



## CHAPTER V

### PHILIP II AND SPANISH OPPRESSION

[1555-1567 A.D.]

THE eminent German historian and poet, Schiller, opening his account of the Netherlandish revolt, says:

“One of the most remarkable political events which have rendered the sixteenth century among the brightest of the world’s epochs appears to me to be the foundation of the freedom of the Netherlands. If the glittering exploits of ambition and the pernicious lust of power claim our admiration, how much more should an event in which oppressed humanity struggles for its noblest rights, where with the good cause unwonted powers are united, and the resources of resolute despair triumph in unequal contest over the terrible arts of tyranny. It is not that which is extraordinary or heroic in this event which induces me to describe it. The annals of the world have recorded similar enterprises, which appear even bolder in the conception and more brilliant in the execution. Some states have fallen with a more imposing convulsion, others have risen with more exalted strides. Nor are we here to look for prominent heroes, colossal personages, or those marvellous exploits which the history of past times presents in such rich abundance.

“The people here presented to our notice were the most peaceful in this quarter of the globe, and less capable than their neighbours of that heroic spirit which imparts a higher character to the most insignificant actions. The pressure of circumstances surprised them with its peculiar power, and forced a transitory greatness upon them, which they never should have possessed, and may perhaps never possess again. It is, indeed, exactly the want of heroic greatness which makes this event peculiar and instructive; and while others aim at showing the superiority of genius over chance, I present here a picture where necessity created genius, and accident made heroes.”<sup>b</sup>

It is impossible to comprehend the character of the great Netherland revolt in the sixteenth century without taking a rapid retrospective survey of the religious phenomena exhibited in the provinces. The introduction of

Christianity has been already indicated. From the earliest times, neither prince, people, nor even prelates were very dutiful to the pope. As the papal authority made progress, strong resistance was often made to its decrees. The bishops of Utrecht were dependent for their wealth and territory upon the good will of the emperor. They were the determined opponents of Hildebrand, warm adherents of the Hohenstauffens — Ghibelline rather than Guelf.

Heresy was a plant of early growth in the Netherlands. As early as the beginning of the twelfth century, the notorious Tanchelyn [or Tanchelinos, or Tanchelm] preached at Antwerp, attacking the authority of the pope and of all other ecclesiastics — scoffing at the ceremonies and sacraments of the Church.

#### EARLY NETHERLAND HERESY

The impudence of Tanchelyn and the superstition of his followers seem alike incredible. All Antwerp was his harem. He levied, likewise, vast sums upon his converts, and whenever he appeared in public his apparel and pomp were befitting an emperor. Three thousand armed satellites escorted his steps and put to death all who resisted his commands. So grovelling became the superstition of his followers that they drank of the water in which he had washed, and treasured it as a divine elixir. Advancing still further in his experiments upon human credulity, he announced his approaching marriage with the Virgin Mary, bade all his disciples to the wedding, and exhibited himself before an immense crowd in company with an image of his holy bride. His career was so successful in the Netherlands that he had the effrontery to proceed to Rome, promulgating what he called his doctrines as he went. He seems to have been assassinated by a priest in an obscure brawl, about the year 1115.

By the middle of the twelfth century, other and purer heresiarchs had arisen. Many Netherlanders became converts to the doctrines of Waldo. From that period until the appearance of Luther,<sup>1</sup> a succession of sects — Waldenses, Albigenses, Perfectists, Lollards, Poplicans, Arnaldists, Bohemian Brothers — waged perpetual but unequal warfare with the power and depravity of the Church, fertilising with their blood the future field of the Reformation. Nowhere was the persecution of heretics more relentless than in the Netherlands. Suspected persons were subjected to various torturing but ridiculous ordeals. After such trial, death by fire was the usual but, perhaps, not the most severe form of execution. In Flanders, monastic ingenuity had invented another most painful punishment for Waldenses and similar malefactors. A criminal, whose guilt had been established by the hot iron, hot ploughshare, boiling kettle, or other logical proof, was stripped and bound to the stake; he was then flayed, from the neck to the navel, while swarms of bees were let loose to fasten upon his bleeding flesh and torture him to a death of exquisite agony.

Nevertheless heresy increased in the face of oppression. The Scriptures, translated by Waldo into French, were rendered into Netherland rhyme, and the converts to the Vaudois doctrine increased in numbers and boldness. At the same time the power and luxury of the clergy were waxing daily. The bishops of Utrecht, no longer the defenders of the people against arbitrary power, conducted themselves like little popes. Yielding in dignity neither to king nor kaiser, they exacted homage from the most powerful princes of the Netherlands.

[<sup>1</sup> For a general account of the Reformation and fuller details concerning Erasmus, see the history of Germany.]

[1300-1523 A. D.]

