passions of the mob were roused. Nothing was too sacred to escape their fury. High above the great altar in the cathedral was an image of the Saviour, curiously carved in wood. Throwing a rope round the statue, the Christ was dragged to the ground, and with hatchets and hammers soon broken into a hundred pieces.

When at last the great cathedral, the pride of Antwerp, was utterly despoiled, the rioters made their way to the other churches and treated them after the same fashion. Ere another morning dawned thirty churches within the city walls had been sacked. Nuns and monks hurried hither and thither thinking to escape the fury of the rabble. But their terror was needless; for throughout the riot the fury of the mob was directed only against images, nor was any of the immense amount of property that was destroyed appropriated as

plunder.

Antwerp was not alone in her revolt. From city to city the movement spread, until in the province of Flanders alone four hundred churches were sacked. In Tournay a "guard of terror" was set, and the magistrates hoped their churches might escape destruction. But their hope was vain, for the mob swept through the city, stripping the sacred buildings to the very walls.

When the news of the riot reached Brussels, the Regent was wild with fear. She made preparations to leave the capital, and neither the threats nor entreaties of the Council would have kept her had not the magistrates, hearing of her intention, ordered the gates of the town to be closed and guarded. Being left no choice, Margaret appeared to yield to the wishes of the nobles, but henceforth she counted them her enemies, and denounced Orange, Egmont and Hoorn as secret traitors to the King.

On the 25th August 1566, the Regent was forced to sign a document named the Accord or Agreement. In this document she declared that the Inquisition was abolished, that his Majesty would issue a general edict protecting the nobles from punishment for their past deeds, and stating that public preaching of the new doctrines was to be permitted in places where it was already established. Letters were immediately sent throughout the country proclaiming the good news. And the people of the Provinces lifted up their heads once more and looked at one another in the face, no man daring to make them afraid. Was not the Inquisition abolished, and had they not gained freedom once more to worship God?

CHAPTER XI

Revenge Taken on the Image-Breakers

Churches pillaged! Images broken! When the news reached Madrid, Philip found it impossible to hide his real feelings. "It shall cost them dear," he cried, "it shall cost them dear. I swear it by the soul of my father."

But more was to follow. The Duchess, almost a prisoner in her own palace, wrote to him piteously, complaining that her hand had been forced. She had had no choice but to sign the Agreement or Accord, promising pardon to the confederates and liberty to heretics to hold their assemblies in those places where already the Reformed doctrines had been preached. The promises had, however, she treacherously added, been made only in her own name. She had been careful not to compromise the King. He would, she hoped, ignore the Accord, and speedily arrive himself in the country to avenge the wrong done to the ancient Church.

It was soon evident to the Netherlander themselves that they had gained nothing by the signature wrung from the Regent's fears on the 24th August. The Accord had been signed only to be broken as soon as Margaret felt her position less dangerous. And now, with Philip's permission to levy arms at last in her possession, her tone began to assume a boldness for which the nation was unprepared. Ere long troops levied in Germany were at the disposal of the Regent, and these, as also her Walloon regiments, she placed under the command of Aremberg and Meghem and other leaders, on whose loyalty she could depend.

Government, having troops, was competent once more to rule, to rule if necessary by force. Accordingly little or no pretext was used in

breaking the Accord which had given such joy to the nation on August 24. It was enough, having arms on their side, for Government to assert that the preaching now prohibited had certainly never been established in the place before the date of the Accord. It was enough for Government to make the permission to preach when persistently claimed of but little or no avail, since now, so it was asserted, preachers might perform no rite in connection with their services. The permission to preach had certainly never been intended to include the right to baptize, to marry, or even to bury the dead. And Government, thus playing the nation false, had no fear, since there were troops to maintain authority should it become necessary.

Count Egmont was now directed by the Regent to go to Flanders, where disorder still reigned, and reduce the province to obedience. Nothing loth, the Count obeyed, for, always a fervent Catholic, the image-breaking and pillaging of the churches had revolted him, and alienated his sympathies from the cause of the people. He was determined to show his loyalty by upholding Government, even should Government have recourse to force. "We must take up arms," he said, "sooner or later to bring these Reformers to reason or they will end by laying down the law for us."

And indeed there was the ring of truth in his words. For the men of whom he spoke were those who, to the number of sixty thousand, had already assembled armed at the different field-preachings in Flanders; men these who needed but an intrepid leader to march to victory and become masters of the whole country. They had even dared to dream, these armed men, that the hero of the people, the victor of Saint Quentin, even Egmont himself, might become their leader. But the Count had entered Flanders for but a few days before their dream was rudely broken. For Egmont came not as a deliverer of the people, nor even as a wise ambassador, but as a determined upholder of the Regent's policy, ready to punish those who were even suspected of having taken any share in the late disturbances. Image-breakers were executed, heretics were burned. The Count's zeal had no chance to cool, for it was skilfully fanned by his secretary, Bakkerzeel, who himself on one occasion "hanged twenty heretics, including a minister, at a single heat." Such treatment soon reduced Flanders to submission; such treatment made even the most hopeful

realise that the Accord had wrought no deliverance in the land. Egmont and his secretary had surely given striking proof of their devotion to the King's service, while the Count had even won a passing tribute of praise from the Regent.

Meanwhile William of Orange had returned to Antwerp, and succeeded in restoring peace to the disturbed city, as he had done also in Utrecht, Amsterdam, and the other principal towns under his care. Knowing that the Accord was being set aside on all hands, he yet arranged peace on the basis of its conditions.

But Orange looked forward to the future with but little confidence. He knew that the Accord meant nothing to the Regent. He believed it would be ignored by Philip, who would never allow himself to be defrauded of the vengeance he was already planning on all those who had dared to share, or even to countenance, the destruction of the sacred buildings of the Roman Catholic Church. This belief was confirmed by the report of his well-paid spies, who assured the Prince that Philip was secretly gathering large bodies of troops together with which he intended to invade the provinces of the Netherlands. The King's scheme of vengeance included the death of the leading nobles of the land.

Acting on his knowledge of Philip's plans, William, on October 3, held a conference with his brother Louis, Egmont, Hoorn and Hoogstraaten. They discussed the possibility of forcible resistance to a Spanish army. Count Louis was in favour of this, believing that troops might be raised in Germany with which to resist the foe. But Egmont and Hoorn absolutely refused to compromise themselves by taking up arms against the King.

William left the conference sadly. Though assured of the sympathy of Hoogstraaten, he knew that henceforth he could count on no aid from those who had been his closest friends, and to add to his sorrow was his conviction that Egmont and Hoorn were walking straight into a trap prepared for them by the King.

And now William redoubled his watchfulness. Philip in his distant Cabinet was, unknown to himself, subjected to yet closer espionage. Even his private secretary was in the pay of the Prince. The Regent, growing uneasy, complained to Philip that his private letters were tampered with. But Philip in his wisdom had no

apprehension. Apprehension! Philip always locked up his letters. He carried the key with him. It never left his pocket. Of what should he be apprehensive?

He wrote to the Regent chiding her for her foolishness, and telling her how futile were her fears. His correspondence was secure from all eyes save those for whom it was intended. Nevertheless while Philip slept, the key was taken from his pocket, and while he dreamed, his private papers were read, and their contents faithfully conveyed to the Prince of Orange.

With the aid of his brothers Louis and John, William now formed a league in Germany in defence of the Reformers of the Netherlands, and slowly but unceasingly preparations were made to meet force with force. At this time, too, Orange gave up all connection with the Roman Catholic Church, and became one with the Reformers in faith as well as in sympathy.

The year of 1566 was drawing to a close, and Government, weak when the year had dawned, had become powerful once more. The confederates were scattered, the Accord had brought but transitory relief to the nation. Egmont, completely obedient to the King, was imposing garrisons on all the cities of Flanders and Artois. These garrisons were ordered to maintain implicit obedience to the orders of Government, and to crush out any sign of enthusiasm on the part of the heretics. Accordingly the Regent now felt herself at leisure to effect the reduction of Valenciennes, a town in the province of Hainault, strongly tainted with heresy.

Noircarmes, the Governor of the province, was ordered to secure the obedience of the town by throwing into it a garrison of three companies of horse and as many of foot. The citizens might have yielded to the Governor's commands had their courage not been inflamed by a Frenchman named La Grange. He was a preacher of the Reformed doctrines, whose eloquence gave him unbounded influence over the masses. La Grange warned his hearers that should a garrison be allowed to enter the town, their liberty would be for ever lost, and the first to become victims of the soldiers' cruelties would be those who belonged to the Reformed faith. The citizens listened to the eloquent voice of their preacher, and unanimously refused to admit the garrison.

Noircarmes angrily told the magistrates to exert their authority, but they were powerless in their efforts to weaken the effect of La Grange's eloquence. Accordingly on the 17th December 1560 a proclamation was issued by the Regent, declaring Valenciennes to be in a state of siege and all the inhabitants rebels. Nor was this all. Noircarmes' orders were stringent. Any city, village, or province holding communication with Valenciennes, buying or selling with its inhabitants, or aiding them with counsel, arms, or money, would be considered rebel, and as such be executed with the halter!

The inhabitants of Valenciennes were in no wise intimidated. Not even the formidable numbers of troops assembling under their walls could daunt their courage, while they were sustained by the presence of La Grange in their midst. From outside, too, there was hope of succour, notwithstanding the strictness of Noircarmes' siege. For the confederates were once again uniting, and sent promises of help to the beleaguered citizens. Orange also privately encouraged them to refuse admittance to a garrison, while from the country came hopes of a general rising.

The burghers were proud of their town and confident in its defences. Starvation was not even dreaded, for the city was well supplied with food. The hopes of the doughty burghers were high. They indulged in frequent sallies. They tempted their enemy to engage in frequent skirmishes. They even laughed at the fiery Noircarmes and his six officers, and thought it a brave joke to christen them the "Seven Sleepers." Their leisurely methods deserved the title. Nor did their joke end there. The papists of Arras were reported to be sending artillery to aid in the siege. The besieged must mock at the enemy by placing on the ramparts of their city huge spectacles, three feet in diameter. Perchance without such aid the approaching help would reach the enemy unnoticed. From the pulpits of the city the voices of the Reformed preachers rang out, eloquent over the deeds of heroes of old. Among the inhabitants of Valenciennes might there not also dwell a Joshua or a Judas Maccabeus, as among the Israelites of old?

In the meantime the general rising throughout the country had not taken place. There were, however, large gatherings at two separate points.

Pierre Cornaille, once a locksmith, thereafter a Calvinist preacher, had now determined to try his fortune as a general. He collected at Lannoy an untrained band of nearly three thousand. Countrymen armed with pitchforks gathered around his standard, students too and old soldiers armed with rusty matchlocks, pikes and halberds helped to swell his force.

Another band, as strange and motley as these, was collecting at Watrelots, in the hope of joining Cornaille's force, and together marching to the relief of Valenciennes.

But the "Seven Sleepers" were awake. Indeed Noircarmes was never known to have been caught napping, despite the joke of the inhabitants of the besieged city. Early in January 1567 he fell upon the locksmith's army at Lannoy, while on the same day the Seigneur de Rassinghem attacked the force at Watrelots.

Noircarmes found no difficulty in dispersing the untrained rabble under Cornaille. They fled indeed at the sight of the enemy, many of them in their fright throwing away their weapons before they had struck a single blow. Of those who fled many were hunted into the river, while a thousand soon lay stretched on the field destroyed by Noircarmes' first charge.

Rassinghem meanwhile attacked the troops at Watrelots under Teriel. Although he was far outnumbered, he had the advantage of being at the head of six hundred disciplined troops, and these soon put to flight or cut in pieces half the rebel force. Some, however, took refuge in a cemetery. Here, behind the stone wall, they entrenched themselves, and made a desperate stand against the attack of Noircarmes' men. They were, however, soon forced to abandon their position, when they retreated into the church. As they struggled through the narrow doorway a sharp arquebusade was poured in upon them. Escape was impossible, and hundreds perished, while those who managed to effect an entrance into the church were hunted up the narrow steps that led to the belfry. The triumphant army then lighted a fire at the foot of the steeple and fed its flames without intermission until the miserable fugitives were all roasted or suffocated.

Thus in dire defeat ended the first struggle in the great fight now beginning for religious liberty in the Netherlands. Government was

elated with its success, but into the hearts of those shut up in Valenciennes there crept a chilling fear. Help from outside would be slow to reach them now that the forces under Cornaille and Teriel had been slain and scattered, while the spectacles on the ramparts seemed but a sorry joke now that the enemies were seen but too plainly crowding around the city walls.

Noircarmes resolved to press the siege more closely. He pillaged all the villages in the neighbourhood and laid waste all the surrounding fields. The citizens of Valenciennes, with a failing supply of food, knew that the supply from without was threatened by Noircarmes' actions, knew too that any, were they men, women or children, found attempting to communicate with them would be slain without mercy. At length a day came when Noircarmes from a battery of twenty heavy guns opened a heavy fire on the city. Shot and shell penetrated into every corner of the town, and the terrified inhabitants, after enduring four hours of disastrous fire, so far humbled their pride as to beg for a parley. To this the general agreed, without, however, allowing his guns to cease firing for a moment. Deputies from the city informed Noircarmes that the citizens were now prepared to capitulate on the terms originally proposed by the Government. To this Noircarmes replied with scorn that it was not his wont to make terms with a fallen enemy. With heavy hearts the deputies returned to the city to report the failure of their mission. And still the storm of shell and shot continued.

Palm Sunday dawned. It was the 23rd of March. Women and children with branches of palm trees in their hands wandered restlessly along the streets. Here and there, seized with sudden fear, little groups were kneeling to pray for deliverance. And still the cannonade continued, creating such terror and despair, that before a breach had been effected an almost unconditional surrender was offered. That the city should not be sacked or the inhabitants slaughtered was agreed to by Noircarmes.

On the 2nd April 1567, four months from the commencement of the siege, the victorious army marched into the city of Valenciennes. Noircarmes' first act was to go to the town house, where he found the assembled magistrates. These he at once turned out of office, himself assuming control of the city. He then proceeded to seize the leaders

of the rebellion, and they, along with La Grange, were loaded with chains and thrown into a dungeon, thereafter suffering death on the scaffold. The preacher lost neither his courage nor his eloquence as he was led to death, but loudly proclaimed that he was willing to suffer for having preached the pure Word of God to a Christian people. The executioner threw him from the ladder while he was still speaking. Thus, amid the sobs of the terrified citizens, perished the preacher who had encouraged the city to resist the Regent's demands. "May I grow mute as a fish," he had cried ere the siege was proclaimed, "before I persuade my people to accept a garrison of cruel soldiers, by whom their rights of conscience are to be trampled upon."

The Regent was victorious. The Reformed religion was abolished in the city. Not only so, but Valenciennes having fallen, other rebellious towns had no courage left, and sullenly admitted the garrisons Margaret now imposed upon them. Maestricht, Tornhut, Ghent, Ypres, and Oudenarde, these all bowed their necks to the hated terms. Antwerp and a few towns in Holland were alone found steadfast in their resistance to the tyranny of the Regent.

CHAPTER XII

William of Orange Pacifies Antwerp

Since October William had been in his own provinces of Holland and Utrecht, repressing disorder on the basis of the Accord of August 24, only to find, however, a few weeks later, that all his arrangements had been cancelled by the Duchess. She withdrew all privileges from the Reformers, peremptorily forbidding the preaching of the Reformed faith either within or without the walls of the cities. This she did while fully aware that the Prince had restored order on the understanding that every privilege granted by the Accord should be strictly guarded.

It was becoming daily more impossible for William to allow his work to be undone by the foolish policy of a treacherous woman. Largely by his personal influence he had restored peace in Holland and Utrecht, and men of all ranks and religions were grateful to him for the security which seemed now assured, while the Regent disowned his deeds and on every opportunity reviled his character to the King. Yet the unselfishness of his acts was apparent. Holland in its gratitude voted the Prince 50,000 florins, as a recognition of his labour on their behalf. But he, though in debt and pressed for money, refused the gift, telling Philip that it was not his wish that any one should think his actions were governed by motives of avarice or private gain, rather than by the true affection which he had for his Majesty's service and for the good of the country. In spite of his true affection, however, he was forced by the Regent's next move into an attitude of rebellion, if not to the King himself, at least to his counsellors and his policy.

Margaret demanded from the nobles a new oath of allegiance, an

oath by which all who held office for the King solemnly pledged themselves to obey the orders of Government, "everywhere, and against every person, without limit or resistance." Count Mansfeld had not hesitated to take the new oath. Aerschot, Berlaymont, and Meghem took it with fervour, and after a little wavering Egmont also took this irrevocable step. Orange, however, spurned the idea. "A new oath!" he had not yet broken the one already taken of allegiance to the King, nor did he intend to do so. He was still ready to do all lie could for the real interest of the monarch. It was no hypocrisy for the Prince to use such language, both now and later on, when he entered the Netherlands with an army in the hope of overthrowing for the King's good the King's representative, Alva. There was but one alternative to taking the new oath, and this Orange had already accepted when he resigned the offices he held on behalf of the Government.

His resignation, however, was not accepted by the Duchess, who in the meanwhile felt that the Prince was the one man in the country whose influence it was necessary to retain. She accordingly asked him at once to take measures against Brederode, who was actively engaged in levying troops in and around Antwerp. Orange had returned to Antwerp early in February 1567, but he was little inclined to accede to the Regent's request. Brederode, it was true, was rash, yet he was whole-hearted in his endeavour to check the spread of tyranny, and the Prince resolved to leave him to enroll his troops unchecked. He meanwhile devoted himself to preserving peace in Antwerp, of which city he was burgrave.

But the Regent could not tolerate such indifference to her wishes, and after shrill and reiterated commands she at length induced the Prince to issue a formal proclamation forbidding the Count's enlistments, but otherwise he continued to ignore Brederode's efforts. The Count, however, moved northwards, and still went on with his work of enrolling troops.

Meanwhile in Brussels there was a feeling of alarm. The enrollment of rebels must end. Egmont, anxious to give further proof of his loyalty, offered to throw himself at once into the Isle of Walcheren to dislodge any rebels who might have gained an entrance there, but his services proved unnecessary. The rebels, it was true, had been cruising about in the neighbourhood of Flushing, but they had been

refused admittance into any of the ports of the island. They therefore sailed up the Scheldt, and landed at a little village called Ostrawell, little more than a mile distant from Antwerp. The commander of the rebels, Marnix of Tholouse, was a young nobleman who had left college to fight for the cause of liberty. A mere lad, accomplished and talented, he had yet nothing but his courage to fit him for the post he had undertaken. Inexperienced himself, he led a troop as inexperienced, composed of raw youths, vagabonds, and outlaws. Marnix, however, posted his army, such as it was, in a convenient position in the little village. The Scheldt and its dykes lay to his rear, his right and left were protected by the dykes and the village, while before him he threw up a breastwork and sunk a trench. This accomplished, Tholouse set up his standard, and to it there flocked many vagrants from the countryside. Within a few days the young nobleman had 3000 men in his camp, while Brederode, still busy in Holland, boasted he would soon be in the field with at least 6000 troops.

The alarm in Brussels was growing. The Regent felt it was necessary to act. With some reluctance she accepted the offer made by Lannoy, Seigneur de Beauvoir, commander of her bodyguard, to destroy the rebels before their numbers were further increased. On March 12 the intrepid officer despatched secretly a force of 8000 troops towards Ostrawell. Though few in number these were all picked men. To avoid suspicion the soldiers were sent off in small companies, unarmed, save with sword and dagger. Helmets, bucklers, spears, flags, drums were handed over to the officers and conveyed noiselessly to the Abbey of St. Bernard. Here, within a league of Antwerp, before daybreak the following morning, De Beauvoir met his soldiers and gave them their arms. Their orders were plain. With banners furled and muffled drums, the troops were to advance silently till within sight of the enemy. The foremost section was then to fire, retreat to the rear and load, while the next company were to do as the first had done. Above all, not an arquebus was to be discharged until the faces of the enemy could be clearly distinguished.

The troops started. Soon they were in full sight of Ostrawell. Flags were unfurled, trumpets sounded, the roll of drums was heard, and with loud huzzas the 8000 picked men advanced upon the rabble entrenched behind their breastworks. Tholouse hastened out to

welcome, as he believed, a detachment of Brederode's promised force. The cross on the banners soon undeceived him. His disappointment was bitter and his surprise complete, yet, "like a brave and generous young gentleman as he was," he lost no time in drawing up his men for action, assuring them that if they would but defend their breastworks courageously, so small a force could do them no serious harm. But the young nobleman had no power to infuse his own brave spirit into his undisciplined followers. Already, at the mere sight of the enemy, they were panic-stricken.

De Beauvoir's veterans came coolly on, aiming deliberately at their enemies, though themselves exposed to fire. The fire of those behind the fortress, however, did little harm to the assailants, as it rattled aimlessly over their heads, while the defenders fell as often as they ventured to show themselves above their bulwarks. The trench was crossed, the breastwork carried at a single determined charge. Resistance there was none, the rebels fleeing in terror as soon as the enemy entered their fort. They fled, terror-stricken, and what followed was no longer a battle but a hunt. Hundreds were cut down as they fled. Hundreds were driven into the river Scheldt. Many more vainly dreamed of safety as they took refuge in a farmhouse. It proved but a trap, for De Beauvoir's men set fire to the building, and every rebel who had entered it was either burned alive or shot. The body of Tholouse, the brave young scholar, was cut into a hundred pieces.

De Beauvoir had won a complete victory. Writing to the Regent, he paid a pleasing tribute to his veterans, telling her that there were "some very valiant fellows in his little troop." Truly they had acquitted themselves bravely and with entire success of the task entrusted to them.

In Antwerp, but a league away, the excitement was intense. The ramparts, the roofs, the church towers were thronged by anxious spectators. The sympathies of 40,000 of the inhabitants in Antwerp were with the rebels. Looking down from the battlements they watched in growing suspense. Would Tholouse hold Ostrawell? Would the breastwork and the bravery of its defenders win the day? And still they gazed, till at last the cry arose, "They fly! they fly!" Too soon they knew the flight meant disaster to their hopes. It was not the Government troops who fled. The fugitives were those who from

the surrounding country had flocked to the standard of liberty.

The citizens of Antwerp could watch no longer. Their excitement had become uncontrollable. The battlements were deserted while they hastened to arm, and then rushed madly to the gate. The burghers had determined to go to the help of their friends. They reached the gate, but only to find it locked. Dismay, succeeded by a terrible tumult, prevailed when the 10,000 men already in arms found the gate not only locked, but guarded by order of their burgrave, the Prince of Orange. He must be a strong man indeed who could control such a mob. Yet in the city was one who could achieve the feat. Antwerp, its enormous wealth, nay more, its women and children, had been confided to the care of William of Orange. And he had accepted the responsibility, and now, in the crisis which had come upon the city, the Prince was determined to discharge it to the uttermost. The citizens, indeed, were to see the mettle of which their burgrave was made. Mounting his horse, he rode quietly and unattended down to the Red Gate, where the mob raged furiously. Howls of execration greeted him. An angry clothier aimed an arquebus full at his breast, shouting, "Die, treacherous villain!" but the weapon was struck away by another hand in the crowd.

The Prince, undaunted by the attack, and undisturbed by the abuse, began to address the crowd earnestly and imperatively. And the mob listened, listened till the wonderful power of William's personality asserted itself and held them quiet. Alone, without soldiers, without violence, he quelled the rage of 10,000 armed Calvinists who were thirsting for vengeance on the victorious Catholic troops. Unfortunately the postern of the lied Gate had been broken before the Prince had arrived, and the most excited of the mob were still prepared to rush forth upon the enemy at Ostrawell. The battle was over, urged the Prince, the Reformers already slaughtered. It would be impossible for a disorderly mob to retrieve the fortunes of the day. Once more his words prevailed, till only a determined five hundred insisted on leaving the gate. The rest of the mob, still restless and inclined to wreak their vengeance on the Catholics within the walls, since they had been thwarted in their wish to punish those without, thronged through the long, wide street into the very heart of the city, called the Mere.



Mounting his horse he rode quietly and unattended to the Red Gate

Meanwhile the five hundred, finding themselves in the open fields, felt their confidence waning. De Beauvoir, seeing the advance of a new enemy, had rallied his little army for a fresh encounter, shooting 300 prisoners he had spared for ransom, lest they should prove troublesome during the fight. Then, drums beating, flags waving, De Beauvoir marched towards Antwerp. The 500 Calvinists, in reality outnumbered and with their ardour damped, did not feel capable of meeting the enemy, and retreated within the Red Gate even more hastily than they had left it. On marched the enemy close to the city moat, and there De Beauvoir planted the banner of the unfortunate Tholouse and sounded loud a trumpet of defiance. But all was silent within the walls, and De Beauvoir, finding his menace ignored, removed his trophy and marched away with his troops.

In the city the resources of the Prince were being taxed to the uttermost, for the tumult grew as the hours passed. By early afternoon twelve or fifteen thousand Calvinists had assembled in the Market-place. Here they erected barricades of pavement and upturned wagons. They broke into the arsenal and carried off field-pieces, which they planted at every street and by-path. They stormed the city gaol and set free the prisoners, all of whom, grateful and ferocious, came to add to the numbers who were defending the stronghold of the Mere. An angry mob and powerful this, ready to pillage the Catholic churches and to sack the whole city. As the rumour of their threats spread, terror grew apace. The wailing of women and the cries of little children, fearing what the day might bring forth, filled the air.

On the part of the Prince of Orange courage and diligence but grew with the spread of the insurrection. He did not yet despair of saving the city. He ordered the eight companies of guards, enrolled in September, to be mustered. He summoned to a consultation the Senate of the city, the board of ancients, the deans of guilds. At the peril of his life he again went down to the angry mob, in face of their cannon, and demanded, in spite of their outcries, that eight deputies should be appointed to treat with him and the magistrates at the Town Hall. Again the Prince's influence prevailed and the deputies were sent, but the conditions hastily drawn up by William, and agreed to by the deputies and the magistrates, were not received with favour by the mob. They demanded the keys of the city. They did not choose

to be locked up at the mercy of any man. They even threatened to blow the Town Hall into the air should the keys not be given into their keeping.

At length the long day was over. It was nightfall, yet no settlement had been reached. Slowly the night hours dragged along. Would the mob fulfil their threats before a new day dawned? Fierce cries of "Down with the Papists!" "Long live the Beggars!" filled the air, but the mutineers did not leave their barricade. Day broke and still the city was unharmed.

During the whole of the following day the Calvinists remained in their encampment, the Catholics and city guards at their posts near the Town Hall. The Prince spent the day in drawing up a treaty of peace that might satisfy the angry mob, but their dislike to any reasonable arrangement was expressed with fierce determination. They threatened, without further delay, to plunder the religious houses in the city and the mansions of all the wealthy Catholics. They even declared that should the Lutherans not join them, they too should share the fate of the Catholics.

Another day dragged slowly by. Night brought with it no rest to the Prince. He had determined, if possible, to induce the Lutherans to join with the Catholics and all those who wished to preserve peace against an army of outlaws who were threatening to burn and sack the city. With this end in view Orange did not wait for morning, but had interviews that same night with the ministers and notable leaders of the Lutheran Church. Did the Prince know that men were as wax in his hand, or was his success beyond his highest hopes? Before the night was over the Lutherans had taken arms and encamped to the number of three or four thousand along the riverside, near St. Michael's cloister.

Nor was it Lutherans only who had that evening prepared to defend the city. The Prince had enlisted the aid of the deans of the foreign merchants' guilds in protecting Antwerp from destruction. They, with their associates, had undertaken to remain in their armour at their various factories, ready to act at a moment's notice.

On the morning of February 15, 1567, there were thus three distinct armies stationed at different points within the walls of the city. The Calvinists, 15,000 strong, lay in their encampment on the

Mere. The Lutherans, armed and eager for the fray, were assembled near the river, while the Catholics and city guards were drawn up on the square. There seemed still to loom before the city a great struggle, but William the Silent, foreseeing the terrible havoc and desolation that would be brought to every home should a battle be fought within the walls of the city, was still determined to avert the threatened doom.

The arrangements for peace drawn up by the Prince had been already read to the Catholic and Lutheran parties, and by them had been cordially approved. It was now imperative that the Calvinists should also approve them or that the quarrel should be fought out at once.

At ten o'clock the Prince of Orange, attended by Hoogstraaten and the magistrates, and followed by a hundred troopers, rode to the Mere. To distinguish them from the Calvinists they all wore red scarfs over their armour. Fierce and threatening as ever, the insurgents watched as the Prince and his few attendants drew near. They were, however, permitted to ride unharmed into the square. The conditions of peace were then, by William's commands, read aloud, after which he, with the greatest composure, spoke a few words. The arrangements for peace were, the Prince reminded them, founded on the concessions obtained by Antwerp in September, and granted the right of worship within the city, while it continued to refuse a foreign garrison. "Nothing," and his voice rang out clear and strong, "nothing further could be justly or honourably demanded by them." As for a struggle, he confidently declared it would be hopeless, as the Catholics and Lutherans, who were already agreed as to the justice of the treaty, outnumbered them by nearly two to one. Earnestly and affectionately he entreated them to accept the conditions offered to them by repeating after him the words with which he should conclude. Then, for the last time, as it proved, but with a firm voice, the Prince exclaimed, "God Save the King!"

A moment of suspense! the city's fate trembled in the balance. Then the magnetism of the Prince asserted itself over the vast throng, and the air was rent with one tremendous shout of "God Save the King!"

The day was won, and gratefully the Prince of Orange recognised

that his efforts had been successful. Antwerp was saved. Deputies from the Mere signed the treaty, while kind words were exchanged among those who but a short time before had been thirsting for one another's lives. Weapons were now restored to the arsenal, while Calvinists, Lutherans, and Catholics laid down their arms.

The Prince had indeed achieved a signal triumph. For three days 50,000 armed men could have been found in Antwerp. Of these many were incited, by a fierce religious zeal, to avenge their comrades who had fallen at Ostrawell on the Catholics within their reach. Yet not a blow had been struck, not a shot had been fired.

The Regent had followed the events in the city with alternating hope and fear. Her gratitude for the safety of Antwerp was forgotten in her annoyance with Orange for the terms on which it had been saved. The Reformed worship was still sanctioned within the city walls; the garrison was still refused. Then William of Orange deserved rather to be denounced than thanked for the arrangements he had thus foolishly made. And the Regent did not scruple to ignore the difficulties the Prince had overcome, while she wrote to Philip denouncing the methods by which he had restored peace to Antwerp.

CHAPTER XIII

Orange Leaves the Netherlands. Alva Arrives

The crisis in Antwerp over, the Prince of Orange wrote to Margaret of Parma on the 19th March 1567 repeating his resolution not to take the new oath of allegiance, and stating that he now considered himself suspended from all his offices, although she had refused to accept his formal resignation on her own authority. Advised by her Council, the Regent sent her secretary to try to induce the Prince to yield to her wishes and take the oath. "It were not right," he was to urge, "to resign responsible posts when trouble threatened the country."

But in the presence of the Prince the secretary's courage shrivelled up, before his fine words of scorn the secretary's arguments lost their flavour. Was he, William of Orange, to take an oath binding him to obey, without restriction, any order issued to him in his Majesty's name? The King's representative might be one whom it would ill become him or any of his race to acknowledge. Was he, William of Orange, to receive absolute commands from the Duke of Alva?

Before such unanswerable arguments the secretary retired, having, however, first prevailed on the Prince to have an interview with the Duke of Aerschot, Count Mansfeld, and Egmont. The meeting took place in the first week in April, at a little village midway between Antwerp and Brussels. Aerschot was unable to attend, and with Count Mansfeld Orange had never felt much sympathy. But between himself and Egmont there had always been a close and constant friendship, which in William's own touching language "struck its roots too deeply into his heart" to allow him in this, their parting

interview, to neglect a last effort to save Egmont from Philip's treachery.

Through information that had reached him from Spain, William knew that the secret condemnation extended to Egmont also. Eagerly he urged his friend to choose exile and the chance to become the champion of his struggling country, rather than rush upon the miserable fate towards which his blind trust in the King would surely lead him. But William entreated in vain. Egmont, always sanguine, was confident now of the royal clemency.

"Alas, Egmont," said the Prince, "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 as soon as they have passed over it to invade our country." Then, persuaded that he would see his friend no more, William of Orange threw his arms round Egmont, and as he embraced him tears fell from the eyes of both. It was their last farewell.

A few days later William wrote to the King, once more resigning ail his offices, and announcing his intention of leaving the Netherlands. On the 11th April 1567 he said farewell to Antwerp, and a few days later left the country for Dillenburg, the ancestral seat of his family.

Nor had William moved too soon, for not long after his arrival at Dillenburg, Philip's private secretary, who was also the secret agent of the Prince, wrote that he had read letters from the King to Alva, in which the Duke was instructed to arrest the Prince as soon as he could lay hands on him, and not to let his trial last more than twenty-four hours.

With the departure of Orange a great fear fell on the Netherlands. To whom could they turn for aid? Orange, to whom already the country turned as to a deliverer, was gone. The confederates were scattered. Brederode had had to leave the country, and Louis of Nassau, "the good chevalier and good Christian," as the Prince affectionately called him, was in Germany. To whom could they turn for aid? In their despair those who were able left the country to escape persecution which was intolerable. Many who were left behind sought again their old hiding-places, while some who loved their possessions more than their creed were suddenly transformed

into most zealous Catholics. These were now seen regularly at Mass, and neither day nor night did they omit to attend the services of the Church. The new religion was banished from every city, conventicles were broken up by armed men, preachers and leading members were hanged, their disciples beaten with rods and reduced to beggary, or imprisoned if they occasionally escaped the scaffold.

Resistance was apparently at an end, yet on the 24th May the Regent issued a fresh edict, more harsh than any former one. A sneer against a priest? It became a capital crime. Had a house been used for religious meetings? Those who owned it were sentenced to the gallows. Was a hymn sung at the burial of a relation? Those who took part in the melody had to pay for doing so with their lives.

The publication of this edict drove the country into even greater desperation. The people left the country in crowds, till they were paralysed by yet another proclamation. For the Regent now found it necessary to forbid all persons, whether foreigners or natives, to leave the country or to send away their property. She at the same time prohibited all ship-masters and wagoners from assisting in the flight of any such fugitives, upon the pain of death. It seemed that no escape was possible, it seemed that the doom of the people was sealed. But Philip was determined to make assurance doubly sure. The Regent indeed wrote with considerable satisfaction that the country was pacified, but the King had determined that it should be crushed. He was even now sending to the Netherlands a Spanish army, at whose head was the ferocious Duke of Alva, bringing with him well-nigh royal powers.

