

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST COUNTS OF HOLLAND

[843-1299 A.D.]

As the seven united provinces of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Friesland, Groningen, Overijssel, and Gelderland formed in the early ages of their history four distinct and separate states, to follow out minutely the annals of each would cause the thread of the subject to be perpetually broken off, and by diverting the attention into so many channels deprive it of any interest it might otherwise possess; and would moreover swell the work to such a magnitude as to render it unavailable to the general reader. This is the less necessary, as, with some difference of detail, the general features of the constitution and governments of the Netherland states bear so strong a similarity to each other that a perfect acquaintance with one will give a tolerably clear insight into all. We shall therefore confine our observations principally to Holland and Zealand, which, during the period now under consideration, formed a state or county of itself; the prince-bishop of Utrecht held that province, together with Groningen and Overijssel, as a fief of the German Empire, acknowledging the sovereignty of the archbishop of Cologne in spiritual matters. Friesland will often present itself to our notice as a subject of contention between the bishops of Utrecht and the counts of Holland, and retaining its independence against both, under a *podestato* of its own choosing.

Gelderland formed a part of the empire of Germany until the year 1002, when the emperor Henry II made it a separate county, feudatory to the empire; Otto, the first count, coming into possession of Zutphen also, by his marriage with Sophia, heiress of that county. Gelderland was raised to a duchy in 1337 by Louis VII of Bavaria, emperor of Germany.

THE PERIODS OF DUTCH HISTORY

The history of Holland thus divides itself into four periods:¹ the first extending from the end of the ninth century, the time of its erection into a separate county, to the year 1428, when it became annexed to a great portion of the other states of the Netherlands, under Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy: the government of the princes of the house of Burgundy and Austria will form the second period, ending in 1579, when the Union of Utrecht laid the foundation of the republic of the Seven United Provinces.

It is here that the history of Holland has been generally considered to begin; and from this epoch it is supposed her birth as a free and commercial country is to be dated. No idea, however, can be more erroneous; Holland was no Pallas among nations, starting at once into vigour and maturity, exempt from the errors and trials of youth; it was not the mere act of revolt from Spain that made her a nation of heroes, statesmen, legislators, and merchants, such as we then find her. She had been formed by long years of experience, by long ages of endurance. The strength which enabled her to cope with a power so infinitely superior to her own had been infused by continued enjoyment of equal laws, constitutional rights, and prescriptive franchises. It was not to enforce the fanciful theory of a constitution, not to create new rights, new laws, new liberties, that the Dutch threw off their allegiance to their sovereign; but to preserve those which they had been constantly asserting, and jealously defending, since the accession of the house of Burgundy, more than a hundred years before; and the war of independence was the end, not the beginning of the contest—the desperate extremity to which they were unwillingly driven by the obstinacy and cruelty of Philip II, not a scheme devised for their own aggrandisement. The separation of Holland from Spain involved but a slight change in her internal government, the essential principles of which had already existed for centuries; and though the extension of liberty obtained by this event did undoubtedly tend to the vast improvement of her commerce, yet it is equally certain that, after the decay of the Italian republics, Holland excelled all the rest of the world except Flanders and Brabant, as well in commerce and navigation as in agriculture and manufactures.

The union of Utrecht may therefore be properly considered as the commencement of the third period, which extends to the year 1747, when a radical change was effected in the constitution of Holland, then rendered monarchical in fact, though not in name, by the creation of a *stadholderate*, hereditary in the male and female line.

The fourth short and mournful era is comprised between 1747 and 1795, when the provinces were subjugated by the arms of the French Republic. During this time, but feeble and evanescent scintillations of the ancient Dutch spirit appear. The whole nation, divided into two factions, the orange and republican, sacrificed with one accord the welfare of the commonwealth to the rage of party spirit.

Thus enfeebled and tottering, Holland required no seer to foretell that

[¹ Blok divides the history of the Dutch people into seven periods: 1st, the period of the most ancient times, ending with the complete development of the feudal states in the fourteenth century; 2nd, the period of Burgundian power, ending in the last half of the sixteenth century; 3rd, the period of the Eighty Years' War, ending in 1648; 4th, the period of the republic, which fell in 1795; 5th, the transition period of French influence until 1815; 6th, the period of the kingdom of the United Netherlands until 1830; 7th, the period of the history of Holland after the separation from Belgium.]

[843-922 A.D.]

her Ides were come. Prussia, England, and France each struck a death-blow at her heart; but she covered herself with her robe as she fell—science, the arts, and the venerable relics of her ancient institutions veiled from human eyes the extremity of her degradation. The civilised world, her jealous rivals themselves, mourned over her fate. Mocked with the name of an independent republic, deluded with the shadow of a free constitution, Holland found her treasury drained by French extortion, her commerce made subservient to French interests, and her government framed and changed according to the fanciful models of French politicians. With the invasion of the year 1795, therefore, her history closes, since she appears no more on the theatre of Europe as a free commonwealth.

Her regeneration, as a limited monarchy, in 1813, is the beginning of a new era.

HOLLAND AS A GERMAN FIEF

Before the end of the eighth century, Charlemagne had finally united the whole kingdom of Friesland to the Christian church. The last king, Gundebold, grandson of Radbod, was slain in the famous expedition of this monarch against the Saracens in Spain; and from that time Friesland was governed by counts and dukes appointed by the emperor, and afterwards by his son Louis the Pious. On the division of the empire in 843 made after the death of Louis, between his three sons, Lothair, Ludwig the German, and Charles, surnamed the Bald, Ludwig received that portion of the Netherlands which lies on the right of the Rhine, while the provinces between that river and the Maas and Schelde were allotted to the emperor Lothair.

The situation of these countries rendered them peculiarly obnoxious to the incursions of the Danes or Normans, for three centuries the terror and scourge of Europe; and it was probably with the view of erecting a barrier against their assaults that Ludwig the German granted to Dirk,¹ one of the counts in Friesland, and to his heirs, the forest of Wasda. The Danes, however, continued to harass Friesland as before, sometimes plundering the country, and levying heavy contributions on the inhabitants; sometimes making transient settlements there, and forcing the sovereigns to surrender to them possession of different portions of it. Charles III of France, surnamed the Fat, having become master of the whole of the empire of Charlemagne, found himself obliged to purchase their absence from Germany by the gift of a large sum of money, and the cession of the whole of Friesland to Godfrey, their king (883), by which act Gerulf, the son of Count Dirk, became a subject of the Dane. The death of Godfrey, who was treacherously assassinated, two years after, by order of Charles, restored Gerulf to his allegiance under the emperor of Germany, and he received from Arnulf, successor to the empire, after the deposition of Charles the Fat, the lands lying between the Rhine and Zuithardershage.

Gerulf was the father of that Dirk whom the Hollanders reckon as their first count, probably because he was the first who possessed the monastery of Egmond, whence nearly all the documents relating to their early history are drawn. From him, the line of succession and the thread of history continue unbroken.

The time of the foundation of the county of Holland is involved in great obscurity, and we will not enter into the tedious discussion as to whether it should be fixed in 863, or in the year 922. For the former date we have the

[¹ The name is also given as Dietrich, Theoderic, and Theodore.]

[912-993 A.D.]

authority of Melis Stoke,^b Beka,^d Barlandus,^e Meyer,^f and numerous others; while Buchelius,^g the annotator of the *Chronicle of Beka*, and Wagenaar^h insist upon the latter.

THE FIRST DIRKS, I-IV (912-1049)

To the lands which Count Dirk already held, Charles IV of France, surnamed the Simple, added the abbey of Egmond, with its dependencies, from Zuithardershage to Kinnem. By the cession which this prince made to the



COUNT DIRK II

(From a manuscript at Egmond)

emperor Henry I of the whole kingdom of Lorraine, these lands, as well as the remainder which Count Dirk possessed, became a fief of Germany in 974. Nothing further is known of Dirk than that he built a church of wood at Egmond, dedicated to St. Adelbert, and founded there a convent of nuns. The time of his death is uncertain, but it is generally supposed to have occurred in the year 923.