By the end of the thirteenth century, however, the clerical power was already beginning to decline. It was not the corruption of the Church, but its enormous wealth, which engendered the hatred with which it was by many regarded. Temporal princes and haughty barons began to dispute the right of ecclesiastics to enjoy vast estates, while refusing the burden of taxation and unable to draw a sword for the common defence. At this period, the counts of Flanders, of Holland, and other Netherland sovereigns issued decrees forbidding clerical institutions from acquiring property, by devise, gift, purchase, or any other mode. The downfall of the rapacious and licentious Knights Templar in the provinces and throughout Europe was another severe blow administered at the same time. The attacks upon Church abuses redoubled in boldness, as its authority declined.

In 1459, Duke Philip of Burgundy prohibits the churches from affording protection to fugitives. Charles the Bold, in whose eyes nothing is sacred save war and the means of making it, lays a heavy impost upon all clerical property. Upon being resisted, he enforces collection with the armed hand. The sword and the pen, strength and intellect, no longer the exclusive servants or instruments of priestcraft, are both in open revolt. Charles the Bold storms one fortress, Doctor Grandfort, of Groningen, batters another. This learned Frisian, called "the light of the world," friend and compatriot of the great Rudolf Agricola, preaches throughout the provinces, uttering bold denunciations of ecclesiastical error. He even disputes the infallibility of the pope, denies the utility of prayers for the dead, and inveighs against the whole doctrine of purgatory and absolution.

With the beginning of the sixteenth century, the great Reformation was actually alive. The name of Erasmus of Rotterdam was already celebrated — the man who, according to Grotius,<sup>e</sup> "so well showed the road to a reasonable reformation." But if Erasmus showed the road, he certainly did not travel far upon it himself. Perpetual type of the quietist, the moderate man, he censured the errors of the Church with discrimination and gentleness. He was not of the stuff of which martyrs are made, as he handsomely confessed on more than one occasion. The Reformation might have been delayed for centuries had Erasmus and other moderate men been the only reformers. He will long be honoured for his elegant Latinity. In the republic of letters, his efforts to infuse a pure taste, a sound criticism, a love for the beautiful and the classic, in place of the owlish pedantry which had so long flapped and hooted through mediæval cloisters, will always be held in grateful reverence. In the history of the religious Reformation, his name seems hardly to deserve the commendations of Grotius.

Erasmus, however, was offending both parties. A swarm of monks were already buzzing about him for the bold language of his Commentaries and Dialogues. On the other hand, he was reviled for not taking side manfully with the reformer. The moderate man received much denunciation from zealots on either side. He soon clears himself, however, from all suspicions of Lutheranism. He is appalled at the fierce conflict which rages far and wide.

#### SEVERE PUNISHMENT OF HERESY : THE ANABAPTISTS

Imperial edicts are soon employed to suppress the Reformation in the Netherlands by force. The provinces, unfortunately, are the private property of Charles, his paternal inheritance; and most paternally, according to his view of the matter, does he deal with them. The papal inquisition was introduced into the provinces to assist its operations. The bloody work

for which the reign of Charles is mainly distinguished in the Netherlands now began. In 1523, July 1st, two Augustine monks were burned at Brussels, the first victims to Lutheranism<sup>1</sup> in the provinces. Erasmus observed, with a sigh, that "two had been burned at Brussels, and that the city now began strenuously to favour Lutheranism."

Another edict, published in the Netherlands, forbids all private assemblies for devotion; all reading of the Scriptures; all discussions within one's own doors concerning faith, the sacraments, the papal authority, or other religious matter, under penalty of death. The edicts were no dead letter. The fires were kept constantly supplied with human fuel by monks, who knew the art of burning reformers better than that of arguing with them. The scaffold was the most conclusive of syllogisms, and used upon all occasions. Still the people remained unconvinced. Thousands of burned heretics had not made a single convert.

A fresh edict renewed and sharpened the punishment for reading the Scriptures in private or public. At the same time, the violent personal altercation between Luther and Erasmus, upon predestination, together with the bitter dispute between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence, did more to impede the progress of the Reformation than ban or edict, sword or fire. The spirit of humanity hung her head, finding that the bold reformer had only a new dogma in place of the old ones, seeing that dissenters, in their turn, were sometimes as ready as papists with axe, fagot, and excommunication. In 1526, Felix Mantz, the anabaptist, is drowned at Zurich, in obedience to Zwingli's pithy formula — *Qui iterum mergit mergatur*. Thus the anabaptists, upon their first appearance, were exposed to the fires of the Church and the water of the Zwinglians.