On the 15th April the Duke, with his army, left Madrid. By the middle of August they had reached the territory of the Netherlands, having accomplished a dangerous journey in safety and under perfect discipline. The Regent was furious at Alva's arrival. She had quelled the disturbances unaided, and she had no desire to share her laurels with the Duke. That the King had sent him without consulting her added to her bitterness. She could have told Philip that the very name of Alva was hateful enough to make the whole Spanish nation detested in the Netherlands. In spite of her rage the Regent knew that an official welcome must be given to the Duke, and accordingly Berlaymont and Noircarmes were despatched to greet him on his

arrival. Deputations from various cities also accorded a grudging welcome to the Duke. The most cordial greeting that met him came from Count Egmont, who, accompanied by other noblemen, rode forth from Brussels to show the Duke the respect due to him as Philip's representative. Egmont even presented Alva with several beautiful horses. For reasons of his own the Duke had intended to receive Egmont with respect and courtesy, but he found it impossible at the first moment to conceal his dislike. "Behold the greatest of all heretics," he said to his attendants as Egmont was announced, and his voice was not so low but that Egmont might have heard the accusation. Even as he coldly greeted the Count, Alva spoke in bitter and resentful tones which might well have aroused suspicion. Egmont, however, seemed unconscious of any slight, and Alva speedily became master of his feelings. He passed his arm affecttionately round the Count. He rode side by side with him, in apparently friendly conversation, and together they entered the gate of Brussels. Here they separated, the Duke, without alighting, proceeding to the palace to announce his arrival to the Regent.

For three days Margaret had been debating with her Council as to the possibility of refusing to see the Duke. That he had been sent to supersede her she was convinced, and it was hard to brook the insult. Alva's submissive language had, however, slightly appeased her wrath. With Spanish courtesy he had offered to place his guards, his army, even himself at her feet, and though she was aware that these were but empty words, she resolved to receive his visit. His reception was, however, of the coldest. The Duchess remained standing motionless in the centre of the room, attended by Berlaymont, Aerschot, and Egmont, none of whom advanced to meet the Duke. A formal conversation followed, which lasted about half an hour.

The Duke, though respectful, found it difficult to conceal the chagrin he felt at this reception, nor did he try to conceal his sense of approaching triumph. It was accordingly with entire satisfaction that he next day received a request from the Council of State to show the powers with which he had been instructed by the King. That the extent of his powers would surprise them he was confident. The Duchess with her Council was made to understand that to her was left the bare title of Regent, while all real authority, civil as well as

military, was placed in the hands of the Captain, General Alva. To accept the nominal position left to her was not to be thought of for a moment. Margaret wrote to Philip, not attempting to conceal her anger at the insult he had offered her, and demanding that her resignation should at once be accepted.

Meanwhile Alva proceeded to introduce his Spanish soldiers into many of the principal cities. Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, were forced to accept the indignity, while the Duke, to add if possible to their humiliation, insisted that the magistrates should transfer their keys to his keeping. Ghent humbly begged to protest against this last indignity, and Egmont was rash enough to voice the petition of the city, which, needless to say, was useless. Against the quartering of foreign troops in Brussels the Duchess herself protested, but the Duke was inflexible. Brussels was the royal residence, and its quiet could only be secured by a garrison. "If people murmur," he concluded, "you can tell them I am a headstrong man bent on having my own way. I am willing to take all the odium of the measure on myself." Thus was Margaret thwarted, and made to feel her helplessness, when any question of real power was involved. And now over Brussels, once the gayest city in the Netherlands, lay a deep gloom. Business was suspended, places of entertainment were unfrequented, the streets were silent and deserted. Many of the nobles had gone to their estates, from whence they could watch the trend of events. Those of the courtiers who remained had forsaken the Regent's palace and gone to pay their homage to her rival at Culemberg House. There at least merriment prevailed, for the Duke strove by fetes and entertainments to amuse the nobles and lighten the gloom that hung heavy over the capital.

That Alva even now was but carrying out a deep-laid scheme, on which Philip and he had agreed, was suspected by few. Yet the one aim of his costly entertainments was to draw round him the great nobles, especially those mixed up with the late rebellious movement.

In Spain the envoys Berghen and Montigny were already secured, for Berghen had drooped and died, perhaps with longing for his own country, and Montigny was closely watched and would never leave his prison-house alive. Egmont was still in Brussels, and Alva believed that he would not leave the city, but Hoorn had withdrawn to his

estates, and Hoogstraaten was in Germany with the Prince of Orange, and of the latter's return the Duke had little hope. Hoorn, when urged by Alva to return to Brussels, at first held aloof, but gradually his reluctance yielded to the pressure put on him by the Duke, and to Egmont's assurances of belief in the royal clemency. Hoogstraaten, warned by his good genius or by the counsel of Orange, was not to be entrapped.

Meanwhile Egmont received daily warnings to leave the capital, but to these he paid but little heed. He was determined to believe in the King's promises and in his gratitude for the services rendered, not only at Gravelines and St. Quentin, but more recently against the heretics of Flanders. Yet, in spite of his lightheartedness, the Count was greatly changed. It might be that he realised the gravity of his position more than his friends imagined. Lines were engraven on his face and his hair had grown white. Though but forty-six years of age, he looked old and worn, and his hidden fears caused him to sleep always with pistols under his pillows.

On the night of September 8 Egmont received yet another warning, delivered stealthily by a mysterious personage, apparently an officer of rank, who solemnly urged him to escape from the city ere the morning dawned. Yet still the Count refused to believe danger was imminent.

The following day, September 9, Egmont and Hoorn, with many other noblemen, were invited by the grand prior, Ferdinando, the Duke's son, to a magnificent dinner. The Duke himself sent his military band to the festival that it might be enlivened by martial music.

At three in the afternoon Alva requested the noblemen to adjourn to his house when their dinner should be ended. He wished to consult them concerning the plan of a citadel which he proposed to erect at Antwerp. Egmont, who was seated next to the grand prior, heard at this moment a whisper in his ear. It was Ferdinando who breathlessly murmured, "Leave this place, Signer Count, instantly, take the fleetest horse in your stable and make your escape without a moment's delay." Listening, the Count recalled the warnings that had come so repeatedly of late, and for an instant he was troubled. Half resolved to follow the Spaniard's advice, he rose and passed unnoticed into the next room. Still hesitating, he was met by

Noircarmes, to whom he repeated the warning he had that moment received. "Ha, Count," said Noircarmes, "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 not your escape be construed into a confession of high treason?"

At these words all thought of flight fled from Egmont's vacillating mind, and he returned to the banquet. An hour later (it was now four o'clock), Hoorn, Egmont, and the other nobles retired to the house of the Duke, who welcomed them courteously, and, spreading out the plans of the citadel for Antwerp, retired while the nobles discussed the plans with Alva's engineers. It was seven o'clock before the discussion ended. As the nobles separated, the Captain of the Duke's Guard requested Egmont to remain for a moment, as he had an important communication to make to him. As soon as they were left alone the Spanish officer asked Egmont to surrender his sword. Surprised, in spite of all the warnings that he had received, the Count did not answer. Again the officer demanded Egmont's sword, saying that he had been ordered to arrest him. At the same moment the door opened and the Count saw that he was surrounded by a company of Spanish musketeers and halberdmen. Finding himself thus entrapped he gave up his sword, saying bitterly, as he did so, that in times which were past it had at least rendered some service to the King.

Egmont was then taken to a room in the upper part of the Duke's house, a room already prepared for its guest. The windows were barricaded, the daylight carefully shut out, and the whole apartment hung with black. Here the Count remained for fourteen days, being allowed neither to see nor to write to his friends. His room was lighted day and night by candles. He was served in strict silence by Spanish servants and guarded by Spanish soldiers.

Count Hoorn had been arrested on the same evening as Egmont. He was confined in another room in the Duke's mansion, and met with exactly the same treatment as was meted out to Egmont. On September 23 both the prisoners were removed, under a strong escort, to the castle of Ghent.

The two nobles had not been the only victims on the fateful day

of the 9th September, for Bakkerzeel, Egmont's private secretary, had been adroitly captured, and the rich and influential burgomaster of Antwerp had been taken on the same day. The latter had been invited by the Regent, at Alva's request, to repair to Brussels on business. He obeyed the invitation, which was in reality a command, but, fearing some danger, he set out on his journey disguised so that it was impossible to recognise him. The coach in which he travelled had, however, no sooner reached the open country than it was fallen upon by a band of forty soldiers, commanded by a Spanish officer, and the burgomaster, in spite of his disguise, was seized and taken prisoner.

The whole plot for the different arrests had been Alva's, and he now wrote an exultant letter to the King explaining the masterly way in which they had been carried out.

In the Provinces, when the arrests became known, universal consternation reigned. Egmont, the victor of Saint Quentin and Gravelines, Egmont, whose services ranked him high above the masses, and whose devotion to the Catholic religion had been but lately made evident if he were prisoner, who then was safe? The Regent, when Alva sent to inform her of what he had done, made no effort to release the nobles, who had assuredly done her good service in troublous times. But her indignation was great that they had been arrested without her knowledge or permission, and she wrote once more to the King demanding that her dismissal should be no longer delayed.

On hearing of the arrests Philip at once wrote to congratulate Alva. Rome also applauded the deed, for only by such means could heresy be stamped out.

Yet there was one who saw more clearly than either Philip or the Pope. The old statesman, Cardinal Granvelle, when informed that Egmont and Hoorn had been captured, asked if the Duke had also drawn into his net the "Silent One," as he always called the Prince of Orange. He was told that Orange had left the Netherlands and was still free. "Then," said the Cardinal, "if he has not caught him he has caught nothing."

CHAPTER XIV

Alva's Reign of Terror

Margaret, Duchess of Parma, who for eight years had ruled with well-nigh sovereign power, now found herself a cipher in the land which she had governed. From the time of Alva's arrival she had not ceased to demand her release from this humiliating position. In October 1567 Philip at last accepted her resignation, at the same time appointing the Duke of Alva as Governor-General of the country.

The tidings of the Regent's abdication was received with dismay throughout the Provinces. If there had been evils in her administration, they were forgotten in the atrocities which they foresaw would follow on the appointment of the Duke of Alva. Addresses poured in upon Margaret from every quarter, and more than one of the Provinces showed their good-will by liberal gifts. Cheered by these signs of interest, Margaret wrote a farewell letter to the Estates in December 1567, and a few days later she left the country whose indomitable spirit she had failed to crush.

Alva was now in supreme command of the Netherlands, with authority as great as had the King himself. And this authority he was prepared to use. The disguise he had deemed necessary until the arrest of the nobles was accomplished might now be thrown aside. He would take no further trouble to hide his cruel purposes.

Already in September Alva had created a tribunal before which his prisoners might be tried without delay. Originally called "The Council of his Excellency," its name was soon changed to "The Council of Tumults," though it was popularly known throughout the country as "The Council of Blood." This tribunal, though provided with no charter by the King, exercised authority greater than that

even of the Council of State. Yet it was in reality only an informal club, of which the Governor-General was perpetual president, while all the other members were appointed by himself. Two members, Vargas and Del Rio, alone had the privilege of voting. They were both Spaniards, and Alva could have found no more suitable tools than these with which to carry out his designs.

Berlaymont and Noircarmes, having given abundant proof of their loyalty, had seats on the tribunal, but they found the wholesale butchery in which the Council indulged so abhorrent that they soon absented themselves from the meetings, their example being followed by the Chancellor of Gelderland and the presidents of Flanders and Artois.

As soon as the tribunal was established, the Provinces were ransacked in search of victims, and informers were encouraged to accuse their neighbours. Information poured in, and was duly placed before the tribunal, the Council sitting regularly morning and afternoon, while the Duke himself was often present for seven hours in the day. To try each case separately was impossible, and accordingly whole batches of those accused were condemned together, till from one end of the Netherlands to the other the executioners were busy. Stake, sword, gibbet, these all did their gruesome work, until the whole land ran red with blood. Innocence was no safeguard from the charge of treason. Thus Peter de Wit of Amsterdam was beheaded because at one of the tumults in that city he had persuaded a rioter not to fire upon a magistrate. He must indeed be a man in authority among the rebels if he had power to command a rioter, and, his good deed notwithstanding, Peter de Wit was put to death.

It was now late autumn of the year 1567, but in 1566 one named Madame Juriaen had struck with her slipper a little wooden image of the Virgin, while her maidservant, who had witnessed the act, had failed to denounce her mistress to the authorities. Though months had passed since the sacrilegious act had been committed, Madame Juriaen and her little maid must be punished. Accordingly, both were drowned by the hangman in a hogshead placed on the scaffold. Merry joy-bells rang no longer from the towers and belfries of the cities, only death-bells tolled their solemn notes through the long, dreary days. The Netherlands would have been depopulated had not stringent

orders closed the gates of every city. Grass began to grow in the forsaken streets. Silence reigned where formerly the busy stir of life was heard. The great manufactories failed, and the industrial centres were deserted.

One of the first acts of the Council in 1568 was, in the name of Alva, to summon Orange, Louis of Nassau, Count Hoogstraaten and other nobles to appear before their tribunal within thrice fourteen days from the date of the summons. Should they not appear, the penalty would be perpetual banishment, with confiscation of their estates.

That obedience would have been followed by death the nobles were well aware, and the summons was ignored. The Prince of Orange, however, publicly denied that either Alva or his self-constituted Council had any control over his person or his property. The defiance of the Prince cost him dear. By some strange oversight he had left his eldest son, a boy of thirteen years of age, in the country to continue his studies at the College of Louvain. Alva saw his chance of revenge, and did not hesitate to grasp it. He determined at once to seize the son as hostage for the good behaviour of the father.

On the 13th February 1568 Signer de Chassy, attended by four officers and twelve archers, presented himself at the College of Louvain and demanded to see the Prince's son. When the young nobleman appeared, De Chassy handed him a letter, in which he was told to place entire confidence in the bearer of the despatch. With a boy's excitement he read that it was the desire of the King to see him educated for the royal service. The young Count de Buren's curiosity was aroused, and he listened eagerly when De Chassy proceeded to invite him in the name of his Majesty to Spain, adding that he himself would be his escort. Should his tutor be willing, he, along with his two valets, two pages, a cook and a keeper of accounts, were to accompany the young Count.

It had been arranged that the lad should be taken to Antwerp, after which he would be escorted to Flushing, there to embark for Spain. The scheme sounded delightful to the lad. He accepted the invitation of his captors readily; he even wrote to the Duke of Alva, who had arranged the pleasant trip, to thank him for his kindness. Indeed he did all in his power to help his enemies in their attempt to

kidnap him. During his short stay at Antwerp he was feted in a way to delight his boyish tastes, and he set out for the gloomy land of Spain without reluctance.

Philip's revenge had in it a refinement of cruelty. The Count de Buren suffered neither imprisonment nor torture, but he was trained in such a way that when he grew to be a man there was left in his character no trace of the noble and self-sacrificing spirit which was the rightful inheritance of all who belonged to the House of Orange of Nassau.

Meanwhile consternation reigned at the University of Louvain. The University had statutes and privileges which even the Duke dare not infringe. The abduction of a pupil was a gross violation of these privileges, and the professors did not hesitate to assert their rights and to demand the restoration of their pupil. It was in vain.

Vargas, upon whom as Alva's deputy the professors waited, treated them with but scant courtesy. They pleaded the privileges of their order. "We care nothing for your privileges," answered Vargas, as he dismissed the now fearful and downcast professors.

Meanwhile the terrible Blood Council was besieged with petitions on behalf of those who were imprisoned, but these in nowise softened the hearts of those to whom mercy was a virtue as foreign as was justice. To the magistrates of Antwerp, who came with a prayer for mercy on behalf of some of their distinguished citizens, the Duke's answer was fierce and passionate. "How dare the magistrates intercede for traitors and heretics?" he shouted angrily. "Was not Antwerp a very hotbed of treason?" "Let them look to it in the future," he continued, "or he would hang every man in the country, for his Majesty would rather the whole land should become an uninhabited wilderness than that a single Reformer should exist within its territory."

And indeed it was not long before a sentence of death was actually pronounced upon all the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

The sentence was issued by the Pope, and ten days later confirmed by the King, who ordered it to be carried into execution, without regard to age, sex, or condition. A few persons specially named were alone exempted from this awful doom. No added impetus was needed by the cruel Blood Tribunal, yet the sentence

supplied one. Alva complacently wrote to Philip that as soon as Holy Week was over he hoped to execute eight hundred heads. The Duke had also determined to end the disturbances caused in the street by the speeches which the victims addressed to the onlookers as they passed to the scaffold. His invention was sufficiently brutal. A new gag was invented. The tongue of each prisoner was screwed into an iron ring, and then seared with a hot iron. It at once became so swollen and inflamed that there was no possibility of it again slipping from the ring, and speech was of course impossible.

Meanwhile nine months had passed since Egmont and Hoorn had been imprisoned in the strong citadel at Ghent. They had met with none of the indulgence usually granted to prisoners of State. They were allowed to take no exercise in the open air. They were shut off from intercourse with any members of their family, and but for the care of friends would have had to go without even the necessaries of life. Their enemies had not been idle. "Bakkerzeel," wrote the Duke to Philip, "makes disclosures every day respecting his master, Count Egmont. When he is put to torture, wonders may be expected from him in this way." But the rack extracted nothing from the unfortunate man save some obscure information as to where Egmont had hidden boxes filled with plate and some caskets of jewels, remnants of his once splendid fortune.

On the 12th November 1567 Egmont and Hoorn had been separately questioned by Vargas and Del Rio, but it was not until the 12th January in the following year that they were provided with a copy of the accusations brought against them. Care had been taken that no offence should be forgotten. Egmont's crimes, amounting to ninety in number, included the folly of the fool's cap and livery, while the complaints against the minister Granvelle were counted as treason against the monarch. The accusations were answered by both prisoners with indignant denials of any treasonable or disloyal intentions. Ceaseless efforts were made on behalf of the two unfortunate nobles, and at length, as a great concession, they were permitted to procure an advocate to aid them in their defence. Egmont's wife, who, with her eleven children, had been reduced to absolute want, wrote touching appeals to both Alva and the King. But no appeal could alter Philip's purpose. The death of the nobles had been

determined before ever Alva left Madrid. Their doom was but hastened by an attempt on the part of Hoogstraaten, and a more formidable one on the part of Louis of Nassau, to bring an army to the aid of the paralysed people of the Provinces.

Alva determined to take the field in person, but before he could leave Brussels it was necessary that the case against Egmont and Hoorn should be concluded. Other matters also were despatched with speed.

On the 28th May an edict was issued, banishing, on pain of death, the Prince of Orange, Louis of Nassau, Hoogstraaten and others, and confiscating all their property. Four days later eighteen prisoners of distinction were executed in the Horse-Market at Brussels. On the 2nd June the case of Egmont and Hoorn was submitted to the Council of Blood, or, in other words, to Vargas and Del Rio, who quickly pronounced the nobles guilty of high treason and sentenced them to death.

The following day the prisoners were brought in a carriage to Brussels. Escape was rendered impossible, the carriage being guarded by ten companies of infantry and one of cavalry. On reaching Brussels they were taken to the Broodhuis, a large building still standing in the great square of the capital. The Council met on the afternoon of the 4th June, and Alva was present while the secretary read aloud that the two nobles, Egmont and Hoorn, had been found guilty of treason, and should therefore be beheaded by the sword, their heads being then set on poles and their estates confiscated. Thereafter the Duke sent for the Bishop of Ypres. The prelate arrived at dusk, when Alva informed him of the sentence which had that day been pronounced on Egmont and Hoorn, and commanded him to visit the condemned and tell them that their execution would take place on the following morning. "Moreover," added the Duke, "you shall shrive the nobles, and thus prepare their souls for death." Aghast, the Bishop fell on his knees, and with tears and earnest prayers besought Alva to avert, or at least to postpone, the doom which had been pronounced. His entreaties were vain. Roughly the Duke answered, "You will act as confessor to the criminals, not as adviser to the Governor-General." Thus rebuked, the Bishop withdrew to carry out his difficult mission.

It was nearly midnight when the prelate reached the Broodhuis. Count Egmont was fast asleep, wearied after his journey, perhaps dreaming that the change to Brussels meant a speedy release. The Bishop roused the sleeping Count, and, unable to speak, placed in his hands a copy of the terrible sentence. Egmont read it without flinching, astonishment mingling with his dismay, till, remembering his wife and little children, he exclaimed bitterly against the cruelty and injustice of the sentence. Gradually he grew calmer, and, listening to the good Bishop's words, he kneeled and confessed his sins and solemnly received the Holy Sacrament. Then, still calm, he wrote his well-known letter to the King:

> Sire – I have learned this evening the sentence which your Majesty has been pleased to pronounce on me. Although I have never had a thought, and believe myself never to have done a deed, which could tend to the prejudice of your Majesty's person or service, or to the detriment of our true? ancient, and catholic religion, nevertheless I take patience to bear that which it has pleased the good God to send. If, during these troubles in the Netherlands, I have done or permitted aught which had a different appearance, it has been with the true and good intent to serve God and your Majesty and the necessity of the times. Therefore I pray your Majesty to forgive me, and to have compassion on my poor wife, my children, and my servants, having regard to my past services. In which hope I now commend myself to the mercy of God. From Brussels, ready to die this 5th June 1568. – Your Majesty's very humble and loyal vassal and servant,
>
> Lamoral d'Egmont.

At ten o'clock on June 5, 1568, a body of soldiers came to conduct Egmont to the block. They brought with them, as the custom was, cords to bind the prisoner's hands. But the Count, showing them that already he had cut the collar from his doublet and shirt, and was therefore evidently prepared to suffer without resistance, they did not force this indignity upon him.

Escorted by the soldiers, and with the Bishop by his side, the Count proceeded to the Market Square, repeating, as he walked, some verses from the Fifty-first Psalm. In the Square 3000 Spanish

troops were drawn up in battle array. In the centre of the Square a scaffold had been erected. Upon the black cloth which covered it were placed two velvet cushions, two iron spikes, and a small table. On the table lay a silver crucifix. From every window and roof fearful and sorrowful faces gazed down upon the scaffold, while in the Square itself there surged and swayed a restless throng. The Count is seen approaching. His face is grave, and he quietly acknowledges the murmured greetings of the down-trodden crowd. With steady step he mounts the scaffold, and, kissing the crucifix, he kneels on one of the cushions. Drawing a silk cap, which he had brought for the purpose, over his eyes, he repeats the words, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," and as the words are still on his lips the executioner strikes off his head. A shudder passes over the vast crowd. Tears fall even from the eyes of the Spanish soldiers, who have known and honoured Egmont as a valiant general.

Of Count Hoorn's last hours less is known, though we learn that the terrible sentence left him as it found him, calm and composed. He was now seen to advance through the crowd, his head uncovered, his hands unbound. Calmly greeting those whom he recognised, he spoke a few words to the people, wishing them happiness, and begging them to pray for his soul. Uttering in Latin the very words that were last on Egmont's lips, he bent his neck to the stroke of the executioner. The heads of both victims were then exposed for three hours upon the iron stakes, the bodies being thereafter delivered to their friends. In spite of the soldiers, the populace crowded about the scaffold, muttering curses and uttering vows of vengeance on the Spaniards.

If the people had hated Philip before, their hatred was now increased tenfold. The execution of the nobles was ascribed, it is true, to the jealousy of the Duke, but Philip did not fail to proclaim his satisfaction with the deed, or to state that the Governor-General had only done what justice and duty demanded.



In the centre of the square a scaffold had been erected

CHAPTER XV

William Defies Alva

The Prince of Orange had at last thrown down the gauntlet. From henceforth he stood before the world the champion of his sorely bestead countrymen. Had he been goaded to this act by the wrongs done to him personally, could one have wondered? An outlaw, his eldest child kidnapped, his property in the Netherlands confiscated, his wrongs cried aloud for vengeance. Yet it was, above all else, the cry of the nation that rang in his ears and roused him to defy her pitiless oppressor.

On March 3, 1508, he had boldly refused to acknowledge Alva's right to summon him to appear before his self-appointed tribunal. Nor did his defiance end here. At Dillenburg he was busy enlisting the aid of the Sovereign of Germany on behalf of his oppressed country. At the same time he was doing all in his power to raise funds and to collect troops.

On April 6, 1568, Louis, one of the boldest soldiers of the age, received a commission from his brother, the Prince, and he, along with Van den Uerg and Hoogstraaten, were actively engaged in levying troops. William stopped at no sacrifice. He gave 50,000 florins, and sold all his jewels, plate, tapestry and other furniture to help to raise the funds which were necessary before he could organise an army fit to enter the Netherlands. For his task was no light one. The country he meant to invade was garrisoned by an old and experienced army, and was under the command of the redoubtable Alva.

But no difficulty could quench the steadfast determination of William to bring help to the victims of Alva's cruelty. The constancy of the Reformers had gained the admiration of the Prince, and their

faith had become his own. In his letters to his wife we catch a glimpse of the true source of his unwavering efforts to serve his country. It was not ambition that called to him, nor the love of power, but a strong belief that God had chosen him, as in olden days He had chosen strong men, to be the deliverer of his country.

Only after many weary delays was the Prince at length prepared to invade the down-trampled Provinces. An army of Huguenots and refugees was to enter Artois from France, another, under Hoogstraaten, was to cross the frontier near Maestricht, while a third, under Louis of Nassau, was to enter Friesland from the Ems. The two first corps, numbering respectively about two thousand and three thousand men, were easily routed by the Spanish troops sent out by Alva to meet them; but Louis was at first more successful. He reached the Provinces with a small body of troops. On his banners was blazoned the watchword of the patriots, "Freedom for fatherland and conscience." Thousands, he was assured, would flock to his standard. On the western wolds of Fresia he surprised the Castle of Wedde, belonging to Aremberg, Stadtholder of the province. Encouraged by his success, he then advanced to Appingadam, or Dam, where he was met by his younger brother, Adolphus, with a small troop of horse. Here his expectations seemed as though they would be realised, for daily armed bodies of troops, and peasants carrying any rustic weapon they had been able to lay their hands on, found their way into the camp.

Alva was aware that the Beggars were increasing in numbers, and he at once ordered Count Aremberg, Governor of Friesland, to enroll a force of twenty-eight veteran troops to march against the enemy, while he himself despatched Meghem with 15,000 more to support the Count. His orders were strict, that neither commander should risk an action until their forces had united.

After a long march Aremberg arrived close to the little unwalled city of Dam, where he quartered his troops. Meghem had been delayed by a mutiny among his troops. They had received no wages for many months, and now refused to move unless at least a small payment was made. Nor could Meghem's authority quell the disturbances until money sent from Brussels was distributed amongst them. He then advanced to within fifty miles of Dam, where he encamped,

at the same time sending to let Aremberg know that he might expect him with his infantry and light horse the following day.

Louis of Nassau meanwhile, on the approach of Aremberg, had broken up his camp at Dam and retreated to a strong position near the monastery of Heilger-Lee. To reach it he had crossed an ugly morass by a single narrow footpath. There had been trouble in his camp also, but a little money, ample promises, and the hope of booty had soon ended the mutiny.

On the morning of May 23 Aremberg came in sight of Louis, in his well-nigh impregnable position. Behind him lay a thick wood, in front a swamp. A hill on the left screened his infantry from the enemy's fire, while on the right was stationed his cavalry, under the command of his brother, Adolphus.

Recognising how strong was the position of the enemy, and knowing better than could his Spanish soldiers the great sweep of pitfalls in the morass before them, Aremberg had no wish to risk an engagement, at least till he was reinforced by Meghem's troops. But the Spanish soldiers chafed at the delay, and called loudly to be led against the enemy, whom they foolishly despised. They even hinted their suspicions of the loyalty of their general, as he still persisted in his plan of awaiting Meghem's arrival. Aremberg was a Fleming, they grumbled, and might well be in touch with his countrymen in the enemy's camp. The taunts stung the General to the quick. Discretion and obedience were flung to the winds. Placing himself at the head of his army, he marched towards the enemy. Feeling sure of an easy victory, the Spanish veterans rushed forward to the attack, and in a moment found themselves struggling helplessly in the morass. As they struggled, the musketeers of the enemy poured in a deadly fire upon them. The pikemen too charged upon those who were attempting to escape and drove them back to a muddy death.

At length Louis ordered the cavalry on his right to charge Aremberg's flank, and the unexpected movement decided the fate of the battle. Attacked in front and in the flank, hemmed in by the fatal morass, the Spaniards were thrown into utter confusion. Gallantly Aremberg attempted to rally his followers. As he rode hither and thither, doing his utmost to restore their courage, his horse was killed under him, and as he was mounting another he received a shot from

a foot soldier and fell from his saddle mortally wounded. Their General fallen, the soldiers fled in all directions, pursued by the enemy. The ground was covered with the dead and dying. Count Louis' victory was complete.

The battle was scarcely over when an advancing trumpet was heard, and the victors paused in their pursuit, thus allowing a remnant of the conquered Spaniards to escape. Meghem's force was believed to be advancing. He had come indeed, but with only a few attendants, his army being still some leagues from the scene of battle. Hearing from some stragglers how the day had gone, Meghem hastily fell back on Groningen, and succeeded in securing that important city, which was indeed the key to the province of Friesland.

Unfortunately Count Louis, hampered by want of artillery, had no power to follow up his victory by attempting to reduce Groningen. He and the Prince of Orange, while they rejoiced in the triumph achieved by their troops, were left to mourn the loss of the chivalrous Adolphus, whose life had just been given in the cause of freedom.

To Alva the news of the defeat of his Spanish veterans was wellnigh incredible. His choicest troops defeated by the patriots! Then the patriots should suffer for their audacity, and that right speedily. The defeat and death of Count Aremberg should be avenged. This time he would leave nothing to chance, he himself would lead his army forth to victory. Accordingly, after completing the arrangements for the execution of Egmont and Hoorn, and seeing them carried out to their fatal end, Alva left Brussels at the head of a large force of Spanish soldiers.

CHAPTER XVI

Alva Avenges the Victory of Heilger-Lee

Count Meghem, still in possession of Groningen, was ordered by Alva on no account to fight with the enemy. Reinforcements were hurriedly sent to the seat of the war, and by July 14 the force in and around the city amounted to 15,000 picked troops, and a large number of less experienced soldiers.

Meanwhile Louis of Nassau was helpless, owing to the total want of funds. The inhabitants of the province, knowing that the terrible Alva was already on his way to Friesland, were afraid to offer the help it was in their hearts to give Louis and his patriot band. Accordingly the only funds the Count could secure were obtained by blackmailing the affrighted inhabitants of the province, and his troops were on the point of mutiny.

As the Duke drew nearer, Louis hastily called together his whole force and stationed it at a strongly fortified camp, within half a cannon-shot of Groningen. His army numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Alva, reaching the city, marched his troops towards a spot from which it was easy to inflict damage upon the camp. His experienced eye at once saw the strength of the enemy's position. In front of Louis' camp, serving as a moat, flowed the river. Two wooden bridges leading across it were commanded each by a fortified house, in which was a provision of pine torches. These at a moment's notice would set fire to the bridges. The Duke resolved to send a small force of 500 musketeers to skirmish with the enemy, and if possible to tempt them from their trenches. But Louis, having little faith in his soldiers, who were on the verge of mutiny, had no wish to fight. Indeed he would

gladly have fallen back before his formidable foe. Towards evening, however, a large body of the patriot army was tempted to leave their trenches, and soon they were engaged in a fierce fight with the Spaniards. In but a few minutes the patriots were routed, and fled in confusion back to their camp. A regular panic followed upon their arrival, and the whole of Count Louis' army was soon in retreat. Fortunately the bridges had not been forgotten, the pine torches had done their work, and the retreating army had gained a slight start at the beginning of the chase.

But the Spaniards were to be kept back by neither the blazing bridges nor the flowing river. Vitelli, a Spanish officer, obtained permission to follow with 2000 troops. Some of his men dashed across the blazing bridges with their garments, and even their beards, on fire. Others sprang into the river and swam to the other side. The cavalry dismounted and drove their horses into the water. Then, clinging to their tails, they pricked their steeds forward with their lances. Having thus been dragged across the river, they joined their comrades in the mad chase; along the narrow dykes and through the pitfalls of swamp and marsh they followed, wherever the rebels fled. Darkness came with the night and put an end to the wild hunt. Three hundred of the patriots lay dead on the field; at least as many perished in the rivers and canals.

Next morning the Duke started with his men in search of the remnant of the rebel army, and four days later he reached Reyden on the Ems. It was here that he expected and feared to find that Count Louis had taken up his position. Feared, for the position was one which could not have been assailed without great difficulty, while a bridge across the river would have made it possible for Louis at any moment to retreat into Germany. But Alva looked in vain for the sight he had feared to see. Indeed Louis was at Jemmingen, a little farther down the river, and about four leagues from Reyden. Bold, but not very patient, the Count, who had seen little chance of keeping his rebellious troops much longer together, had placed them in a position where they would be forced either to fight or to perish.

Alva was delighted with the false move made by Count Louis. He had placed himself in a trap, being shut up between 12,000 Spanish veterans and the River Ems. And the river, flowing deep and wide,

could not be forded, nor would the passage be feasible save for a powerful swimmer, while as for boats, not more than two or three were available.

Louis did not hesitate to show his rebellious soldiers the position in which they stood. He was as clearly aware of the danger as Alva. Flight, he showed them, was impossible, for they knew that from the lances of the Spaniards they need expect no mercy. Their only chance of safety lay in their own swords.

Yet even as he spoke thus to his men, Count Louis was aware of one other means by which the onward course of the enemy might yet be stayed. He might enlist the great ocean itself in his defence. Had he but time to break down a few dykes, to open a few sluices, the whole country through which the Spaniards had still to pass would be laid under water. A strong detachment was at once ordered to begin the work of breaking down the dykes, while Louis himself, seizing a spade, showed his men the need there was for haste if the work of destruction was to be accomplished in time. Two or three tide-gates had been opened, two or three breaks in the dykes effected, when Alva, riding in advance of his army, appeared within a mile or two of Jemmingen.

It was then eight o'clock on the 21st July. The patriots redoubled their efforts. By ten o'clock the waters already reached to the knee, in some places they rose even to the waist. At that hour the advanced guard of the Spaniards arrived. Fifteen hundred musketeers were at once ordered forward by the Duke. In front of them rode a company of carabineers, attended by a small band of distinguished volunteers. This little band threw itself at once upon the troops engaged in destroying the dykes, and the rebels, heedless of the importance of holding their position, fled at the first onset. Count Louis, without a moment's delay, ordered a large force of musketeers to recover the position and complete the work of inundation.