Hardly had Dirk II established himself in the government after the death of his father, when he was obliged to march against his rebellious subjects in West Friesland, whom he overcame, and forced to return to obedience. He had by his wife, Hildegarde, two sons, of whom the younger, Egbert, became archbishop of Treves, and the elder, Arnold, married Luitgarde, sister of Theophano, the wife of Otto II, emperor of Germany (983). The empress Theophano, after the death of her husband, and during the minority of her son, Otto III, enjoyed a large share in the adminis-

tration of the empire; and her alliance with the family of the count of Holland induced her to use her influence over the mind of the young emperor, to obtain for Dirk a grant of all those states as an hereditary fief which he had hitherto enjoyed in usufruct only. Dirk II died in 988.

The grant of Otto III rendered it unnecessary that Arnold should obtain the emperor's confirmation of his authority, and the succession henceforward passed in the regular line, without any intervention of the imperial sovereignty, nor did the emperors ever interfere in the slightest degree in the internal government of the county; in process of time, indeed, the counts of Holland so far freed themselves from the ties of feudal allegiance that it became at length a matter of dispute whether or not Holland owed fealty to the empire at all. Arnold's short reign of five years was spent in continual warfare with his rebellious subjects of West Friesland, by whom he was slain in a battle fought near the village of Winkel (993). He left two sons, of

[908-1039 A.D.]

whom the younger, Siwart, or Sigefrid, is said to have been the founder of the noble and illustrious house of Brederode.

Dirk III succeeded his father when only twelve years of age, the government being administered during his minority by his mother Luitgarde. In the year 1010 the Normans again made an irruption into Friesland, defeated the Hollanders who opposed their passage, and advanced as far as Utrecht. This is the last time we hear of any invasion by the Normans of either Holland or Friesland.

WARS WITH UTRECHT, FLANDERS, AND THE EMPIRE

In the year 937 the emperor Otto I of Germany had granted to Baldric, then bishop of Utrecht, the privilege of coining money. By Ansfrid, the domain of Utrecht had been brought close to the territories of the counts of Holland, over the whole of which, likewise, the church of Utrecht had a spiritual jurisdiction; and this furnished the bishops with a pretext for laying claim to the temporal sovereignty of the county. Hence arose disputes of a nature easily exasperated into hostilities.

In order to provide a barrier against the encroachments of this restless neighbour, Dirk built and fortified the celebrated town of Dordrecht, in 1015, which became, and long remained, the capital of the county, and ever afterwards held the first rank in the assembly of the states. Here he levied tolls upon all vessels passing up or down the Waal.

The emperor commanded Gottfried, duke of Lorraine, to assist the bishop in expelling Dirk from the fortress of Dordrecht. Gottfried, in obedience to his orders, assembled a large body of troops, accompanied by the bishops of Cologne, Cambray, Liège, and Utrecht, with their forces. In the engagement which ensued in 1018 an event, singular as unexpected, turned the fortune of the day in favour of the Hollanders, and saved the infant state from the destruction which appeared inevitable: the battle was at the hottest, and the Hollanders were defending themselves bravely, but almost hopelessly, against superior numbers, when suddenly a voice was heard crying, "Fly, fly." None could tell from whence the sound proceeded, and it was therefore interpreted by the troops of Lorraine as a warning from heaven: their rout was instantaneous and complete. Dirk concluded his long and troubled reign of thirty-four years by a pilgrimage to the Holy Land; he died 1039, soon after his return, and was buried in the church of Egmond, leaving behind him a high reputation for valour and ability.

In the reign of Dirk IV began the first of a long series of dissensions between the counts of Holland and Flanders concerning the possession of Walcheren, and the other islands of Zealand, west of the Schelde. The Flemings claimed these territories in virtue of a grant (1007) made by the emperor Henry II to Baldwin IV, surnamed Longbeard, count of Flanders, while the Hollanders insisted on a prior right, conferred by the gift of Ludwig the German, in the year 868, to Dirk, the first count of Holland. Baldwin, fifth son and successor of Baldwin Longbeard, undertook a hostile expedition into Friesland and returned victorious. The bishop of Utrecht, taking advantage of the embarrassment, induced the emperor Henry III to lend him his assistance in regaining possession of those lands about the Merwe and Rhine, of which he maintained that Count Dirk III had unjustly deprived his predecessor.

The emperor, at the head of a numerous army, sailed down the river to Dordrecht, which he forced to surrender, as well as other towns. He was

[1049-1070 A.D.]

not able long to retain these places, Dirk having formed an alliance with Gottfried of Lorraine.

The emperor was obliged to retreat to Utrecht, pursued by Dirk and a small band of troops, who so harassed the rear of his army that Henry with difficulty succeeded in reaching the city in safety. His departure left Dirk at liberty to regain possession of all the territory he had lost, which, however, he was not destined to enjoy long in peace. While passing unguardedly through a narrow street, he received a wound from a poisoned arrow, shot by an unknown hand, and died within three days in January, 1049. Dirk died unmarried, and was succeeded by his brother.

FLORIS I TO IV (1049-1235)

The reign of Floris [or Florence], like that of his predecessors, was rendered turbulent and unhappy by the restless jealousy and enmity of the bishop of Utrecht. In the year 1058, William I, who then filled this see, formed a confederacy against Floris, and the united armies, accompanied by some troops of the empire, invaded the county of Holland. Floris, despairing of being able to withstand so overwhelming a force, had recourse to stratagem, much in use in the warfare of early ages. In a field near Dordrecht, where his forces were drawn up to await the attack, he caused pits to be dug and lightly covered with turf, into which several of the enemies' horse, when advancing briskly, as if to certain victory, suddenly fell, and being unable to extricate themselves, the whole army was thrown into the utmost confusion; at this moment Count Floris led forward his troops, and as they met with scarcely any resistance, the issue of the battle was decisive in their favour; sixty thousand of the allied troops were slain, and the governor of Gelderland, the count of Louvain, and the bishop of Liège made prisoners.

A like success attended the arms of the count in a second invasion, by the archbishop of Cologne, the markgraf of Brandenburg, and the lord of Cuyck, whom he defeated and put to flight in an obstinate and murderous battle, fought near the village of lower Hemert. Wearied with the combat, Count Floris fell asleep under a tree, not far from the scene of action, when the lord of Cuyck, having reassembled his scattered soldiers, returned, and surprising him thus defenceless, put him to death with a great number of his followers. He did not, however, venture to attack the main body of the army, which retired in safety.

Dirk V, being a child of tender years at the time of his father's death, was placed under the guardianship of his mother, Gertrude of Saxony. She had conducted the administration scarcely two years, when she contracted a second marriage with Robert, the younger son of Baldwin V, of Flanders (surnamed from this alliance the Frisian), and in conjunction with the nobles conferred on him the government of the county during the minority of her son.

In May, 1064, a grant was made to the bishop of Utrecht in the name of the emperor of the whole of the county west of the Vlie, and about the Rhine, with the abbey of Egmond, besides Bodegrave, from which Dirk III had expelled Dirk Bavo [the vassal of the bishop of Utrecht].

The bishop, having gained Gottfried, duke of Lorraine, to his alliance, by promising him the government of Holland, as a fief of the bishopric, Robert attempted in vain to make a stand against his enemies. Being defeated in a severe battle, he was forced to take refuge in Ghent. Holland

[1071-1125 A.D.]

and Friesland submitted to Gottfried. He founded the city of Delft, where, after having governed the country for about four years with great harshness and severity, he was assassinated.