There is no doubt that the anabaptist delusion was so ridiculous and so loathsome as to palliate, or at least render intelligible, the wrath with which they were regarded by all parties. The turbulence of the sect was alarming to constituted authorities, its bestiality disgraceful to the cause of religious reformation. The evil spirit, driven out of Luther, seemed, in orthodox eyes, to have taken possession of a herd of swine. The Germans, Münzer and Hoffmann, had been succeeded, as chief prophets, by a Dutch baker, named Matthiaszoon, of Haarlem, who announced himself as Enoch. Chief of this man's disciples was the notorious John Bockhold [or Beukelzoon], of Leyden.

Under the government of this prophet, the anabaptists mastered the city of Münster. Here they confiscated property, plundered churches, violated females, murdered men who refused to join the gang, and, in brief, practised all the enormities which humanity alone can conceive or perpetrate. The prophet proclaimed himself king of Sion, and sent out apostles to preach his doctrines in Germany and the Netherlands. Polygamy being a leading article of the system, he exemplified the principle by marrying fourteen wives. Of these, the beautiful widow of Matthiaszoon was chief; she was called the queen of Sion, and wore a golden crown. The prophet made many fruitless efforts to seize Amsterdam and Leyden. The armed invasion of the anabaptists was repelled, but their contagious madness spread.

The plague broke forth in Amsterdam. On a cold winter's night (February, 1535), seven men and five women, inspired by the Holy Ghost, threw off their clothes and rushed naked and raving through the streets, shrieking, "Woe, woe, woe! the wrath of God, the wrath of God!" When arrested, they

[<sup>1</sup> Luther wrote a hymn in their honour, exclaiming that "their ashes would not be lost but scattered in all the lands."]

[1535-1549 A.D.]

obstinately refused to put on clothing. "We are," they observed, "the naked truth." In a day or two, these furious lunatics, who certainly deserved a madhouse rather than the scaffold, were all executed. The numbers of the sect increased with the martyrdom to which they were exposed, and the disorder spread to every part of the Netherlands. Many were put to death in lingering torments, but no perceptible effect was produced by the chastisement. Meantime the great chief of the sect, the prophet John, was defeated by the forces of the bishop of Münster, who recovered his city and caused the "king of Sion" to be pinched to death with red-hot tongs.

Unfortunately the severity of government was not wreaked alone upon the prophet and his mischievous crew. Thousands and ten thousands<sup>1</sup> of virtuous, well-disposed men and women, who had as little sympathy with anabaptistical as with Roman depravity, were butchered in cold blood, under the sanguinary rule of Charles V, in the Netherlands. In 1535 an imperial edict was issued at Brussels, concerning all heretics to death: repentant males to be executed with the sword, repentant females to be buried alive; the obstinate, of both sexes, to be burned. This and similar edicts were the law of the land for twenty years, and rigidly enforced. In the midst of the carnage, the emperor sent for his son Philip, that he might receive the fealty of the Netherlands as their future lord and master. Contemporaneously a new edict was published at Brussels (April 29th, 1549), confirming and re-enacting all previous decrees in their most severe provisions. Thus stood religious matters in the Netherlands at the epoch of the imperial abdication.

## A BACKWARD GLANCE

Thus fifteen ages have passed away, and in the place of a horde of savages, living among swamps and thickets, swarm three millions of people, the most industrious, the most prosperous, perhaps the most intelligent under the sun. Their cattle, grazing on the bottom of the sea, are the finest in Europe, their agricultural products of more exchangeable value than if nature had made their land to overflow with wine and oil. Their navigators are the boldest, their mercantile marine the most powerful, their merchants the most enterprising in the world. Holland and Flanders, peopled by one race, vie with each other in the pursuits of civilisation.

Within the little circle which encloses the seventeen provinces are 208 walled cities, many of them among the most stately in Christendom, 150 chartered towns, 6,300 villages, with their watch-towers and steeples, besides numerous other more insignificant hamlets; the whole guarded by a belt of sixty fortresses of surpassing strength.

Thus in this rapid sketch of the course and development of the Netherlands nation during sixteen centuries, we have seen it ever marked by one prevailing characteristic, one master passion — the love of liberty, the instinct of self-government. Largely compounded of the bravest Teutonic elements, Batavian and Frisian, the race ever battles to the death with tyranny, organises extensive revolts in the age of Vespasian, maintains a partial independence

[<sup>1</sup> The figures range from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand, according to the words of Hugo Grotius<sup>c</sup> and according to William of Orange's *Apology*; but Blok<sup>e</sup> declares that these figures exceed the entire number of the reformed congregations, while the martyrs' books enumerate hardly a thousand. The number of those punished otherwise than by death, he thinks, must have run high into the thousands. He quotes the "blood-placard" of 1550 which orders that "the men shall be executed with the sword and the women buried alive." But he also emphasises the freedom of large districts from any persecution whatsoever, and the general inclination of the vast majority of the populace toward the tenets of the reformers.]