It was too late the little band of Spaniards held the post with superb tenacity. Charge after charge, volley after volley crashed in among them, making terrible havoc of the little force. Yet still the Spaniards never loosened the fierce grip with which they held fast what they knew was the key to the whole situation. Before they could be driven from the dykes reinforcements arrived and the patriots

made a hurried retreat to their camp.

Alva then ordered 1500 musketeers to advance nearer to the camp to skirmish and draw the enemy out of the trenches as soon as possible. Gradually Count Louis" men grew bolder and the fight more grim. The Spaniards seemed but few in numbers. As the patriots redoubled their efforts the commander of the musketeers became alarmed and sent to the Duke for reinforcements. But the Duke's answer was that if he could not do the enemy any harm, he could at least, in the meantime, hold his own. So much he had a right to expect from a Spanish soldier. Again the fight raged so fiercely that the commander once more ventured to send for help. But again Alva refused his request. A third time the Spanish body was in such desperate straits that still more urgent entreaties for succour were sent to the Duke, but still he relentlessly refused to send troops to their assistance.

The result of his determination was seen about noon, when the patriots began to feel assured that the force they had to fight was but a small one. Perhaps the inundation had, after all, been successful. Perhaps the main body of the Spanish army was even now floundering in the onrush of the mighty ocean.

The patriots sent out boats to reconnoitre, and they returned to report that no large force lay in the neighbourhood.

Count Louis resolved to work on the rising courage of his men. He would incite them to make one supreme effort to cut their way out of the trap which held them fast. He was successful. His whole army at last marched boldly forth from their entrenchments, drums beating, colours flying. But already the concealed reinforcements of the Spaniards were on the spot, and the patriots found a stronger foe than they had expected. Their courage began quickly to decrease. Hardly had they advanced three hundred yards, when the whole body wavered and then retreated hastily to the encampment, having scarcely exchanged a shot with the enemy. Count Louis rushed from rank to rank, but neither commands nor entreaties were of any use; his terror-stricken men refused to be rallied. When even the battery which guarded the road was entirely deserted, Count Louis himself rushed to the cannon and fired them all with his own hand. But his single arm had no strength to turn the tide of battle, and he was swept

backward with his coward troops. A moment longer and the Spaniards had dashed upon the battery, and, turning upon the rebels their own guns, the road was soon swept clear. Then, rushing through the trenches, the Spanish soldiers pursued the retreating foe. A terrible massacre followed, the patriots forgetting even to defend themselves, so abject was their fear. While 7000 rebels were killed, only seven of the great Spanish host were slain. Count Louis himself, when all was over, barely succeeded in escaping by swimming across the Ems.

Two days later the victorious Spanish army marched back to Groningen, committing on their way such cruelties that Alva hanged those of his own soldiers who had been foremost in the dastardly brutalities.

CHAPTER XVII

Orange Returns to the Netherlands

During Alva's absence in Friesland the executions had been carried on with less energy. Even Vargas was growing less zealous in his gruesome labours. But with the return of the Duke to Brussels a new impetus was given to the Council of the Bloody Tribunal. Victims were hauled in cartloads to their doom, were it hanging, drowning, burning, or beheading. Notable among these victims were four, whose sufferings on the rack had been so intense that it was impossible for them to walk to the scaffold. They were accordingly placed in chairs, to which, as a necessary support for their mangled bodies, they were secured by ropes. The chairs were then carried to the scaffold and execution was done on their already mutilated bodies.

Of these sufferers one was Bakkerzeel, who had been Egmont's secretary, and another was the Burgomaster of Antwerp, who had been taken prisoner on the fateful 9th of September 1567. Even the Blood Council hinted that a pardon was due to the Burgomaster. His services to Philip had been both generous and constant. The funds for the King's first brilliant campaign in France had been furnished almost entirely by him. But no power could save him from Philip's pitiless representative. As the Burgomaster mounted the scaffold he was heard to murmur sadly, "For faithful service, evil recompense."

The Prince of Orange from his place of exile followed the events in the Provinces with a sorrowful though courageous heart. He knew that the oppressed people were crouching in mortal fear before their relentless tormentor. He knew that help was needed even more urgently than before. Yet on every side he was urged to await patiently

the course of events.

The Emperor Maximilian had written to Philip regarding Alva's treatment of Orange, and till an answer was received the Prince would be wise to pause in his efforts to free his country from oppression. The German Princes too were of the same opinion. "Your Highness must sit still," said Landgrave William. "Your Highness must sit still," echoed Augustus of Saxony.

But in spite of commands and expostulations the Prince of Orange did not sit still. Nay, he arose, determined to give immediate and persistent battle to the pitiless tyrant of the Netherlands. At his own expense and by almost superhuman exertion the Prince had assembled nearly 30,000 men. On August 31, 1568, he summoned all loyal subjects of the Provinces to come to his help. "Take heed to the uttermost need of the country," he cried, "and the danger of perpetual slavery for yourselves and for your children, until Alva the tyrant has been overthrown." The rich were called upon to give out of their abundance, the poor out of their poverty. Above all, William begged them, "while it was yet time, to do this before God, the fatherland, and the world."

His eloquent appeal received but a scanty response. How could the downtrodden Netherlander respond while the paralysis of despair was upon them, while Alva still ruled in their midst with his rod of iron? On behalf of the leading nobles and merchants some 300,000 crowns were promised, but of this amount no more than ten or twelve thousand ever reached the Prince.

Late in September 1568 William mustered his 30,000 men, of whom 9000 were cavalry. He was joined by Luney, Count de la Marck, at the head of a picked band of troopers. A bold, ferocious partisan he, who, by his fierce conduct and the cruelties of his soldiers to Papists, dishonoured the cause for which he fought. But even such rough associates the Prince of Orange could not afford to push on one side.

In the first week of October, William crossed the Rhine and descended along the bank towards Cologne. Then suddenly, on a bright moonlight night, he crossed the Meuse with his whole army in the neighbourhood of Stochem. The movement was a brilliant one. A compact body of cavalry was placed in the midst of the current to

protect the army, which, under its shelter, successfully forded the river, while it, though unusually shallow, reached as high as the soldiers' necks.

It was a great deed, and its fame spread throughout the country. Yet so impossible seemed the feat that by some its truth was flatly denied, while an unfortunate burgher at Amsterdam was scourged at the whipping-post because he had mentioned it as a matter of common report. Even the Spaniards began to tremble at the prowess of the Prince. But as for the Duke of Alva, he refused to believe the tale when it reached his ears. "Is the army of the Prince of Orange a flock of wild geese," he asked, "that it can fly over rivers like the Meuse?"

Nevertheless the deed, whether accepted or denied, had been actually accomplished. Once again the outlawed Prince stood within the borders of the Netherlands, defying the tyrant who had banned him. He had come with an army of disciplined troops, determined, were it possible, to wipe out the disgrace of Jemmingen. Could he but plant a victorious banner in the very heart of the country, thousands, he believed, would rally around it Accordingly, hoping either to force or entice Alva into a general engagement, the Prince marched into Brabant, with all the pomp and defiance that a conqueror would assume, and took up his position within 6000 paces of Alva's encampment.

The Duke was encamped close to the city of Maastricht, which furnished him with supplies and was under his immediate protection.

Communication between the armies was begun by the Prince of Orange, who sent a herald to the Duke to propose that all prisoners who should be taken in the coming battles should be exchanged rather than executed. Alva's answer was both brutal and insolent. The herald, booted and spurred, even as he had dismounted from his horse, was instantly hanged.

It was plain to the Duke that the Prince would offer battle, but he had determined that he would not fight, and this resolution once taken, he was inflexible. Even the possibility of defeat was too great a risk. Should William gain a decisive victory, he would at once be master of the nation. For Alva was well aware that the Prince was the idol of the people, who would even now flock to his standard if they dared. Should the idol win a great victory, the fears of the people

would be thrown to the winds. No, time should be allowed to work for the Spaniards; so said the Duke, though he knew the fiery spirit of his soldiers and the difficulty of restraining them from an engagement with the enemy. Winter was on its way, and cold and frost would soon combine to weaken AVilliam's forces, while the German mercenaries, with wages probably unpaid, and no hope of plunder before them, would in but a few weeks disappear as completely as though they had been defeated in the open field.

And the plan thus formed the Duke carried out persistently. He hung upon his adversary's outskirts, he encamped at such close quarters that the Prince believed a battle would be fought on the morrow. But when morning dawned the enemy had removed and was nowhere to be seen. For a month Alva pursued his irritating tactics. Twenty-nine times the Prince changed his encampment, and each time there was the Duke shadowing his movements, yet never to be drawn into battle. Food began to grow scarce in the army of the Prince, the country people, in their dread of Alva, refusing to help him in his emergency. The troops were growing discontented and clamoured for pay and plunder. A day came when the soldiers, maddened by their inactivity, broke out into open rebellion. The Prince's sword was shot from his side, and it was only with great difficulty that he succeeded in averting a general insurrection.

Meanwhile a reinforcement of French Huguenots, which William had been expecting, were on the other side of a river, waiting to join his army. The Prince, placing a considerable force upon a hill near the stream to protect the passage, proceeded to send his army across the river. Count Hoogstraaten, with his rear-guard of about 3000 men, was thus left alone to tempt the enemy, who had, as usual, encamped not far off.

Alva rapidly sent his son, Don Frederic, with a force of 4000 foot and 3000 horse to cut off the Count. The movement was successful, the hill taken, and the troops, who had been left to guard the passage and provoke the enemy, entirely cut to pieces.

Emboldened by his success, Vitelli, a Spanish officer, sent an envoy to Alva entreating him to advance, cross the river, and attack the main army.

Alva was furious that his plans were not better understood, even

by his favourite officer. "Go back to Vitelli," he shouted; "is he, or am I, to command the campaign? Tell him not to suffer a single man to cross the river. Warn him against sending any more envoys to advise a battle, for should you or any other man dare to bring me another such message, I swear to you, by the head of the King, he shall not go hence alive."

Meanwhile a few hundred of Count Hoogstraaten's troops had taken refuge in a house in the neighbourhood. The Spaniards immediately set the building on fire, and, standing around it with lifted lances, offered the fugitives the choice of being burned or of springing upon the uplifted spears. Thus entrapped, some, to escape the fire and the brutality of the Spaniards, stabbed themselves with their own swords, others embraced and then killed each other, the enemy meanwhile looking on and applauding. At this action Count Hoogstraaten, the tried friend of the Prince, received a slight wound, from which he died shortly afterwards.

The Prince of Orange, disappointed in his hopes of a general engagement, was still more disappointed at the abject fear of the people, who dared not lift their voices or open their city gates to welcome those who would deliver them from their oppressor.

Slowly the forecast of the Duke was being verified. The Prince's army was growing more discontented, the mutinies more frequent. The Prince's army was dissolving.

On November 17, 1568, Orange had no alternative but to withdraw across the French frontier. Here he disbanded his troops, after having sold his camp plate and furniture to satisfy their demands.

Thus triumphantly for Alva, thus disastrously for Orange, ended the campaign of 1568.

Orange was now a wanderer, in daily danger of assassination by the agents of Alva. It almost seemed that Alva penned the truth as he wrote to Philip, "We may regard the Prince as a dead man; he has neither influence nor credit."

The Duke now returned to Brussels and called upon the people to rejoice with him in his masterly achievement. And for very fear the citizens bedecked their houses with garlands and rang their joybells till they pealed forth merrily. They crowded to the great Square, the scene but lately of their hero's execution, and took part

in the gay tournament as they were bidden. But for garlands their eyes saw homes that were draped in black, for joybells their ears heard but the solemn knell to which they had grown used. The gay tournament grew strangely transformed, till they were conscious only of a scaffold, on which their hero and many of their comrades had suffered martyrdom, and the merry crowd seemed to change once more into a multitude of angry men and women, who muttered curses and vowed deep-voiced oaths of vengeance on the hated Spanish tyrant.

CHAPTER XVIII

A General Pardon Proclaimed

The Duke of Alva had come to the Netherlands with the purpose not only of crushing out heresy, but of filling the always empty coffers of the King. Confiscation of the estates of the nobles and innumerable fines imposed on the wealthy had failed to satisfy the needs of Philip's purse. Accordingly, the Duke could ill brook the loss which befell him shortly after his return to Brussels. Some merchant ships, sailing from Spain with 450,000 ducats for the Spanish army in the Netherlands, were chased by certain roving vessels into the ports of England. Here the merchant fleet lay, not daring to leave the harbour they had gained, for the privateers were watching in the neighbouring ports, ready to pounce on their prey as soon as they put to sea.

The Spanish ambassador in London appealed to Queen Elizabeth, who promised her assistance to the distressed merchantmen. But almost as soon as the promise had been made, she herself seized upon a large portion of the sum carried by the Spanish ships, and proceeded to use it for her own purposes.

Alva was furious, not only at the loss of the money, of which his need was urgent, but at Elizabeth's insult to the Spanish nation. He at once sent a special envoy to the Queen of England. Not only, however, was his messenger refused an audience, but the Duke was rebuked for daring, as though he himself were a Sovereign, to send an ambassador to a crowned head. To emphasise her disdain more thoroughly, Elizabeth then sent a secret commission to Spain to discuss the entire matter with King Philip himself.

Stung to the quick by this scornful treatment, Alva resorted to high-handed measures. He commanded that every Englishman

within the Netherlands should be arrested and his property seized. The result was that the same treatment was meted out to every Netherlander then living in England. The Duke, not to be baulked, thereupon gave orders that all intercourse with England should be strictly forbidden. The order was fatal to Flemish prosperity, and the commerce of the Netherlands received a severe blow, for which it received no compensation from the Spanish Government.

The Duke's wrath was not, however, averted from the heretics by his anger with the English Queen and the anxiety caused by the loss of Spanish gold. The gibbet and the stake still did their cruel work. Even death might not now save the victim from the tyranny of the Duke. Government spies were sent to watch over the dying, lest they should dare to breathe their last without first receiving the consolations of the Roman Catholic faith. Should no priest have administered extreme unction and the holy wafer, the estates of the dead were confiscated and their bodies dragged to the place of public execution. As for the living, death was ever close on their path.

In the north of Holland a poor Reformer, having been sentenced to death, attempted to escape by fleeing across a frozen lake. The officer of justice followed closely on his heels, unheeding of the danger of the race. It was late in winter, and a thaw had just set in. The ice cracked and strained beneath the weight of the hunter and his quarry. With desperate speed the fugitive reached the shore in safety, but as he gained the bank he heard behind him a crack of rending ice, a plunge, and then a great cry for help. There was none to hear save Dirk Willemzoon, the Reformer. Generously he turned and crossed again the perilous ice, then at the risk of his life he reached out his hand to his enemy and saved him from a terrible death. The officer would have saved his rescuer, but, being sternly reminded of his oath, he arrested Dirk, who in the following spring was burned to death under the most lingering tortures.

Almost at the same time four clergymen were executed at The Hague. Their profession was no safeguard, for, though leading blameless lives, they had ventured to favour the Reformed faith. Age could not save them, for though the eldest was seventy years of age, his grey hairs won no sympathy from the tyrant. Being men well known in the district, their execution was to take place with unwonted solemnity.

On May 27, 1569, clad in the gorgeous robes of High Mass, they were brought before a bishop. The prelate, taking a pair of scissors, cut a lock of hair from the head of each prisoner. Then, scraping their crowns and the tips of their fingers with a little silver knife, he removed, so he asserted, the holy oil with which they had been consecrated. The gorgeous robes were then removed, and the four clergymen were given over to the Blood Council, with a request that they should be treated with gentleness. Three days later they were executed at the stake, having, however, by the tender mercies of their judges, been strangled before they were thrown into the flames.

It seemed to the Pope that Alva, by his untiring zeal in defence of the Church, deserved some signal token of her favour. Accordingly, a special messenger arrived from Rome, bringing to the Duke a jewelled hat and sword, gifts but rarely conferred on any son of the Church. With the gifts came an autograph letter from his Holiness the Pope, begging the Duke to remember that when he put the hat upon his head he was guarded with it as with a helmet of righteousness. On the sword was carved the inspiring motto, "Take this sacred sword, a gift from God, by which thou shalt overthrow the adversaries of my people Israel."

But neither gifts nor commendations could increase the zeal of the Duke, nor enable him to add to the horrors of his religious persecutions. It was possible, however, to make a new attack on the resources of the people, and this, though it might be a matter of indifference to the Pope, would be pleasing to his master at Madrid. Alva, therefore, on March 20, 1569, summoned the States-General and boldly proposed a new form of taxation. All property was to be taxed one per cent immediately. A tax of five per cent was to be imposed on all transfers of real estate, and a tax of ten per cent on all articles of commerce to be paid each time they were sold. The five per cent and ten per cent were thus to be perpetual.

The country received the proposal with a cry of defiance, and the cry was uttered by Reformers and Catholics alike, for none would be exempted from this new demand. Petition after petition poured in upon Government, but Government would not yield. By dint of threats the States were at last compelled to agree to pay the tax of one per cent. On the question of the other two taxes they remained

firm. It was long before even a compromise was agreed to by the people, but in the summer of 1569 Alva pretended to be satisfied with a payment of 2,000,000 florins for two years, the term of payment ending in August 1571.

But Alva had at last gone too far. The hatred of the whole nation was now aroused against the tyrant. Even Vigilius, noted for his cringing ways, withstood the Duke's new measure in council, and those who had been faithful to the Spanish rule, Berlaymont, Noircarmes, and Aerschot, joined Vigilius in his condemnation of the measure. The bishops and clergy were against it, as was also Philip's council at Madrid. "Everybody turns against me," wrote the Duke to Philip, at the same time affirming that he would have his own way in the end. And the measures he took to gain it were in accordance with his character. The town and district of Utrecht refusing to pay the tax, Alva quartered a regiment upon them. And when even the insolence and brutality of the soldiers failed to subdue the citizens, their city and province were declared guilty of high treason. Their charters were abolished and all their property confiscated to the use of the King. At all costs the King's exchequer should be filled.

And now Philip, slowly, as was his wont, began to think that Alva's stern rule was no longer desirable for the Netherlands. If the time had not yet come to remove him from the country, at least the time had arrived to lift the ban from the people and proclaim a general pardon. It was true the Duke had himself written to Madrid entreating the King to let him retire from the Netherlands. His health was ruined. He was bitterly hated throughout the country, and even at Madrid, he ventured to hint, his fame was falling into disrepute. Moreover, he had now restored the Provinces to their obedience to their King, "and all this," he added, unashamed, "without violence."

But the King, while considering the plea of the Duke, felt that an amnesty must in the meanwhile be proclaimed. As early as February 1569 the subject had been broached to Alva, but it did not meet with his approval. When the matter was pressed on him he found reasons for delay, and when, towards the close of the year, four different forms of pardon were sent from Madrid, he was in no hurry to select the most suitable. In July 1570, however, the choice had of necessity been made, and the Duke was at length prepared to announce the general

pardon.

On the morning of July 14 the city of Antwerp was all astir, for it was here the long-expected pardon was to be proclaimed. The Duke, accompanied by a gay staff of nobles and officers, had arrived. At the head of a procession of clergy, robed in their gorgeous gowns, Alva paraded the streets of the city and entered the Cathedral, there to offer up prayers and hear Mass. Later in the day the Duke, wearing the famous hat and sword bestowed upon him by the Pope, arrived at the great Square. Here a large platform had been erected, and on the platform stood a throne covered with cloth-of-gold. On either side of the throne stood a beautiful woman, clad in garments, emblematic, the one of Righteousness, the other of Peace. The steps leading to the platform were covered with scarlet cloth, and here the courtiers and officers were drawn up, while the Square itself was thronged with troops, and to its utmost corner with the expectant citizens. When the Duke had seated himself on the throne, the pardon was read aloud, while the hushed crowd listened eagerly, anxiously.

It proved but a sorry pardon, and the murmurs of the people told of their discontent. Six classes of offenders were excepted from forgiveness altogether, while the forgiveness offered to all others was nullified by the condition that they should within two months make their peace with the Church and receive absolution for their sins.

Such was the form of pardon Alva had chosen for the Reformers, for men and women who, he well knew, would not now forsake the doctrines for which so many of their fellows had given their lives.

Ignoring, however, the general discontent roused by a pardon which was in reality no pardon at all, the Duke wrote to the King that the people were entirely satisfied with his kindness, save only those who could tolerate no single exception to the amnesty. But neither the King nor the Duke was really deceived by the falsehood, and ere long Alva was writing again to his Sovereign to acknowledge the outcry the pretended pardon was causing, and to confess that the odium for the meagreness of the forgiveness offered was thrown upon his shoulders. "My authority in the country is weakened, and the censures passed on my actions by both the Spanish and Netherland Governments does not tend to improve it. In truth," he added bitterly, "it is not wonderful that the whole nation should be ill-

disposed towards me, for I have certainly done nothing to make them love me. At the same time the language transmitted from Madrid does not increase their tenderness."

But there was yet much to be done ere Alva's work in the Netherlands was accomplished, much which, in the doing, was to bring down yet more bitter curses on the head of the dejected Duke.

CHAPTER XIX

Montigny's Doom

The amnesty was no sooner proclaimed than Alva hastened to meet Philip's new bride, Anne of Austria, as she passed through the Netherlands on her way to Spain.

Queen Isabella's death had left Philip for the third time a widower, while the death of his son, Don Carlos, had left him without an heir to his throne. The King's grief for the loss of his beautiful Queen was great. Yet when the Emperor offered the bereaved monarch the hand of his daughter, the Archduchess Anne, he laid aside his sorrow and accepted the proposal to make Anne his bride.

Her reception by Alva at Brussels was as gorgeous, and the entertainments were as brilliant, as though the city had already forgotten its baptism of blood.

But the darker side could not be altogether concealed from the Archduchess Anne. The Dowager Countess of Hoorn, who had seen her eldest son perish on the scaffold, now feared for the safety of Montigny, her younger son, who was still kept closely a prisoner in Spain. She obtained an interview with the bride, and entreated her when she reached Spain to plead that the life of her youngest son might be spared. Solemnly the Archduchess promised that her first request to Philip should be for the life of the young Count. And she kept her word, but it was too late, for Philip had already stained his hands yet more deeply by the infamous murder of Montigny. From the moment that Berghen and Montigny, the two envoys of Margaret of Parma, had set foot in Spain in 1566, Philip had resolved that they should never return. From the first, though not imprisoned, they were in reality captives. Berghen drooped and died in 1567, while

Montigny was then closely confined in the castle of Segovia. Here he remained for eight or nine months shut up in a high tower; nor was he allowed any attendants, save only a young page who had come with him from the Netherlands. Eight men-at-arms were ordered to guard against his escape. Slowly and drearily the days passed in the high tower where Montigny lay dreaming of home and pining for liberty. Then one day towards the middle of July 1568 his listlessness was disturbed. Floating up to his high tower came the sounds of a song, and the words were in the language of his fatherland. A band of pilgrims, some of them in Flemish attire, were passing through the streets of Segovia. As they passed slowly along they chanted a low monotonous song. Montigny, fascinated by the sound of his own language, strained his ears to catch more clearly the distant notes. With sudden apprehension the meaning of the words sank into his brain. The pretended pilgrims, knowing no other way to reach him, were singing the terrible doom of his brother, Count Hoorn, and his comrade, Count Egmont. Mingled with the strain he caught a sad foreboding of his own fate, should he not be able to escape from his prison. Montigny, thus forewarned, resolved to effect his escape, were it possible. He succeeded in gaining the goodwill of one of the eight soldiers by whom he was guarded, and thus he was able to write to many of his own followers without the prison walls. Their answers were written on small pieces of paper, and these were skilfully concealed in the loaves which were daily brought to the Count. In the same way files were sent that he might saw through the bars of his window, and even a delicate ladder of ropes reached him unnoticed. At length all was arranged. Horses were to be ready to convey the fugitives to the shore, where a sloop had already been engaged to await their arrival.

Montigny was confidently looking for his final instructions. The loaf which brought them would, he believed, be the last he should break in prison. Unfortunately the loaf, instead of being taken to the Count, was by some mistake carried to the commandant of the castle. As he proceeded leisurely to break his bread, the concealed letter dropped on the table, and it was the bewildered commandant who read the final instructions to his prisoner. After cutting off his beard and otherwise disguising himself Montigny was to let himself down

into the court by his delicate ladder of ropes and then hasten to join his confederates. The whole plan was laid bare to the astonished castellan, who did not delay to act on his discovery. All those privy to the plot, while still in ignorance of their betrayal, were arrested and condemned to death. The Spanish soldier who had aided Montigny was executed without delay. Montigny himself was now kept in still closer confinement in his lonely tower, with little hope of escape to cheer him.

In the autumn of 1568 the Count's case was brought before the Blood Council, and he, a prisoner in Spain, was put upon trial for his life in Brussels. It was true that the Count was allowed to engage an advocate, but as this advocate had never seen his client and was allowed to hold no communication with him. there was little help to be expected from his defence. The proceedings were begun by the Duke of Alva, who summoned Madame de Montigny, the Count's young wife, to appear in place of her absent husband. But she could only appeal to the King, beseeching him by the passion of Jesus Christ to pardon any faults her husband might have committed, and begging him to remember the loyal service of Montigny in the past and her own youth.

The appeal of the young wife was of no avail, and on March 4, 1570, the case was brought to an end, and Montigny was condemned to be beheaded as a traitor, his property being confiscated to the throne.

Six months passed, and the sentence had not yet been carried out, when Philip, hearing of his new Queen's promise to the Countess of Hoorn, resolved that Montigny must die before her arrival.

On October 1, 1570, Philip therefore commanded that the Count should be removed from the tower at Segovia to the castle of Simancas. He at the same time wrote to the Governor of the castle that Montigny was to be privately strangled, though all the world was to be told that he had died from fever. To aid in the deception a medical man was ordered to call at the castle for several days, bringing with him medicines for the pretended patient. Montigny was told that as a special act of grace the King had granted that he should be privately executed. He was allowed to make a will on condition that he wrote it as though he was a sick man lying on his bed, as also

a letter of farewell to his wife. On October 16, between one and two in the morning, an executioner arrived and did his ghastly work, the body being then clothed in a habit of Saint Francis, that no mark of violence might be visible.

Obeying Philip's orders, the Governor of Simancas then wrote to his Majesty, gravely assuring him that, despite the utmost care, Montigny's fever had unhappily proved fatal. The King was careful to appear grieved at the intelligence, and wrote to the well-trained Governor that the funeral should take place with due regard to the rank of the Count, and that his servants should be given each a suit of mourning.

A few weeks later Philip wrote to Alva announcing that the Count de Montigny had died in prison from a malignant fever, while by the same courier came a second and private letter from the King giving a true account of the dark deed which had been done in the castle of Simancas.

Thus perished a loyal subject and a faithful communicant of the Catholic Church. That he had gone to Spain as the deputy of the King's sister, Margaret of Parma, could not save him. That he was clothed in the white robes of an envoy, with the right to claim not only justice, but hospitality, was not enough to deter Philip from arranging, as it seemed with a grim satisfaction, the midnight murder of the Count.

CHAPTER XX

The Sea-Beggars

The Prince of Orange an exile and a wanderer! It was even so, yet never did he let himself yield to despair, and while absent from the Netherlands he was yet, through his agents, kept in constant touch with the affairs of the country.

In 1569 William, with a band of 1200 horse-men, and accompanied by his two brothers, Louis and Henry, joined the banners of Coligny, the great Huguenot chief, but in the autumn of the year he revisited the Provinces. Thereafter, disguised as a peasant, with but five attendants and at great peril, he crossed the Spanish lines, entered France, and before winter arrived in Germany. Here disappointment awaited him. The zeal of the Emperor Maximilian on behalf of the oppressed Provinces had grown faint before the possibility of a close alliance with the powerful King of Spain.

Philip's wife, Queen Isabella, having died, the Emperor had hastened to offer his daughter, Anne of Austria, to the bereaved monarch, and at the same time he had withdrawn the remonstrance he had already sent on behalf of the Prince of Orange and the Netherlands. Nor was it only the Emperor who failed the Prince. Dukes, princes, and electors showed little enthusiasm for the cause that was so dear to William's heart. Yet he had other partisans, who, if rough in their ways, were not wanting in strength, and these were even now beginning to make their power felt.

It was in 1569 that Orange had issued commissions in his own name to various seafaring folk, who were thereby empowered to cruise against Spanish commerce. Soon eighteen vessels were roving the seas. Wild and lawless were the crews who manned the ships,

fearless too of danger, and demanding nought save plenty of fighting and plundering. Gathered from all nations, these corsairs, or Sea-Beggars as they were named, were united in a hatred, fierce and undying, against all Spaniards and Papists.

Already, in February 1570, 300 vessels had fallen into their hands, and the booty they had thus secured had been enormous. In April the Sea-Beggars had a fleet of eighty ships in their possession, and it became increasingly difficult to find ports into which they might safely enter to land their plunder. The Prince of Orange, who had no share of the spoil, was yet held responsible for the cruelty and greed of the Sea-Beggars, and he resolved to bring the trouble-some cruisers under better control. Accordingly, he deposed Dothain, who, though acting as Admiral for the Prince, yet refused to give him an account of the different expeditions of his fleet. The Prince would issue no further commissions unless the strict regulations which he now drew up were enjoined on the lawless crews. To enforce these regulations would be no light task, as the Lord of Lumbres, the newly-appointed Admiral, very well knew; for the first rule declared that one-third of the booty was to belong to the Prince, while the others were intended to enforce discipline on board, and strict attention to religious services.

But the wild Sea-Beggars, though they could not brook control and often evaded the Prince's orders, were yet not wanting in a fierce devotion to his person. To serve him they would go through fire and water, as they were soon to show. Under Lumbres, their chief leaders were the Lord of Treslong, a man capable as he was fearless; and William de la Marck, a wild and cruel noble, who had sworn to wear his hair uncut, his beard unshorn, until he had avenged the death of Egmont, to whom he had been bound by ties of kinship. Savage and uncouth he was, and men, looking at him, shuddered, seeing before them vengeance become incarnate. On Alva and on Popery, should he have his way, he would practise the lessons of cruelty the Blood Council had taught him all too well.

And, indeed, opportunities were not wanting. Up and down the coasts and into many ports the Sea-Beggars found their way, and terrible were the barbarities executed on hapless priests and monks. After each raiding expedition vast too were the stores of treasures

they carried back to the ships. Silver plate, church ornaments were theirs, and often large sums of money which they had extorted as ransoms from their captives.

For some time the fleet had, by the secret permission of Queen Elizabeth, been allowed to put in at various English ports, there to overhaul their ships and lay in fresh supplies of food. They had also used the opportunity to dispose of their plunder and beat up recruits to fill their ranks. But this privilege came to an abrupt end. The Spanish Government protested against the English Queen's connivance with the roving fleet of the Sea-Beggars, and Elizabeth, having at the time no wish to irritate Philip, issued a proclamation forbidding the rebels to make use of the English ports, and commanding her subjects to cease to supply the cruisers with bread, meat, or beer.

The proclamation being strictly enforced, it became necessary for the fleet to leave the English coasts. Accordingly, in March 1572, about twenty-four vessels, commanded by De le Marck, Treslong, and other famous sea-captains, set sail from Dover, and directed their course towards the shores of Holland. Here, a strong westerly wind forcing them to take refuge in the estuary of the Meuse, they anchored off Brill, where they hoped speedily to procure food, the sailors being now on the verge of starvation. To the inhabitants of Brill the arrival of the fleet caused great astonishment. These were no trading vessels, nor and their hearts beat less anxiously were they Spanish ships.

Now there was a worthy ferryman, named Peter Kopplestock, who happened just then to be rowing passengers across the river. "These must be the Water- Beggars," said Kopplestock. The name of the dreaded sea-folk filled his hearers with dismay, and no sooner had they landed than they rushed into the city, warning the inhabitants to prepare for defence or flight.

Meanwhile the ferryman, who was a patriot, rowed boldly out to the fleet to discover, if possible, the cause of its arrival. The vessel he hailed happened to be the one commanded by Treslong, who was well known to Brill, his father having once held the town for the King. Treslong, recognising Kopplestock, hurried him on board De la Marck's vessel, and assured the Admiral that here was the very man

for their purpose. It was absolutely necessary to attempt a landing, for the sailors were calling out for food. De la Marck accordingly, persuaded by Treslong, ordered Peter Kopplestock to go back to the city and demand that envoys be instantly sent to treat with them.

Kopplestock, furnished with Treslong's signet ring as a proof of his commission, speedily made his way back to the city, and, pushing his way through the crowded pier, hastened to the town house, where the magistrates were already assembled. Holding up the signet ring, the ferryman told the bewildered magistrates that he had been sent by the Admiral of the fleet and by Treslong, who was well known to them, to demand that two deputies should be sent from the city to confer with the patriots. The deputies need fear no rough treatment, for the only object the Beggars had in view was to free the land from Alva's hated tax and to overthrow the tyranny of the Duke.

As the magistrates deliberated, one of them turned to Peter Kopplestock asking if De la Marck had under his command a large force. "There might be about five thousand." Carelessly the ferryman pronounced his splendid falsehood. To resist so great a force was impossible. On that point the magistrates were assured. The only course left was either to treat with the enemy or fly. They would be wise and do both, these puzzled magistrates! Accordingly, when two men brave enough to go forth to treat with the famous Sea-Beggars were found, the magistrates and leading burghers prepared for flight. The envoys were courteously received, and assured that while Alva's Government was to be overthrown, no harm would be done to the citizens or their private property. "Go back to your magistrates," said the Admiral, "and say to them that they are given two hours in which to decide if they will surrender the town and accept the authority of De la Marck as Admiral of the Prince of Orange." But the magistrates employed the two hours in making an ignominious escape, while most of the townsfolk followed their example. When the appointed time had passed, the invaders appeared under the walls of the city to find only a few inhabitants of the poorer class gazing at them from above. It was evident the struggle to possess the city would be brief.

Treslong, attacking the southern gate, succeeded in forcing his entrance just in time to arrest the governor of the city as he was making his escape. At the northern gate De la Marck and his men

made a bonfire, and then with the end of an old mast they battered down the half-burned entrance. Before sunset the patriots met in the centre of the city which they had made their own.