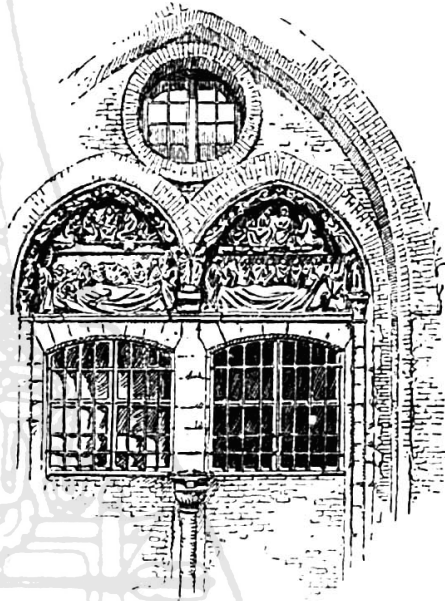
His death was followed in the same year, 1075, by that of William, bishop of Utrecht. Conrad, successor to the see, assumed, likewise, the government of Holland. The Hollanders, unable to endure with patience the episcopal yoke, earnestly desired the restoration of their lawful sovereign, and Robert the Frisian, being in tranquil possession of Flanders, found himself at liberty to assist his adopted son in the enterprise he now formed for this purpose. William the Conqueror, then king of England, who had married Matilda, sister of Robert the Frisian, sent some vessels to their assistance. The whole of the bishop's fleet was either captured or dispersed, and the bishop renounced all claim to the states of the count of Holland, and restored all the conquests made by himself or his predecessors. The inhabitants joyfully took the oath of allegiance to Count Dirk V. He died in 1091, having governed the county fifteen years after his restoration, leaving only one son.

In the reign of Floris II, surnamed the Fat, the whole of Europe was inflamed with the desire of rescuing the tomb of the Redeemer from the hands of the infidels. The effects of the Crusades on Holland were, for some time at least, comparatively slight; for though we find the names of several of her nobility numbered in the ranks of the crusaders, and among them those of Arkel and Brederode, the most powerful and illustrious in the state, yet, whether that the mercantile habits

of the people rendered them unwilling to engage in war, except some tangible advantage were to be gained by it, or that their constant hostilities with the bishops of Utrecht had placed the church in such an unfavourable point of view, certain it is that the enthusiasm was neither so highly wrought nor so widely diffused as among the other peoples of Europe, and particularly the neighbouring county of Flanders.

Floris the Fat ended his tranquil reign of thirty years in the spring of 1121.

Dirk VI, being too young at the time of his father's death to undertake the management of affairs, his mother, Petronella, was appointed governess during his minority—a woman of extraordinary courage, sagacity, and ambition. She took up arms in the cause of her brother, Lothair of Saxony, against the emperor Henry V, with whom he was at war; and Henry, although he invaded Holland with a powerful army, found considerable difficulty in forcing her to acknowledge feudal allegiance to him. The election of Lothair to the throne of Germany at length put an end to the enmity between the emperors and the counts of Holland, which had now subsisted, with the inter-



ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL
(Thirteenth century)

mission only of the short alliance between Floris the Fat and Henry V, for more than a century.

In this reign, Holland was already sufficiently populous to admit of the removal of a large colony of its inhabitants to the borders of the Elbe and Havel. The Hollanders (so strong is the power of habit or the human mind) fixed themselves, by choice, on the low and marshy lands. Notwithstanding the difficulties they had to contend with, both from the nature of the soil and the frequent incursions of the Slavi, these patient and industrious colonists built towns and churches in their new settlement, and in a short time rendered it incredibly rich and flourishing. Dirk VI died in the autumn of 1157.

Floris III finding, on his accession to the government, that the Flemish merchants evaded the payment of the tolls at Dordrecht, by passing down the Maas, obtained permission of the emperor to establish a toll. Count Philip of Flanders equipped a number of ships sufficient to keep the Holland navy in check, while with his land forces he made himself master of the Waasland, after which, having enriched his troops with considerable booty, he retired to Flanders. Count Floris put to sea a large fleet of ships, but he was defeated in a severe naval battle, wounded and carried prisoner to Bruges. Philip consented to release Floris, after an imprisonment of two years, and to reinstate him in the territories he held of Flanders.

The West Frieslanders had not let slip the favourable opportunity for rebellion, and Floris was never able, during the whole of his reign, to reduce his rebellious subjects in that quarter to entire obedience.

The crusade preached in 1187 by Pope Clement III drew a considerable number of the princes of Europe to the army of Frederick I or Barbarossa, emperor of Germany: among these was the count of Holland, who had assumed the cross three years before. He was among the immense number of those who fell victims to a pestilence. He was buried near the grave of the emperor Frederick in St. Peter's church, at Antioch. This count is said to be the first who obtained from the emperor the privilege of coining money stamped with the arms of Holland.

Floris III left four sons, Dirk VII, his successor to the county; William, who remained in the Holy Land for nearly five years after the death of his father; Floris, archdeacon of Utrecht; Robert, governor of Kennemerland, and four daughters.

William of Holland perceiving, shortly after his return from the Holy Land, that some enemies at court had found means to excite suspicion and jealousy in the mind of his brother towards him, retired to West Friesland, where the disaffected were always sure to find companions ready for revolt. Hostilities were begun on the side of William, when Dirk sent one part of his army to Friesland, under the conduct of his wife Adelaide (daughter of the count of Cleves), while he himself advanced with the remainder to expel the Flemings from Walcheren. The issue of both expeditions proved fortunate. Towards the end of the same year the brothers were reconciled and Dirk consented to bestow on William all his possessions in Friesland, to be held as a fief of Holland. The good fortune of Count Dirk at length deserted him, and the event of a war, in which he was afterwards engaged with Utrecht, was disastrous in the extreme both to himself and the state. The bishop betook himself for protection to Henry, duke of Brabant,¹ or Lower Lor-

¹ The duchy of Brabant took its rise in the year 1106, when the emperor, Henry V, divided the ancient kingdom, or duchy of Lorraine, into two parts, called Upper and Lower Lorraine, and bestowed the latter on Godfrey the Bearded, count of Louvain, who assumed the title of duke of Brabant and Lorraine. Henry III, duke of Brabant, dropped the title of duke of Lorraine, and styled himself duke of Brabant only. See Guicciardini² and Johan. à Leid.³

[1202-1224 A.D.]

raine. Dirk's troops were entirely defeated, and he himself was taken prisoner. He was released within the year upon payment of 2,000 marks of silver; but by the treaty then made with the duke he was obliged to surrender Breda, and bound himself and his successors to do homage to the dukes of Brabant for Dordrecht and all the lands lying between Stryen, Walwyk, and Brabant, and to assist them against all their enemies, except the emperor. Thus the ancient capital of the county became a fief of Brabant, and so continued until the year 1283, when John I, duke of Brabant, released the count of Holland from his fealty. Dirk died in 1203, the government falling into the hands of a girl of tender years, guided by a mother sufficiently shrewd, indeed, and courageous, but intriguing and ambitious.

The last wish of Count Dirk, that the guardianship of his daughter, Ada, and her states should be confided to his brother William, was frustrated by the intrigues of the countess-dowager, Adelaide of Cleves, who, in order to debar him from all share in the administration, had determined upon marrying her daughter to Louis, count of Loon. Within a very short time, however, symptoms of discontent at the prospect of being governed by a female, and a stranger, began to manifest themselves among some of the nobility. The disaffected brought William disguised to the island of Schouwen. Here he was received with every demonstration of joy, and shortly after was proclaimed as lawful governor. The countess Ada was sent prisoner to the Texel, and subsequently to the court of John, king of England.

The termination of the war between France and England left Count William free to accompany the crusade undertaken at this time (May, 1217); and he accordingly set sail from the Maas, with twelve large ships, which, uniting with a great number of smaller vessels from Friesland, arrived after some delays at the port of Lisbon. Immediately upon their landing, a message was sent by the Portuguese nobles to the crusaders, beseeching their assistance against the king of Morocco, who had wrested the fortress of Alcacer-do-Sal from the king of Portugal, and obliged the inhabitants of that country to deliver into his hands a hundred Christian slaves every year. The greater part of the Frieslanders refused to delay their journey to the Holy Land, but the Hollanders under Count William besieged and took Alcacer-do-Sal, and continued the remainder of the year in Portugal. In 1218 William joined the fleet of the crusaders at Acre.