even against the sagacious dominion of Charlemagne, refuses in Friesland to accept the papal yoke or feudal chain, and, throughout the dark ages, struggles resolutely towards the light, wresting from a series of petty sovereigns a gradual and practical recognition of the claims of humanity. With the advent of the Burgundian family, the power of the commons has reached so high a point that it is able to measure itself, undaunted, with the spirit of arbitrary rule, of which that engrossing and tyrannical house is the embodiment. For more than a century the struggle for freedom, for civic life, goes on — Philip the Good, Charles the Bold, Mary's husband Maximilian, Charles V, in turn, assailing or undermining the bulwarks raised, age after age, against the despotic principle. The combat is ever renewed. Liberty, often crushed, rises again and again from her native earth with redoubled energy.

At last, in the sixteenth century, a new and more powerful spirit, the genius of religious freedom, comes to participate in the great conflict. Arbitrary power, incarnated in the second Charlemagne, assails the new combination with unscrupulous, unforgiving fierceness. Venerable civic magistrates, haltered, grovel in sackcloth and ashes; innocent religious reformers burn in holocausts. By the middle of the century, the battle rages more fiercely than ever. In the little Netherland territory, Humanity, bleeding but not killed, still stands at bay and defies the hunters. The two great powers have been gathering strength for centuries. They are soon to be matched in a longer and more determined combat than the world had ever seen. The emperor is about to leave the stage. The provinces, so passionate for nationality, for municipal freedom, for religious reformation, are to become the property of an utter stranger — a prince foreign to their blood, their tongue, their religion, their whole habit of life and thought.

Such was the political, religious, and social condition of a nation who were now to witness a new and momentous spectacle.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE ACCESSION OF PHILIP II (1555)

Philip II was in all respects the opposite of his father. As ambitious as Charles, but with less knowledge of men and of the rights of man, he had formed to himself a notion of royal authority which regarded men as simply the servile instruments of despotic will, and was outraged by every symptom of liberty. Born in Spain, and educated under the iron discipline of the monks, he demanded of others the same gloomy formality and reserve that marked his own character. The cheerful merriment of his Flemish subjects was as uncongenial to his disposition and temper as their privileges were offensive to his imperious will. He spoke no other language than the Spanish, endured none but Spaniards about his person, and obstinately adhered to all their customs. In vain did the loyal ingenuity of the Flemish towns through which he passed vie with each other in solemnisising his arrival with costly festivities. Philip's eye remained dark; all the profusion of magnificence, all the loud and hearty effusions of the sincerest joy could not win from him one approving smile.

Charles entirely missed his aim by presenting his son to the Flemings. They might eventually have endured his yoke with less impatience if he had never set his foot in their land. But his look forewarned them what they had to expect; his entry into Brussels lost him all hearts. The emperor's gracious affability with his people only served to throw a darker shade on the

[1555 A.D.]

haughty gravity of his son.<sup>1</sup> They read in his countenance the destructive purpose against their liberties, which even then he already revolved in his breast. Forewarned to find in him a tyrant, they were forewarned to resist him.

The throne of the Netherlands was the first which Charles V abdicated. Before a solemn convention in Brussels, he had absolved the states-general of their oath, and transferred their allegiance to King Philip, his son.

The alarm which the arbitrary government of the emperor had inspired, and the distrust of his son, are already visible in the formula of his oath, which was drawn up in far more guarded and explicit terms than that which had been administered to Charles V himself, and all the dukes of Burgundy. Philip, for instance, was compelled to swear to the maintenance of their customs and usages, which before his time had never been required. In the oath which the states took to him, no other obedience was promised than such as should be consistent with the privileges of the country. Lastly, in this oath of allegiance, Philip is simply styled the natural, the hereditary prince, and not, as the emperor had desired, sovereign or lord—proof enough how little confidence was placed in the justice and liberality of the new sovereign.

Philip II received the lordship of the Netherlands in the brightest period of their prosperity. He was the first of their princes who united them all under his authority. They now consisted of seventeen provinces: the duchies of Brabant, Limburg, Luxemburg, and Gelderland; the seven counties of Artois, Hainault, Flanders, Namur, Zutphen, Holland, and Zealand; the marquisate of Antwerp; and the five lordships of Friesland, Mechlin (Malines), Utrecht, Overysel, and Groningen, which, collectively, formed a great and powerful state able to contend with monarchies. Higher than it then stood, their commerce could not rise. The sources of their wealth were above the earth's surface, but they were more valuable and inexhaustible, and richer than all the mines in America.

The numerous nobility, formerly so powerful, cheerfully accompanied their sovereign in his wars, or amid the civil changes of the state courted the approving smile of royalty.