The Admiral, in the name of the Prince of Orange, as lawful Stadtholder of Philip, now took formal possession of the deserted port. No injury was done to the few inhabitants who had remained, but soon the Sea-Beggars were established in all the forsaken houses, and the desire to plunder the churches could no longer be restrained. Altars were torn down and images were destroyed, while the gorgeous vestments of the priests were thrown over the worn and patched garments of the Beggars. Treslong appeared on the deck of his vessel, clad in the magnificent robes of an officiating priest, and henceforth he would use no drinking cups in his cabin save the golden chalices of the Sacrament.

Unfortunately the hatred of Popery was wreaked not only on the garments of the priests, but on the priests themselves. Thirteen monks who had been unable to escape were arrested and thrown into prison, and a few days later De la Marck hailed the opportunity of revenge. To the Admiral these unknown and conceivably harmless men were the representatives of Alva and the Spanish tyranny, and they were therefore executed with all the barbarity of which De la Marck was master. Food had been found in abundance, plunder unstinted had been theirs, and the Beggars were now ready to return to their ships, when Treslong suggested that they should rather fortify the town and continue to hold it as a place of refuge. Accordingly, the inhabitants were forced to take the oath of allegiance to the Prince of Orange as Stadtholder, and for the first time his flag was hoisted and waved proudly over the little port of Brill.

Far and wide spread the news of the great achievement of the Sea-Beggars. It surprised Alva at a critical moment, and broke in upon a deed of deliberate vindictiveness.

In Brussels the demand for the ten per cent tax was arousing violent opposition. Rather than pay the tax demanded upon every sale of goods, the shop-keepers unitedly vowed they would sell no goods at all. The shops were closed. The brewers refused to brew, the bakers to bake, the butchers to kill, the tapsters to tap. The capital was as silent as though it had been stricken by the plague.

The Duke was furious. Defied in his very strong-hold! The defiance should end on the morrow, and Alva sent privately for Master Carl, the executioner. The city should be startled into doing his will. Without even the form of a trial, without even a day's delay, he would hang eighteen of the leading shop-keepers of the city in the doors of their own shops. When the remaining tradesmen saw the bakers, butchers, and brewers hanging in front of the shops they had refused to open, they would soon return to their business, and buy and sell with exceeding goodwill. Master Carl was therefore ordered to prepare eighteen strong cords and eighteen ladders twelve feet in length. That very night the executioner was to begin his preparations. At midnight President Vigilius was aroused to draw up the warrants for the hastily planned executions, which he did, being only half-awake, with a very bad grace. Alva, with grim impatience, waited for the dawn.

But before the morning broke, the Duke was disturbed by the overwhelming news that Brill had been captured by the Sea-Beggars. For the time, butchers and bakers were saved, while Alva devoted all his energies to the task of retaking the important little town of Brill.

Count Bossu, who, since the resignation of Orange, had acted as Stadtholder of Holland and Zeeland, was ordered at once to recover the seaport. Hastily marching with a force of ten companies, Bossu reached Brill on Easter Day 1572, and sent a summons to the rebels to surrender the town. The patriots, awed by the numbers of the enemy, were at first afraid to venture beyond the gates, but their courage soon returned. A carpenter of the town, who had long been devoted to the Prince, dashed into the water with his axe in his hand, and, swimming to one of the sluices, hacked it open with a few vigorous strokes from his axe, whereupon the sea poured through the opening, making the approach to the city on the north side impossible.

Bossu, hastily retreating before the onrush of the waters, led his troops toward the southern gate, only to be met by a heavy discharge of artillery, which completely staggered him.

Meantime Treslong and a comrade had, with the daring that distinguished the Sea-Beggars, rowed out to the ships which had brought the Spaniards to the port. Some they quietly cut adrift, some

they set on fire. The ships were blazing before the Spanish troops discovered what had been done, then, panic-stricken, as they gazed first at the flames, then at the sea, now rising rapidly over the dykes, they dashed off, bent only on effecting a safe retreat. Many were drowned as they hurried along the slippery dyke or struggled in the rising waters, while others succeeded in reaching those ships that had not drifted far from shore, and thus escaped.

Bossu, baffled in his attempt to retake Brill, retreated with what troops he could muster to Rotterdam, only, however, to find the gates closed against him. The city was loyal. What need had they of Spanish troops to teach them to be faithful to their King?

But Bossu resolved to take possession of the city, were it by force or by fraud mattered little to him. Accordingly, he asked that his troops might at least be permitted to pass through the town without halting. It was not easy to refuse the request, but the magistrates, still feeling uneasy, granted it on the condition that only a small company should be admitted at a time. To these terms the Count consented. But the gates were no sooner opened to admit the first detachment than a treacherous assault was made upon them by the whole Spanish force. The citizens, taken by surprise, made little resistance, though a sturdy smith seized his sledgehammer and boldly attempted to protect the gates. His efforts were vain, and he was stabbed to the heart by Bossu. The soldiers then rushed through the streets, putting to death all who resisted them, after having, in many cases, insulted and tortured them. Soon 400 of the citizens were murdered, and the town was in the hands of the treacherous Count.

Meanwhile, after the vain attempt to recover Brill, Alva, fearing that Flushing also might fall into the hands of the patriots, commanded that its garrison and defences should be at once strengthened. Flushing was indeed too important a town to be allowed to slip out of the Spaniard's hands, for it was the key to Zeeland and commanded the approach to Antwerp. But the citizens of Flushing had already been roused, by a message from Louis of Nassau, to drive out of the town the small remnants of a Spanish garrison, and Alva's reinforcements arrived too late. The burghers were easily persuaded by De Herpt, a warm friend of Orange, that, having thus defied the Duke, their only chance lay in a determined refusal to admit the fresh troops

which had arrived at their port. While De Herpt was still talking to the citizens, a half-witted vagabond was merrily mounting the ramparts, and, having reached the cannon, discharged it in the direction of the fleet. A sudden panic seized the Spaniards, and, waiting for no further signs of hostility, they immediately stood away in the direction of Middleburg, and were soon lost to sight.

The next day Antony, a celebrated orator, and Governor, under Alva, for the Island of Walcheren, appeared in Flushing. Surely his eloquence would not fail to bring the burghers back to their allegiance to Spain! Solemnly the great bell was tolled, and in answer to the summons the whole population assembled in the market-place. Standing on the steps of the town house, Antony pompously delivered his speech. The King was the best-natured Prince in all Christendom, he cried, and would forget and forgive their offence if they would but return to their duties. But the orator was not destined to pursue his eloquence undisturbed. Cries of "Hoorn," "Egmont," were heard from a little group which surrounded De Herpt. "'The best-natured Prince in Christendom' – Berghen and Montigny found him very good-natured," they tauntingly cried; and then, their patience exhausted, the citizens seized the flustered Governor and hustled him out of the city in the very midst of his eloquence.

But though Flushing's spirit was bold, her soldiers were too weak in numbers to successfully defend her long. De Herpt accordingly sent envoys to Brill to entreat De la Marck to send them men for whom the citizens would undertake to provide arms and ammunition. To aid Flushing meant to thwart Alva, and therefore De la Marck's help was at once secured. He hurriedly despatched 200 bold and experienced men, in three small vessels, under the command of Treslong. A strange, wild crew they were, clothed in the spoils they had clutched at in plundered churches or snatched from condemned priests. A glittering, gorgeous crew, arrayed in gold-embroidered cassocks, in rich vestments and costly silks, with here and there a sombre figure in the dull cowl and robe of a Capuchin friar. Thus along the stagnant waters rowed the fierce Sea-Beggars, shouting as they rowed their songs of warfare and of vengeance. But for all their fantastic robes, Treslong and his crew could fight, and they held

Flushing for the Prince of Orange till he sent thither Zerome van Zeraerts as Lieutenant-Governor over the whole Island of Walcheren.

CHAPTER XXI

The Capture and Surrender of Mons

From the towns of Brill and Flushing the flag of the Prince of Orange was now waving. The capture of these towns proved to be but the beginning of a series of triumphs for the patriot cause, which lasted during the first half of the year 1572.

The Island of Walcheren was equally divided between the two parties. Enkhuizen, the key to the Zuyder Zee, the principal arsenal, and a great commercial town, rose against the Spanish Admiral; nor was it long until the banner of Orange was seen flying from the ramparts. Nearly all the important cities of Holland and Zeeland, in one great spontaneous movement, raised the standard of him whom they at last recognised as the deliverer of their country. Henceforth they swore allegiance to Orange, as lawful Stadtholder to the King.

Nor was the movement limited to Holland and Zeeland. City after city in Gelderland, Overyssel, and Utrecht, as well as all the important towns of Friesland, threw off the yoke of the tyrant; and of these, some without a struggle, others after a short siege, accepted the garrisons of the Prince, and formally recognised his authority.

During the outburst of enthusiasm in Holland and Zeeland the Prince was in Germany, working on behalf of the oppressed Provinces, Sonoy being sent to act as Lieutenant-General in the north of Holland.

Louis of Nassau meanwhile was in France, negotiating with the leaders of the Huguenot party, and secretly with the French Court. From France he now made a startling, and to Alva an entirely unexpected descent upon the town of Mons.

Mons was the capital of Hainault, and an important town,

protected by lofty walls, a triple moat, and a strong citadel. Situated close to the frontiers of France, it was specially suited to the needs of the patriot party. A native of the city, Antony Oliver, had won the confidence of Alva while preparing for him at different times some well-executed maps of the country. Oliver was on his way to France at this time, and had been employed by the Duke to keep a watch over the movements of Louis of Nassau, and to report on the progress of his intrigues with the French Court. But Oliver had made a dupe of the great Duke, for he was no spy, but a friend and correspondent of Orange. What he had to say to Count Louis in Paris was not, therefore, quite what Alva had expected. Oliver was indeed telling Louis that there were already many adherents of the Prince in Mons, who were waiting and eager to cooperate with him and the Huguenot leaders Genlis, De la Noue, and others would they but attempt to secure the city.

On May 22, 1572, Oliver was at the gates of Mons with three wagons, supposed to be carrying merchandise, but in reality laden with arquebuses, which he distributed among his confederates in the city. That same day Count Louis, believed by Alva to be still safely in Paris, also arrived in the neighbourhood of Mons. He had with him 500 horsemen and 1000 foot soldiers, which force he concealed in a thick forest close to the city.

Towards evening twenty men, dressed as wine merchants, might have been seen entering the city gates. Nor were there any to say, "Beware of the wine merchants, they are followers of the daring Count, Count Louis of Nassau." The wine merchants went boldly to a wine shop, ordered supper, and as they chatted with the landlord carelessly asked at what hour next morning the city gates would be opened. About four was the usual hour, they were told, but a "drink-penny" given to the porter would ensure them being opened earlier. "Ah! in that case we will bring some casks of wine into the city before sunrise," said the merchants, and, bidding their host a friendly good-night, they wended their way out of the city.

Early the next morning the wine merchants were at the city gates, and the porter, receiving a handsome "drink-penny," agreed to unlock them. But no sooner were the bolts withdrawn than he was struck dead, while about fifty dragoons rode through the gates. Close

on their heels followed the Count and his attendants, and soon they were galloping over the city in the early dawn, shouting, "Liberty! Liberty! The Prince is coming! Down with the tenth-penny tax! Down with the tyrant Alva!" In spite of the cries, not one of the secret confederates joined them. The streets were quiet and empty, and daylight was spreading. Count Louis began to fear a trap, and looked anxiously for his army, which should have followed hard upon his footsteps.

Inaction was impossible, and Louis galloped out of the town in search of his troops, whom he found wandering in the woods, where they had completely lost their way. Sharply rang out his orders to each horseman to take a foot soldier on the crupper behind him, then, turning, he led them speedily towards the city. Nor were they a moment too soon, for the citizens, having at last been roused to their danger, had closed all the gates but one, where the porter was quarrelling with a French soldier over an arquebus. The draw-bridge across the moat had even begun to rise, when a French officer riding with Count Louis urged his charger forward and sprang upon it, causing the bridge to sink again under his weight. The troops seized the opportunity and thundered across, forcing the gate on the other side, and riding triumphantly into the city.

Louis then ordered the bell to be rung, and in answer to its summons the. burghers, with their magistrates and clergy, assembled in the market square. "I protest that I am no rebel to the King," cried the impetuous Count when silence had fallen upon the crowd. "I prove it by asking no new oaths from any man. Remain bound by your old oaths of allegiance. Against Alva alone have I taken up arms; 'tis to protect you against his fury that I am here. I demand, then, that you declare Alva de Toledo a traitor to the King, an enemy to the country, and thereby deprived of authority." "Tis a bold demand," whispered the timid magistrates anxiously the one to the other, and they rejected it.

But the burghers would not be guided by their craven leaders. They would hold their city against the Duke. Volunteer troops were speedily organised and drilled, and the fortifications of the city strengthened, the expenses being borne by the owners of the great cloth and silk manufactories for which Mons was famous. No attempt was

made to force the Reformed religion on the citizens, nor did the Catholics suffer personal injury, though plate, jewelry, money, and other valuables which had been sent to the city from the churches and convents of the province were seized. Thus, with little bloodshed and no violence, Mons was secured for the patriots.

Three days later Louis received 2000 French infantry into the city, and early in June he was still further strengthened by the arrival of 1300 foot and 1200 horsemen.

The Duke of Alva found himself in the very midst of a revolution; Brill and Flushing were lost, and Middleburg was closely besieged. The news of the revolt of Enkhuizen was followed, two hours later, by that of the rebellion of Valenciennes, while the following day brought the incredible information of the capture of Mons.

Louis of Nassau master of Mons! Alva refused to believe it. It was but the other day that Count Louis had been seen playing in the tennis court at Paris! It was impossible that he should have already reached the province of Hainault.

When at length he was convinced that the disastrous tidings were true, Alva in a fury dashed his hat to the ground, and vowed vengeance against the house of Nassau. Don Frederic, his son, was ordered at once to undertake the siege of Mons, while Alva himself began to raise large reinforcements. Without much opposition Don Frederic proceeded to take possession of the Bethlehem cloister, in the neighbourhood of Mons, and with 4000 troops began to besiege the city, Count Louis meanwhile despatching Genlis to France for the further reinforcements which had been promised by the royal lips of the French King. Sharp combats before the walls were constantly taking place, and it was obvious to Louis that he would be unable to hold the town unless help reached him from without.

Genlis had, however, speedily accomplished his mission, and was already returning to Hainault with a force of Huguenots, whose numbers, being unknown, were greatly magnified. The Spanish enemy held its breath at the report of an approaching army of 10,000 veterans.

It would be necessary for Genlis to approach Mons with great caution. Louis sent an earnest message to him, urging that he should join Orange, who had already crossed the Rhine with a new army,

before he attempted to throw reinforcements into the city. Unfortunately, Genlis disregarded Count Louis' advice. It would, he believed, be a more glorious adventure to relieve the city alone, unaided by the Prince. Accordingly, towards the middle of July he advanced to within two leagues of Mons, and on the 19th of the month he encamped in a circular plain, surrounded with forests, and dotted here and there with farmhouses. A detachment was sent to reconnoitre, but they were soon to be seen hastening back to the camp. "Don Frederic of Toledo is coming instantly upon us," they cried; "Don Frederic, with 10,000 men." In reality the Spanish force was not so great, but 3000 half-armed boors had been engaged by Don Frederic to add to the apparent number of his troops. The panic this caused among the French Huguenots was not easily allayed, and before they were aware, Noircarmes was charging upon them at the head of his cavalry, and the infantry arriving directly after, the army of Genlis was entirely routed.

The slaughter of the Huguenots was great, and among the many officers taken prisoners was the Commander-in-Chief Genlis himself, who was imprisoned in the castle of Antwerp. Sixteen months later he was secretly strangled by the command of Alva, who, however, took care that it should be reported that he had died a natural death. One hundred foot soldiers alone succeeded in making their way into Mons, and this was the only help Count Louis was destined to receive from France.

On August 27, 1572, the Prince of Orange with his new army crossed the Meuse, many cities and villages accepting his authority as he passed along. With Mechlin, the most important of these, Alva was specially angry, as it had but lately excluded his own troops. To the very gates of Brussels the Prince of Orange marched, but the city being too fearful to open its gates, and too strongly defended to be attacked, the Prince passed on his way. He was looking hopefully for the promised aid of the French Admiral Coligny, at the head of a large army, for with such reinforcements William believed the Netherlands would soon be free and Alva in his power.

On August 11, 1572, Coligny had written to the Prince that, sanctioned and aided by his King, he expected soon to begin his march towards the Netherlands.

But an awful catastrophe was on its way, a catastrophe that caused the whole world to pause in its wonted course, and that petrified all those who put their trust in kings. Saint Bartholomew's day dawned, and before its close Admiral Coligny and thousands of the Huguenot party who had been deliberately lulled into security by royal promises were butchered in the streets of Paris.

To Orange the awful tidings from France meant that the fate of his campaign was sealed. Without the French reinforcements on which he had relied, it would be impossible to relieve Mons. But the news which, in the Prince's own words, "had struck him to the earth with the blow of a sledge-hammer," brought only delight to the Spanish camp. They celebrated the massacre of Saint Bartholomew with bonfires and illuminations; they even sang anthems in the church of Saint Gudule in honour of the stupendous murder achieved by the most Christian King of France; they rejoiced, for they knew that the fate of Mons was sealed.

The Prince with his army now turned towards Hainault. On September 11 he reached the village of Harmignies, about a league from Mons, and that same night his camp was attacked by the Spaniards. Creeping through the darkness of the night, 600 men, each wearing a white shirt over his armour, that he might at once see a comrade, and led by their captain, Julian de Romero, made their way towards the camp of the Prince. The sentinels were surprised and cut down. Then the small band of Spaniards dashed in among the enemy, who, suddenly aroused from sleep, were little able to defend themselves. For an hour the slaughter continued, but Romero and a few of the boldest had gone in search of William of Orange. They saw his tent before them. They would capture a prize indeed should they capture the Prince. Yet more stealthily they drew near. His guards slept. William himself was in a profound slumber. All at once a small spaniel who slept on the Prince's bed began to bark furiously and to rub his master's face with his paws. He had heard strange footsteps, this faithful hound. There was but just time for the Prince to spring from his bed, mount a horse which was ready saddled, and gallop into the darkness, before his enemies sprang into his tent. William's servants were killed, and his master of the horse, who gained his saddle but a moment later than the Prince, lost his life. Had it not

been for the faithful spaniel it would seem that the bold Romero would have captured his prize. In their fury at his escape the Spaniards set fire to the tents, and in the blaze the Orangists saw that the force that had attacked them was but small. Before they could rally, however, Romero had led off his men.

Six hundred of the Prince's troop had been killed with the sword, while many others were burned in their beds, or drowned in the little river which flowed past the camp, while only sixty Spaniards had lost their lives. The remainder of the Prince's troops were now on the verge of mutiny and furious at his inability to pay them. Indeed, but for the exertions of the officers, who loved and respected their General, his life would not have been safe from the rough soldiers.

With a heavy heart William wrote to Louis of his forlorn condition and inability to relieve Mons, at the same time advising him to capitulate on the best terms he could make. He then took his way across the Meuse, and, marching to the Rhine, crossed it also and disbanded his troops. Thereafter he made his way almost alone to Holland, the only province which still remained true to him. Here warm hearts were beating, and no conqueror could have been greeted with more love and respect than was William after his disastrous campaign. Here in the North, where the spirit of resistance to Spanish tyranny was still vigorous, the Prince resolved to stay. From henceforth his interests were absolutely identified with those of the heroic Hollanders and Zeelanders, who were struggling, at tremendous odds, for freedom.

Meanwhile in Mons the position of Count Louis became daily more difficult. He himself lay in bed with a high fever. His soldiers, knowing that no further help could be expected from the French King, Charles IX., and hearing that Orange had withdrawn his forces, refused to hold the city longer.

Accordingly, when Alva offered honourable conditions, Louis felt that to capitulate was the only course left open to him, and on September 19, 1572, the capitulation was signed, it being expressly agreed that all the soldiers, as well as the inhabitants who had borne arms, should be allowed to leave the city with their property, while those who remained should be safe from injury to either their persons or their goods.

On September 21, Count Louis, still prostrate with fever, was carried out of the city on a litter, being greeted by Alva with perfect courtesy. By easy stages he was conveyed to Dillenburg, where, under the care of his mother, he slowly regained his strength.

Alva entered the city on September 24, 1572. Most of the volunteers had withdrawn with the garrison, but those who had tarried were instantly thrown into prison, notwithstanding the terms of the capitulation.

Soon after Noircarmes arrived at Mons, having been appointed grand bailiff of Hainault. He at once began to pillage and massacre the inhabitants, and, not content with this, he proceeded to institute a Commission of Troubles, in imitation of the Blood Council at Brussels. Day after day, month after month its cruel work went on, nor was it abolished until August 27 in the following year. And when Requesens, Alva's successor, caused the prison of Mons to be opened, there were found seventy-five condemned creatures still awaiting their terrible fate.

Mons regained, the revolution in the southern Netherlands was at an end. The keys of that city unlocked the gates of all others in Brabant and Flanders. Towns which had but lately accepted the authority of Orange now hastened to disown the Prince and to return to their cowardly allegiance to Alva. The new oaths of fidelity were for the most part accepted by Alva, but the beautiful city of Mechlin, which had excited his special wrath, he reserved for signal punishment.

As was usually the case, heavy arrears were due to the Spanish troops. To satisfy their demands Alva resolved that Mechlin should be looted. Don Frederic was sent to the town to command its surrender. In answer a few defiant shots were fired from the ramparts. It was a brave answer, but during the following nights the troops proved faithless and marched away, leaving the town defenceless.

Early in the morning a solemn procession of priests with banners and crozier issued from the city gates, closely followed by a suppliant throng of citizens. Slowly as the priests moved they sang their psalms of penitence. Did they dream that thus they might avert the tyrant's wrath? If it were so, they were soon roughly awakened. Before the chant was ended, thousands of Spanish soldiers had rushed through

the gates or climbed the walls and entered the city in hope of booty. The sack had begun.

Don Frederic and General Noircarmes were in the city while the soldiers did their cruel deeds, but it was in vain that petitions were brought to them, entreating them to save the city from destruction. "They were seen whispering to each other in the ear on their arrival," wrote an eye-witness of the scene, "and it is well known the affair had been resolved upon the preceding day."

When the three-days' raid was over "hardly a nail was left standing on the walls," and Alva applauded his soldiers for the energy with which they had carried out his desire for vengeance on the beautiful city of Mechlin.

CHAPTER XXII

The Struggle Between Spain and the Provinces Grows Desperate

For a long time Alva had been impatient to leave the Provinces. Even he had begun to weary of the never-ceasing curses which assailed his ears. "The hatred which the people bear me," he wrote to Philip, "because of the chastisement which it had been necessary for me to inflict, although with all the moderation in the world, makes all my efforts vain. A successor will meet more sympathy and prove more useful." Accordingly, in the beginning of the year 1572, the Duke of Medina Coeli had been sent from Spain to inquire into the state of the country, and eventually to take Alva's place as Governor-General of the Netherlands. But Medina Coeli, after having narrowly escaped being taken prisoner by the Sea-Beggars, found that the country was threatened by so many dangers, that the strong hand of a military chief was still necessary, and Alva was requested by Philip to retain his post of Governor-General, while in the following year Medina Coeli returned to Spain. The Duke could not easily brook his position. Where he had formerly been able to enforce his will he now found himself compelled to yield. The attempt to enforce the tenth-penny tax had proved his undoing.

In July 1572 deputies sent to Philip by the Estates returned in safety with the public assurance that the tax was suspended, and a private hint that it was only to save the Duke's dignity that it was not entirely abolished. Alva, before the return of the deputies, had professed himself ready to abolish the whole tax, on condition that the States-General of the Netherlands would provide him with a yearly supply of two millions of florins.

Both concessions came too late. The Estates of Holland, goaded by the thought of Alva's attempted exactions, had already resolved to formally renounce his authority. They met, in answer to a summons from William of Orange, at Dort on July 15, 1572. Sainte Aldegonde, as the Prince's representative, spoke eloquently of the sacrifices Orange had in former years made for his country, and urged the States to come to his help in the larger struggle that lay before him. The meeting was roused to a wild enthusiasm, men crying that their lives and their gold were at the service of their Prince. They straightway resolved to recognise him as lawful Stadtholder over Holland, Zeeland, and Friesland, and to use their influence with the other provinces to procure his recognition there also. The surrender of Mons, and with its fall the subjection of the Southern Netherlands to Alva's yoke, made their influence in this direction of no avail.

But while Brabant and Flanders were again submissive to Alva, in Zealand the conflict between the power of Orange and the Duke was still waging, for on the Island of Walcheren Middleburg still held for the King; and from Middleburg Zeeland lay open to attack, and might yet find itself subjugated once more by the Duke, whose authority the province had dared to disown. Alva resolved, if possible, to strengthen the garrison at Tergoes, which fortress defended the important town of Middleburg, for it was weak, and unless reinforced would be compelled to yield.

Meanwhile Zeraerts, who commanded for the Prince in the Island of Walcheren, though both brave and faithful, was unfortunate. He laid siege to Middleburg and had to retreat. He laid siege to the little city whose downfall would inevitably cause Middleburg to surrender, and again he had to retreat. Flushing had shut her gates on Zeraerts and his troops for several days, so angry was she with his failures.

Determined to retrieve his disgrace, Zeraerts now assembled a force of 7000 men, and, marching against Tergoes on August 26, 1572, again laid siege to the city. D'Avila, who had been ordered by Alva to throw reinforcements into the besieged city, had attempted to do so both by land and sea, but in vain. Baffled but not beaten, the Spaniards had recourse to a daring scheme. Between Tergoes and the mainland there was a track of "drowned land," as it was called, which at low tide it was possible to ford. The average depth was between

four and five feet, while the tide rose and fell at least ten feet. The track was muddy and treacherous, while the passage across was about ten miles. Mondragon, a veteran colonel in the Spanish army, saw his opportunity. He would march his men across the channel at ebb-tide. Secretly he assembled 3000 picked men. Each soldier carried on his head a sack, in which was a supply of biscuits and powder. When the ebb-tide had flowed half out, Mondragon, preceded only by his guides, plunged into the waves, followed by his army almost in single file. Never lower than the breast, the water often rose higher than the shoulder. Steadily the little band followed their determined leader, and indeed they dared not linger. Should they not have crossed the passage within six hours, the tide, rising again, would have engulfed them. Before day dawned the deed was done, while of the 3000 troops only nine had been drowned. D'Avila, watching anxiously from the starting-point, was strangely elated as he saw the beacons lighted on the farther shore, assuring him of the safety of the troops. A brief rest, and then Mondragon marched his veteran band to Tergoes.

Zeraerts commanded the land with his army, the sea with his fleet. Whence then had these Spaniards stolen upon him through the darkness and through the silence of the night? A panic fell upon the patriot army, and Zeraerts found it impossible to induce his men to fight. They turned and fled to their ships, pursued by the Spaniards, who overtook and destroyed the whole of the rear-guard before it could embark.

Thereafter Tergoes was reinforced by the courageous veterans, and Middleburg continued to wave the Spanish flag from its ramparts.

Alva was indeed vindicating the power of the Spanish arms. Mons was taken, Mechlin sacked, and now Don Frederic was ordered to reduce the northern and eastern provinces. The dread of Alva was on the cities, and Don Frederic met with little resistance from those which but lately had received the Prince of Orange with acclamations. Zutphen in her hardihood attempted to resist the entrance of the King's troops, and terribly did she suffer for her daring. Alva ordered his son to kill every man and to burn every house to the ground. Without a moment's warning Don Frederic ordered the

garrison to be massacred. The citizens were stabbed in the streets, or hanged on the trees of the city, or stripped naked and turned out into the fields to freeze to death in the wintry night. Five hundred burghers were tied, two and two back to back, and drowned in the river Yssel, while a few who escaped were afterwards dragged from their hiding-places and hanged by their feet upon the gallows, some of them suffering days and nights of agony before they died.

What the fate of Zutphen had been was for days unknown, no one daring to go near the city. "A wail of agony was heard above Zutphen last Sunday," wrote a count to his friend, "a sound as of a mighty massacre, but we know not what has taken place."

In Holland, Amsterdam alone held for Alva. From Zutphen, therefore, Don Frederic was ordered to go to that city and from thence undertake the conquest of Holland. But the little city of Naarden, on the coast of the Zuyder Zee, lay on his way, and had not yet formally submitted to the King. Don Frederic would not overlook even this insignificant city.

On November 22, 1572, a company of 100 troopers arrived at the gate of Naarden and demanded it to surrender. The small garrison left by the Prince had little will to resist, but the doughty burghers were made of sterner stuff. They held the city for the King and the Prince of Orange, they cried, and with God's help would continue to do so. After their defiance the town, having neither arms nor ammunition enough to withstand a siege, despatched messengers to Sonoy and other patriot generals in the neighbourhood, entreating them to send reinforcements. But the little town received neither encouragement nor the more practical aid for which it had asked. The messengers returned emptyhanded, and Naarden was advised by the patriots to make what terms were still possible. Reluctantly the proud burghers despatched their burgomaster and a senator to make terms with Don Frederic. But the army was already moving towards Naarden, and the envoys were ordered to go with it and receive their answer at the gates. But the burgomaster foresaw an unpleasant end to his mission and determined not to return to Naarden. Accordingly he slid quietly from the sledge in which he was travelling with the senator, and whispering, "Adieu; I think I will not venture back to Naarden at present," he disappeared from sight, leaving the senator

to discharge his duties. About half a league from the city the army halted and Naarden was invested. Senator Gerrit was then ordered to return to the town, and next morning to bring to the camp a deputation prepared to surrender.

The following day the envoy returned with a number of citizens. They were met by Romero, who had been deputed by Don Frederic to treat with them. Romero demanded the keys of the city, and receiving a solemn pledge that the lives and the property of the inhabitants should be sacredly guarded, the keys were surrendered and Romero rode into the city, followed by 600 musketeers.

Relief was in the hearts of the inhabitants they were safe, despite their defiance. They hastened to feast the soldiers, while Romero and the other officers were entertained by Senator Gerrit in his own house. The feasting ended, the great bell was rung and the people assembled in the church that was at that time used as a town-house to listen to what Romero had to say to them. Suddenly a priest entered the church and hurriedly bade the people prepare for death. But time for preparation there was none. The door of the church was flung open and a band of Spanish soldiers dashed in among the defenceless citizens, firing one volley and then slaying them with sword and dagger. When the awful butchery was over, the church was set on fire, and all, dead and dying, were consumed together.

Thereafter the soldiers rushed into the streets, killing all whom they met. Some they pierced with rapiers, some they chopped to pieces with axes, some were tossed by groups of laughing soldiers to and fro on their lances and mocked at in their agony. So lost to humanity were the soldiers that they even opened the veins of some of the victims and drank the blood as though it had been wine. And truly the Spanish fiends were intoxicated. Neither man nor woman could escape their fury. The chief burgomaster, who was known to be wealthy, was tortured by having the soles of his feet exposed to a fire till they were almost consumed. In his agony he gladly promised to pay a heavy ransom, but scarcely had he done so when, by the express orders of Don Frederic, he was hanged in his own doorway, his limbs being afterwards nailed to the gates of the city. Shortly afterwards the fortifications of the city were razed to the ground, and all trace of the little town of Naarden was destroyed.

Don Frederic, his dastardly deed accomplished, hastened to Amsterdam, where his father, well pleased with his son's latest achievement, awaited him.

CHAPTER XXIII

The Siege of Haarlem

Ten miles from Amsterdam lay Haarlem, in which city the spirit of resistance to the Spanish tyranny ran high. The inhabitants were for the most part Reformers of the strictest type. A visit from the Prince of Orange had but lately clinched their determination to make a stand for liberty. With Alva and Don Frederic but a few miles off, they were well aware that their determination would soon be put to the test.

The Prince of Orange was stationed watchfully to the south of the city, without an army, it is true, but ready to organise help for the city should it be needed. His lieutenant, Diedrich Sonoy, had been ordered to take up his post in North Holland. Between them lay the important city of Haarlem, in the narrowest part of the isthmus which separated the Zuyder Zee from the German Ocean, the distance from sea to sea being less than an hour's walk. To the south of the city was a large wood; to the west, beyond the sand dunes, the ocean; while on the east Haarlem looked towards Amsterdam, from which city it was separated by the Haarlem Lake. Communication between the towns was made possible by a narrow pathway which passed along by the side of the dyke. Beyond Haarlem Lake, to the north, the waters of the Y swept across the peninsula.

One of the largest and most beautiful of the cities in the Netherlands, Haarlem was less able to defend herself than many another, for her walls were old, and, though turreted, frail, while the long stretch of the defences made a large garrison necessary. To procure reinforcements was not in her power, and the city's chief hope was in the brave hearts of the burghers. And now Don Frederic,

ordered to crown his many triumphs by reducing Haarlem, was approaching.

With the approach of danger the courage of the magistrates gave way, and they were even base enough to treat with Alva, sending three of their number to Amsterdam for this purpose. One of the three discreetly stayed with the enemy, while the other two, on their return to the city, were arrested and condemned to death; for the brave commandant of the little garrison, Ripperda, deemed that no cowards would be of service in the struggle that was before them. Ripperda had assembled the citizens and soldiers in the market-place and warned them that, should they surrender, their fate would be the fate of Mechlin, Zutphen, and Naarden. Soldiers and citizens responded to his appeal, and unanimously swore to die rather than surrender their city. The fugitive magistrate, unashamed, wrote urging the citizens to surrender, but his messenger was hanged. Such was the stern spirit which animated the defenders of Haarlem.

It was the first week in December 1572 when terms were thus roughly refused, and on the 11th Don Frederic appeared before the walls of the city and the siege was begun. The weather was misty and veiled his operations, which did not cease until at least 30,000 men had been encamped around the city. Within the walls of Haarlem the garrison at no time numbered more than 4000.

By the command of the Prince of Orange a cluster of forts had been built along the edge of the mere, by which the command of the frozen lake was secured for Haarlem. The dense fog which hung day after day over the lake, if it served as a screen to Don Frederic, was equally useful to the Haarlemers, for, sheltered by this curtain, large numbers of men and supplies of provisions and ammunition were daily brought into the city, in spite of all the efforts of the besieging troops. All through the short dark days and the long nights of December sledges skimmed backwards and forwards, and men and women, and even children on their skates, brought offerings to the gallant city.

The garrison in Haarlem now numbered about 1000 delvers or pioneers and 3000 fighting men, while there was a strong corps of 300 women armed with sword, musket, and dagger. The chief of this corps was a widow of noble family, a woman honoured by all who knew her.