Soon after the conclusion of the siege of Damietta, he returned to Holland, which he governed in peace for about four years. He died on the 4th of February, 1224.



COUNTESS HILDEGARDE
(From a manuscript at Egmond)

An Early Charter

In this reign was granted a charter of privileges (nearly the oldest known in the county of Holland¹) to the city of Middelburg, in Zealand, in the joint names of Joanna, countess of Flanders, and William of Holland. By this charter, certain fines were fixed for fighting, maiming, striking, or railing, for resisting the authority of the magistrates, and other delinquencies of minor importance, under the jurisdiction of the schout and sheriffs. A Middelburger, choosing another lord than the count of Holland, must pay ten pounds Flemish (5*l.*) to the count, and ten shillings to the town;² the count reserving to himself the judgment in such cases.

The charters of the other cities of Holland and Zealand bear more or less resemblance to this, which ancient as it is, appears, nevertheless, to have been rather a confirmation of prescriptive customs than a new code of regulations, though there is no earlier instance on record of the counts binding themselves by oath to the observance of them.

Floris IV was only twelve years of age when he succeeded his father in 1224, but it is not known with certainty who administered the affairs of the county during his minority, or under whose direction it was that the young count conferred on the towns of Domburg and West Kappel, in Walcheren, charters of privileges.

Floris was the first and last of the counts of Holland who, in obedience to the injunctions of the holy see, bore a part in one of those crusades against Christian heretics, which had, unhappily, become so much the mode during this century. The Stedingers, a people inhabiting the small tract of country bordering on the Weser, having refused to acknowledge the temporal jurisdiction of the archbishop of Bremen, were, for this reason, accused by him of heresy, before Pope Gregory IX, who preached a general crusade against them. The duke of Brabant, therefore, with the count of Cleves and the count of Holland, who sailed to the Weser in a fleet of three hundred ships, led their united forces into the country of the Stedingers. In an obstinate and bloody battle (1234), four thousand of them were slain, and they submitted at length to the archbishop.

The fame of Count Floris' beauty, valour, and skill in all knightly accomplishments being widely spread abroad, produced such an eager desire in the breast of the young countess de Clermont to see so bright a pattern of chivalry that she induced her aged husband to proclaim a tournament at Corbie (1235), where she knew the young count would not fail to be present. The apparently innocent curiosity of his wife aroused such furious jealousy in the bosom of the old man that, at the head of a number of horsemen, he rushed suddenly upon Count Floris, dragged him from his horse, and slew him, before his attendants had time to assemble for his defence. His death, however, was instantly avenged by Theodore, count of Cleves, who killed the count de Clermont on the spot. Thus perished Count Floris in the bloom of youth and beauty, leaving his states to his son William II, an infant under seven years of age.

¹ That of Geertruydenberg is somewhat older, being dated 1213, but much mutilated. [In Flanders, however, such charters had been granted a century earlier. See the Historical Introduction and also Chapter II.]

² From this it would appear that the subject had a right to withdraw his allegiance from his lord, a custom which, though it might be the occasion of some disorders, must yet, by providing a remedy against oppression and tyranny on the part of the lord, have tended much to soften the rigour of feudal government.

[1235-1252 A.D.]

COUNT WILLIAM II, EMPEROR OF GERMANY (1235-1256)

The government of the county, during the minority of the young prince, was entrusted to Otto III, bishop of Utrecht, brother of the late count. William had just entered his twentieth year, was still "beardless and blushing," and not yet knighted, when he was elected emperor of Germany. In the year 1245 Pope Innocent IV had pronounced sentence of excommunication against Frederick II. In order to give effect to the decree of the council, Innocent spared neither pains nor money to procure the election of another emperor. William hastened to Aix-la-Chapelle [Aachen], to receive the imperial crown, but found this city entirely devoted to the interests of Frederick, and it cost him a long and expensive siege before he could effect his entrance. He was obliged, in order to raise funds for carrying it on, to mortgage Nimeguen, a free city of the empire, to the duke of Gelderland, for the sum of 16,000 marks of silver.

The new emperor's coronation was performed by Conrad, archbishop of Cologne (1248); but William was never able, even after the death of Frederick II (1250), to insure general obedience to his authority; while the measures he took for this purpose raised up a troublesome and dangerous enemy in his hereditary states. According to an ancient custom of Germany, those vassals who neglected to do homage to a new emperor within a year and a day after his coronation lost irrecoverably the fiefs which they held of the empire. The emperor, therefore, in a diet held 1252 at Frankfort, declared all those fiefs escheated, the possessors of which had not received investiture from him within a year and a day after his coronation at Aix. Among the number of these was Margaret, countess of Flanders, familiarly termed "Black Margaret," daughter of Baldwin, emperor of Constantinople. She had omitted to do homage for the five islands west of the Schelde, for which reason William deprived her of these territories, and bestowed them on John of Avennes, the husband of his sister Adelaide. John was the son of Margaret, by her first husband, Bosschaert [or Burchard], lord of Avennes, from whom she had been divorced in 1214, on the plea of too near a relationship between the parties, and that Bosschaert had entered into holy orders, and was a deacon at the time of their marriage. She was afterwards married to William de Dampierre, a Burgundian nobleman, by whom she had three sons, William, Guy, and John; and upon her succession to the county, after her union with William, she declared her intention of leaving the whole of her states to the children of her second husband, alleging that, the marriage with Bosschaert of Avennes having been declared null by the pope, the issue of it must be illegitimate.

The stigma thus cast on his birth, coupled with the fear of losing his inheritance, provoked John of Avennes to declare open war against his mother; but on the mediation of Louis IX of France, a treaty was made, whereby John, after his mother's death, should inherit Hainault, and William de Dampierre, Flanders. Matters stood thus, when William made the transfer above mentioned, of the fiefs held by Flanders, under the empire, in favour of John of Avennes. This intelligence no sooner reached the ears of Margaret, than she assembled a powerful army, with the design of invading Zealand; and when her troops were in readiness to march, sent to demand homage of the emperor, as Count of Holland, for the five islands of the Schelde.

The emperor, flushed with the pride of his high station, haughtily answered that "he would be no servant where he was master, nor vassal where he was lord." The rage of Black Margaret at this contemptuous reply knew no

bounds; and while she sought to amuse William by affecting to listen to the terms of accommodation proposed by Henry, duke of Brabant, she despatched her son, Guy de Dampierre, at the head of her army, into Zealand. The troops landed at West Kappel, where they sustained a signal defeat, in an engagement with the Hollanders, under Floris, brother of the emperor; and Guy and his brother, John de Dampierre, were taken prisoners. Black Margaret was now amenable to terms of peace which she had before haughtily and angrily refused.¹

In 1255 William found it necessary to repair in person, with a powerful army, to West Friesland, in order to reduce it to obedience. From Alkmaar, he advanced in the depth of winter to Vroone, a considerable village of Friesland; before him lay the Heer Huygenward, a large drained lake, now entirely frozen over. The Frieslanders purposely retreating to where the ice was weakest, he galloped on in heedless pursuit of them, leaving his troops at some distance behind. The ice broke. Three or four of the Frieslanders immediately rushed upon him; and, deaf to his prayers for mercy and offers of ransom, cruelly slaughtered him. His body was secretly buried at Hoogt-woude; and his army, after the death of their leader, retreated in disorder and with heavy loss to Holland.

The numerous and expensive undertakings in which William II was engaged, during nearly the whole period of his government, rendered necessary to him the support and assistance of the towns of Alkmaar, Haarlem, and Delft, which he purchased by the grant or confirmation of privileges so important that in course of time they rendered them, as towns, integral and influential portions of the nation. As it was about this time that the constitution and administration of Holland began to assume a regular and permanent form, it may be permitted to make a short digression, for the purpose of giving such an idea of its composition, before the union of 1579, as the notices scattered here and there through the different histories and descriptions of the country will enable us to form.