A large portion, moreover, of the nobility were deeply sunk in poverty and debt. Charles V had crippled all the most dangerous vassals of the crown, by expensive embassies to foreign courts, under the specious pretext of honorary distinctions. Thus, William of Orange was despatched to Germany with the imperial crown, and Count Egmont to conclude the marriage-contract between Philip and Queen Mary. Both, also, afterwards accompanied the duke of Alva to France, to negotiate the peace between the two crowns, and the new alliance of their sovereign with Madame Elizabeth. The expenses of these journeys amounted to three hundred thousand florins, towards which the king did not contribute a single penny.<sup>b</sup>

#### FIRST DEEDS OF PHILIP

Philip did not at first act in a way to make himself more particularly hated. He rather, by an apparent consideration for a few points of political interest and individual privilege, and particularly by the revocation of some of the edicts against heretics, removed the suspicions his earlier conduct had excited. He succeeded in persuading the states to grant him considerable subsidies, some of which were to be paid by instalments during a period of

[<sup>1</sup> For a fuller presentation of the strange character of Philip II and for his deeds outside the Netherlands consult the history of Spain, volume X, chapter 9.]

nine years. That was gaining a great step towards his designs, as it superseded the necessity of a yearly application to the three orders, the guardians of the public liberty. At the same time he sent secret agents to Rome, to obtain the approbation of the pope to his insidious but most effective plan for placing the whole of the clergy in dependence upon the crown. He also kept up the army of Spaniards and Germans which his father had formed on the frontiers of France; and although he did not remove from their employments the functionaries already in place, he took care to make no new appointments to office among the natives of the Netherlands.

Philip was suddenly attacked in two quarters at once — by Henry II of France, and by Pope Paul IV. He promptly met the threatened dangers. He turned his first attention towards his contest with the pope; and he exerted himself from it with an adroitness that proved the whole force and cunning of his character. Having first publicly obtained the opinion of several doctors of theology, that he was justified in taking arms against the pontiff, he prosecuted the war with the utmost vigour, by means of the afterwards notorious duke of Alva, at that time viceroy of his Italian dominions. Paul soon yielded to superior skill and force, and demanded terms of peace.

In the war with France, his army, under the command of Emmanuel Philibert duke of Savoy, consisting of Belgians, Germans, and Spaniards, with a considerable body of English sent by Mary to the assistance of her husband, penetrated into Picardy, and gained a complete victory over the French forces. The honour of this brilliant affair, which took place near St. Quentin, was almost wholly due to the count of Egmont, a Belgian noble, who commanded the light cavalry. In the early part of the year 1558, one of the generals of Henry II made an irruption into West Flanders; but the gallant count of Egmont once more proved his valour and skill by attacking and totally defeating the invaders near the town of Gravelines.

A general peace was concluded in April, 1559, which bore the name of Cateau-Cambrésis, from that of the place where it was negotiated. Philip now announced his intended departure on a short visit to Spain; and created for the period of his absence a provisional government, chiefly composed of the leading men among the Belgian nobility.

The composition of this new government was a masterpiece of political machinery. It consisted of several councils, in which the most distinguished citizens were entitled to a place, in sufficient numbers to deceive the people with a show of representation, but not enough to command a majority, which was sure on any important question to rest with the titled creatures of the court. The edicts against heresy, soon adopted, gave to the clergy an almost unlimited power over the lives and fortunes of the people. But almost all the dignitaries of the church being men of great respectability and moderation, chosen by the body of the inferior clergy, these extraordinary powers excited little alarm. Philip's project was suddenly to replace these virtuous ecclesiastics by others of his own choice, as soon as the states broke up from their annual meeting; and for this intention he had procured the secret consent and authority of the court of Rome.

In support of these combinations the Belgian troops were completely broken up and scattered in small bodies over the country. The whole of this force, so redoubtable to the fears of despotism, consisted of only three thousand cavalry. But the German and Spanish troops in Philip's pay were cantoned on the frontiers, ready to stifle any incipient effort in opposition to his plans. In addition to these imposing means for their execution, he had secured a still more secret and more powerful support — a secret



[1559 A.D.]

article in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis obliged the king of France to assist him with the whole armies of France against his Belgian subjects, should they prove refractory. Thus the late war, of which the Netherlands had borne all the weight and earned all the glory, only brought about the junction of the defeated enemy with their own king for the extinction of their national independence.

Philip convened an assembly of all the states at Ghent, August 7th, 1559.<sup>1</sup> This meeting of the representatives of the three orders of the state offered no apparent obstacle to Philip's views. The clergy, alarmed at the progress of the new doctrines, gathered more closely round the government of which they required the support. The nobles had lost much of their ancient attachment to liberty; and had become, in various ways, dependent on the royal favour. It was only from the third order — that of the commons — that Philip had to expect any opposition. Already, during the war, it had shown some discontent, and had insisted on the nomination of commissioners to control the accounts and the disbursements of the subsidies.