She was about forty-seven years of age when, at the head of her little band, she fought in many of the most fiercely contested actions of the siege, both within and without the walls.

Towards the middle of December the Prince had assembled a force of about 4000 men at Leyden. These he sent, under De la Marck, towards Haarlem, but on the way they were attacked, in a heavy snowstorm, by strong detachments under Bossu, Noircarmes, and Romero, and completely routed. One thousand of the patriot soldiers were slain, while many hundreds were carried off as prisoners and executed on the gibbets which were already erected in a prominent position in the Spanish camp.

On the 18th a cannonade was directed against the Gate of the Cross, which was not very strong, but was commanded by a redoubt. Again on the two following days the cannonading continued, but within the city, men, women, and children worked night and day to repair the breaches as fast as they were made. Everything on which the inhabitants could lay their hands was seized bags of sand, blocks of stone, cartloads of earth, even the images of saints were dragged from the churches to be thrown greedily into the gaps.

On the 21st December the assault was ordered, Romero leading the attack. He was destined to quail before the fury of his reception. Throughout the city the church bells rang the alarm, and sword and musket did their work, while heavy stones, boiling oil, and live coal descended on the bewildered enemy. Hoops, too, smeared with pitch and set on fire, were skilfully thrown upon their necks, nor could they extricate themselves from the horrible embrace. Romero lost an eye in the conflict, and many officers were killed and wounded, while three or four hundred soldiers were left dead in the breach. The novel weapons had done much damage, and Haarlem was exultant when the trumpet sounded the recall and the Spaniards were compelled to retire, the town still untaken.

Meanwhile the Prince of Orange had assembled another relief party. Two thousand men, with seven field-pieces and wagons full of provisions, were sent forward under Batenberg. All went well till the troops had reached the neighbourhood of Haarlem, when a thick mist came down and the city was completely shrouded in gloom. Not a tower, not a belfry could Batenberg discern. From the city cannons

were fired, fog-bells were rung, and on the ramparts beacon fires blazed gaily, but all was useless; Batenberg and his men were lost in the fog. While they were still vainly seeking to find their way into the city the Spaniards stole upon them. In the confusion many were killed. Some escaped and a few even succeeded in reaching the city. But the provisions so eagerly expected in Haarlem were lost, and Batenberg retired with but a remnant of his army. De Koning, the second in command, was taken prisoner. The Spaniards, who had a sorry idea of a jest, cut off his head and threw it over the walls of Haarlem, with an inscription in bold characters: "This is the head of Captain de Koning, who is on his way with reinforcements for the good city of Haarlem." The citizens, not to be outdone in the matter of a joke, grimly cut off the heads of eleven prisoners and put them into a barrel, which they threw into the Spanish camp. To the barrel a label was nailed, with these words: "Deliver these ten heads to Duke Alva in payment of his tenpenny tax, with one additional head for interest."

Such ghastly bursts of merriment did not, however, interfere with the serious work of the siege. Since the unsuccessful assault on December 21, Don Frederic had been undermining the fortress that protected the Cross Gate. As fast, however, as the Spaniards mined the citizens countermined, and daily in the dark passages underground desperate hand-to-hand fights took place as Spaniard and Netherlander met. Sometimes it was but a quick, impatient dagger-thrust that was given where the dull lantern dimly showed a foe. A hoarse cry and a groan would follow, and then silence, save for the pickaxe and the spade. The mines were sprung unexpectedly and frequently; and still the Spaniards toiled, and still the besieged, undismayed, dug deeper yet and checked the enemy's advance with sword and spear and horrible explosions.

On January 28, 1573, the burghers were cheered by reinforcements of 400 veteran soldiers, who had been despatched by the Prince of Orange across Haarlem Lake. As the frost still held, the soldiers had crossed on sledges, bringing with them large supplies of much-needed powder and bread. In spite of the Spaniards' efforts the redoubt was still held by the citizens, but they knew it was useless to try to hold it much longer. Should the redoubt be destroyed, Don

Frederic believed his way into the city was clear; but the citizens had resolved it should be otherwise, had indeed been working secretly and patiently through the long winter nights that it should be otherwise. On the inside of the redoubt old men, feeble women and little children joined with the strong and able-bodied to build a defence of solid masonry that would save them when the outer protection fell. Of such an obstacle Don Frederic did not dream.

After three days' cannonade, on January 31, the Spaniards were ordered to assault the Gate of the Cross at midnight. The attack was unexpected, but the sentinels defended the walls manfully while they sounded the alarm, and soon the ramparts were manned by citizens, whose sleep was not often deep during those dark and perilous nights. When day at last dawned, the struggle was at its height, the Spaniards being hampered in their movements, as before, by firebrands, melted pitch, and live coal. A general assault was then ordered, and with a tremendous effort the Gate of the Cross and the fortress beyond it were carried by the Spaniards. The troops quickly pressed through the gate, and, mounting the walls of the fortress, prepared to sweep into the city with fire and sword.

But see, they stop, and for a moment stare stupidly, for there, in front of them, bristling with cannon, stands a solid wall of masonry. They have never suspected the existence of such an obstacle. As they hesitate, a sharp fire is opened on them, and at the same moment the fortress, which the citizens had undermined, blows up with a great explosion, carrying with it all the Spanish soldiers who have but a short time before entered it in triumph. The retreat is now sounded, and the Spaniards sullenly withdraw to their camp, leaving at least three hundred dead beneath the walls of Haarlem. Thus gloriously was Don Frederic's second assault repelled.

If the town was not to be taken by assault, it was resolved that it should be reduced by famine, and the Spanish army settled down to watch and wait. But the cold was intense and the food insufficient, and the troops suffered greatly as the winter months dragged slowly by, many of them dying from exposure and the lack of proper nourishment. As for their General, Don Frederic, he grew wearied of the inactivity, and, thinking he had done enough for the honour of Spanish arms, he sent a messenger to his father asking to be allowed to raise

the siege. Tell Don Frederic," was Alva's answer, "that if he be not decided to continue the siege till the town be taken, I shall no longer consider him my son. Should he fall in the siege, I will myself maintain it, and when we have both perished, the Duchess, my wife, shall come from Spain to do the same." Don Frederic understood that he had no alternative save to press the siege.

Within the city the whole population had been put on a strict allowance of food. Nevertheless, the supplies were growing alarmingly less, and should a thaw set in, there was danger that they would be entirely cut off from outside help. Famine no longer skulked in corners, famine was staring them in the face.

By the end of February 1573 a thaw set in, and Bossu, who had been in Amsterdam building a fleet of small vessels, succeeded in entering the Lake of Haarlem with a few gunboats. The Prince was also ready to send his ships to the mere.

Amsterdam was for the time in as great peril as Haarlem, for should the communication along the dykes towards Utrecht be cut, it would be impossible to get supplies for the people in that city. "Since I came into the world," wrote Alva to the King, "I have never been in such anxiety."

Orange too was well aware of the danger of the enemy, but his efforts to profit by their difficulties were frustrated by lack of men and money. He determined, however, to make an attempt to secure the important Diemerdyke. A party of men, under General Sonoy, accordingly entrenched themselves as strongly as they could between the Diemer and the Y, at the same time opening the sluices and breaking through the dyke. Leaving his men thus entrenched, Sonoy then proceeded to a town some little distance off for reinforcements. In his absence his troops were attacked by a large force from Amsterdam, and a fierce contest took place. The soldiers fought in their boats or struggled desperately on the slippery causeway, or, slipping into the water, they carried on the conflict there. Sonoy returned only to find his troops, who had fought bravely, flying before the superior number of the foe, nor with all his efforts could he rally them.

Among the deeds of daring done on the Diemerdyke was none braver than that of John Haring of Horn. Standing alone on the dyke

where it was too narrow for two men to stand abreast, he, armed with sword and shield, held in check 1000 of the enemy, hoping that his own men would rally. And when he found that they had fled, he stood dauntless at the post until those of his comrades who yet remained in the entrenchments had had time to escape. Then, plunging into the sea unscathed, he swam to a place of safety.

March came, and still Haarlem held its own, still Don Frederic sat, dogged now and resolute, before the walls of the city. But even yet famine had not subdued the spirits of the citizens. Many were the sallies of the patriots and many the surprises of the Spaniards.

On March 25 the city was gladdened by the capture of seven cannon, nine standards, and, most welcome of all, many wagon-loads of provisions. In this successful venture the patriots had also driven in all the outposts of the enemy, burned 300 tents and killed 800 of the enemy, returning with their spoils to the city. The burghers, in full view of the enemy's camp, made a colossal mound of earth in the form of a grave, and, planting on it the cannon and flags so gallantly won, added the taunting inscription, "Haarlem is the graveyard of the Spaniards."

Alva, who for sixty years had had experience of warfare, wrote to Philip that never was a place defended with such skill and bravery as Haarlem, and added a request for three additional veteran regiments from Milan.

While the Spanish land force was thus in time to be strengthened, the fleet on the Haarlem Lake was already increased. The mere seemed alive with ships, for the fleet of the Prince was also larger and now numbered 100 sail. There was still hope for Haarlem as long as the Hollanders could hold, or even dispute the possession of the Lake. Sea-fights took place daily, but with little result, till at last on May 28, 1573, a decisive battle was fought. The vessels grappled with each other, and a fierce hand-to-hand fight followed. Several thousands were slaughtered ere the victory was won by the Spaniards, who took twenty-two of the Prince's vessels captive and totally routed the rest of the fleet.

In triumph Bossu swept across the Lake, seized the forts on the edge of the mere which had been built by the patriots, and the Haarlemers as well as their allies were now excluded from the Lake.

The dismay in the city was great. Without supplies it would be impossible to hold out longer than three weeks. Would the Prince be able to give them no further aid? Even as they wondered a carrier-pigeon flew into the city, and they read the words with which William hoped to encourage them. He was even now assembling a force, and could they but endure a little longer he would yet succeed in sending them supplies. Therefore, though all through the month of June their sufferings were terrible, the citizens steadfastly set themselves to wait for the promised help.

It was weeks since an ordinary meal had been eaten in the city. Linseed and rapeseed had failed them long ago, and now they were so hungry that they ate without disgust, say rather with relish, cats, dogs, rats and mice, and when there were no more animals left to be devoured, they boiled the hides of horses and oxen and greedily bit at even a leather shoe, were they so fortunate as to find one. Every weed, every nettle showing itself between the stones of the pavement was eagerly gathered for food, that so they might defy the enemy a little longer. Men, women, children died by scores, dropping down in the streets from sheer starvation, while those who were left seemed to walk the streets as living skeletons. Yet never, for all their sufferings, did the courage of the citizens utterly fail.

June passed, and on July 1 the burghers agreed to a parley. It was, however, abruptly ended, Don Frederic offering no compromise.

On the 3rd a tremendous cannonade was reopened on the city. The walls were severely shattered, but no assault followed, for the city could not possibly hold out many days longer. Their Prince seemed to be failing to fulfil his promise. A last letter was now sent to him, written in blood by the despairing citizens, telling him of their desperate straits.

No answer came, and a day or two later they hoisted a black flag on the Cathedral door. It was the signal of despair. Shortly after a pigeon flew into the town. The Prince had not forgotten them. Help was approaching, and could they but hold out two days longer they would be succoured. Indeed the Prince had moved heaven and earth to raise an army to send to the relief of Haarlem, but all his efforts were vain. Soldiers he had none, but a band of burgher volunteers offered to march to the help of the heroic citizens. These, numbering

about 4000, assembled at Sassenheim, and the Prince placed himself at their head. But at this there was a loud outcry. The life of the Prince was too precious to Holland to be hazarded thus. Earnestly the people pleaded and protested, and at length they prevailed on Orange to entrust the command of the expedition to Batenberg.

On July 8, at dusk, the expedition set out, and, reaching the woods on the south side of the city, remained there till midnight. The enemy's camp seemed motionless. Batenberg believed he would be able to steal through their lines as they slept.

Never was confidence more misplaced. The enemy was alert, had indeed been on the watch for him for two days. His plans and his numbers were all known, for two doves, bearing letters to Haarlem from the Prince, had been shot and brought into Don Frederic's camp.

Even as Batenberg crept from the shelter of the wood he was attacked by a force superior to his own, and a few moments later he was surrounded by over-whelming numbers. The whole Spanish army indeed was under arms. Batenberg was slain, and his undisciplined troops utterly routed; and thus the last attempt to relieve the city had been made in vain.

In the town the midnight battle was dimly heard, but the citizens were ignorant of Batenberg's arrival, and, thinking the noise but a feint on the part of the Spaniards to draw them beyond their walls, they paid little heed to the disturbance.

When the failure of the volunteer band was known, there were many and unjust reproaches hurled at the Prince throughout the country, but these he bore with the tranquillity which was one of his characteristics. With a heavy heart he wrote to the burghers that the time had come to make the best possible terms with the enemy.

Terms? But the time for making terms was left far behind them! Starvation or slaughter were the only alternatives, for had they not to treat with Don Frederic, the victor and murderer of the inhabitants of Mechlin, of Zutphen and of Naarden? But Don Frederic had seen enough of the spirit of the Haarlemers to dread it still. Should they set fire to the city and perish themselves, their children and their houses in the flames, where were the gains of his hard-won victory? He would offer ample forgiveness would the town submit without

further delay. In consequence of this offer of forgiveness the city surrendered at discretion on July 12, 1573.

Slowly the great bell tolled, and the women were ordered to assemble in the Cathedral, and the men in a neighbouring cloister, all arms in the possession of the garrison or inhabitants being first brought to the town-house.

Don Frederic, accompanied by Count Bossu and a numerous staff, then rode into the city. All officers were arrested. Some, however, had already killed themselves rather than yield to the vengeance of the Spaniards. Captain Ripperda, whose courage and eloquence had done so much to sustain the inhabitants during the month of the siege, was among the first to be executed.

Two days later the massacre began, the German troops, of whom there were 600, being, however, dismissed by the orders of Alva himself. The rest of the garrison, as also 400 of the chief citizens, were butchered, while 300 were tied, two and two, back to back, and drowned in Haarlem Lake. Then, vengeance having been taken, tardily the promised pardon was granted, though fifty-seven burghers were exempted from the act of grace and taken into custody as hostages for the good conduct of the other citizens. Of these some were executed, some died in prison, while those remaining were rescued by the Prince soon after the naval defeat of Bossu by the patriots.

In the early part of August 1573, the traces of suffering being removed, Don Frederic, complacent and triumphant, rode through the streets of Haarlem.

Never in the annals of their country will the heroic and steadfast defence of the brave burghers of Haarlem be forgotten, nor ever will the tale of the siege of Haarlem be listened to save with wonder and admiration the wide world over.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Patriots Win by Land and Sea

After the horrible fate of Haarlem, resistance to the Spanish arms would cease so thought Alva and the self-satisfied Don Frederic. They would have but to demand the surrender of a city and it would be on its knees, with keys hurriedly held out to propitiate the wrath of the all-powerful conquerors. But Alva had yet to learn the indomitable spirit that dwelt in the hearts of Holland's sons, the spirit which, unafraid, would nerve the arm to struggle still for its inalienable right of freedom.

Undismayed by the fall of Haarlem, yet fully aware of the dread fate which awaited them should they fail, the inhabitants of the little city of Alkmaar had even now determined to defy the tyrant. Up in this northern stronghold the hearts of the hardy burghers beat strong and true, and the flag of freedom waved proudly from the battlements. Its defiance was noted by Alva. The spirit of resistance was then alive, had even reared itself and stood erect, undaunted, ready to do and dare to the death rather than renounce its faith. That it should indeed be to the death the Duke had determined. Already as he laid his plans he gloated over the downfall of the town. "If I take Alkmaar," he wrote to Philip, "I am resolved not to leave a single creature alive; the knife shall be put to every throat. Since the example of Haarlem has been of no use, perhaps an example of cruelty will bring the cities to their senses."

It was evident that the defiance of Alkmaar had disturbed the Duke's idea of what was fitting. He had no mind to tolerate the folly of Alkmaar or any other city. It should be war to the death.

On August 21, 1573, the town was invested by Don Frederic with

16,000 veteran troops, Alva declaring that it had been done so thoroughly that not a sparrow could find its way into or out of the city. The town itself had only a garrison of 800 soldiers, while about 13,000 burghers were capable of bearing arms. Sonoy, Lieutenant-General for Orange in North Holland, grew uneasy, for all his experience, at the unequal conflict before him, and wrote to the Prince gloomily, hoping that he had a secret alliance with some foreign power, for otherwise the cause of freedom seemed doomed.

Gently Orange rebuked the fearfulness of his General. "You ask," he said, "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 mightiest of all potentates, the God of Hosts, who is able to save us if He choose."

It was in the sea that the main hope of Alkmaar lay, for the great sluices of the Zyp were but a few miles distant. By opening the sluices and piercing a few dykes the ocean might be made to bring them help.

Before laying the country under water, and thus destroying all the standing crops, it would be necessary to gain the consent of the inhabitants of North Holland. For this purpose an envoy must be sent with a letter to Sonoy, to the Prince of Orange, and to the Governors in the chief cities of the province. But if, as the Duke had said, it would be difficult for a sparrow to escape from the city, it would be no easy task for a man to leave Alkmaar and reach the Prince unscathed.

A carpenter in the city, however, undertook the important mission, and, with his letters enclosed in a hollow walking-stick, he set out to cross the enemy's lines.

Don Frederic meanwhile was growing tired of the daily skirmishes which were taking place with but little result, and on September 18 he ordered the guns to open fire on the walls of the city. This continued for twelve hours, when an assault was ordered. Two choice regiments led the attack, rending the air with their shouts and confident of victory.

Yet never, even in Haarlem, had the defence been more vigorous. The walls were alive with men, who assailed the Spaniards with cannon, muskets and pistols, while women poured on them boiling

water, pitch, oil, molten lead and unslaked lime. Tarred and burning hoops were also again flung over the necks of the soldiers, who knew not how to free themselves from such strange weapons. The invaders might plant a foot upon the breaches, but only to find themselves face to face with doughty burghers, who hurled them headlong into the moat below. Thrice was the attack renewed, and thrice was it repulsed with unflinching courage. At length darkness fell, and the Spanish troops were recalled, leaving at least a thousand dead in the trenches, while in the city only thirteen burghers and twenty-four of the garrison lost their lives.

The fury with which they had been received surprised the veteran troops of Spain. Who were these plain men, with neither helmet nor harness, but dressed for the most part like fishermen, who were they to defeat the choicest regiments in Alva's army? And superstitious terrors swept across the strong men's hearts and made them feeble and afraid. Half-starved fishermen fight as these citizens had fought? Nay, but the city must be protected by some unseen power; and the soldiers crossed themselves and crouched closer to the camp fires, to whisper strange tales, which for aught they knew might be true, of saint and devil, of unknown spirits of light and darkness.

Next morning, after a fresh cannonade, an assault was again ordered, but it was in vain. The midnight fears of the troopers were not thus easily banished, and nothing could prevail on them to face again the unknown foes and strange weapons of yesterday.

Don Frederic threatened, he even stooped to entreaty, but when that proved useless he drew his sword, as did his officers, and ran through the body several of the soldiers as they stood there immovable. Even then their comrades refused to advance, and the assault was of necessity postponed.

The carpenter meanwhile had reached the Prince of Orange in safety, and on September 26 he was in Sonoy's camp with letters from William, bidding the General flood the country at once rather than risk Alkmaar falling into the hands of the enemy. Copies of the Prince's letter, together with fresh instructions, were then carefully enclosed in the walking-stick. There was comfort for the citizens in the Prince's letter, for should it be necessary he solemnly promised that the waters would be set free to sweep the Spanish army from the

face of the earth.

Already, indeed, the work had begun. The Zyp and other sluices had been opened, and the water, driven by a strong north-west wind, had reached the neighbourhood of the Spanish camp. The soldiers, uncomfortable, and as the water slowly increased in depth, alarmed, were inclined to prove mutinous. Should the two remaining dykes be pierced, the flood would be complete. Harvests would be swept away and an enormous amount of property would be destroyed, but as certain recompense the Spaniards would be compelled to fly, or be swept away by the ocean.

The carpenter, on his way back to Alkmaar with the reassuring messages from Orange, found it almost impossible to pass through the enemy's lines. As he fled for his life he dropped the stick containing his despatches, the contents of which, however, he told to his fellow-burghers when at length he succeeded in re-entering the city.

But the despatches being found, were carried to Don Frederic. No sooner had the Spanish General read them than he assembled his officers, for of the determined temper of the foe he now had proof. The sea, which was already creeping around their camp, would soon, he assured them, be set free by the will of these unflinching burghers, and no longer creeping, but rushing upon them in resistless fury, would sweep them off the face of the earth. Don Frederic and his officers decided that loyalty to the Spanish arms did not involve an impossible struggle with the waves of the great deep. On October 8, 1573, the inhabitants of Alkmaar could scarcely believe their eyes as they saw the Spaniards hurriedly raise the siege and retreat toward Amsterdam.

Three days after the raising of the siege the patriots were encouraged by a great naval victory.

Early in October 1573 Count Bossu, with a fleet of about thirty ships, sailed into the Zuyder Zee, despite the sunken vessels and other obstacles with which the patriots had done their utmost to make the passage of the Y impossible.

In North Holland a fleet of twenty-five vessels under Admiral Dirkzoon had speedily been equipped, and was now also cruising in the Zuyder Zee. A few skirmishes only took place, Bossu not encouraging his fleet to come to as close quarters as the patriots wished.

But on October 11, favoured by a strong easterly breeze, the fleet under Dirkzoon had its will, and bore down upon the Spanish armada, which was lying off and on in the neighbourhood of Hoorn and Enkhuizen.

A general engagement folio wed, and the Spanish fleet was soon forced to retire, closely pursued by the Dutch vessels. Five of the royal vessels were captured, the rest effecting their escape. But the Inquisition, the largest and best manned of both the fleets, had not run away. Admiral Bossu was on board, and though he saw himself thus basely forsaken by his forces, he scorned to yield. Grappled to the sides and prow of the powerful Inquisition were three of the smaller patriot vessels, and together, before wind and tide, the four boats drifted. To guide the ships in any direction was not possible, for a life-and-death struggle was at its height. Bossu and his men, armed in bullet-proof coats of mail, stood on the deck, ready to repel any attempt to board the vessel.

The Hollanders fought, as was now their wont, with tarred and burning hoops, boiling oil and molten lead. Fiercely the battle raged and long. It was three o'clock in the afternoon when the fleets had met, and now night had fallen, and still through the long, dark hours, with never a pause to rest, the combat raged. And the vessels drifted together until they were close to a shoal called the Nek, and there they struck on the rocks, but so hotly was the battle raging that the shock was hardly felt.

Then in the early morning John Haring of Horn, the hero of Diemerdyke, clambered on board the Inquisition and hauled her colours down. A gallant deed and brave, but the ship was not yet prepared to lower her flag, and John Haring paid the price of his reckless deed, for he was shot through the body, and even as he grasped her colours he fell back dead on the deck of the Inquisition.

But a few more hours passed and Bossu saw that it would be folly to resist longer. The ships were aground on a coast hostile to the Spaniards. His fleet was gone, his crew for the most part dead or disabled, while the vessels of the patriots were continually being reinforced by boats from the shore, which brought men and ammunition, and at the same time removed the killed and wounded. Accordingly, by eleven o'clock Bossu surrendered, and he, with 300



Fiercely the battle raged and long

prisoners, was taken into Hoorn. The city was not slow to show its hatred of the Spanish Admiral, for it was he whose treachery had caused the massacre of Rotterdam. Deep and bitter were the curses that greeted him, for was he not one of the hated tyrants under whose oppression they were forced to groan. His capture was of great use to Orange, who held him as hostage for the life of his friend, Sainte Aldegonde, the eloquent patriot, who was taken prisoner a few weeks later.

Both Bossu and the patriot were eventually set free.

CHAPTER XXV

The Grand Commander

As the year 1573 drew to a close the Duke of Alva found his position always more galling. Even in Spain his influence was waning, and Philip, annoyed at the recent losses of his army in the Netherlands, failed to support his minister as he had formerly done.

In Amsterdam the Duke was disliked as heartily as he had been in Brussels, and he believed that, hated by both King and people, the time had come when his recall might be effected. His renewed appeal to Philip met with success, and on November 17, 1573, Alva was once more in Brussels to receive his successor, the Grand Commander Don Louis de Requesens. After some show of reluctance the Grand Commander consented to begin his new duties at once, and on November 29 he took the oath as Governor-General, in the presence of the Duke of Aerschot, Berlaymont, and other officers of the State.

The Duke of Alva, relieved of his duties, did not linger long in the Provinces. On December 18, 1573, he left for ever the country which he had for so long trampled under his foot. And a gleam of hope flashed in the hearts of the Netherlander, and they rejoiced at the departure of the tyrant, rejoiced in silence, yet, as a courtier wrote to Philip, "the Duke had engendered such an extraordinary hatred in the hearts of all persons in the land, that they would have fireworks in honour of his departure if they dared."

The arrival of the Grand Commander was indeed hailed with a gleam of hope, for it was not possible for any human being to prove as pitiless as had the Duke of Alva. Yet the Netherlander had no great regard for the character of the new Governor-General, nor did

they deem it fitting that a simple gentleman of cloak and sword, rather than a Prince of their ruling house, should be sent to govern them.

Requesens came with a policy of peace, subject to but two conditions. The King believed the conditions pointed to the clemency and goodwill he bore his rebellious subjects. They need but acknowledge his absolute supremacy and accept as the one form of worship the Roman Catholic religion, and peace would once again be restored to their country.

For ten long years the Netherlander had been fighting against the King's attempt to rule them with absolute authority. Was it possible for them now to give up without a protest that for which they had sacrificed life, home and property? For seven years they had been striving to gain freedom to worship God in their own way. Was it possible for them now to give up the slender fruits of their struggles for the sake of an ignoble peace?

The Commander soon learned that it was to be war to the end, that the two conditions on which alone he might base a policy of peace were conditions that would never be accepted by this nation of sturdy and independent burghers.

Meanwhile there was work awaiting the new Governor, for the war was still waging. Middleburg, in the Isle of Walcheren, was still held for the King by Mondragon, who had now been for some time closely besieged by the patriots. There was both merchandise and money shut up in the city, treasures the Spaniards were loth to lose; there was, above all, Mondragon, too brave and distinguished an officer to be left to his fate. Famine was already in the city, and the townspeople had nothing to eat save rats, mice, dogs or cats. Mondragon would be forced to surrender did he not promptly receive supplies.

Requesens' most pressing duty on his arrival was, if possible, to relieve Middleburg. He accordingly collected seventy-five ships at Bergen, which were under the command of Romero. Another fleet, laden with provisions, was assembled at Antwerp under D'Avila.

Meanwhile the patriots had not been idle. The Prince of Orange was at Flushing with Admiral Boisot, who had already a powerful squadron in readiness to attack the royalist fleet.

Late in January 1574 D'Avila arrived near Flushing and awaited Romero. The two commanders, after uniting, were to make a determined effort to reinforce the starving city of Middleburg. Admiral Boisot had already sailed up the Scheldt and taken up a position nearly opposite Bergen. Here the Prince of Orange came to speak to his assembled officers before the action began. In stirring words he reminded them that it was necessary for the sake of the whole country to prevent the city of Middleburg being wrested from their grasp, and he urged them to fight as men fight for their Fatherland. And the officers rent the air with their cheers, and swore to be true to the Prince, and to fight for their country with every drop of blood in their veins.

The Prince, confident of the valour and enthusiasm of the patriot crews, then withdrew to Delft, to make arrangements to drive the Spaniards from Leyden, which city they had now besieged.

On January 29, 1574, the fleet of Romero sailed from Bergen. A general salute was fired in honour of the Grand Commander, the discharge accidentally setting fire to one of the magazines of the ships. With a terrible explosion the vessel was blown to pieces, every soul on board perishing. The fleet, saddened by the occurrence, went slowly on its way. Opposite Romerswaal the patriot fleet under Boisot awaited them, drawn up in battle array. It was evident to Romero that he would not join D'Avila till a battle had been lost or won.

The captain of the patriot flagship had been left on shore. He was apparently dying of fever, and the Admiral had appointed a Flushinger in his stead. Just before the action, however, Schot, the dying captain, so weak that he was "scarcely able to blow a feather from his mouth," staggered on board and claimed his command. Of such dogged stuff were the men made who were that day to fight for their Prince and for their country.

Romero's first division now drew near and delivered a broadside, which killed and wounded many, both officers and men, Admiral Boisot at the same time losing one eye. But there was no chance to cannonade further, Romero's vessels finding themselves grappled and held in the close clutch of their enemies. No mercy was shown in the murderous fight that followed. Battle-axe, pike, pistol, and dagger were wielded with unerring aim by the wild Zeelanders. Should a man

yield, he was instantly stabbed and thrown hurriedly into the sea. No thought of plunder touched the patriots freedom, not booty, was that for which they fought and the gold chains and other ornaments worn by the Spaniards they did not stop to seize. Furiously the fight continued. Not until fifteen ships had been captured and 12,000 royalists slain did the enemy's fleet retreat into Bergen. Romero, whose ship had grounded, sprang out of a port-hole and swam ashore, followed by many of his men. He landed at the very feet of the Grand Commander, where, wet and cold, he had remained on the dyke of Schakerloo. "I told your Excellency," said Romero boldly, as with difficulty he clambered up the bank, "I told you that I was a land-fighter and not a sailor. If you were to give me command of one hundred fleets, I believe that none of them would fare better than this has done."

Requesens returned to Brussels, owning himself beaten in his first adventure in the Netherlands. D'Avila, hearing that Romero's fleet was destroyed, speedily brought his vessels back to Antwerp, and Mondragon was left to his fate.

Orange now called upon Middleburg to surrender at discretion, but rather than trust himself to his enemy's mercy, Mondragon declared that he would set fire to the city in twenty places, and, together with every soldier and burgher, perish in the flames. Knowing that the brave old Spaniard was capable of thus destroying the city and its inhabitants, the Prince granted honourable conditions, which were signed on February 18, 1574 It was agreed that Mondragon and his troops should leave the city with their arms, ammunition and personal property. The citizens who remained were to take the oath of allegiance to the Prince, as Stadtholder to his Majesty, and were besides to pay a subsidy of 300,000 florins.

With such humane conditions Mondragon could not but be pleased, for well he knew that had the Spaniards been the victors, slaughter and plunder would have been the fate of the city and its inhabitants.

Requesens now bethought himself of the peace policy which the King would sanction, could his two conditions be but complied with. The Prince of Orange was approached through ambassadors and by letters, but he was not to be moved from the conditions he had always

laid down as a basis of agreement. These clashed in every point with the King's conditions. For unless freedom to worship God in their own way was granted, the ancient charters of their land restored, and the Spanish and other foreign troops at once removed from the Netherlands, the Hollanders and Zeelanders, encouraged by the Prince, were resolved to fight to the last man.

In the autumn of 1574 the Prince bound himself yet more closely to the cause he had made his own by publicly becoming a member of the Calvinistic Church, which Church had its firmest roots in the Northern Provinces.

The efforts of the Prince to obtain help from foreign powers were now ceaseless. From both France and England he received at this time men and money, but more often his advances were met with rebuffs, or, what was even harder to bear, with evasions and falsehoods. Often, too, his life was endangered by the knife of the assassin, for Philip and his counsellors counted the attempt to get rid of William a righteous deed, and one well pleasing to Heaven. The Grand Commander, who received orders to dispose of both the Prince and Louis of Nassau, far from dissenting from the proposal, only expressed his regret that in this matter he had small hope of success unless God helped him. The Prince, however, informed by his well-paid spies of all that passed in the secret Cabinet of Madrid, had been able thus far successfully to avoid all the traps that had been laid for him.

During the winter Louis of Nassau had been attempting, with the aid of Charles IX. of France, to raise a force with which to join the Prince and enable him to relieve Leyden. He now, with an army of 7000 foot and 3000 horse, crossed the Rhine. With him were his two brothers, John and Henry.

Requesens felt the situation was grave, and at once levied troops in Germany, and ordered Mendoza, with some companies of cavalry, to throw himself without delay into Maestricht. He then drew off the troops which were besieging Leyden to help at the new point of danger.

Louis, failing in an attempt to take Maestricht by surprise, advanced along the right bank of the Meuse, hoping to join William, who had set out to meet him at the head of 6000 men. But, to his

disappointment, he found a strong body of Spanish troops under D'Avila directly in his path, and close to the little village of Mook.

At daybreak on April 14, 1574, both armies were drawn up in battle array. The skirmishing began with an attack on Count Louis' trench, which extended from Mook, where he had stationed ten companies of infantry. After a short and fierce struggle the trench was carried, only, however, to be speedily retaken by a detachment which Count Louis sent to the rescue. The battle at this point now became general, nearly all the patriot force being employed to defend it. But once again the Spaniards carried the trench, and the patriots were routed.

Seeing this, Count Louis charged with all his cavalry upon the enemy's horse, which had remained motionless. So sudden was the shock that the Spanish vanguard fled in all directions, Count Louis driving them before him till they reached the river, into which they recklessly plunged, many of them being drowned, while a few only reached the other side in safety. The patriot cavalry wheeled and retired to load their pieces. Ere they were ready for another charge, down upon them came the Spanish lances and the German black troopers. The patriots were unable to withstand the shock, and a confused action followed, in which Count Louis' troops were overthrown.

Finding his army well-nigh cut to pieces, Louis rallied round him a little band of troopers, among whom was his brother, Count Henry, and rushed to a hopeless and desperate charge. But they were soon surrounded and cut to pieces, and nothing more was ever seen or known of the indomitable Louis and his little band. The battle ended amid horrible slaughter, the whole patriot army being exterminated.

Meanwhile, in intense anxiety, the Prince was waiting to hear from Count Louis, but never a message reached him, only dark rumours were sorrowfully reported in his presence, rumours to which he at first refused to listen, but which at last made themselves heard and believed.

The blow was a crushing one, for William had ever looked to the chivalrous Louis for sympathy and help, and now he deeply mourned his loss and that of the gallant Henry, the youngest of the three brothers who had laid down their lives for their country.

As for the victory of Mook, if it had been disastrous for the patriots, it proved of but little real use to Spain, for the royal troops, irritated at having had to work for three years without pay, resolved to mutiny. This they did in a body, choosing a general of their own, and marching towards Antwerp. On April 26, 1574, they entered the startled city, numbering at least 3000, and encamped in the town square. The Grand Commander at once rode down to the rebels and remonstrated with them, but they only answered briefly and unanimously, "Dollars, not speeches."