THE CONSTITUTION OF HOLLAND

The towns of Holland were not, as in other nations, merely portions of the state, but the state itself was rather an aggregate of towns, each of which formed a commonwealth within itself, providing for its own defence, governed by its own laws, holding separate courts of justice, and administering its own finances; the legislative sovereignty of the whole nation being vested in the towns, forming in their collective capacity the assembly of the states.

The government of every town was administered by a senate (*wethouderschap*), formed of two, three, or four burgomasters, and a certain number of sheriffs (*schepenen*), generally seven; a few of the towns, as Dordrecht, had only one burgomaster. The duties of the senate were to provide for the public safety by keeping the city walls and fortifications in repair, to call out and muster the burgher guards in case of invasion or civil tumult, to administer the finances, to provide for the expenses of the town by levying excises on different articles of consumption, and to affix the portion of county taxes to be paid by each individual. To the burgomasters was committed

¹ After the battle of West Kappel, according to Matthew Paris, John of Avennes sent ambassadors to his mother, entreating her to listen to terms of accommodation, if not for his sake, for the sake of her sons, who were his prisoners. "My sons are in your hands," answered the fierce old virago; "but not for that will I bend to your will: slay them, butcher! and devour one seasoned with pepper, and the other with salt and garlic!" Such language in the mouth of a woman, and a princess, would give us no very advantageous opinion of the manners of these times.

the care of the police and the ammunition, of the public peace, and of cleansing and victualling the town. The senate generally appointed two treasurers to receive and disburse the city funds under their inspection, and an advocate, or pensionary, whose office (similar to that of recorder in English municipal corporations) was to keep the charters and records, and to advise them upon points of law. The count had a representative in each town, in the person of the schout, an officer whom he himself appointed, sometimes out of a triple number named by the senate. It was the business of the schout,¹ besides watching over the interests of the count, to seize on all suspected persons and bring them to trial before the *vierschaar*, or judicial court of the town. This court was composed of the sheriffs, and had jurisdiction over all civil causes, and over minor offences,² except in some towns, such as Leyden, Dordrecht, etc., where the power of trying capital crimes was specially given to them in the charters granted by the counts: the schout was also bound to see the judgments of the *vierschaar* carried into execution.

Besides the senate there was, in every town, a council of the citizens, called the "great council" (*vroedschap*),³ which was summoned in early times when any matter of special importance was to be decided upon; but afterwards their functions, in many of the towns, became restricted to the nomination of the burgomasters and sheriffs for the senate. In Hoorn, where the government was on a more popular basis than in most of the other towns of Holland, this council comprised all the inhabitants possessing a capital of two hundred and fifty nobles, and from this circumstance was called the *rykdom*, or wealth.

In Dordrecht, the most confined and aristocratic of the municipal governments of Holland, the great council consisted of forty members, whose office was for life, and who filled up the vacancies as they occurred, by election among themselves. The senate of this town was composed of one burgomaster, whose office was annual, nine sheriffs, and five councillors (*raden*); four sheriffs and three councillors went out of office one year, five sheriffs and two councillors the next, and so on alternately; their places were filled up by the count, or the schout on his behalf, out of a double number nominated by the council of forty. The only representatives of the people in the government were the so-named "eight good men" (*goede luyden van achte*), and their functions were limited to choosing the burgomaster in conjunction with those senators whose term of office had expired; if they were unanimous, their votes reckoned for twelve, but the burgomaster chosen must always be one of the ex-senators.

Constitution of the Guilds

The inhabitants of the towns, being generally merchants and traders, were divided into guilds⁴ of the different trades; at the head of each guild was placed a deacon (*dekken*), to regulate its affairs and protect its interests; and as the towns obtained their charters of privileges from the counts, so did the guilds look to the municipal governments for encouragement and support, and for the immunities they were permitted to enjoy. Each guild

¹ We have no English term for this office: that of county sheriff (including the duties he usually performs by deputy) is analogous to it in some respects; the word *schout* is an abbreviation of *schouddrechter*, a judge of crimes.

² The power of trying offences which were not capital was termed the "low jurisdiction."

³ Literally "council of wise men."

⁴ For further treatment of the guilds, see in the next chapter the history of the Belgian communes. In Holland the earliest guild was that of the cloth merchants at Dordrecht, dating from 1200; the guilds came into prominence about 1350, but never attained the power they reached in Flanders.]

inhabited for the most part a separate quarter of the town, and over every quarter two officers, called *Wykmeesters*, were appointed by the burgomasters, whose duty it was to keep a list of all the men in their district capable of bearing arms, to see that their arms were sufficient and ready for use, and to assemble them at the order of the magistrates, or upon the ringing of the town bell: the citizens, on their part, were bound to obey the summons without delay, at any hour of the day or night. Over all the wykmeesters were placed two, three, or four superior officers, called *hoofdmannen*, or captains of the burgher guards.

The guilds, when called out to service within the town, assembled, and acted each under their own banners; but in defence of the state they were accustomed to march together under the standard of the town, and dressed in the city livery. As every member of a guild was expected to have his arms always ready for use, and the burgher guards (*schuttery*) were frequently mustered, and drilled under the inspection of the burgomasters and sheriffs, the towns were able to man their walls, and put themselves into a state of defence in an incredibly short space of time.

In this manner each town formed, as we have remarked, a species of republic, containing within itself the elements of civil government and military force. The burgher, for the most part, considered his town as his nation, with whose happiness and prosperity his own was inseparably linked, not only as regarded his public but also his private interests; since his person was liable to be seized for the debts which its government contracted, and the government, on the other hand, if he were too poor to pay the county taxes, stepped in to his relief, and not unfrequently discharged them for him. This separate existence (if we may so term it) of the towns, a source of national strength inasmuch as, by developing to its fullest extent the social activity of the people and giving to each individual a place in the political scale, it formed, as it were, a heart in every one of the extremities of the body politic, was yet a cause of weakness by the disunion, jealousy, and opposition of interests which it occasioned; the patriotism of the Dutchman was but too often confined within the walls of his native city; and we shall have occasion more than once to remark, in the course of Dutch history, that the towns, pursuing each their own private views, totally lose sight, for a while at least, of the interests of the nation in general, and even of their own as members of it.

The Nobility

The municipal government and privileges of the towns extended over a certain space without the walls, which the burghers enlarged as they found occasion by grants obtained from the counts; whether by favour or purchase. The portion of the county not included within these limits, and commonly called the "open country," either formed the domains of the nobles or abbeyes, or were governed by bailiffs, whose office was analogous to that of the schout in the towns, and who were, like them, appointed by the count. Both nobles and abbots exercised the low jurisdiction in their states, and sometimes the high jurisdiction also: the nobility had the power of levying taxes on the subjects within their own domains, and exercised the right of private warfare among themselves; of the latter privilege they were always extremely jealous, and the efforts of the counts to abolish or modify it were for many centuries unavailing: in fact, it fell into disuse in Germany and Holland later than in the other countries of Europe.

The nobles were exempt from the taxes of the state, being bound in respect

of their fiefs to serve with their vassals in the wars of the country; and if from any cause they were unable to attend in person, they were obliged either to find a substitute or to pay a scutage (*ruytergeld*) in lieu of their services, in the same manner as other vassals of the count: such, however, was only the case when the war was carried on within the boundaries of the county, or had been undertaken by their advice and consent; otherwise the service they rendered depended solely on their own will and pleasure.

The chief of the nobility were appointed by the count to form the council of state, or supreme court of Holland: the council of state assisted the count in the administration of public affairs, guaranteed all treaties of peace and alliance made with foreign nations; and in its judicial capacity took cognizance of capital offences, both in the towns (unless otherwise provided by their charters) and in the open country. To this court, where the count generally presided in person, lay an appeal in civil causes from all the inferior courts in the state.