Anthony Perrenot de Granvella, Bishop of Arras, who was considered Philip's favourite counsellor, was commissioned to address the assembly in the name of his master, who spoke only Spanish. His oration was one of cautious deception, and contained the most flattering assurances of Philip's attachment to the people of the Netherlands. It excused the king for not having nominated his only son Don Carlos to reign over them in his name; alleging, as a proof of his royal affection, that he preferred giving them as governess a Belgian princess, Margaret, duchess of Parma.

But notwithstanding all the talent, the caution, and the mystery of Philip and his minister there was among the nobles one man who saw through all. This individual, endowed with many of the highest attributes of political genius, and pre-eminently with judgment, the most important of all, entered fearlessly into the contest against tyranny — despising every personal sacrifice for the country's good. Without making himself suspiciously prominent, he privately warned some members of the states of the coming danger. Those in whom he confided did not betray the trust. They spread among the other deputies the alarm, and pointed out the danger to which they had been so judiciously awakened. The consequence was a reply to Philip's demand, in vague and general terms, without binding the nation by any pledge; and a unanimous entreaty that he would diminish the taxes, withdraw the foreign troops, and entrust no official employments to any but natives of the country. The object of this last request was the removal of Granvella, who was born in Franche-Comté.

Philip was utterly astounded at all this. In the first moment of his vexation he imprudently cried out, "Would ye, then, also bereave me of my place — I, who am a Spaniard?" But he soon recovered his self-command, and resumed his usual mask; expressed his regret at not having sooner learned the wishes of the states; promised to remove the foreign troops within three months; and set off for Zealand, with assumed composure, but filled with the fury of a discovered traitor and humiliated despot.

A fleet under the command of Count Horn, the admiral of the United Provinces, waited at Flushing to form his escort to Spain. At the very moment of his departure, William of Nassau, prince of Orange and governor of Zealand, waited on him to pay his official respects. The king, taking him apart from the other attendant nobles, recommended him to hasten the

[<sup>1</sup> This, says Blok,<sup>e</sup> was the last time that a Burgundian prince ever took part in an assembly of representatives from the seventeen provinces.]

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execution of several gentlemen and wealthy citizens attached to the newly introduced religious opinions. Then, quite suddenly, whether in the random impulse of suppressed rage, or that his piercing glance discovered William's secret feelings in his countenance, he accused him of having been the means of thwarting his designs. "Sire," replied William, "it was the work of the national states." "No!" cried Philip, grasping him furiously by the arm; "it was not done by the states, but by you, and you alone!"<sup>1</sup>

This glorious accusation was not repelled. He who had saved his country in unmasking the designs of its tyrant, admitted by his silence his title to the hatred of the one and the gratitude of the other. On the 20th of August, Philip embarked and set sail, turning his back forever on the country which offered the first check to his despotism; and, after a perilous voyage, he arrived in that which permitted a free indulgence to his ferocious and sanguinary career.

For some time after Philip's departure the Netherlands continued to enjoy considerable prosperity. From the period of the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis commerce and navigation had acquired new and increasing activity. The fisheries, but particularly that of herrings, became daily more important, that one alone occupying two thousand boats. While Holland, Zealand, and Friesland made this progress in their peculiar branches of industry, the southern provinces were not less active or successful.<sup>9</sup>

#### SCHILLER'S PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM OF ORANGE

Among the Flemish nobles who could lay claim to the chief stadholdership, the expectations and wishes of the nation had been divided between Count Egmont and the prince of Orange, who were alike entitled to this high dignity by illustrious birth and personal merits, and by an equal share in the affections of the people.

William I, prince of Orange, was descended from the princely German house of Nassau, which had already flourished eight centuries, had long disputed the pre-eminence with Austria, and had given one emperor to Germany. Besides several extensive domains in the Netherlands, which made him a citizen of this republic and a vassal of the Spanish monarchy, he possessed also in France the independent principedom of Orange. William was born in the year 1533, at Dillenburg, in the county of Nassau, of a countess Stolberg. His father, the count of Nassau, of the same name, had embraced the Protestant religion, and caused his son also to be educated in it; but Charles V, who early formed an attachment for the boy, took him, when quite young, to his court, and had him brought up in the Romish church. This monarch, who already in the child discovered the future greatness of the man, kept him nine years about his person, thought him worthy of his personal instruction in the affairs of government, and honored him with a confidence beyond his years. He alone was permitted to remain in the emperor's presence, when he gave audience to foreign ambassadors — a proof that, even as a boy, he had already begun to merit the surname of the Silent.