Requesens withdrew. He was without money himself, Philip having failed, as was not unusual, to send his minister the necessary supplies, but he appealed to the magistrates for the 400,000 crowns needed to satisfy the demands of the troops. To give it without delay would save the city from the pillaging of the soldiers. But the magistrates were not to be hurried, and while they deliberated, the soldiers barricaded the great square, quartered their self-elected general in the town-house, and found homes for themselves in the houses of the wealthiest citizens. Here they demanded the best apartments, the most luxurious meals, the most delicate wines, the burghers not daring to incur the wrath of the heedless soldiers by refusing to do their will.

On May 9 the magistrates offered to pay ten months' wages in cash, five months' in silk and woollen cloths, and the balance in promises to be redeemed in a few days. The offer was received with hootings and groans of disdain. It was not liberal enough for men who had worked for three years without wages. Nowise disturbed, however, the soldiers proceeded to enjoy themselves still further at the expense of the citizens.

May came to an end, and at the same time the patience of the inhabitants was exhausted. The magistrates must rid them without further delay of their troublesome and alarming guests. Accordingly, pressure being put on them, the magistrates at length complied with Requesens' request for money, and he at once proceeded to make arrangements with the soldiers. They agreed, on receiving all their wages, either in cash or cloth, together with a solemn promise of pardon for all their acts of insubordination, to once again obey their officers. Religious ceremonies in the Cathedral concluded with

pledges of pardon being given by Requesens to the soldiers, who immediately afterward received the promised payments. A great banquet was then held in the mere to celebrate the day's event. The soldiers in their foolish glee arrayed themselves in costumes cut from the cloth they had received in payment. Bronzed and scarred faces looked out from fantastic draperies of silks and satins and gold-embroidered brocades. The mirth was loud, the banquet rich, and when it was over the soldiers made their drums into gaming tables, and were soon eagerly winning or reluctantly losing their hard-won gold.

Suddenly the distant booming of cannon was heard from the direction of the river. The soldiers, no longer mutinous, were summoned from their games, and, dressed still in their gorgeous decorations, with many a rag peeping through between the silks and satins, were ordered forth upon the dykes.

Admiral Boisot had been sailing up the Scheldt, determined to destroy, if possible, the fleet which, under D'Avila, had retreated to Antwerp after the disaster at Romerswaal. He had encountered twenty-two Spanish vessels, and after a short and sharp action he was victorious. It was the booming of his cannon which had interrupted the soldiers' games. From the dykes the soldiers now opened a warm fire of musketry upon Boisot, to which he replied with his cannon. But the distance from the shore made the action unimportant, and the patriots sailed triumphantly down the river. And the Grand Commander felt that the foothold on the sea, which he believed would enable him to reduce the Netherlands, was farther from his grasp than ever.

CHAPTER XXVI

The Siege and Relief of Leyden

The first siege of Leyden had lasted for five months, when it was unexpectedly raised by Requesens, who, on the arrival of Count Louis and his army, had ordered every available soldier to defend the frontier. Here was a golden opportunity for the city to strengthen its garrison and increase its store of provisions. The Prince warned the citizens to use the chance thus provided, but they, assured in their own minds of Count Louis' success over the Spanish army, recklessly omitted to prepare for the renewal of the siege. To their dismay their hopes proved unfounded. Count Louis' defeat was quickly followed by the reappearance of Spanish troops around the walls of Leyden. Unprepared to sustain a long siege, the inhabitants saw themselves completely shut out from all hope of military relief by a circle of forts thrown up by the enemy.

In the city were no troops, save a small company of freebooters and five companies of the burgher guard. It was in the stout hearts of the burghers and the ceaseless energy of William the Silent that the only chance of a successful resistance lay. By the advice of the Prince the city was at once placed on a strict allowance of food. Half a pound of meat and half a pound of bread was given to each full-grown man, and to the others in due proportion. The only communication that was possible was by means of carrier-pigeons and by a few swift and skilful messengers called jumpers. Fierce sorties relieved the monotony of the days, and a handsome reward was offered to any who brought into the city gates the head of a Spaniard.

The Prince had his headquarters at Delft and Rotterdam. Between the two cities lay an important fortress, from which place

alone he could hope to relieve Leyden.

On June 29, 1574, the Spaniards, knowing its value, made an effort to capture the fortress, but were beaten off with the loss of several hundreds, and Orange still held in his hands the keys with which he could unlock the ocean gates. He had already determined to pierce the dykes along the Meuse and the Yssel, and, should it prove necessary, the sluices at Rotterdam, Schiedam, and Delftshaven would be opened, though the damage to fields with their growing crops, and to villages left thus exposed, would be enormous. "Better a drowned land than a lost land," cried the patriots, as the Prince explained that only by these means could Leyden be relieved and the whole of Holland rescued from destruction.

Meanwhile, on July 30, Valdez, who was in command of the Spanish army, sent ample offers of pardon to the citizens would they but consent to open their gates and submit to the King's authority. But the offers were treated with disdain, though already the people were suffering from scarcity of food.

Four days later, the Prince himself went along the river Yssel as far as Kapelle to superintend the opening of the dykes at sixteen different points. The sluices at Schiedam and Rotterdam were also opened, and the ocean began to pour over the land. While the waters slowly rose, provisions were being collected, according to the orders of the Prince, in all the chief towns of the neighbourhood, while 200 vessels were equipped at Rotterdam, Delftshaven and other ports. And need was there for help, and that speedily, for Leyden was growing anxious. Its bread had come to an end, and malt cake, which had been used in its place, was all but exhausted.

On the 12th of August a ray of hope reached the city in the shape of a letter from the Prince assuring them of speedy relief. They waited till the 21st of the month, and then sent a despatch to him, reminding him that they had now held out for three months. For two of the months they had had food, for the last nothing but a little malt cake, which would only last four days longer.

On the last of the four days they again received a letter, dictated by the Prince, who was now lying in bed at Rotterdam with a violent fever, though of his illness he did not speak. The dykes were all pierced, they read, and the water rising over the great outward barrier

which separated the city from the sea. At the good news the city forgot its hunger for a brief hour, and, to the amazement of the enemy, music was heard and shouts of merriment in the usually silent streets of Leyden.

Valdez felt a vague anxiety. What cause was there for gaiety in the starving town? Uneasily he felt the clue might be found in the watery waste that was spreading round the camp. It lay ten inches deep, this rising flood, and the Spanish camp was already in a perilous condition. But among his officers were Flemings who laughed equally at the fear of Valdez and the desperate remedy of the Prince. The sea come to Leyden! They laughed at the possibility, till Valdez forgot his fear.

In the city, too, the fair gleam of hope had faded to a dull distrust. They heard, these starving men and women, the bitter taunts of the few royalists who were in the city. "Go up to the tower, ye beggars," they cried, "go up to the tower, and tell us if ye can see the ocean coming over the dry land to your relief." And day after day, with trembling feet, they did go up to their ancient tower, and, with eyes blinded by tears, they gazed and gazed across the country, longing and watching, hoping a little and praying much for some sign of the promised relief.

On August 27 they sent a desponding cry to the Estates. Had the promised help failed? Had they been forgotten in their extremity? That same day came back an answer that told the inhabitants that indeed they were not forsaken, and that every nerve was being strained to bring them help.

"Rather," said the Estates, "will we see our whole land and all our possessions perish in the waves than forsake thee, Leyden. We know full well, moreover, that with Leyden all Holland must perish also."

Meanwhile the Prince still lay in bed. The fever was at its height, but no relief was possible to his weary brain while Leyden was in danger. From his couch he dictated words of counsel and encouragement to the well-nigh desperate citizens. Towards the end of August the rumour found its way to his sick-room that Leyden had fallen. He refused to believe the report, yet so troubled was he that his fever increased, and not till the rumour was contradicted did he begin to improve.

By the end of the first week in September the Prince was convalescent, and the preparations for the relief of Leyden were pushed on with all possible haste.

On September 1 Admiral Boisot arrived out of Zeeland, with a small number of vessels and a wild, fierce crew of 800 veteran sailors. The fleet was increased to 200, and then sailed without hindrance to within five miles of Leyden. Here a dyke held by the Spaniards, and still a foot and a half above water, stopped their progress. The Prince had given orders that at all hazards the dyke was to be secured by the fleet. This was successfully done, the few Spaniards who had been stationed there being taken by surprise and driven off or killed, while the patriots fortified themselves upon the dyke without the loss of a man.

But the following morning the Spaniards, seeing the folly of leaving the bulwark in the hands of the patriots, rushed in considerable numbers upon the dyke to recover what they had lost. A hot fight followed, but the wild Zeelanders were not to be ousted from the position they had gained, and the enemy was forced to retire, leaving hundreds lying dead along the dyke, of which the patriots were still in complete possession.

In the very face of the enemy great gaps were made in the dyke, and the fleet sailed triumphantly through, only, however, to find, to their surprise, that three-quarters of a mile farther inland their progress was again checked. Another long dyke, called the Greenway, rising a foot above water, lay right across their path. This dyke also was but feebly defended, and Admiral Boisot, taking possession of this barrier, levelled it in many places, and brought his fleet safely over its ruins.

But again disappointment awaited the gallant crew. A large mere, called the Freshwater Lake, stretched before them, and into this lake the Admiral had expected instantly to float. Instead, he found that his only way to reach it lay through a deep canal, which led to a bridge strongly occupied by the enemy. Moreover, along both banks of the canal the Spanish troops were drawn up to the number of 3000.

Boisot determined to force his passage, and led the van himself in a desperate attempt to make his way to the Freshwater Lake. But the enemy's position was impregnable, and Boisot, having lost a few men,

withdrew, defeated and nearly in despair.

Meanwhile the water had grown too shallow to keep his vessels afloat, but on September 18 the wind arose, and for three days a gale raged. The waters rapidly rose, and on the second day the fleet was once more afloat.

It was now that a countryman of the district reached the Admiral and showed him how he could reach Leyden and yet avoid the Freshwater Lake, with its fatal approach. Guided by the stranger, the fleet sailed towards a low dyke on the opposite side from the mere, which was defended by a few Spaniards. They, seized by a panic, fled inland, and Boisot surmounted the third barrier, and sailed on to North Aa, which the enemy deserted on their approach.

Yet here again a barrier called the Kirkway rose before them. The waters too, spreading over a wider space and diminishing under an east wind which had arisen, fell to the depth of nine inches, while eighteen or twenty were necessary to float the vessels. Day after day was wasted while the ships lay motionless, helpless in the shallow sea.

Orange, as soon as he could stand, left his sick-room and came on board the stranded fleet. Despair fled before his presence, while his words brought new patience to the restless Sea-Beggars, who, ferocious to foreigners, were docile as children to their Prince. Before he left them, William ordered the Kirkway, the last important obstacle between the fleet and the city, to be immediately destroyed. Then, leaving the Admiral and his men with new inspiration and courage in their hearts, the Prince returned to Delft.

And the city? The city was literally starving. Even Haarlem in all its misery had never suffered as Leyden suffered now. In many a house the watchman, going his rounds, would find a whole family huddled together dead, for hard on the steps of famine there had stalked disease. From six to eight thousand perished from the plague alone. Yet never was there a thought of yielding to the foreign foe, more dreaded tar than either plague or famine.

The burghers knew that the fleet was on its way. They had heard of the different barriers that had been surmounted, but after its arrival at North Aa no news had reached them. All was silent, and the silence seemed ominous to the failing hearts of the citizens. Yet wistfully at the dawn of each day their eyes turned to the vanes on the

steeples. Had the wind veered, or did it still blow from the cruel east? And day after day they looked in vain for the longed-for change that might yet mean deliverance, for still the wind blew steadily from the east.

Valdez, who was well aware that his position was less stable than the citizens suspected, sent once again offers of pardon, would the city but surrender. But the offers were spurned by the heroic defenders of Leyden. It is true that a party of the more faint-hearted of the inhabitants assaulted the heroic burgomaster, Adrian van der Werf, with threats and reproaches as he passed along the streets. Tall and haggard the burgomaster stood and faced the angry crowd. "What would ye do, my friends?" he cried. "Why do ye murmur that we do not break our vows and surrender the city to the Spaniards, a fate more horrible than the agony she now endures. I tell you I have made an oath to hold the city, and may God give me strength to keep my oath. I can die but once, whether by your hands, the enemy's, or by the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me, not so that of the city entrusted to my care. I know that we shall starve if not soon relieved, but starvation is preferable to the dishonoured death which is the only alternative. Your menaces move me not. My life is at your disposal. Here is my sword. Plunge it into my breast and divide my flesh among you. Take my body to appease your hunger, but expect no surrender, so long as I remain alive." And those who heard the brave words never murmured against Der Werf again. With shouts of applause they left him, and mounted yet again to the tower and battlements to watch for the coming fleet.

From the ramparts they flung, these starving men and women, a fresh defiance to the foe. "Ye call us rat-eaters, dog-eaters," they cried, "and it is true. So long, then, as ye hear a dog bark or a 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 right to defend our women, our liberty and our religion against the foreign tyrant. And 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."

Valdez heard the defiance flung so proudly from the battlements,

and he saw the city slipping from his hold. Yet the fleet still lay stranded at North Aa, and derisively the Spaniards shouted to the citizens, "As well can the Prince of Orange pluck the stars from the skies as bring the ocean to the walls of Ley den for your relief."

September had drawn to a close when a dove flew into the city, bringing a letter from Admiral Boisot. In a few days the long-looked-for relief would enter the city, wrote the Admiral. And though to the citizens in their agony the few days seemed to mock them, stretching out into endless hours of gnawing pain, they yet caused the letter to be read publicly in the market-place and caused the bells to ring a merry peal of hope.

Nevertheless when the morrow dawned the wind still blew chilly from the east, and still the waters continued to subside. Boisot, as well as the inhabitants of Leyden, was almost in despair. Then at length the longed-for tempest came. On the 1st and 2nd October a violent gale blew from the northwest, and then veering in a few hours to the south-west, increased in violence. The waters of the North Sea were driven furiously landward, and swept unhindered over the ruined dykes. Ere twenty-four hours had passed, the fleet at North Aa had more than two feet of water, instead of but nine inches, and at midnight, in the midst of the storm, the fleet sailed triumphantly over the Kirkway dyke and on steadily towards Zoeterwoude. A few sentinels challenged them as they rowed along, the only answer being a flash from Boisot's cannon, lighting up for a moment the wild waste of water around them. A little farther and the patriot fleet encountered the Spanish ships, and a fierce battle ensued, the enemy's vessels being soon sunk and the crews hurled relentlessly into the waves. Then on once more the Admiral swept over the broad waters. As they approached some shallows in the great mere, the Zeelanders dashed into the sea and with sheer determination shouldered the vessels through.

Between the fleet and Leyden there were now left only the forts of Zoeterwoude and Lammen, one 500, the other 250 yards from the city. Troops and artillery would assuredly delay them at Zoeterwoude, and every moment was precious. But the panic which had already driven many foes from their path seized upon the defenders of Zoeterwoude.

No sooner was the fleet in sight than the Spaniards fled from the fortress towards The Hague. The footpath was rapidly disappearing in the ever deepening flood, and hundreds of the fugitives lost their footing, while the wild Zeelanders, springing from their vessels upon the crumbling dyke, drove those more fortunate into the sea, plunging after them in their fury and attacking them with boat-hook and dagger.

The first fortress was thus captured and set on fire, and a few more strokes of the oar brought the whole fleet close to Lammen. Swarming with soldiers, bristling with cannon, this last fortress lay directly across their path. Within a mile and a half of the headquarters of Valdez it lay, seemingly an insurmountable barrier. Yet Boisot wrote to the Prince that he would attempt to take the fort the following morning.

And the citizens dragged themselves to the market-place, wild with a newly kindled hope. A dove had been sent by Boisot to tell them that the fleet lay but a few yards off. When night fell, the burgomaster, with a number of citizens, mounted the highest tower. "Yonder," cried the steadfast Der Werf, "yonder, behind the fort, are bread and meat and brethren in thousands. Shall all this be destroyed by the Spanish guns, or shall we rush to the rescue of our friends?" "We will tear the fortress to fragments with our teeth and nails," cried the starving men, "before the relief so long expected shall be wrested from us." At break of day they would join with Boisot in an attack upon Lammen.

It was a pitch-dark night, a night full of ominous sights and sounds, which filled the Spaniards, the city, and the fleet with strange forebodings. Through the darkness, at dead of night, a long procession of lights was seen to issue from the fort and flit across the waters. A large part of the city wall fell with a loud crash, and the horror-stricken citizens believed that the Spaniards were upon them at last, while the Spaniards believed the noise was caused by a desperate sortie on the part of the citizens. All was strange and bewildering through the dark hours of the night, and men looked eagerly for morning, for daylight.

With the first break of dawn, Admiral Boisot prepared for the assault. But from Lammen not a sound was heard. A deathlike silence

brooded over the fortress. In the hearts of the Sea-Beggars suspicion, terrible and sickening, awoke. Had they come too late? Had the city been taken during those strange night hours? Had the massacre already begun?

The answer to their surmisings was on the way. Even now a man was wading towards the fleet, while from the summit of the fort a lad was seen to wave his cap. Then, as the man reached them, the mystery was solved.

The night had been full of unknown terrors to the Spaniards also, and, panic-stricken, they had fled through the darkness. Their lanterns were the lights that had been seen to flit across the sea. Only the boy who now waved his cap from the forsaken fort had seen the flight of the enemy, and so certain was he of it, that he had offered to go alone to the camp as soon as morning dawned.

Valdez had indeed fled and ordered all his troops to retire from Lammen. Not an obstacle remained, and Boisot, sweeping by the last forsaken fort, reached his goal at length on October 3. The quays were lined with famishing folk, all who could stand coming out to greet the preservers of the city. From every ship loaves were hurriedly tossed to those who for two months had tasted no wholesome human food.

Admiral Boisot stepped ashore, and a solemn procession was at once formed. Magistrates, wild Zeelanders, soldiers reduced to skeletons, emaciated women and little children all wended their way without delay to the great church, led by the Admiral. Here the grateful citizens with their deliverers bent in deep thanksgiving before the King of Kings. The good news was at once sent to the Prince of Orange, who immediately set out for the city to rejoice with the inhabitants and his brave and tenacious Admiral.

On October 4, the day following the relief of the city, the wind veered again to the north-east, and in the course of a few days the land was bare, and the work of rebuilding the dykes was begun.

As a reward for its great sufferings, the Prince granted the city of Leyden a ten days' annual fair, without tolls or taxes, while as a proof of the gratitude felt by the people of Holland and Zeeland for the fortitude of the inhabitants, it was resolved that a university should at once be founded within their walls. The following year, 1575, the



The quays were lined with famishing folk

building was consecrated, amid the feasting and rejoicing of a happy and prosperous people.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Grand Commander Dies

For the space of nine months after the relief of Leyden there was little fighting carried on between the Spaniards and the patriots. Once again the Spanish army was mutinous, and Requesens, with his empty exchequer, had nothing with which to pay them. In April 1575 the Grand Commander wrote to Philip, complaining that it was now five months since he had heard from his Majesty.

To win over the Prince by his favourable terms seemed to Requesens the only way out of his difficulties, and accordingly during these months of inactivity he again approached Orange. But the most he dare offer on behalf of his master was that those of the Reformed faith should be allowed a space of time in which to sell their property and leave the land in safety. Neither the states of Holland and Zeeland nor their Stadtholder would for a moment accept such an offer.

These provinces were now anxious to unite with one another under the authority of the Prince. In April 1575 the conditions of the union were drawn up, and it was declared that William of Orange, as Sovereign, should have absolute power in everything that concerned the defence of the country, while in all other matters his power was assured. In July the Prince formally accepted the government of the devoted provinces of Holland and Zeeland.

A month previously, William, who had been divorced from Anna of Saxony, was married to Princess Charlotte of Bourbon. In sympathy with the Reformed faith, she had, three years earlier, fled from a cloister, in which she had been placed by her friends. Many were the remonstrances made to William, for it was far from pleasing

to his friends that the great reformer should marry a fugitive nun. But the Prince did not hesitate. Writing to his brother John, who had joined in these remonstrances, he said, "I can assure you that my character has always tended to this, to care neither for words nor menaces in any matter where I can act with a clear conscience and without doing injury to my neighbour." And the marriage was a happy one, the Princess Charlotte proving herself in many troublous times worthy of the Prince's reliance on her character.

Towards the end of July 1575 the Grand Commander, having found that all negotiations with William ended in failure, renewed hostilities, resolving, if possible, to recover some portion of Zeeland. To do this he resolved to follow the wonderful example of Mondragon and send his army through the sea to capture Zierickzee. The passage would be even more perilous than that accomplished by Mondragon, for now there was not only darkness and the ocean to overcome, but a watchful and determined foe.

The night for which the expedition had been planned proved wild and stormy. Lightning flashed and thunder rolled, while waves dashed over the narrow path along which the soldiers marched. They soon found themselves up to the neck in water, while from the long line of Zeeland vessels the artillery played ceaselessly upon their ranks. Then, as they advanced, the adventurers found themselves attacked by harpoons, and many a soldier fell transfixed by the fatal weapon, while many another was dragged from the war-path with boat-hooks. Still the enemy steadily advanced, and soon after daybreak the opposite shore was reached, though many had perished by the way. The patriot vessels were unable to prevent the enemy reaching Schouwen, on which island was the city of Zierickzee. It was accordingly besieged, and Mondragon was left in charge of the important enterprise. For lack of funds, however, the operations of both besiegers and besieged were but languid.

In the spring of 1576 the Prince came to the neighbourhood to attend personally to the plans that were being made for the relief of the city.

On May 25 Admiral Boisot, the hero of the Leyden relief, was given the command of an expedition, which was to attempt to throw help into Zierickzee by the sea. But Mondragon had blocked the

shallow harbour with hulks and chains and with a loose submerged dyke.

Boisot, with his usual boldness, drove his ship, the Red Lion, against these obstacles, but failed to cut his way through them. His vessel, the largest in the fleet, becoming entangled, he was at once attacked by the besiegers. With the ebb of the tide the enemy withdrew, and Boisot found that his ship was aground, while the rest of his fleet had been beaten back by the enemy. Night fell, and it had been impossible for the Admiral to accomplish his task. With the morning his captivity would be certain. Rather than wait to fall into the hands of the enemy he sprang into the sea, followed by 300 of his crew, some of whom succeeded in escaping. The Admiral himself swam for a long time, sustained by a broken spar, but night fell before assistance reached him, and he perished.

Deeply the Prince mourned the loss of his brave and trusted Admiral. Where he had failed none were likely to succeed, and Zierickzee was regretfully ordered by the Prince to surrender, should honourable terms be offered.

Mondragon, whose soldiers were on the point of mutiny, willingly agreed to let the garrison depart with their arms and personal property, while the citizens were allowed to retain their charters on payment of 200,000 florins. There was little money in the impoverished town, but mint-masters were hastily appointed, and to them the citizens brought their spoons and silver dishes, which were melted and coined into dollars and half-dollars until payment could be made.

By the fall of Zierickzee the Spaniards had once more gained an outlet upon the ocean, and the Prince was not easily reconciled to its loss. "Had we received the least succour in the world from any side," he wrote, "the poor city should never have fallen."

Hemmed in on every side, the Prince felt that the time had at length come to face the great question of throwing off allegiance to Philip, should a foreign power be found willing to accept the trust forfeited by the Spanish King. On October 1, 1575, William therefore formally proposed to the Estates of Holland and Zeeland to make terms with the enemy or to throw off for ever their allegiance to Philip and find a new Sovereign to protect the Provinces. Unanimously the Estates declared their independence of Philip and their willingness to

accept as Sovereign him whom the Prince of Orange should select. An embassy was therefore sent to England to offer to Queen Elizabeth the Sovereignty of the two Provinces, but she, being fond of neither rebels nor Calvinists, declined the offer, while promising to the Dutch envoys her secret support, which in reality counted for but little.

William, if not in despair, was reduced to great straits. He even dreamed of a wonderful scheme by which to deliver the people and the land he loved for ever from the tyranny of Philip. He would collect a gigantic fleet, and, placing in it all the men, women and children who dwelt in the Provinces, with their property, he would sail with them to seek a new home beyond the seas; while the Netherlands, her windmills burnt and her dykes pierced, would be for ever restored to the ocean from which she had painfully been redeemed.

But the unexpected death of the Grand Commander changed the tenor of the Prince's thoughts. Once more he stood alert, watchful to seize a new opportunity should it arise. A violent fever had attacked Requesens on the 1st of March 1576, and on the 5th of the month he died, in the fifty-first year of his life. In the royalist ranks all was thrown into confusion, and before a successor was found to take up the reins of government, Orange found his opportunity.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Spanish Fury

On the death of the Grand Commander the members of the Council of State had of necessity to attempt to govern the country while they awaited the arrival of a new Governor-General. With the exception of Jerome de Roda the members were Netherlanders, and several of them, among whom was the Duke of Aerschot, were weary of the presence of foreign soldiers in their provinces, and little disposed to brook the further interference of Spaniards in the government of the land. Indeed, the conduct of the soldiers, after the capture of Zierickzee, was filling not only the Government but the populace with dismay. For nine long years they had worked for Philip with but little pay. They had resolved to wait no longer for their wages, and the mutiny on the Island of Schouwen was, by the month of July 1576, already general. Promises were no longer of any use. The soldiers wished for shoes and bread, and at all costs money. To obtain it they resolved to levy themselves on the cities of the Netherlands. Their first step was to imprison their officers within their quarters at Zierickzee, their next to surround the house of Mondragon and call upon him, with threats and taunts, to give them the wages long since due.

The veteran, furious with the insubordination of his men, and fearless of the consequences, sprang into their midst, fiercely daring them to do their worst. But the soldiers turned away, shamed into admiration for the General who had led them to so many victories. They swept through Schouwen, and only when they had stripped it bare did they prepare to leave Zeeland and make their way to Brabant. Terror marched before them, while, as they advanced

towards the capital, Count Mansfeld was deputed to meet them and offer them everything but money. But money or a city they would have, and Mansfeld's overtures were laughed to scorn, and he withdrew, having accomplished nothing, as was shown by the mutineers' next movement Descending on the unfortunate town of Alost in Flanders, they carried it by storm, butchered all the inhabitants and took possession of the well-fortified and wealthy city. They were now nearly three thousand strong.

In Brussels alarm disappeared in rage, and the population rose to a man to defend the capital with their arms. Moreover, they demanded that the Council of State should declare the rebel soldiers to be outlaws, and on July 26, 1576, this was accordingly done. Men everywhere were commanded to slay one or all of them wherever they should be found, to refuse them bread, water, fire, and to assemble at the sound of the bell in every city where the magistrate should order an assault upon them. On August 2 an even more stringent edict was published against them throughout Flanders and Brabant.

The Spanish officers had meanwhile had no dealings with the insurgents. Jerome de Roda had indeed voted in the Council for the edict against the men, yet as the insurrection spread, not only he, but every Spaniard in the capital, was looked on with suspicion by the populace and kept watch over accordingly. As for the Council itself, the citizens had little regard for it, believing it incapable of shielding them from the violence of the soldiers.

By the beginning of September 1576 the whole country seemed subdued by the soldiers, whose officers had now joined them in their revolt. D'Avila, who held the citadel at Antwerp, was in communication with the mutineers at Alost, while the castles of Valenciennes, Ghent, Utrecht, Maestricht, and many other important citadels were held by a body of veteran soldiers, 6000 strong. Out of Holland and Zeeland, Brussels was the only important town that was in the hands of the Netherlanders. From Philip the people need expect no help. He sent indeed an envoy to assure them that they were not forgotten in Madrid, and that a successor to Requesens would soon be found to cure their troubles. Meanwhile he confirmed the authority of the State Council, which had already ceased to exist.

Orange, watching the distracted state of the Provinces, believed

that the time had come when Holland and Zeeland might be united with the other fifteen provinces more closely, on the basis of their common hatred to the foreign soldiers. As for their differences in politics and religion, these might be sunk till their land was free from its hated yoke.

In the autumn of 1576, in response to his appeals, deputies from the other provinces were appointed to meet the representatives of Holland and Zeeland. The congress met in the city of Ghent, which was at that time being closely besieged by the State army, assisted by Orange. The meetings were held within earshot of the continual cannonading and assaults of the attacking force.

While the siege of Ghent was being thus vigorously carried on, the citizens of Maestricht determined, if possible, to wrest their city from the hands of the Spaniards. They succeeded in winning the German garrison within the town to their side, and, thus strengthened, the burghers rose and drove the Spaniards without the city gates. The triumph was but short, for a few companies of the banished Spaniards collected at the small village of Wieck, on the opposite side of the Meuse from Maestricht, and here were speedily joined by Don Frederic with several hundred troops. Their own officer had been taken prisoner, and Don Frederic was loudly called upon to lead them back to the city, that they might wipe out the disgrace to their arms. But the bridge over which they must pass was defended by a strong battery, and the citizens were thronging in thousands to defend their homes from the dreaded foe. Before the deathly passage, despite their eagerness, the soldiers flinched, but Don Frederic was quick to supply an invulnerable shield for his faltering troops. There were few men in the little village of Wieck, but many women. Don Frederic commanded each of his soldiers to seize on one of these defenceless women, and, placing her before his own body, to advance across the bridge. And this they did unhindered, for how could the citizens of Maestricht dare to discharge their cannon, knowing that among the women were many of their own kindred, mothers, wives, sisters?

The bridge by this cowardly device was soon secured, and Maestricht was recovered by the Spaniards, and so awful was the fate of those who had escaped from the battle, that a shudder was felt throughout all the land, a shudder not only for the fate of Maestricht,

but for the doom that seemed to be hanging over many another fair city.

It was on October 20, 1576, that Maestricht was retaken, and within a few days, foiled in an attempt upon Brussels, the troops marched towards Antwerp, the commercial capital. Here would be gold enough and to spare, and in the massive warehouses would be treasures untold, collected from many a far-off clime. Already the citadel was in the hands of D'Avila, who was now regarded as the chief of the mutineers. It was indeed from him the rebels took their orders.

Champagny, Governor of the town on behalf of the States, had before him no easy task. With only a body of German mercenaries under the command of Count Oberstein to assist him, he knew it would be impossible to save Antwerp from the advancing Spanish troops. At his request, therefore, a large reinforcement of Walloon regiments, under the Marquis of Havré, was sent to the city, and preparations for defence were vigorously carried on.

D'Avila meanwhile had secured Count Oberstein, and persuaded him, when half drunk and wholly irresponsible, to sign a treaty, agreeing to disarm the burghers of Antwerp and send the weapons to the citadel. But the next morning Oberstein, realising what he had done, resolved to ignore the treaty he had foolishly signed, and the burghers retained their arms. Not many hours passed ere D'Avila solemnly called upon the Count to carry out his compact, but Oberstein chose to defy the challenge and treat it with contempt. The result was an immediate cannonade from the batteries of the citadel, which was full of danger to the men and women who were rapidly erecting a rampart along the street. Night fell, but in the bright moonlight the cannon still played on the half-finished fortification, till the Walloons, and at length even the citizens, feared to raise their heads above the frail rampart. Champagny did all that was possible to encourage the workers, wandering all night up and down the city, and with his own hands, assisted by only a few citizens and his own servant, planting the battery at a point where it would tell on the citadel.

Early next morning, through a thick mist that hung over the city, men were seen entering into the castle, and the tramp of cavalry was

heard. By ten o'clock the mist had lifted, and from the south-west a moving forest seemed to be approaching. The whole body of the mutineers from Alost, wearing green branches in their helmets, were arriving. Three thousand strong, they rushed into the castle and were warmly welcomed by D'Avila. The refreshments that were offered them they refused. "We will dine in Paradise," they cried, "or sup in Antwerp," and their leader was not the man to balk their mood.

Champagny, seeing that an attack was imminent, mustered the whole of the force of the city. Havré claimed as his right the place of honour and responsibility opposite the citadel, where, accordingly, the whole body of his Walloons and a few companies of Germans were stationed. The ramparts were far from strong, but their strength was increased by the living barrier of 6000 men. Against the determination of these burghers it seemed that even the Spanish fury might be swept aside.

It was noon when 5000 foot soldiers, followed by 600 cavalry, sallied out of the citadel. They bore a standard, these men whose deeds were so inhuman, on one side of which was emblazoned the crucified Saviour, while from the other looked down the pitiful face of the Virgin Mother. Falling on their knees, as was their custom, they invoked the aid of God, and then swept forward confidently into the city. Champagny saw them coming, and spoke a last word of encouragement to the soldiers. The next moment the Spanish troops struck the barrier, and the Walloons, forsaking the post their leader had himself claimed for them, fled, terror-stricken, never staying to look the enemy in the face. Without a struggle the Spaniards crashed through the ramparts and poured into the streets.

Champagny hastily collected a small force of German troops and led them in person to the rescue. The Germans were brave, and fought well and died hard, but their courage could not restore bravery to the ranks of the Walloons, who were in full retreat. As an ensign fled past him, Champagny seized a banner from his hand and called upon the nearest soldiers to rally against the foe, but he called in vain. Still the Governor would not despair. He galloped hither and thither, calling upon the burghers everywhere to come to defend their homes. And they came forth in answer to his call, from every nook and alley they came, and fought as men fight to defend their hearths. "Saint

James! Spain! Blood, flesh, fire!" the hideous cries echoed in their ears and nerved their arms with fiercer strength. But the foe was solid, disciplined, resistless, and steadily bore the ill-armed burghers down, down, to be trampled and spurned beneath its feet.

The massacre was enormous, and Champagny, who had hoped to make a last stand, found himself deserted, as the mingled forms of fugitives and conquerors swayed hither and thither like a storm-tossed sea. With great daring the Governor, seeing all was lost, made his escape, while Oberstein, attempting to leap into a boat, missed his footing and was drowned in the river.

The short November day was nearly over when the last few burghers stood at bay in the great Square. Around them blazed the burning houses, for the enemy had set fire to the buildings with their torches, and thousands were perishing amid the flames. But in the square the heroic Margrave of the city still fought with the desperation of despair. At his feet the burgomaster lay dead. Senators, soldiers, burghers fell fast around him, and at last he, too, sank among the slain. With his death resistance ended, the few remaining patriots being butchered or forced downward to the Scheldt to perish there.

Never was more awful fate than that meted out to the city of Antwerp, never more awful doom than that which overtook the inhabitants. The Spanish Fury sent a thrill of horror throughout Christendom, while in the Netherlands itself it aroused a frenzy of indignation against Philip, the author of all this untold misery.