In after times, as the towns increased in wealth and importance, and the more prolonged and expensive wars in which the counts were engaged rendered their pecuniary support necessary, they, likewise, became parties to the ratification of treaties,¹ and were consulted upon matters relating to war or foreign alliances. It was probably the custom of summoning together deputies from the towns for these purposes which gave rise to the assembly of the estates, as historians are unable to fix the exact time of its origin. It has been generally supposed that, before the middle of the sixteenth century, the six "good towns" only, that is, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leyden, Amsterdam, and Gouda, enjoyed the right of sending deputies to the estates. This, however, is not altogether the fact. It is true that treaties of peace and alliance were usually guaranteed by the great towns only, and that affairs relating both to domestic and foreign policy were frequently transacted by them, in conjunction with the deputies of the nobles, the smaller towns (unwilling to incur the expense of sending deputies to the estates) being content to abide by their decision. But until about 1545 the small towns were constantly summoned to give their votes upon all questions of supply, nor did the deputies of the great towns consider themselves authorised to grant or anticipate the payment of any subsidies without their concurrence. The small towns were likewise accustomed to send deputies to the estates



A NOBLEWOMAN OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

¹ The first treaty which appears guaranteed by the towns was made with Edward I of England in 1281.

when a measure was to be discussed which peculiarly regarded their own welfare.

The Estates

The deputies to the estates were nominated by the senates of the several towns, each town possessing but one voice in the assembly, whatever number of deputies it might send; the whole body of the nobility likewise enjoyed but one vote, though it was often represented by several, never by less than three deputies. The estates were generally summoned by the counts to the Hague, or to any other place where they might happen to be residing. The more usual practice was to petition either the count or the council of Holland to issue the summons. The deputies of the nobles and towns deliberated separately, and afterwards met together to give their votes, when the nobles voted first, and then the towns, the ancient city of Dordrecht having the precedence. No measure could be carried, if either the nobles or any one of the towns refused to give their vote in its favour.

The principal officers employed by the assembly of the estates were a registrar or keeper of the records, who acted likewise as secretary, and an advocate called the pensionary of Holland, whose business it was to propose all subjects for the deliberation of the estates, to declare the votes, and report the decisions of the assembly to the count, or council of state; although this officer did not possess the right of voting, he was accustomed to take a share in the debates, and generally enjoyed great influence both in the assembly of the estates and the whole country: the nobles, likewise, chose a pensionary, nearly always in the person of the same individual. The constitution of the estates of Zealand differed from that of Holland, inasmuch as the clergy in the latter did not form a separate estate, nor were they represented in the assembly; whereas in Zealand, the abbot of St. Nicholas in Middelburg enjoyed the right of giving the first vote as representative of the ecclesiastical estate.

Taxation

It is impossible at this time to define exactly the powers formerly possessed by the estates, since during the reign of feeble princes, or minors, they naturally sought to extend them, and often succeeded in so doing; while, on the other hand, they were considerably abridged by the more powerful and arbitrary counts, particularly those of the house of Burgundy. The most essential, however, that of levying taxes, none of the sovereigns of Holland before Philip II of Spain ever ventured to dispute; and the old feudal principle, that the nation could not be taxed without its own consent, wholly abandoned in France, and evaded in England by the practice of extorting benevolences, was in Holland, except in some rare and single instances, constantly and firmly adhered to.¹ The counts, on all occasions of extraordinary expense, were obliged to apply for funds to the assembly of the states, and these applications were called "petitions" (*beden*), a word in itself denoting that the subsidy was asked as a favour, not claimed as a right. If the "petition" of the count were granted by the estates, a certain portion of the sum required was adjudged to each town, and to the open country (which

¹ The imposts levied by the nobles on their domains are to be considered rather in the light of lords' rents than taxes, since the lands of the vassals were supposed to belong to the lords, and they were not levied on such as held their lands by military service; but as they were unlimited in amount, and almost every article of raw produce was liable to them, they were the cause of grievous oppression.

in this respect was represented by the deputies of the nobility), and raised by an assessment on houses (*schildtal*), and a land-tax (*morgental*). This tax was levied in the towns, not by any receiver or officer on the part of the count, but by the senate, which was answerable for the payment of the quotas that the towns had bound themselves to furnish: the custom of levying the taxes on the county in general was first introduced under the government of the house of Burgundy.

The authority of the count, however, was not so limited as it would at first appear. His ordinary revenues were so ample as to preclude the necessity of making petitions to the states, except in cases of unusual expenditure; in addition to extensive private domains, and the profits of reliefs and of the fiefs which escheated to him as lord, he was entitled to the eleventh part of the produce of the land in West Friesland; and he had moreover the right of levying tolls on ships passing up and down the rivers; and customs upon all foreign wares imported into the country. Besides these sources of revenue, he received considerable sums for such privileges as he granted to the towns; which were also accustomed to give gratuities when he was summoned to the court of the emperor; when his son, or brother, was made a knight; and upon the marriage of himself, his son, brother, sister, or daughter.

The important right also possessed by the towns of rejecting any measure proposed in the estates, by a single dissentient voice, was considerably modified in practice, in consequence of the influence which the count obtained over them by granting or withholding privileges at his pleasure. He likewise exercised, on many occasions, the power of changing the governments of the towns, out of the due course, but this was always considered as an act of arbitrary violence on his part, and seldom failed to excite vehement remonstrance, as well from the estates as from the town which suffered it.

Thus the constitution of Holland was, as we may gather from the preceding observations, rather aristocratic than republican, being exempt indeed from the slightest leaven of democracy in any of its institutions. Nevertheless, it was in many respects essentially popular in its spirit: although the government of the towns was lodged in the hands of but few individuals, yet as they were generally men engaged in manufactures and commerce, or (in later times) gentry closely connected with them, their wants, interests, and prejudices were identified with those of the people whom they governed; while the short duration of their authority prevented the growth of any exclusive spirit amongst them.

Special regulations also were adopted in every town, by which no two members of the government could be within a certain degree of relationship to each other; thus preventing the whole authority from being absorbed by one or more wealthy and powerful families, as was the case in the Italian republics, especially those of Florence and Genoa. The guilds, although they possessed no share in the administration of affairs, yet exercised considerable influence in the towns, from their numbers and wealth; the members also, being all armed and organised for the public defence, were equally ready to assemble at a moment's notice for the purpose of obtaining the removal of any grievance, or the redress of any injury which they might conceive themselves, or the inhabitants in general, to have sustained.

The fundamental principles of the government, as recognised by the best authorities, were these: that the sovereign shall not marry without the consent of the states; that the public offices of the county shall be conferred on natives only; the estates have a right to assemble when and where they judge expedient, without permission from the count; it is not lawful for the count

to undertake any war, whether offensive or defensive, without the consent of the estates; all decrees and edicts shall be published in the Dutch language; the count shall neither coin nor change the value of money, without the advice of the estates; he shall not alienate any part of his dominions; the estates shall not be summoned out of the limits of the county; the count shall demand "petitions" of the estates in person, and not by deputy, nor shall he exact payment of any greater sum than is granted by the states; no jurisdiction shall be exercised except by the regular magistrates; the ancient customs and laws of the state are sacred, and if the count make any decree contrary to them, no man shall be bound to obey it.

It is not meant to be affirmed that these principles were always adhered to; on the contrary, they were frequently violated; and under the powerful princes of the house of Burgundy, almost wholly neglected; but the Dutch constantly looked to them as the sheet-anchor of their political existence, and seldom failed to recur to and enforce them whenever an opportunity offered itself for so doing.