William was twenty-three years old when Charles abdicated the government, and had already received from the latter two public marks of the highest esteem. The emperor had entrusted to him, in preference to all the nobles of his court, the honourable office of conveying to his brother Ferdinand the imperial crown. When the duke of Savoy, who commanded the imperial

<sup>1</sup> The words of Philip were: "*No, no los estados; ma vos, vos, vos!*" *Vos* thus used in Spanish is a term of contempt, equivalent to *toi* in French.

army in the Netherlands, was called away to Italy by the exigence of his domestic affairs, the emperor appointed him commander-in-chief, against the united representations of his military council, who declared it altogether hazardous to oppose so young a tyro in arms to the experienced generals of France. Absent and unrecommended by any, he was preferred by the monarch to the laurel-crowned band of his heroes, and the result gave him no cause to repent of his choice.

The marked favour which the prince had enjoyed with the father was, in itself, a sufficient ground for his exclusion from the confidence of the son. Philip, it appears, had laid it down for himself as a rule to avenge the wrongs of the Spanish nobility for the preference which Charles V had, on all important occasions, shown to his Flemish nobles. Still stronger, however, were the secret motives which alienated him from the prince. William of Orange was one of those lean and pale men who, according to Cæsar's words, "sleep not at night, and think too much," and before whom the most fearless spirits quail. The calm tranquillity of a never varying countenance concealed a busy, ardent soul, which never even ruffled the veil behind which it worked, and was alike inaccessible to artifice and to love — a versatile, formidable, indefatigable mind, soft and ductile enough to be instantaneously moulded into all forms, guarded enough to lose itself in none, and strong enough to endure every vicissitude of fortune.

A greater master in reading and in winning men's hearts never existed than William. Not that, after the fashion of courts, his lips avowed a servility to which his proud heart gave the lie, but because he was neither too sparing nor too lavish of the marks of his esteem, and through a skilful economy of the favours which mostly bind men, he increased his real stock in them. The fruits of his meditation were as perfect as they were slowly formed; his resolves were as steadily and indomitably accomplished as they were long in maturing. No obstacles could defeat the plan which he had once adopted as the best; no accidents frustrated it, for they all had been foreseen before they actually occurred. High as his feelings were raised above terror and joy, they were, nevertheless, subject in the same degree to fear; but his fear was earlier than the danger, and he was calm in tumult, because he had trembled in repose. William lavished his gold with a profuse hand, but he was a niggard of his moments. The hours of repast were the sole hours of relaxation, but these were exclusively devoted to his family and his friends. His household was magnificent; the splendour of a numerous retinue, the number and respectability of those who surrounded his person made his habitation resemble the court of a sovereign prince.

No one, probably, was better fitted by nature for the leader of a conspiracy than William the Silent. A comprehensive and intuitive glance into the past, the present, and the future; the talent for improving every favourable opportunity; a commanding influence over the minds of men; vast schemes which, only when viewed from a distance, show form and symmetry, and bold calculations, which were wound up in the long chain of futurity — all these faculties he possessed, and kept, moreover, under the control of that free and enlightened virtue which moves with firm step, even on the very edge of the abyss.

A man like this might, at other times, have remained unfathomed by his entire generation; but not so by the distrustful spirit of the age in which he lived. Philip II saw quickly and deeply into a character which, among good ones, most resembled his own. In him, Philip had to deal with an antagonist who was armed against his policy, and who, in a good cause,

could also command the resources of a bad one. And it was exactly this last circumstance which accounts for his having hated this man so implacably above all others of his day, and his having had so supernatural a dread of him.

The suspicion which already attached to the prince was increased by the doubts which were entertained of his religious bias. So long as the emperor, his benefactor, lived, William believed in the pope; but it was feared, with good ground, that the predilection for the reformed religion which had been imparted to his young heart had never entirely left it. Whatever church he may, at certain periods of his life, have preferred, each might console itself with the reflection that none other possessed him more entirely. In later years, he went over to Calvinism with almost as little scruple as in his early childhood he deserted the Lutheran profession for the Romish. He defended the rights of the Protestants, rather than their opinions, against Spanish oppression: not their faith, but their wrongs, had made him their brother.



WILLIAM THE SILENT

These general grounds for suspicion appeared to be justified by a discovery of his real intentions, which accident had made. William had remained in France as hostage for the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis, in concluding which he had borne a part; and here, through the imprudence of Henry II, who imagined he spoke with the confidant of the king of Spain, he became acquainted with a secret plot, which the French and Spanish courts had formed against Protestants of both kingdoms. The prince hastened to communicate this important discovery to his friends in Brussels, whom it so

nearly concerned, and the letters which he exchanged on the subject fell, unfortunately, into the hands of the king of Spain. Philip was less surprised at this decisive disclosure of William's sentiments, than incensed at the disappointment of his scheme; and the Spanish nobles, who had never forgiven the prince that moment when, in the last act of his life, the greatest of emperors leaned upon his shoulders, did not neglect this favourable opportunity of finally ruining, in the good opinion of their king, the betrayer of a state secret.