At Ghent the members of the congress felt it impossible to spend more time in discussion. Events were moving too quickly for their slow deliberations. Accordingly, a treaty was at once concluded between the fifteen provinces of the Netherlands and the States of Holland and Zeeland. By this treaty, known as the Pacification of Ghent, all the provinces bound themselves to unite for the purpose of driving the Spanish soldiers and other foreigners from the country. All placards against heretics were abolished. The Prince of Orange was recognised as Governor of the Provinces, and Admiral-General in Holland and Zeeland, while the edict confiscating the property of the house of Nassau was revoked. This treaty was the result of the labours of the Prince of Orange, carried on through many years of defeat and opposition. It was signed on November 8, 1576, on which

day also Ghent fell into the hands of the States. By the withdrawal of the mutinous troops from the north, the Prince had also been enabled to regain Zierickzee, and with it the whole Island of Schouwen.

CHAPTER XXIX

Don John of Austria

On the very day of the Spanish Fury a courtier, attended by a Moorish slave and six men-at-arms, rode into the city of Luxemburg. It was in this romantic disguise that the new Governor-General arrived in the Netherlands, for the Moorish slave was none other than Don John of Austria, the half-brother of Philip, and the tardily appointed successor to Requesens.

From his childhood Don John had possessed a fascination that was all his own. His father, the Emperor Charles V., had entrusted him to the care of Quixada, a member of the imperial household. The little Juan grew up full of beauty and grace. Strong, too, and agile, he could throw the javelin farther, break a lance more readily, and ride at the ring more skilfully than any of his companions. Destined by Charles V. to be a priest, it seemed that this early training might be useless.

When Juan was fourteen years of age his foster-father invited him to ride with him to see the royal hunt. Awaiting them stood two horses, one a noble charger, the other but a sorry steed, which latter the lad mounted, while Quixada leaped on to the charger, and together they rode towards the mountains. But no sooner were the bugles of the approaching huntsmen heard than Quixada halted, bidding Juan exchange horses with him. The boy obeyed, and then his foster-father seized his hand, and, kissing it respectfully, exclaimed, "Your Highness will soon be informed as to the meaning of my conduct." When the royal hunting party rode up, Quixada and the lad dismounted and kneeled before their monarch. But Philip told the youth to rise, for he, Don John, was the brother of the King and

would return with him to Valladolid. Thus Juan said farewell to his foster-father and his early home, and rode to the court with Philip. Here he was educated with his nephews, Alexander Parma, the son of the Duchess Margaret, and Don Carlos, the Prince Royal of Spain.

When he was eighteen years of age Don John, fearing lest he should be made a priest against his will, ran away, but before he had succeeded in joining a military expedition to Malta he was recalled in disgrace by Philip.

Five years later Don John's wish to live a military life was granted, and he was made commander of the campaign against the rebellious Moors in Granada. Here he gained his first laurels. He next won a brilliant naval victory against the Turks in the Gulf of Lepanto, a victory which caused the name of Don John of Austria to be known throughout the world.

The victor then sailed westward, descending on the coast of Barbary, where he captured Tunis, and brought the King and his sons captive to Italy. Intoxicated with his success, Don John then demanded from the Pope a crown, which, should the young hero win, his Holiness was ready to bestow on him.

It was here, in Italy, that he heard that he had been appointed Governor-General to the Netherlands. The appointment pleased him, for across his brain there flashed a brilliant vision. He saw the Netherlands easily pacified by his gracious ways, and 10,000 veteran Spanish troops thus set free to work his will. He saw, as in a mirror, his gallant rescue, by the aid of his veteran troops, of the beautiful Mary Queen of Scots, his betrothal to her, and their united rule over England and Scotland. With this vision gleaming before his eyes, he would not delay for a moment to hasten to the scene of his new appointment. Dyeing his bright locks dark, and staining his fair face to the complexion of a Moor, he started on his journey disguised as a slave.

After reaching Paris he had a short interview with the Duke of Guise, the vision still gleaming bright before his eyes, as he explained his scheme of rescue and betrothal to the kinsman of the Scottish Queen.

On November 3, 1576, Don John arrived at Luxemburg, and, throwing off his disguise, stood revealed. His appearance was as well

known and as much admired as his rash and daring spirit. Blue eyes sparkled and bewitched those of sterner mould, while his curling hair was flung carelessly back from a well-shaped head. Though not much above middle height, he was well knit in every line, while his beauty seemed the greater for the fascination which, as in childhood, he still possessed.

Such was Don John, who now, on the threshold of the Netherlands, stood face to face with William of Orange. William the Silent, gaunt and plainly clad, with kind but careworn face, and locks worn away by anxiety more than by his helmet William the Silent, with ways that, while courteous, were yet grave and almost devout, was a hero different indeed from Don John, the curled darling of chivalry. Even as they differed in appearance, so also had their characters and fortunes led them to far different destinies. The world was ringing with the praise of Don John's brilliant victories. William the Silent, baffled and often defeated, was wringing a few painful victories from the enemy, forcing, in his extremity, the ocean to come to his aid; William the Silent was wringing triumphs out of the divisions and dissensions of the Provinces, as slowly, with strong hand and far-seeing brain, he compelled these forces to obey his will. And if the world did not yet ring with the praise that was one day to be his, in his own heart and in the heart of his people lay the consciousness that a deed was being wrought that would one day set their country free, and the glory of the future shone before them as a star. Don John came to the Netherlands with little ambition save to clutch for himself a crown. The Prince of Orange was even now waiving aside the diadem the people would fain have had him wear.

It was with a quiet determination to counteract or crush his policy that William the Silent met his antagonist, and he lost no time in imparting to the Estates his own feeling of distrust as to the policy of the young Governor. Don John had been sent to gain by fraud what Philip had failed to secure by force, and when his position was assured, the smiles and pleasantries of the Governor would be exchanged for frowns and menaces. "Make no agreement with him," he urged, "unless the Spanish and other troops have been sent away beforehand; beware meantime of disbanding your own, for that were to put the knife into his hand to cut your own throats withal."



Don John arrived at Luxemburg, and, throwing off his disguise, stood revealed

The great scheme which was revolving in Don John's brain made him, however, specially desirous of retaining the Spanish soldiers in the Netherlands.

After his arrival at Luxemburg Don John sent an envoy to the States-General to announce his arrival, and his purpose of entering Namur, attended by fifty mounted troops. But to this the Estates would not consent, nor, they added, would they receive him as Governor of the Provinces until he had consented to expel the Spaniards from the country, to approve the treaty of Ghent, nor until he had sworn to maintain the ancient charters of the Provinces, and to employ none but Netherlander in his service. For such a reception the brilliant cavalier was unprepared, and during the winter of 1576 he chafed and fretted, while he tried in vain to evade the demands made upon him by the States and the Prince of Orange.

It was not, indeed, till the spring of the following year that Don John at length yielded and signed the Perpetual Edict, the States thereupon agreeing to receive him as Governor-General of the country.

To the Prince the Edict was but a trap, in which the Southern Provinces had been snared. Neither Don John nor Philip would, he believed, hesitate to withdraw all that they had conceded on the first favourable opportunity. Therefore it was that the Prince stood sadly aloof with his loyal Northern Provinces, while the South rejoiced in the fancied security of its new alliance.

The Prince might ignore Don John, but Don John was determined if possible to win the Prince, for he saw that it was he who "bewitched the minds of all men." "The name of your Majesty," he wrote plainly to Philip, "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 peace and the maintenance of the Catholic religion and the obedience to your Majesty depend now upon him." But the envoy sent by Don John to the Prince returned only to report his failure to induce Orange to enter into any arrangement then or in the future with the new Governor-General.

Still, however, the young lord did not despair of bending the Prince to his will. He determined himself to write to William. For "in

such times as these we have no choice," said Don John, "nor do I see any way to save the State from destruction, save to gain over this man, who has so much influence with the nation." Philip also recognised the need there was to gain the man he had outlawed, and, cringing as tyrants can, he offered, through his brother, pardon, advancement, power to the man he had erstwhile denounced as a rebel. "You cannot imagine," wrote Don John to the Prince, "how much it will be within my ability to do for you."

That he should seek to gain the Prince by promises of personal advantage only showed Don John's ignorance of the nobility of William's character. The Prince gravely dismissed the Governor's suggestions, telling him that he had ever preferred the welfare of his country to his own private interests, which he had placed under his foot, and was still resolved to do so, as long as his life should endure. Thus did Philip the King, through his representative Don John, vainly sue the Prince, whom he had hoped to banish from the land.

Though the formal reception of Don John as Governor was not to take place till the troops had actually left the country, he now advanced into the heart of the Provinces, trusting himself to the loyalty of the people, with a confidence he was far from feeling. The charm of his manner at once began to conquer the hearts of the populace. He mingled gaily and freely with all classes of citizens, as had his father, Charles V. He joined in the national sports, and at the annual games brought down with his crossbow the popinjay, to the great delight of the spectators, who thereupon hung a golden bird around his neck and pledged the health of the new king of the crossbow men. In their good nature the Netherlanders were ready to believe that the advent of Don John had brought peace.

Meanwhile arrangements were being hurried on for the departure of the troops, for the Governor, on this point, intended loyally to keep his promise. Towards the end of April 1577 the Spanish troops finally left the country, the vast crowds of citizens who saw them go scarcely daring to believe that their dreaded foes would not return. Their joy, too, was damped by the knowledge that 10,000 Germans still remained in the Provinces, attached to the royal service.

On the withdrawal of the troops from Antwerp, it had been decided to appoint the Duke of Aerschot to the command of this

important fortress. As Commander-in-Chief under the authority of the State Council, and as the chief of the Catholic nobility, the post was his by right. Yet he was a man trusted by neither party, for he had shown himself to be arrogant when in power, and cringing and fickle when the fortunes of his party fell. Standing on the drawbridge of the town the oath was administered to the new Governor of the Citadel. "I, Philip, Duke of Aerschot," he repeated, "solemnly swear to hold this castle for the King and no others." To which came the grave response, "God help you with all His angels if you keep your oath; if not, may the devil carry you away body and soul." A few passers-by cried "Amen," and with this brief ceremony the keys were delivered to Aerschot.

CHAPTER XXX

Don John's Treachery

The Spanish troops having left the Netherlands towards the end of April, Don John's entry into the capital was no longer deferred.

On the 1st of May 1577 a gay procession escorted the young Governor along the streets. Six thousand troops led the way, followed by archers and musketeers in picturesque array, while Don John rode in their midst, wrapped in a long green cloak. Services were then held in the great churches of Brussels, after which the day was given over to festivities, and when the happy May day came to an end, Don John found himself the acknowledged head of the Provinces.

Yet he was far from satisfied, for though he had gained the goodwill of the burghers, he himself had no love for either the Netherlands or its inhabitants, having regarded his position as Governor-General only as a stepping-stone to the English throne. With the withdrawal of the Spanish troops his position failed to aid him to carry out his desperate scheme.

Moreover, strange as it may seem, Don John had little confidence in his safety in a country where the partisans of Orange abounded. He complained that his life was in danger, he suspected a trap in every street and an ambush in every wood. He found himself longing once again to buckle on his sword and face the resolute Prince of Orange on the battlefield. The gay cavalier was already weary of this land of stern Calvinists and burghers, who, save for the national sports in which they indulged, led a hard and strenuous life, and already he was entreating Philip to grant him his dismissal. Yet as long as he remained in the country he resolved to assert his independence, and the Provinces were soon bewildered and dismayed by an edict

issued by the Governor in direct defiance of the Pacification of Ghent, which he had promised to support. The edict commanded all bishops and provincial councils to renew without delay the persecutions against those of the Reformed faith. His orders were obeyed, and the Southern Provinces saw that the Prince of Orange had not slandered Philip's representative. Don John was indeed beginning to frown where he had formerly smiled, to menace where he had but lately indulged in pleasantries.

But either Don John's conscience betrayed him, or there were in reality designs, if not upon his life, at least upon his liberty. It was impossible to renew the religious persecutions and feel secure in this land of heretics. Accordingly the Governor, when solemnly warned that his life was not safe in the capital, fled hurriedly to Mechlin, and when the same warnings followed him to that city, he resolved to shake himself free from the control of the States-General. He therefore, since war was forbidden by Philip and peace had been rendered impossible by his recent treacherous act, resolved at least to secure his own safety. Placing himself at the head of a body of Walloon soldiers, he suddenly marched to Namur and took possession of the city. That Don John was able thus easily to secure Namur was due to the fact that the States had neglected to follow the advice of the Prince of Orange in regard to it. "You know," he had written in the preceding December, "the evil and dismay the loss of the city and fortress of Namur would occasion us. Let me beseech you that all possible care be taken to preserve them." But the city and citadel had been left to the care of a feeble old castellan and a handful of troops, and had therefore been secured without difficulty by the Governor.

Meanwhile in the north of Holland and Zeeland the work of repairing the dykes had been accomplished, and, at the request of the people, the Prince made a tour through the little provinces, honouring every city with a visit. And as he passed along the streets men, women and children crowded round, joyously shouting, "Father William has come," "Father William has come." None were forbidden to approach him, and even little children drew near to touch the hand which had delivered them from the power of the tyrant.

The enthusiasm spread. Utrecht sent an urgent invitation to the Prince. His presence only was needed to make the citizens unanimous

in their desire to recognise his authority. Accompanied by his wife, the Princess Charlotte, the Prince journeyed to the city. But Charlotte trembled for the safety of her husband, knowing that in Utrecht were many of his enemies. As they drove through the gates of the city, a shot passed through the carriage window and struck the Prince on the breast, and the Princess believed her fears were realised. But William quickly calmed her. It was only a wad that had struck him, shot from the cannon which was still roaring its noisy welcome. From Utrecht the Prince passed through the other cities of the province, and in the autumn of 1577 he was formally acknowledged as Stadtholder of Utrecht, while a treaty was drawn up, in which he promised to support both the Reformed and the Catholic faiths.

Meanwhile the States-General, feeling that their agreement with Don John had been a mistake, were relying more than ever on the capable guidance of Orange, who did his utmost to open their eyes yet more clearly to the deceptions practised by the new Governor. For Don John, not satisfied with the capture of Namur, was making a brave attempt to capture the important city of Antwerp. He had carefully planned the absence of the new Governor of the city, the Duke of Aerschot, on whom few were willing to depend, and had ordered the keys of the citadel to be left in the hands of Treslong, a devoted royalist. Treslong, however, was unable to secure Antwerp, and when Don John heard of his failure his chagrin was great. "These rebels think," he wrote to Spain, "that fortune is all smiles for them now, and that all is ruin for me. The wretches are growing proud enough, and forget that their chastisement some fine morning will yet arrive."

To the Estates Don John wrote a haughty letter, ignoring the attempt he had made to secure Antwerp, and demanding, as though his authority was supreme, that it should be restored to him, and that all the forces of the country should be placed at once under his own control. Nor was this all. He ordered likewise that the people of Brabant and Flanders should instantly "set themselves to hunt, catch, and chastise all heretics and preachers," while the Prince of Orange was called upon to withdraw his armed vessels, and, should he refuse, the Estates were summoned to take up arms against him. Don John knew neither how futile nor how ludicrous was his attack upon the

Prince.

This letter, written on the 7th of August 1577, was followed by another on August 13, written in more modest strain. The Estates were assured that Don John abhorred war more than anything else in the world, and that, as he seemed to be disliked by them, he was willing to leave the land as soon as the King should appoint a successor. The States protested that his recent movements had made it difficult for them to believe in his desire for peace, while his renewal of the persecutions against heretics justified them in taking means for their self-defence.

Again Don John wrote from Namur, protesting that he had removed the Spanish troops, and that more they could not expect from him, but, should the King be willing, he would gladly resign the appointment which seemed so displeasing to the Estates.

On August 26 the Estates wrote offering to yield him their confidence, should he, on his side, disband all the soldiers in his service, sending the Germans instantly out of the country, dismiss every foreigner from office, whether civil or military, and renounce his design on the English throne, which design, they took care to assure him, was no longer secret. Henceforth, if he agreed to these conditions, he should govern, but only with the advice and consent of the State Council. Should he, however, resign, the country would not complain, and would, till a successor arrived, be governed by its own representatives. The tone of the letter startled Don John, and he protested that it was still possible to make an arrangement on more friendly terms; and thus the weary correspondence dragged along.

But the correspondence of the Estates-General was not confined to Don John. On August 24, and again on September 8, they wrote to the King, telling him of the unfortunate troubles in their country, and requesting that as the double-dealing and insolence of the present Governor made a sincere reconciliation difficult, another prince might be appointed in his place.

In Antwerp, meanwhile, the citizens were at length obeying the counsel of the Prince, and razing to the ground the citadel erected in their midst by Alva. Morning, noon and night the work went on, more than ten thousand persons helping to destroy the hateful sign of a past bondage. Nobles brought fair dames, and grave magistrates

their wives, citizens came with their children, and even beggars took their share in the glad work of destruction. And when, as the work went on, an old statue of Alva was found in a forgotten crypt, the people fell upon it with a howl of rage. The bronze image was dragged through the streets by an excited crowd, then, seizing sledge-hammers, they dashed it to pieces, as they would fain have done to the hated tyrant himself had he been within their reach.

The example set by Antwerp was followed by city after city, until Alva's strongholds no longer existed in the land.

CHAPTER XXXI

The Prince of Orange Is Invited to Brussels

Eleven years had passed since the Prince, to save his life, had fled from Brussels. They had been years of hardship and struggle, with many defeats and few victories. Yet his influence had slowly grown, until now he was the acknowledged leader of the nation. And the people clamoured for his presence in their capital.

It was with reluctance that the Estates of Holland and Zeeland gave their consent to his visit to Brussels, for they feared the city, where so many of the great and powerful had met their death. His wife shared their fears, and saw him depart with a heavy heart. Daily during his absence prayers were offered in all the churches of Holland and Zeeland for the safety of their beloved "Father William."

He arrived at Antwerp September 17, 1577, and was received with great enthusiasm. For five days he remained in the city, and then, attended by a vast crowd of citizens, he walked to the new canal, which led to Brussels, where three barges awaited him and his suite. In one a magnificent banquet was spread, while the others were draped with the banners of the seventeen provinces. Before the gates of the city were reached, half the inhabitants had poured forth to meet the Prince, and, thus escorted, he entered Brussels on September 23. The Prince of Orange knew no greater moment than this, as, surrounded by the representatives of all the provinces, and greeted by the unbounded fervour of the people, he heard their confident and joyous cries, "Father William is come, Father William, Father William!"

It is true that even amid the rejoicings the Prince was aware of the jealousy and suspicion of the Catholic nobility, at whose head was



The Prince of Orange knew no greater moment than this

the ever fickle Duke of Aerschot, but his tact was able to avert all outward signs of hostility on this great occasion. The public welcome being ended, William's first act was to stop the negotiations which were still being carried on with Don John. This he did by adding more stringent conditions to those already offered to the youthful commander. That the terms were in reality a declaration of war William was well aware, and the soldier in Don John scented battle and leaped to the haughty challenge thus flung down to him. A suspension of hostilities for three days was forthwith agreed upon between the Estates and Don John.

Meanwhile the nobles, their jealousy growing with the growth of the Prince's power, sought to check his influence by entering into secret negotiations with the Archduke Matthias, brother of the Emperor Budolph. An envoy was even sent by the nobles to Vienna to invite to Brussels the mild and easy-tempered Matthias, who was but a lad, twenty years of age. Only when the step had been taken did the nobles refer the matter to Orange and craftily ask for his advice. It was useless to offer it under the circumstances, but, should Matthias appear, Orange resolved to use him for the sake of the country, and thus thwart the plans of the nobles, which had obviously been made with a view to his own downfall. But when the populace heard of the invitation to Archduke Matthias they were furious, believing it to be a plot to get rid of the Prince whom they idolised. Henceforth if Orange had but little faith in the fidelity of the Catholic nobles, he had abundant proof of the care with which the burghers watched over his safety. Being on one occasion delayed at the State Council till a late hour, the Prince was informed that a large number of citizens had armed themselves and surrounded the palace, fearing that he was in danger. He immediately threw open a window, thanking them for their friendship and assuring them of his safety. They refused, however, to leave him alone, and remained under arms below the window till the Council broke up, when they escorted him with great devotion to his own home.

The secret envoy had now reached Vienna, and little was needed to excite the ambition of the foolish Archduke Matthias. He determined to accept the invitation of the Netherland nobles to go to Brussels. On October 3, 1577, he went to his room at an early hour,

and, waiting till his brother fell asleep, Matthias slipped from the room in his sleeping suit, not waiting even to put on his slippers, for the lad was excited at the greatness of his enterprise. His companions provided him with the disguise of a servant, and thus at midnight he made his escape from Vienna, arriving at Cologne shortly afterwards, attended by only two gentlemen and a few servants.

Don John, as might be expected, lost his temper at this new insult to himself and the King, but the Prince of Orange, in nowise discomposed on hearing of his arrival, proceeded to Antwerp to receive the young Archduke at the head of 2000 cavalry and attended by a great number of citizens. The nobles looked on helpless and confused. They had felt sure that William would either ignore Matthias, and thus rouse the anger of the Emperor, and all Germany as well, or that he would allow himself to be driven from his post and supplanted by the aimless Archduke. But thus checkmated by the wisdom of the Prince, they found it impossible for the present to make a further move against him.

During this same month of October Orange was appointed Governor of Brabant, to the boundless delight of the people, and to the entire dissatisfaction of the Duke of Aerschot, who had himself straightway made Governor of Flanders by the States of that province. But in Ghent the townsfolk were not slow to show their dislike of the Duke. He had promised that their ancient charters should be restored. Then let him see to it that it were done, and done without delay, or it would go hard with him, they muttered sullenly, these rugged burghers of Ghent.

Disturbances arose in the streets, led by two nobles named Ryhove and Imbize, both of broken fortunes and rough and passionate ways. The haughty Duke, riding through the streets, encountered the fiery Imbize, who rudely demanded if he were yet ready to restore the ancient charters to the good city of Ghent. Nor could Aerschot shake off his determined questioner, who followed him, taunting him with increasing boldness to delay no longer to redeem his promise. "Charters, charters!" cried the Duke at last, losing his temper, "you shall learn soon, you that are thus howling for charters, that we have still the old means of making you dumb, with a rope on your throats. I tell you this, were you ever so much hounded on by the Prince of

Orange." Imbize, furious at the public insult, only waited to find his colleague Ryhove, before rousing the burghers.

At midnight the conspirators met in the public square, whence, under the command of Ryhove, they swept to the Palace of Aerschot. The guards, seeing the approach of the furious mob, closed the gates. Brandishing their spears and waving their torches, they drew near and demanded that the gates should be opened. But when this was refused Ryhove cried, "Let us burn the birds in their nests," and the conspirators, at his command, brought pitch and wood, and the palace would soon have been in a blaze, had not Aerschot, seeing that they were in earnest, surrendered himself. As soon as he appeared the mob rushed upon him, and would have torn him to pieces, had not Ryhove resolutely interfered and twice protected his life at the risk of his own. The Duke was then made prisoner, and, under a strong guard, taken to the mansion of Ryhove, where his fate was shared by other Catholic nobles.

William, who had known of the plot, disowned any share in the act of violence, and sent an envoy to demand that the prisoners should be set free, a demand which was complied with only in the case of Aerschot.

Meanwhile on December 7, 1577, the States-General proceeded, as a preliminary to war, to disown Don John as Governor, while any showing favour to him or rendering him assistance were declared rebels and traitors. And though the war thus let loose on the land was due to the policy of the Prince of Orange, yet he did not regret it, ever being assured "that war was preferable to a doubtful peace." He had even prepared for it by an alliance with England, Queen Elizabeth lending the States money and agreeing to send troops to the Provinces under the command of an officer of rank.

Matthias, the Archduke, through the influence of Orange with the States-General, was now accepted as Governor, but without a vestige of power being conceded to him. His duties were well-nigh limited to the signing of documents, which were countersigned by Orange. Thus the reins of government were in reality in the strong hands of William the Silent.

On January 18, 1578, Matthias made his public entry into Brussels, where he was received with every demonstration of delight.

It was winter, yet the streets were strewn with flowers; it was midday, yet flaming torches were flashed from hand to hand. The houses, as on all great occasions, were festooned with garlands, and draped with silks and velvets, while triumphal arches adorned the streets.

Matthias at length began to enjoy the fruits of his midnight expedition as he stood, feasted and feted, before the townsfolk and listened to long speeches and stared at stiff tableaux. Matthias the meek was too full of the glory of his position to feel weary! In the streets, when evening fell, the citizens feasted before blazing bonfires, roasting geese, pigs, partridges and chickens in abundance, while the youths and maidens danced their merriest. In the midst of the gaiety a rocket was sent off from the Square, and burst with a tremendous explosion. So frightened were the crowds at this new plaything that they all "took to their heels as if a thousand soldiers had assaulted them," and thus dispersed to their homes.

The following day Matthias took the oaths as Governor-General, the Prince of Orange being sworn in as Lieutenant-General and Governor of Brabant.

CHAPTER XXXII

Don John's Struggles and Death

Don John was no scribe. Gladly he laid down his pen and rejoiced that the weary correspondence with the Estates was ended, gladly he buckled on his sword and prepared to do battle for the Spanish rights. Already his troops numbered more than 20,000 well-disciplined veterans, while he himself was the most famous chieftain in Europe. Around him too were gathered many officers of renown, among them Mansfeld, Mondragon, and Mendoza, while Alexander Parma, who had already given proofs of the wonderful military genius that was his, was also with the royalist army.

The States troops, though equal in number to those of the opposing army, were handicapped at the outset by the characters of their officers. De Goignies, the Commander-in-Chief, was indeed a veteran who had fought under Charles V., but without distinction, while many of the nobles to whom Orange had entrusted commands were too jealous of the Prince to be whole-hearted in their devotion to their country. Among them, also, were young officers whose inexperience led to their undoing. For the satisfaction of Don John and his Catholic Majesty Philip, the Pope had issued a Bull, declaring once again that all Netherlander were unbelievers, and therefore under ban and curse, and to be exterminated, should that prove possible.

On the last day of January 1578 the State troops, who had been stationed within a few miles of Namur, began to return towards Gembloux. Don John, at once breaking up his camp before the city, marched in pursuit of the retreating foe, attended by the Prince of Parma. Over the head of the young chieftain streamed the crucifix-

emblazoned banner, with its bold inscription, "Under this standard I have conquered the Turks; under it I will conquer the heretics."

Before day was far advanced the rearward column of the States army was seen in the distance. Troops, under Gonzaga and the famous Mondragon, were at once ordered forward to harass the enemy, and do all possible damage to it without venturing on a general engagement until the main army under Parma and Don John should arrive. The orders were at first strictly obeyed, but gradually a spirited cavalry officer advanced nearer to the enemy than was wise, and Gonzaga sent to recall the eager soldier. He was flatly disobeyed. "Tell Ottavio Gonzaga," said the heated Perotti, "that I never yet turned my back on the enemy, nor shall I now begin. Moreover, were I ever so much inclined to do so, retreat is impossible." The retiring army was then creeping along the edge of a deep ravine, which was filled with treacherous mire, and was as broad as, and more dangerous than, a river.

At that moment Alexander of Parma rode up among the skirmishers. At a glance he saw that the enemy were marching unsteadily; he could even see the trembling of their spears as they tried to avoid being thrown into the ravine. He would take advantage of the passing confusion in the ranks of the enemy, and he rapidly assembled the bodies of cavalry already detached from the main body. Then, mounting a fresh and powerful horse, he dashed through the ravine. "Tell Don John of Austria," he cried, "that Alexander of Parma has plunged into the abyss to perish there, or to come forth again victorious." Through the dangerous swamp the gallant officer urged his steed, and in another moment it had carried him across in safety. Halting till his troops had also gained the bank, he led them unnoticed to level ground; then, with a few words of encouragement, he launched his little compact column at the foe.

The attack was unexpected, the shock complete; the States cavalry was plunged into confusion, young Egmont, who had command of the division attacked by Parma, trying in vain to rally his men. Assaulted in flank and rear at the same moment, the cavalry turned and fled, and the centre of the States army was left exposed. Nor was it alone from the immediate assault of Parma that it was destroyed, but by the retreat of its own horse, as in a shameful panic

it rushed from the scene of battle. The whole States army finally broke to pieces and ran away, hardly staying to defend itself from the onslaught of the Spaniards. Hardly a man in Parma's little band was wounded, while in little more than an hour and a half the whole force of the enemy was destroyed. Of the captives some were soon hurled off the bridge at Namur and drowned in the Meuse, while the rest were hanged, not one escaping with his life. The glory of the day belonged to Parma, whose genius had detected the fatal but almost unnoticed hesitation of the enemy.

The victory was followed up by the capture of several towns, most of them, however, of little importance. When the news of the terrible slaughter at Gembloux spread throughout the country there was great dismay, and burghers in their talk with one another bitterly blamed the officers, some for not being heartily loyal to their own flag, others for the less serious faults of youth and inexperience.

In Brussels itself anger was fierce against the Catholic party, to whose plots and incapacity the defeat of Gembloux was attributed. Orange, with all his influence, could scarcely restrain the citizens from sweeping in a mob to the houses of the leading nobles in order to drag them forth as traitors. In their trouble Matthias was forgotten, and the people turned to the Prince for aid. By his advice all parties joined together to complete the defence of the capital, and measures were at once taken to assemble new troops in the place of the army but now cut to pieces.

The States-General were still anxiously awaiting the King's answer to their letters, written on August 24 and September 8, 1577, in regard to their troubles with Don John. But had they really expected help from Spain they would have been disappointed, for in the early days of 1578 Philip wrote only to express the necessity of maintaining the royal supremacy and the Catholic religion. To their condemnation of Don John's methods and their suggestion of a new Governor-General the King said not a word. To Don John the King also wrote, promising that funds, the lack of which he had so often to deplore, should be more regularly supplied, and advising him with a portion of the money to buy the governors who held the cities belonging to the States.

Meanwhile the armies were once again moving towards each

other. Don John was at the head of nearly 30,000 troops, while the new army for the States, under Count Bossu as Cornmander-in-Chief, hardly numbered more than 20,000 men. Bossu, however, expected to be reinforced by the Duke of Casimir, who had been entrusted by the Queen of England with the levies which she had placed at the control of the States. But Don John would not wait, if he could help it, till Duke Casimir with his 12,000 Germans should join Bossu.

Towards the end of July he advanced towards the enemy, and day by day he offered battle. The result was at first only a succession of indecisive skirmishes, followed, however, on August 1 by an engagement which lasted for nearly eight hours, and in which the royalists were worsted and forced to retire, leaving 1000 dead upon the field.

Don John, wishing to repair his fortune, offered battle on the following morning, which was steadily refused by Bossu, who, secure within his entrenchments, had no wish to run the risk of a general engagement. The royalist army accordingly fell back again to the neighbourhood of Namur.

On August 26, 1578, the Duke of Casimir at length united his forces with those of Bossu. He was neither clever nor unselfish enough to be of real use in the Netherlands during the present troubles, but he had been pushed forward by Queen Elizabeth, who, despite the disinclination of the Prince, believed she was sending him a reliable lieutenant. In her heart she also hoped Casimir might overthrow the influence of the Duke of Anjou, who was now being urged by the Catholic nobles to take the place they had intended for Matthias, which place indeed Matthias now held, but as a dependant of the Prince of Orange in all but name. Orange himself had believed the Duke of Anjou, brother to the French King, might be useful; for should Elizabeth refuse her aid to the oppressed Provinces, he had but to turn to France to force her hand. The Queen of England would rather a Spanish Netherlands than a French one.

Through the intrigues of those who either openly or in secret were hostile to Orange, the Duke of Anjou was now persuaded to enter the Netherlands. He crossed the southern frontier and made himself master of Mons, at the same time that the Duke of Casimir with his

troops had joined Count Bossu. The Prince of Orange might well have been daunted by the varied forces thus brought into the unhappy Provinces. Apparently, however, he was resolved to subdue the Duke of Anjou, even as he had subdued Matthias, and the Duke, dull and base in character as he was, understood it was his best policy to cultivate the friendship of one so powerful as Orange.

From Mons, Anjou sent envoys to the States-General and the Prince, ignoring the nominal head of the country, Archduke Matthias. He, poor foolish lad, when he heard of the slight, wept bitter tears, and feebly wished that help from Germany might make this French alliance unnecessary.

The help offered by Anjou was accepted on conditions drawn up by William of Orange. Should he agree to submit himself to the civil government of the Netherlands, and also promise to bring to their aid a force of 10,000 foot and 2000 horse to fight against the Spaniards, the States would confer upon him the title of "Defender of the liberty of the Netherlands."

While these negotiations were being carried on with the Duke of Anjou, Don John, at the head of a large army, was chafing week after week at his enforced inactivity, caused, as was usual in the Spanish camps, through lack of funds. Disappointed at the disgrace to his arms in the late encounter with Count Bossu, and wounded by the King's indifference to his frequent appeals for money, the health of the formerly buoyant chief broke down, and he grew weak and despairing. In his army the plague was raging, and 1200 of his troops were now in hospital, besides many who were being nursed in private houses. To remove the evil, Don John had neither means nor money. Moreover, the enemy, seeing that they were no longer opposed in the open field, had cut off the passage through which money and supplies could reach him, while they themselves had advanced along the Meuse and were in communication with France.

A few days later Don John himself was seized with a malignant illness. Tossing with fever, the gay cavalier was now in but a sorry plight as he lay in a rude hovel, the only room in which had long been used as a pigeon-house. The attendants did their best to make him comfortable, cleansing the garret and hanging the bare walls with flags and tapestry. Alexander of Parma watched by his side, as in the

delirium of fever the dying soldier fought over again the battles of his glorious youth. Shrilly he would shout his orders and raise himself with sparkling eyes to listen to the trumpet-call of victory. But as the end drew near the fever left him, and he received the sacraments tranquilly, thereafter breathing his last on October 1, 1578.

When the news of Don John's death reached Philip, he at once appointed Alexander of Parma as Governor-General in his stead.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Alexander of Parma

From his babyhood the clash of arms had fallen on the heedless ears of Alexander of Parma; but when he grew to be a boy he was no longer heedless of the clang of armour or the ring of steel, for ever he was foremost in all military exercises and sports. Philip had received the boy as a hostage from his parents, the Duchess of Parma and Ottavio Farnese, when he left the Netherlands for Spain. On the far-famed day of St. Quentin, when he was but a lad eleven years of age, Alexander had begged to be allowed to serve as a volunteer, and had wept bitterly when his request was refused by the astonished King. His marriage, when twenty years of age, to Maria of Portugal, had been celebrated at Brussels, and had thrown a passing gleam of brightness over the capital ere the trouble between King and nobles deepened.