FLORIS V (1256-1296)

Floris V was born during the time that the emperor, his father, was besieging Charles of Anjou in Valenciennes, and was consequently scarcely two years old at the time of his father's death; he was, nevertheless, immediately acknowledged by the nobles, and the government of the county, during his minority, was confided to his uncle Floris. Equally inclined with his brother to favour the increase and advancement of the towns, the governor granted charters of privileges to nearly all those of Zealand which did not yet enjoy them. He likewise concluded the treaty of peace with Flanders, begun in the last year: it was agreed that the counts of Holland should continue to hold the five islands as a fief of Flanders; that the count of Flanders should receive ten thousand pounds (Flemish) from Holland; and that either Floris, or the young count, when he came of age, should marry Beatrice, daughter of Guy de Dampierre: Guy, and his brother John, were released from their imprisonment upon payment of heavy ransoms. The county did not long enjoy the pacific government of Floris the Elder, since he was killed in a tournament at Antwerp, little more than two years after his accession. Upon his death, in 1258, Adelaide, countess-dowager of Hainault, the widow of John of Avennes, assumed the guardianship of the young count, and the administration of affairs, under the title of Governess of Holland; but the nobles, disdaining to submit to female rule, invited Otto of Gelderland, cousin of Adelaide, to undertake the government of the county.

During the administration of Otto, a dangerous revolt broke out among the people of Kennemerland, who, uniting with those of Friesland and Waterland, declared their determination to expel all the nobles from the country, and raze their castles to the ground.¹ They first took possession of Amsterdam, the lord of which, Gilbert van Amstel, either unable to make resistance against the insurgents, or desirous of employing them to avenge a private quarrel he had with the bishop of Utrecht, consented to become their leader and immediately conducted them to the siege of that city.

A parley ensued, when one of the Kennemerlanders vehemently exhorted the besieged to banish all the nobles from Utrecht, and divide their wealth among the poor. Fired by his oration, the people quitted the walls, seized

[¹ This was a genuine peasant insurrection, and according to Beka^d the leaders had an ambition to form a popular democracy, a "vulgaris communitas."]

[1271-1291 A.D.]

upon the magistrates, whom they forced to resign their offices, drove them, with all the nobles, out of the town, and admitting the besiegers within the gates made a league of eternal amity with them. After remaining a short time at Utrecht, the insurgents laid siege to Haarlem, but a considerable number were slain, and the remainder dispersed. Utrecht shortly after submitted to the authority of the bishop. The cause of this insurrection appears to have been the extortion practised upon the people by the nobles, most of whom, as we have observed, exercised the right of levying taxes in their own domains.

On the death of the count of Gelderland (1271), Floris being then seventeen, took the conduct of affairs into his own hands, and about the same time completed his marriage with Beatrice of Flanders, as agreed upon by the treaty of 1256. Early in the next year he made preparations for an expedition into West Friesland, for the purpose of avenging his father's death. He carried on the war for years, with varying success. In 1282 he effected a landing at Wydensse: the Frislanders were totally defeated.

The trade carried on by the Hollanders with England was now become highly valuable to both nations; the former giving a high price for the English wools for their cloth manufactures, while they procured thence (chiefly, perhaps, from Cornwall) their silver for the purpose of coinage.

Marriage was agreed upon between John, the count's infant son, and Elizabeth, daughter of Edward I, of England. The friendship cemented by this alliance was highly advantageous to the commerce of Holland: the staple of English wool was fixed at Dordrecht,¹ a town of extensive trade in wines, grain, salt, iron, wood, and cloth; and the subjects of the count were permitted to fish, without restriction, on the English coast at Yarmouth. This is the first grant we find of a privilege, which the Dutch continued to enjoy, with little interruption, until the time of Cromwell.

The Great Flood

After the departure of the army of Holland from West Friesland, the inhabitants renewed their hostilities, and made several unsuccessful attacks upon a fort which the count had built at Wydenesse; but a dreadful storm, which this year laid the whole of the country on both sides the Zuyder Zee entirely under water,² proved the means of enabling Count Floris to effect their complete subjugation. The floods rose to such a height that every part of the province was accessible to a numerous fleet of small vessels called cogs, well manned, and placed under the command of Dirk, lord of Brederode; the inhabitants of the several towns, being unprovided with a sufficient number of boats to oppose those of the count, found their communication with each other wholly cut off; and thus reduced to a state of blockade, and unable to render the slightest mutual assistance, they severally acknowledged the authority of Count Floris.

Count Floris undertook a journey to England, for the purpose of advancing his pretensions to the throne of Scotland, vacant by the death of Margaret, commonly called the Maid of Norway, grand-daughter and heiress of Alexander III. Floris was descended in a direct line from Ada, daughter of Henry, eldest son of David I, king of Scotland, who married, in the year 1162, Floris III, count of Holland. On this ground he appeared, in 1291, among

¹ The chronicler Melis Stoko^b observes that "this did not last long, for it was an English Contract."

² The flood overwhelmed fifteen islands in Zealand, and destroyed fifteen thousand persons.

[1291-1296 A. D.]

the numerous competitors for the crown, who, at the conferences held at Norham, submitted their claims to Edward I of England; and, however remote his pretensions, the native historians inform us that his renunciation of them was purchased by the successful candidate with a considerable sum of money, and the contemporary chronicler, Melis Stoke,^b reprobates, in no very measured terms the advice that persuaded him thus, like another Esau, to sell his birthright.

The amity between the two courts was in a very few years broken, on the occasion of a war between Holland and Flanders. Guy made a sudden irruption into the island of South Beveland in 1295. Floris solicited in vain succours from the king of England, who evaded his request under various pretexts, and whose interests now prompted him to court the alliance of Guy of Flanders, in preference to that of Holland. He proposed a marriage between his eldest son and Philippa, daughter of Count Guy; bestowed on him the sum of 300,000 livres in payment of the auxiliaries he should furnish during the war, and removed the staple of English wool from Dordrecht to Bruges and Mechlin, to the great detriment of the trade and manufactures of Holland.

Finding that Edward had thus made a league with his enemy, Floris determined to accept the offers of friendship made him by Philip of France.

THE KIDNAPPING OF FLORIS

The news of the alliance between Holland and France excited to a high degree the wrath of the king of England: he wrote to the emperor, complaining of the ingratitude of his vassal, the count of Holland, and declared that he would detain John, his son, in prison, unless the alliance were immediately dissolved; and it is supposed that at this time he first formed the design of seizing the person of Floris and conveying him to imprisonment, either in England or Flanders — a scheme which he was not long in finding instruments able and willing to execute, though the event was probably more fatal than he had anticipated.

Besides the causes of dissatisfaction which were common to the whole body of nobles, the count had aroused in the breasts of many individuals among them feelings of personal hatred and revenge. Gerard van Velsen first imparted to Hermann van Woerden a design of seizing the count's person, and placing him in confinement. Several other nobles readily entered into the conspiracy, the lord of Cuyek promising them the support and assistance of the duke of Brabant, the count of Flanders, and the king of England. Since the strong attachment of the citizens and people towards their count rendered the execution of any treasonable enterprise difficult and even dangerous in Holland, the conspirators waited until Floris should go to Utrecht, where he had appointed to be on a certain day in June, 1296, to make a reconciliation between the lords of Amstel and Woerden, and the relatives of the lord of Zuyleu, whom they had slain. After the reconciliation, Floris, unsuspecting of evil, gave a magnificent entertainment, at which all the conspirators were present, Amstel early the next morning, inviting the count to accompany himself and the other nobles on a hawking excursion. Floris, before his departure, asked Amstel to drink a sturup-cup to St. Gertrude. The traitor took the cup from his master's hand, saying, "God protect you; I will ride forward," and draining its contents, galloped off. Fearful of losing any part of the sport, the count quickly followed, leaving behind all his attendants, except a couple of pages. About two miles distant from

[1296 A.D.]

Utrecht, he was surrounded by Amstel, Woerden, Velsen, and several others, whom he greeted in a friendly manner. Woerden then seized the bridle of his horse, saying to him, "My master, your high flights are ended — you shall drive us no longer — you are now our prisoner, whether you will or no." He attempted to draw his sword, but was prevented by Velsen, who threatened "to cleave his head in two," if he made the least movement. One of the pages, attempting to defend his master, received a severe wound, but was able to escape with the other to Utrecht.

No sooner had the rumour of the count's imprisonment been noised abroad than the West Frieslanders rose in a body, and uniting themselves to the people of Kennemerland and Waterland speedily manned a number of vessels, and presented themselves before Muiden. But as they were without a leader, and had neither ammunition nor materials for a siege, they were unable to effect the release of their sovereign, and could only prevent his being carried to England. Finding this scheme, therefore, impracticable, the conspirators determined upon conveying him by land to Brabant or Flanders; gagged and disguised, with his feet and hands bound, and mounted on a sorry horse, they conducted their unhappy prisoner, on the fifth day of his confinement, towards Naarden. Hardly had they advanced half way to Naarden, when Velsen, who rode forward to reconnoitre, encountered a large body of the inhabitants of that city. The nobles, unable to resist so numerous a force, attempted to avoid them by flight; but in leaping a ditch, the count's feeble horse fell with his rider into the mire, and finding it impossible to extricate him before the arrival of his deliverers, who were close behind, they murdered their helpless victim with more than twenty wounds.

The personal character of Floris, as well as the state of affairs in the county, rendered his death a cause of deep lamentation to the Hollanders.¹ Just, liberal, and magnanimous, he was a firm and constant protector of his people against the oppression of the nobles.

Of the conspirators, Woerden and Amstel fled their country, and died in exile; van Velsen was tried at Dordrecht, severely tortured, and, together with William van Zoenden, one of his accomplices, broken on the wheel.

The aristocratic power in Holland never afterwards recovered the shock it underwent on this occasion; besides those of the nobles who were openly convicted of a share in the assassination of Count Floris, many others were suspected of a secret participation in this crime, and the contempt and detestation they incurred extended in some degree to the whole body of the nobility, whose moral influence was thus nearly annihilated, while its actual strength was enfeebled by the death or banishment of many of its most powerful members. This occurred, too, at a juncture when the towns, favoured by the privileges which Floris and his immediate predecessors had bestowed on them, and increasing in wealth and importance, were enabled to secure that political influence in the state which the nobles daily lost, and which, in other countries, was obtained by the sovereign, on the decay of the feudal aristocracy.

The condition in which the death of Floris V left Holland was deplorable in the extreme — engaged in hostilities with Flanders, her nobility discontented and rebellious, her people alarmed and suspicious, and her young

[¹ Holland's greatest poet, Vondel, whose Lucifer is often spoken of as the inspiration of Milton's "Paradise Lost," opened the first public theatre in Amsterdam with a tragedy on this subject, called "*Gijsbrecht van Amstel*." The abduction and death of Count Floris is a favourite subject of Dutch legend and art, and according to Blok "no event of those barbarous centuries is better known to the Dutch people."]

prince John, a minor, in the hands of the English monarch, who had given but too many proofs of his unscrupulous ambition, while to these difficulties was added that of a divided regency. Although John of Avennes was next of kin to the young count, yet Louis of Cleves, count of Hulkerode, related in a more distant degree, assumed to himself the administration of affairs, his supporters being principally found among the friends of those who had conspired against Count Floris. Upon the arrival of John of Avennes in Holland, Louis of Cleves was forced to retire into his own territory. The enemies of Holland were not backward in taking advantage of the embarrassments she was now labouring under.

JOHN I, THE LAST OF THE COUNTS (1296-1299)

At the instigation of the bishop of Utrecht, and relying on his promises of assistance, the West Frieslanders once more took up arms, mastered and destroyed all the castles Count Floris had built, except Medemblik, which they blockaded.

Meanwhile, the king of England, anxious to secure an influence in the court of his intended son-in-law, sent ambassadors to Holland, requiring the attendance of three nobles out of each of the provinces, and two deputies from each of the "good towns,"¹ at the marriage of the count John with the princess Elizabeth, and at the confirmation of the treaty. The marriage was celebrated with great splendour, and the ambassadors, laden with rich presents, returned with the young bride and bridegroom in a well-equipped fleet to Holland. The conditions imposed by Edward in the treaty made on this occasion rendered the young count little more than a nominal sovereign in his own states; he was obliged to appoint two Englishmen, Ferrers and Havering, members of his privy council, and to engage that he would do nothing contrary to their advice, or without the consent of his father-in-law. The disputes between Flanders and Brabant on the one side, and Holland on the other, were to be referred to the mediation of Edward. On the return of John of Avennes from the war in Friesland, he found that the count John had landed in Zealand, and knowing he had nothing but hostility to expect from Wolfart van Borselen, who had obtained possession of the young prince's person, and was devoted to the interests of England and Flanders, he deemed it advisable to retire without delay into Hainault. His departure left Borselen without a rival, and he immediately assumed the title of governor of Holland, and guardian of the minor.

The Frieslanders still refusing to acknowledge John as the son of Count Floris [an idea to which the fact of his long residence in England had given rise], the first step of Borselen was to march with the young count into that province, at the head of an army. With so powerful a force, it was a matter of no great difficulty to subdue the West Frieslanders, and it was done so effectually that this was the last time the counts of Holland were obliged to carry war into their country.

His successes so increased the influence of Wolfart van Borselen that his authority in the state became almost absolute. He thought fit to venture upon the hazardous measure of debasing the coin, a stretch of power which the Dutch, a nation depending for their existence upon trade and commerce,

¹ This is the first time we observe the towns participating in political affairs: it coincides nearly with the summoning of borough members to parliament in England (1295) and the assembly of the states in France (1302).

[1298-1299 A.D.]

have never been able to endure, even from their most arbitrary sovereigns. The murmurs of the citizens then became loud and general; and the popular hatred appeared already to threaten the ruin of the court favourite, when a quarrel in which he involved himself with the town of Dordrecht, concerning its immunities, brought matters to a crisis. Four *hooftmannen*, or captains of burgher guards, were appointed, and letters despatched by the senate to all the "good towns" of Holland and Zealand, intreating them to consider the cause of Dordrecht as their common cause. Their preparations were not made in vain, as no long time elapsed before the town was invested.

Borselen determined to raise a general levy both in Holland and Zealand against the Dordrechtors: but being unable to carry his purpose into effect, from the discontents which had spread over the whole county, deemed himself no longer safe at the Hague, and, leaving the court by night, carried the young count with all expedition to Schiedam, whence he took ship to Zealand (1299).

On the discovery of the abduction of Count John, the court and village of the Hague were in uproar; numbers hurried to Vlaardingcn, where, finding that the ship in which Borselen had sailed lay becalmed, they manned all the boats in the port with stout rowers, and quickly reached the count's vessel, whom they found very willing to return with them. Borselen was conducted a prisoner to Delft. Hardly had the populace there heard of his arrest when they assembled before the doors of the gaol, demanding with loud cries that "the traitor" should be delivered up to them. Those within, struck with terror, thrust him, stripped of his armour, out at the door, when he was massacred in an instant.

As John was still too young to conduct the business of government alone, he invited to his assistance his cousin, John of Avennes, and appointed him guardian over himself and the county for the space of four years. The death of Borselen, and the accession of John of Avennes to the government, entirely deprived the English party of their influence in Holland, since Avennes had been constantly attached, both from inclination and policy, to the interest of the French court. Soon after, determined on entering into a close alliance with France, he set out on a journey to that court, leaving Count John at Haarlem, sick of the ague and flux, which terminated his existence on the 10th of November, 1299. Suspicions of poison were soon afloat, and Avennes has been accused of this crime; but as the charge is flatly denied by Melis Stoke,^b and the nature of John's disease is expressly stated by another contemporary and credible historian, Wilhelm Procurator,ⁱ its being adopted by Meyer,^j a Flemish author writing two centuries later, is hardly sufficient to affix so deep a stain on the character of John of Avennes. As Count John died without children, the county was transferred, by the succession of John of Avennes, the nearest heir, to the family of Hainault. Thus ended this noble and heroic race of princes, having now governed the county for a period of four hundred years; of whom it may be remarked, that not one has been handed down to us by historians as weak, vicious, or debauched.^k