On the field of battle Alexander Farnese had the rare faculty of inspiring his soldiers with his own courage. And for reward there was nothing more greatly prized by his men than a feather, a ribbon, or a jewel taken from his person, and bestowed upon them by his own hand.

In the Prince of Parma Philip had at last found the very man that he needed to carry out his policy in the Netherlands, for he was prepared not only to fight in the open field, but to entrap the nobles in their own selfish aims. But for the alert brain and the vigilant care of the Prince of Orange, the whole of the Netherlands would have shared the fate reserved for the Southern Provinces.

As for religion, Alexander of Parma was a strict Catholic and was honestly horrified at the impiety of the heretics whom he massacred

and persecuted. Mass he attended regularly in the dark winter morning by the light of a torch. It was an exercise as necessary to the health of his soul as his daily tennis was necessary for the health of his body.

The great nobles, more acutely jealous of the Prince of Orange than ever, since he had baffled them in their intrigue with Matthias and seemed minded to do so again in their half-formed design upon Anjou, were but too ready to listen to the persuasive words of Alexander Farnese. Uniting with the southern Catholics, the nobles now became known as Malcontents, and were but awaiting a favourable opportunity, and what was even more important, a good bargain, to make their peace with Spain.

The pressure of war being for the moment removed, the Catholics and Reformers, who had together striven to cast the foreign soldiers from their land, turned upon each other, and began anew to wrangle with and to persecute each other. In the Walloon provinces the Reformers were exposed to the persecution of the Malcontents, while in Flanders the capital was disgraced by the violent and continued attacks of Catholic on Reformer and Reformer on Catholic. John Casimir, the Duke, had come to Ghent, and was doing all he could to encourage an insurrection which he might never hope to control. A rumour had arisen and spread till it reached the ears of the Duke of Anjou. It was whispered that John Casimir was to be made Count of Flanders, which, as Anjou himself intended to be Count of Flanders as well as Count of all the other provinces besides, displeased him greatly. He wrote to the Estates expressing his grievance, to Ghent offering to arrange matters between the burghers and the Malcontents.

Casimir, meanwhile, in need of money for his troops, also wrote to the Estates, who at once supplied what he needed. Angry at what he chose to consider the favour shown to his rival, Anjou disbanded his troops and prepared to return to France. Thousands of his troops, thus carelessly disbanded, at once took service with the Malcontents, who were the enemies of the land Anjou had undertaken to protect.

In Ghent the disturbances were still unchecked. One party was led by Imbize, who was treacherous and cruel, and who was now opposed to the Prince; the other by Ryhove, who was an even more unscrupulous ruffian than Imbize, while counting himself a friend of

the Prince of Orange. Ryhove was ordered to leave Ghent, to oppose a force of Malcontents in another city, but he swore he would not leave the gates as long as two prisoners, captured by him in the riot of October 1577, were still allowed to live.

Hessels and Visch, the two prisoners, sat together in their prison playing chess on October 4, 1578, when they were abruptly ordered to enter a carriage which stood at the door of their prison, a force of armed men being there to enforce the order. Before the carriage had gone far, a halt was made, and Ryhove suddenly appeared at the carriage window and told his prisoners that they were to be hanged at once on a tree by the roadside. Hessels had sworn by his grey beard that Ryhove should yet hang for his insolence, and the ruffian could not forgive nor forget the threat. He taunted Hessels with the words now, "Hast thou sworn my death by thy grey beard, sirrah?" he cried. "Such grey beard thou shalt never live to wear thyself," shouted Hessels furiously, undaunted by his doom. "There thou liest, false traitor," roared Ryhove, and, to prove the falsehood, he roughly tore out a handful of the old man's beard and arranged it as a plume on his own cap. Then, without even the pretence of a trial, the two old men were hanged on a tree.

This was no unusual act of violence, and while the Malcontents plundered and pillaged without the city under the protection of the Catholic clergy, the priests within the city were insulted and their cloisters burned by those who pretended to love the cause of liberty.

There was but one man who could restore peace to the distracted city, and Orange was entreated to visit Ghent. In spite of the danger arising from the hatred of Imbize and his crew, and in spite of the difficulty of dealing with John Casimir, whose soldiers were ruining the land, the Prince went to Ghent early in December 1578. He dined with Imbize, who found it no easy matter to look Father William in the face; he soothed the angry passions of the burghers, and at length he persuaded all the factions to consent to a religious peace, which was published on December 27. John Casimir the Prince had managed tactfully, as was his wont, but shortly afterwards the Duke, having been sharply reproved by the Queen of England for the encouragement he had given to the Malcontents in Flanders, decided to leave the country. He felt, he declared, that he was "neither too

useful nor too agreeable to the Provinces," which was indeed quite true. He left behind him, however, his 30,000 soldiers. They were in a starving condition, and as there was nothing left to pillage, they presented themselves before the Prince of Parma, and asked him for the payment of their wages, at which he laughed as at a jest. He, however, promised to give them passports on condition that they should at once leave the country, which they were glad to do, having received little goodwill from its inhabitants.

Parma meanwhile had been fostering the discontent which existed among the nobles. La Motte had already been gained by a bribe. Lalain, Heze, Havré, young Egmont, all were listening to Parma's pleasant promises. Many of the nobles who commanded large bodies of the States troops were no longer faithful to the patriot cause.

On January 5, 1579, a further step was taken, a treaty being signed at Arras by the deputies of the Walloon provinces. Artois, Hainault, Lille, Douay, Orchies, all avowed their intention of seeking a reconciliation with the King.

The disunion of the Provinces was a blow, though no unexpected one, to the Prince of Orange. Already he had been preparing for it by a greater union with the other provinces on the part of Holland and Zeeland. Gelderland, Ghent, Friesland, Utrecht, Overyssel, and Groningen, after several conferences with the representatives of Holland and Zeeland, signed the important union of Utrecht on January 29, 1579. The members of this union bound themselves together, "as if they were one province, for the defence of their rights and liberties, with life blood and goods, against all foreign potentates, including the King of Spain." In each province there was to be complete freedom of worship for each individual, and no one was to be persecuted for his religious opinions.

Spurred to a decisive step by the momentous union of Utrecht, the Malcontents, on May 19, 1579, through their leaders, concluded a treaty with the Prince of Parma, submitting themselves to the authority of Philip II., and binding themselves to maintain in the Walloon provinces no worship save that of the holy Catholic Church. Thus the Northern and Southern Provinces took their separate ways.

A year later Matthias, always a mere cipher in the Government,

left the country, his dream of lordship long since faded. The authority of the Prince, which formally departed with him, was recognised and reaffirmed by an express act of the States-General.

CHAPTER XXXIV

The Ban

The Prince of Parma now determined to delay his military operations no longer. On March 2, 1579, he appeared under the walls of Antwerp, and a skirmish took place. The Prince of Orange, being in the town, superintended the action, and after an hour or two of sharp fighting Parma was forced to retire with the loss of 400 men.

But the attack on Antwerp was only a feint, and ten days later the royalist army appeared unexpectedly before the walls of Maastricht Time and again the Prince of Orange had warned the States to take measures for the proper defence of the city, but they, engrossed in peace negotiations opened with them by Parma, were in no hurry to listen to his advice. It was not urgent, they thought, as, seated in their council chambers, they discussed Parma's comfortable overtures. But Parma was not putting off the investment of Maestricht till the States had finished their wearisome arguments and discussions. Already he had thrown two bridges over the Meuse and so closely besieged the city that all communication with it was closed. The States had indeed failed to provide for the emergency.

Faithfully and bravely the citizens of Maestricht defended their city. Attack after attack was repelled. Never did these men who were fighting for their homes and for their country falter. Yet a night came when, worn out and weary, every man slept at his post. And as the citizens slept a Spanish guard found a chink in the wall which had thwarted all the enemy's brave cannonading. He stealthily enlarged the opening, until at length he could push through to the other side. The soldier did not hesitate. In a moment he was in the street of the besieged city. The sentinels were sleeping at their posts. He walked

down the dusky streets. No one was to be seen, not even a watchman going his rounds. The city lay asleep, still as a city of the dead. Cautiously the soldier crept back through the crevice, and, finding his officer, told him what he had seen. Before the morning dawned, the city was surprised and taken. Before another evening felt 4000 citizens of Maestricht, men and women, were slaughtered. Through the desolate streets a procession of the Spanish conquerors wended its way to the church, where, their hands still reeking with the blood of their victims, the Spaniards offered thanks to the God of Love for this new victory.

Now that the city had fallen there were many found ready to blame the Prince of Orange for failing to relieve it, yet he had done all in his power to awaken his countrymen to the need for organising speedy relief. He had entreated the States to vote sufficient funds to enable him to go with a large force to the relief of their fellow-countrymen, but the subsidy voted was so meagre that it had been utterly impossible for the Prince to raise an adequate force, and in the face of Parma's tremendous strength he had been forced to retire. Nevertheless he was blamed, and by some the occasion was gladly seized to slander the fair fame of the Father of the country. Orange was plotting, said his enemies, to bring the Duke of Anjou back to the country, and to deliver his land into the hands of a Frenchman. And his friends, hearing the whisper, grew grave, for even among them there were those who did not understand his dealings with the Catholic Duke of Anjou, while the more jealous of the nobles did not scruple to say openly that were the Prince of Orange to withdraw from the country, peace would speedily be made with Spain.

Outwardly, William the Silent bore the blame tranquilly, the suspicions patiently, but there were not wanting signs of hidden pain. Only the tall, spare figure bent a little more wearily, only the lines on the steadfast face were graven a little more deeply.

In the assembly of the States-General the Prince did not hesitate to refer to the accusations made against him. Were an honourable peace possible, and he an obstacle in the way of its accomplishment, he was ready to leave the country and close his lips for ever. But the outcries which broke from the members, outcries of affection and devotion, and of utter confidence in his loyalty to the country,

convinced him that among the faithful representatives of his country he was trusted and relied on as of old.

It was indeed true that Orange, in his anxiety for the future of the country, had never ceased negotiations with the Duke of Anjou, and to these, now that Casimir, whom he had counted his rival, had left the Netherlands, Anjou responded willingly. In September 1580 he had accepted the sovereignty of the United Netherlands, Holland and Zeeland being, however, expressly exempted from the union thus formed. These provinces had indeed refused to accept the French Prince as their Sovereign, and William had been reluctantly prevailed on to rule over them as Count. This title he accepted, on July 24, 1581, but only provisionally.

Two days later a solemn Act of Abjuration, joined in by the new Count of Holland, took place at The Hague. The representatives of Brabant, Flanders, Utrecht, Gelderland, Holland, and Zeeland declared that the King of Spain was deposed from his sovereignty over them on account of his tyranny, and that they no longer professed to owe allegiance to him.

Orange knew well that the newly proclaimed commonwealth could not stand alone. He therefore now did all in his power to hasten the coming of the Duke of Anjou, for although he had begun to fear that the Duke was both fickle and depraved, he yet hoped to be able to keep him under his personal control. With Anjou in the country as Sovereign, the goodwill of France, to whose throne the Duke was heir, would be secured; England also would champion their cause, for Elizabeth was at this time treating the Duke as a favoured suitor.

With Anjou's acceptance of the sovereignty the country was now divided into three parts: the provinces reconciled to Spain, those united under Anjou, and the northern provinces, acknowledging no lord save William of Orange. By midsummer 1581 the Duke of Anjou arrived in the western part of the Netherlands, but finding that the States, in spite of all that Orange could do, were not yet ready to render him formal recognition as Sovereign, soon left for England.

In Madrid the whole course of the transactions with the Duke of Anjou had been carefully watched. That something must be done to curb the power of the Prince of Orange, from whose brain alone were evolved the plans which thwarted Philip's policy, was determined by

the Spanish Cabinet. It had been found impossible to win him by fair promises of power and pardon. Then other tactics should be tried. A ban should be launched against the Prince, and a price set upon his head. The evil suggestion came from Granvelle, whose hatred of the Prince had grown no less since the day he had been forced to retreat from the Netherlands, largely owing to the influence of Orange. Philip eagerly seized on the suggestion and wrote to Parma: "Offer thirty thousand crowns or so to any one who will deliver the Prince of Orange to us dead or alive, that thus the country may be rid of a man so pernicious, or that at any rate he may be held in perpetual fear, and not be unlikely to die of his own accord."

The famous ban was accordingly drawn up, and had been formally published in the Netherlands in June 1580. It concluded with these words, "We declare the Prince of Orange traitor and miscreant. 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 necessaries. 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 one of our subjects or any stranger should be found sufficiently generous of heart to rid us of the 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 be done, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns in gold. If he have committed any crime, however hideous, we promise to pardon him, and if he be not already a noble, we will ennoble him for his valour."

Before the end of the year the cruel words were answered by the Prince. Clear and terrible the voice of his defiance reached Philip in his distant Cabinet. Thinking to frighten the Prince or to terrify him to withdraw from the country, the King, not for the first time, had strangely mistaken the character of the man. The Prince ridiculed the attempt to terrify him, and laughed to scorn the price set upon his head. He confronted Philip undismayed with a list of his darkest crimes, adding that the ban, albeit now made public, was no new affair, for he would have the King know that he, William of Orange, was not ignorant of the "various bargains which had many times been made before with cut-throats and poisoners to take his life."

"Moreover," said the Prince, "I am in the hands of God. My worldly goods and my life have been long since dedicated to His service."

To the people of the Netherlands, who were roused to fierce anger at the new danger to which their beloved "Father William" was exposed, he appealed in passionate affection. "Would to God," he cried, "that my perpetual banishment, or even my death, could bring you a true deliverance from your calamities. For you I have exposed my property, lost my three brothers, borne the theft of my eldest son, and for many years held my life day and night in my hands. Yet if you, my masters, judge that my absence or my death can serve you, behold me ready to obey. Here is my head, over which no prince, no monarch had 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 a service to you, I dedicate them afresh to you and to the country." At the close of his address the Prince of Orange added his motto, "I will maintain it," a motto significant of his strenuous life and character.

CHAPTER XXXV

The Duke of Anjou's Reception and Subsequent Treachery

It was in the autumn of 1581 that the report reached the Netherlands that the Duke of Anjou, their future Sovereign, was betrothed to Elizabeth, Queen of England. The tidings were celebrated with the blaze of bonfires and illuminations, for it pleased the Provinces that their future lord should be favoured by so great a Queen. But by the end of January 1582 the Duke of Anjou saw that there was little prospect that the wedding would ever take place, and he accordingly agreed to set sail for the Netherlands, where the States, urged by Orange, were now preparing for his reception as Duke of Brabant and Sovereign of the United Provinces.

On February 10 fifteen large vessels were to be seen approaching the coast of Flushing. They had been looked for eagerly by the Prince of Orange and a large deputation of the States-General, for on board the fleet was the Duke of Anjou, accompanied by many English nobles.

Francis, Duke of Anjou, as he stepped on to the pier of Flushing, looked the insignificant and vacillating prince he was. Below the middle height, puny and badly formed, his features swollen and distorted, there was neither dignity nor beauty in the appearance of the new master of the Netherlands. He had led both Huguenots and Catholics to the wars. With no religious convictions, it was a matter of indifference to the Duke which party he served, save for the reward to be earned, and thereby he had gained the contempt of the sincere in both religious parties. Yet Iris intelligence and wit were such that he to a large extent deceived so wise a reader of men as the Prince of

Orange. It was this flippant, insincere, and ambitious schemer who was now to be welcomed to the Netherlands, welcomed to a country whose inhabitants were themselves grave and earnest, and who, above all other virtues, looked for truth in their new-found protector.

From Flushing, on February 17, the Duke set sail for Antwerp, attended by a fleet of fifty-four vessels covered with flags and streamers. He stepped on shore at Kiel, which was but a bowshot from the city, for here, as the custom was, the oaths of the constitution would first be administered before he entered the city itself. On a large platform a throne covered with velvet and gold had been erected, and here the Duke took his seat, while in the frosty winter morning the sun shone on the bright uniforms of the burgher troops and on the magnificent costumes of the leading members of the Brabant estates. Amid the silence of the vast multitude assembled at Kiel the Duke of Anjou took the solemn oaths which bound him to protect the people over whom he ruled. And now the ducal hat and the velvet mantle, lined with ermine, were brought, and the Prince of Orange, flinging around Anjou the mantle of the Brabant dukes, fastened the button at the throat, saying, "I must secure this robe so firmly, my lord, that no man may ever tear it from your shoulders." Thus arrayed, Anjou listened to a long oration from a magistrate of Antwerp, from whom he then received the keys of the city, returning them thereafter for safe keeping to the burgomaster of the town. The ceremony was complete. Trumpets sounded, gold and silver coins were scattered to the people, and the heralds cried aloud, "Long live the Duke of Brabant!"

A procession was then formed to escort the Duke into Antwerp. He was seated on a white Barbary horse, covered with cloth of gold, and surrounded by English, French, and Netherland nobles. Among them rode the stately Earl of Leicester and Sir Philip Sidney, the knight of chivalry; while not to be hidden was the tall, gaunt figure of William the Silent, at whose side rode his son, Count Maurice of Nassau, a dark-eyed lad of fifteen, and members of many another noble house followed in the train. The crossbow men and archers of Brabant formed the bodyguard of the Duke, while after them came the French cavaliers, the lifeguardsmen of the Prince of Orange, and a long concourse of troops. The procession ended in a dismal group of 300 malefactors, whose irons clanked as they marched

mechanically along. But hope was theirs, for they had come to implore pardon of the new Sovereign, and they knew that the boon would be granted them ere the day was over. Torches were burning along the road although it was noon. Endless chariots delayed the progress of the procession. It was night ere the sights and speeches ended and Anjou reached the palace of Saint Michael, which had been fitted up for his reception.

The following day the terms of the treaty made with the new Sovereign by the Estates were made public, and deputations crowded to congratulate the Duke.

A little more than a month later it was on March 18, 1582 the first result of the ban pronounced against the Prince appeared. A foreign merchant at Antwerp, whose fortune was in great straits, bethought himself that the price set on William's head would save him from ruin. Not having, however, courage himself to do the deed that would gain the prize, he spoke to a bookkeeper, only to find him unwilling to soil his hands by so dastardly a deed as his master suggested. In a clerk, also a foreigner, the merchant at length found his tool. Juan Jaureguy was easily persuaded that the Prince of Orange was a tyrant, and that to kill him was to do God service. Moreover, he was told that immediately after the deed was done he would become invisible, and therefore would himself be in no danger. Jaureguy, with many fervent prayers to the saints, undertook to do the deed. He even promised, the poor duped lad, should he be successful, to give to Christ "a new coat of costly pattern," and to the shrine of the Virgin a gown, a crown, and a lamp.

Invited in the evening to a festival to celebrate the birthday of Anjou, the Prince of Orange dined in the early part of the day in his own house. Count Hohenlo, two French noblemen, and Maurice of Nassau were with him at table. Dinner being over, the Prince was leading his guests to his own apartments when a small, shabbily dressed youth suddenly appeared before him. It was Jaureguy, who was holding out a petition and pleading that Father William would receive it. The lowliest had access to the Prince at all times, and the appearance of the shabbily dressed clerk had attracted no attention. "Father William" reached out his hand and took the petition. As he did so Jaureguy drew a pistol and discharged it at his head. The ball

entered the neck under the right ear, passed through the roof of the mouth, and came out under the left jawbone. So close had the pistol been held that the hair and beard of the Prince were set on fire. For a moment William was stunned, then, recovering himself, he called out quickly, "Do not kill him, I forgive him my death." But his words were too late to save the assassin, for his deed was no sooner done than two noblemen thrust him through with their rapiers, while immediately afterwards the halberdiers rushed upon him, till he fell, pierced in thirty-two places.

For many weeks the Prince lay between life and death. In the city the anxiety was extreme. A suspicion was aroused that the plot had been devised by the French, and had such been the case well might the Duke of Anjou and his followers have feared for their lives. Papers, however, found on the body of the assassin proved that the deed had been done for the sake of Spanish gold, and Antwerp forgot its anger in its grief.

On Wednesday, March 21, a solemn fast was held in the city, work and amusements were laid aside, and the citizens crowded into the churches and with tears prayed for the recovery of their Prince. As a slow improvement was announced, thanksgiving mingled with the entreaties that were still offered daily in the churches. But again on April 5 hope was changed to gravest fear. The wound had burst, and it was found impossible to bandage it sufficiently to stop the loss of blood. A simple plan was then resorted to. A succession of attendants, relieving each other day and night, checked the flow of blood by keeping the wound slightly compressed with the thumb. The anxiety slowly lessened as once again the wound closed, and it was known that the life of the Prince was saved. By the end of April he was convalescent, and on the 2nd of May 1582 he went to offer thanks for his recovery in the great Cathedral, surrounded by a vast throng of glad and grateful citizens. But his wife, Charlotte of Bourbon, worn out by the nights of watching and the tension of her hopes and fears, was seized by a violent fever, under which she sank on the 5th of May, but three days after the public thanksgiving for her husband's recovery.

Soon after the Prince's recovery, the offer of the sovereign Countship of Holland was again pressed upon him. This honour,

which he had accepted in July 1581, but only during the term of war, he now accepted, August 14, 1582, without limitation. But before the arrangements for conferring the new honour upon him were completed, the price set on the Prince's head had been gained, and he no longer lived to serve the country he loved so well. Thus it was that the Northern Provinces remained a republic, not only in fact, as would have been the case with William as Count, but also in name.

The exertions of the Prince on behalf of the Duke of Anjou, interrupted by his illness, were now resumed. By his influence Anjou found himself accepted as Lord of Friesland and Duke of Gelderland, and publicly proclaimed at Bruges as the Count of Flanders. But the Duke was dissatisfied. Nobles from France were insulting his dignity and inflaming his jealousy. They whispered that he was governed by the States, he, a son of France. They hinted that he was ruled by the Prince of Orange, and that if he were not already he would soon be but a cipher in the country. And they sneered as they muttered the name of the mild and harmless Matthias.

Always false and fickle, the base nature of the Duke began to bestir itself. Already he hated the Prince, by whose intellect he was overawed and by whose pure life his own was put to shame. He resolved to seize by force of arms the principal cities in his new dominions, and thus at all costs compel submission to his rule. To do this would be to break his solemn oaths, but that counted for nothing to the treacherous Anjou, nor did he scruple to deceive the man from whose hands he had received so many benefits. With the troops at his disposal he made arrangements to surprise eight or ten cities, Antwerp itself being the Duke's special prey.

But in some way alarm had been aroused. On January 16, 1583, a man, masked, had mysteriously entered the main-guard house in Antwerp, and giving warning that a great crime was to be committed, vanished before he could be seized. That the stranger had been a Frenchman was all the guards could tell. It was not difficult for suspicion to gather round the Duke of Anjou, for he was no favourite of the burghers of Antwerp. The captain of the city guard went to the Prince, as men did in difficulty. He asserted his entire confidence in the Duke, but suggested that the lanterns should be hung out and the drawbridge raised an hour before the usual time. He also sent the

burgomaster to Anjou to tell him of the suspicions which were being circulated in the city. But the Duke of Anjou assured the burgomaster that he was willing rather "to shed every drop of blood in the defence of the city than to attack her secretly." So solemn were his assurances, and so indifferently did he seem to regard the precautions taken to protect the city, that the burgomaster felt that for that night at least the city was secure.

On the following morning a deputation, accompanied by Orange, called on the Duke. Again Anjou asserted his loyalty to his oaths as well as his affection for the Netherlands, for Brabant, and most of all for Antwerp. So guileless was the Prince that he withdrew, believing he had deeply wronged the Duke by even questioning his fidelity. Anjou had, however, promised not to leave the city that day, yet shortly after the Prince had left him he wrote begging William to accompany him to a review of his troops, which was to take place at Bergenhout, outside the city gates. In this way the Duke hoped to secure the Prince and take him prisoner. But Orange declined the invitation, reminding the Duke of his promise to remain within the walls of the city.

After dining at noon, the Duke, at the head of his bodyguard and about 300 mounted men, rode out of the Palace yard towards the Kip-dorp gate. This gate opened into the road towards Bergenhout, where Anjou's troops were stationed. Antwerp was quiet, the streets deserted, for it was one o'clock, when all the inhabitants would be dining. The guard at the Kip-dorp gate saw the Duke approaching, listlessly, with his troops. They crossed the first drawbridge, still in a leisurely manner, then, on a sudden, Anjou had risen in his stirrups and was waving his hand. "There is your city, my lads," cried he to the troops behind him; "go, take possession of it." Then, putting spurs to his horse, he galloped off towards his camp at Bergenhout.

No sooner had the Duke left than one of his bodyguard pretended to have broken his leg, and the commanding officer at the Kip-dorp gate stepped forward to his help, only, however, to receive a desperate thrust from the Frenchman's rapier. "Broken leg! Broken leg!" the cry was shouted as Anjou's watchword, and as soon as it was heard the band of troopers attacked the burgher watch at the gate, and butchered every man. Then, leaving a force to protect the gate so



“There is your city, my lads. Go, take possession of it.”

easily secured, the rest of the Frenchmen entered the town at full gallop, shouting, "Long live the Duke! Long live the Duke!" The troopers were soon followed by the soldiers from the camp at Bergenhout. They poured into the town, 600 cavalry, 3000 musketeers. From the Kip-dorp gate the soldiers rushed along the two main streets towards the town-house, shouting as they rushed, "The town is ours, the town is ours! Kill, kill, kill!"

The burghers, their suspicions verified, flew to arms. Chains and barricades were thrown across the streets. Trumpets shrilly called to the city guards, who swarmed to the rescue. Catholic and Protestant grasped each other by the hand and swore to die side by side in defence of the city against the treacherous Duke of Anjou and his Frenchmen. In the marketplace the invaders met each moment with a fiercer resistance. Women and children mounted to the roofs and windows and hurled down, not only chimneys and tiles, but tables and chairs, upon the heads of the assailants. Citizens who had exhausted their bullets, wrenched the silver buttons from their coats, or twisted gold and silver coins with their teeth and used them as bullets. The Frenchmen, blinded by the missiles that descended on them and beaten by the wild fury of the burghers, attempted to retreat. Many threw themselves into the moat, while others struggled through the streets back towards the Kip-dorp gate. Here a ghastly sight met their eyes, the slain being piled in the narrow passage ten feet high. Outside the gate some of Anjou's officers were attempting to force their way over the awful mass of bodies into the city, while from within the city the fugitive soldiers were trying to force their way out through the same terrible barrier, many dropping on the heap of slain under the blows of the unrelenting burghers. The Count to whom Anjou had entrusted the expedition stood directly in the path of the runaway soldiers, upbraiding them with cowardice, and actually slaying ten or twelve of them with his own hands to stay their flight. But there were many of the French officers high-minded men these and true who had known nothing of the treacherous plans of their chief, and who now bitterly reproached him for his ignoble deed, while one cursed him to his face. Anjou could stand no more the reproaches ringing in his ears, his treachery fully revealed, he mounted his horse and fled from the scene of his defeat.

The Prince of Orange, in a distant part of the town, knew nothing of what had happened till the burghers had gained the victory. He then hastened to the ramparts and persuaded the citizens to cease firing at the still retreating foe. And the citizens, remembering the Spanish Fury of 1576, of which they could not yet think without a shudder, thanked God that the French Fury had been frustrated and their city saved.

From this time the French were more entirely distrusted, and the Prince of Orange, in attempting to effect a reconciliation between the States and Anjou, brought on himself many reproaches. His marriage, shortly after, to Louisa, daughter of the well-known Admiral Coligny, still further embittered those who dreaded the French alliance.

In June 1583 the Duke of Anjou returned to Paris, writing farewell letters to the Prince and the States. It was understood that arrangements would be made for restoring to him the sovereignty which he had so soon and so basely forfeited. But the negotiations, which were carried on languidly between the Duke and the Estates, were finally ended by his death on June 10, 1584.

To Parma the French Fury had been of advantage, for while the Netherlander were engrossed in their dealings with the Duke of Anjou, he moved from town to town, making himself master of Zutphen and all the district of Waes. Bruges was gained in the spring of 1584, and shortly afterwards Ypres, which had long been besieged by the Spanish, was forced to surrender. The military skill of Parma, combined with his mastery over the minds of men, was slowly re-establishing Philip's foothold in the Netherlands.

CHAPTER XXXVI

The Plot Against Orange and Its Success

Within two years there had been five different attempts to assassinate the Prince of Orange, all of them encouraged by the Spanish Government. It was inevitable that a sixth should soon follow.

The Prince had withdrawn to Delft, a quiet and drowsy little city not far from Rotterdam. Here he watched with regret the growing numbers of Catholic nobles and men of note who were being drawn again under the power of Spain by the subtle fascination of the Prince of Parma. Even his own brother-in-law had gone over to Spain, while his brother John, though true to his country, had left the land some years before.

The Prince of Orange felt the growing isolation of his position. Yet while he lived quietly apart in the house on the banks of the quiet tree-fringed canal of Delft, he toiled ceaselessly for the cause which was so dear to his heart. It was here, in the quiet little village, that a special messenger from the French Court came with despatches telling of the death of Anjou. On Sunday, July 8, 1584, the Prince of Orange, while still in bed, sent for the bearer of the despatches, that he might hear from him further particulars of the Duke's last illness. The courier was admitted to his presence, and proved to be a youth who, in the early spring, had claimed the protection of the Prince, his plea being that he was the son of a Protestant who had suffered death for the sake of his religion. In reality, however, Francis Guion, for so he called himself, was Balthazar Gerard, a Catholic and a fanatic.

Balthazar, who was twenty-seven years of age, was usually to be seen with a Bible or hymn-book under his arm, as he modestly walked along the streets of the city. A pious psalm-singing fellow he seemed,

of whom little was thought, so incapable was he deemed of taking any important share in the business of life. But Balthazar was not what he appeared in character any more than in religion, for in his retiring manner was wrapped a desperate and daring spirit. From childhood he had been trained to hate the Prince of Orange, and he was taught that he would secure the safety both of the Catholic religion and of his most Catholic Majesty Philip II., should he rid the world of one who was an enemy to each. When but twenty years of age he had stuck his dagger into a door with all his might, exclaiming, as he did so, "Would that the blow had been in the heart of Orange."

No sooner had the ban against Orange been published, than Balthazar became more than ever anxious to carry out his long-cherished design against the life of the Prince. He offered his services to Parma, asking for a small sum of money that he might purchase a pistol with which to do his cruel deed. But Parma had already advanced sums to many a would-be assassin, who had spent the money indeed, but never attempted to do the deed for which it had been given, and he at first refused to have anything to do with the shabby-looking individual who now applied to him. Persuaded, however, by his counsellors, Parma eventually promised that Balthazar should receive the promised reward should he indeed succeed in ridding Spain of her great enemy, and should he die as the result of his crime, the reward should be given to his heirs. And now Balthazar, with his despatches, stood in the bedroom of the man who had befriended him, but against whom he had a long and carefully cherished hatred. The interview was entirely unexpected, and the traitor, unarmed, with no plan of escape yet formed, could do nothing save answer the questions of the Prince with what calmness he could call to his aid. As he was dismissed from the bed-chamber the church bells began to ring. But Balthazar did not seem to hear them, as, with his Bible tucked under his arm, he lingered in the passages of the Prince's house. Before long a halberdier noticed him, and demanded what he was waiting for. Balthazar meekly answered that he wished to attend service in the church, which was opposite, but that without at least a new pair of shoes and stockings, he was unfit to join the congregation. The good-natured soldier told the needs of the courier to an officer, and the Prince, happening to hear of his poverty, himself ordered a

sum of money to be given to Balthazar. With the sum thus provided by the bounty of the Prince, Balthazar the following day bought a pair of pistols, bargaining long before he would give the soldier from whom he bought them the price he asked. Before many hours had passed, the soldier, hearing to what use the pistols he had sold had been put, was broken-hearted. Life could never again mean aught but grief to him, and in his despair he stabbed himself to death.

On Tuesday, July 10, 1584, about half-past twelve, the Prince, with his wife leaning on his arm, went towards the dining-room. Balthazar was at the door waiting, and, pushing himself in front of the Prince, he demanded a passport. His excitement and pallor attracted the attention of the Princess Louisa, and she asked anxiously who he was. "Merely a person come for a passport," carelessly replied the Prince. But the Princess was dissatisfied: "I have never seen so villainous a countenance before," she murmured. At two o'clock, dinner being over, the Prince rose from the table and led the way, intending to go to his private apartments alone. He reached the staircase, which was completely lighted by a large window, and began slowly to ascend. He had only reached the second step, when, from a sunken archway, Balthazar crept forth, and, standing within a foot or two of the Prince, discharged a pistol full at his heart. As he fell, the Prince cried out in French: "O my God, have mercy upon my soul! O my God, have mercy upon this people!" These were his last words, save that when his sister asked him if he commended his soul to Jesus Christ, he faintly murmured "Yes," and shortly after he breathed his last.

The murderer had laid his plans well, and succeeded in escaping through a side door. Quickly he sped up a narrow lane, at the end of which a horse awaited him. But pursuers were following hard on his steps. In his desperate haste Balthazar stumbled, and before he could recover himself he was seized upon by several pages and halberdiers and dragged back to the Prince's house. There was no merciful voice now to cry, "Do not kill him, I forgive him my death," and after a strict trial, Balthazar was condemned to be executed. The sentence, accompanied by untold horrors, was carried out on July 14, 1584, the people, by torturing the criminal, vainly trying to stay the grief into



As he fell the Prince cried out, “O my God, have mercy on my soul!”

which he had plunged them.

Stricken and forlorn, the nation mourned the loss of the Prince of Orange, while little children wept when they were told that never more would "Father William" be seen in their streets. As a grateful token of their love, the nation voted an ample provision for the widow and children of the Prince who had given his possessions, as well as his life, in their service, while Maurice of Nassau, who in the future was to lead his country to the peace which his father had desired for it, was given a position of influence in the Government of the land.

Did it seem that Spam had triumphed, that William the Silent was slain, his work being yet undone? But he had struck, a great blow for freedom, with results that reached far out beyond his dreams. He had laid the foundations of the Dutch Republic, laid them so deep and strong that on them was reared, by those who worthily bore his name, a great and world-wide empire.

Spain had indeed not triumphed, save in the seeming, for verily, as the wise man said, "The righteous and his works are in the hand of God."