#### COUNT EGMONT

Of a lineage no less noble than that of William was Lamoral, count of Egmont<sup>1</sup> and prince of Gavre, a descendant of the dukes of Gelderland, whose martial courage had wearied out the arms of Austria. His family was highly distinguished in the annals of the country: one of his ancestors had, under Maximilian, already filled the office of stadholder over Holland. Egmont's marriage with the duchess Sabina of Bavaria reflected additional lustre on the splendour of his birth, and made him powerful through the great-

[<sup>1</sup> This name is derived from that abbey of Egmond which was, as we said in the first chapter, bestowed on Dirk I of Holland by Charles the Simple in 912.]

ness of this alliance. Charles V had, in the year 1516, conferred on him, at Utrecht, the order of the Golden Fleece; the wars of this emperor were the school of his military genius, and the battles of St. Quentin and Gravelines made him the hero of his age.

Egmont united all the eminent qualities which form the hero: he was a better soldier than the prince of Orange, but far inferior to him as a statesman: the latter saw the world as it really was; Egmont viewed it in the magic mirror of an imagination that embellished all that it reflected. Intoxicated with the idea of his own merits, which the love and gratitude of his fellow citizens had exaggerated, he staggered on in this sweet reverie, as in a delightful world of dreams. Even the most terrible experience of Spanish perfidy could not afterwards eradicate this confidence from his soul, and on the scaffold itself his latest feeling was hope. A tender fear for his family kept his patriotic courage fettered by lower duties. Because he trembled for property and life, he could not venture much for the republic. William of Orange broke with the throne, because its arbitrary power was offensive to his pride; Egmont was vain, and therefore valued the favours of the monarch. The former was a citizen of the world; Egmont had never been more than a Fleming.

Two such competitors, so equal in merit, might have embarrassed Philip in his choice, if he had ever seriously thought of selecting either of them for the appointment. But the pre-eminent qualities by which they supported their claim to this office were the very cause of their rejection; and it was precisely the ardent desire of the nation for their election to it that irrevocably annulled their title to the appointment.

#### MARGARET OF PARMA, REGENT OF THE NETHERLANDS

While the general expectation was concerned with the future destinies of the provinces, there appeared on the frontiers of the country the duchess Margaret of Parma, having been summoned by the king from Italy, to assume the government. Margaret was a natural daughter of Charles V and of a noble Flemish lady, named Vangeest, and born 1522. Out of regard for the honour of her mother's house, she was at first educated in obscurity; but her mother, who possessed more vanity than honour, was not very anxious to preserve the secret of her origin, and a princely education betrayed the daughter of the emperor. While yet a child, she was entrusted to the regent Margaret, her great-aunt, to be brought up at Brussels, under her eye. This guardian she lost in her eighth year, and the care of her education devolved on Queen Mary of Hungary, the successor of Margaret in the regency. Ottavio Farnese, a prince of thirteen years of age, and nephew of Paul III had obtained, with her person, the duchies of Parma and Piacenza as her portion. Thus, by a strange destiny, Margaret, at the age of maturity, was contracted to a boy, as in the years of infancy she had been sold to a man. Her disposition, which was anything but feminine, made this last alliance still more unnatural, for her taste and inclinations were masculine, and the whole tenor of her life belied her sex.

These unusual qualities were crowned by a monkish superstition, which was infused into her mind by Ignatius Loyola, her confessor and teacher. Among the charitable works and penances with which she mortified her vanity, one of the most remarkable was that during Passion-Week, she yearly washed with her own hands, the feet of a number of poor men (who were most strictly

forbidden to cleanse themselves beforehand), waited on them at table like a servant, and sent them away with rich presents.

Margaret was born and also educated in the Netherlands. She had spent her early youth among the people, and had acquired much of their national manners.

According to an arrangement already made by Charles V, three councils or chambers were added to the regent, to assist her in the administration of state affairs. As long as Philip was himself present in the Netherlands, these courts had lost much of their power, and the functions of the first of them, the state council, were almost entirely suspended. Now, that he quitted the reins of government, they recovered their former importance. In the state council, which was to deliberate upon war and peace, and security against external foes, sat the Bishop of Arras, the prince of Orange, Count Egmont, the president of the privy council Wigele or Viglius van Zwychem van Aytta, and the count of Barlaymont, president of the chamber of finance. All knights of the Golden Fleece, all privy counsellors, and counsellors of finance, as also the members of the great senate at Mechlin, which had been subjected by Charles V to the privy council in Brussels, had a seat and vote in the council of state, if expressly invited by the regent. The management of the royal revenues and crown lands was vested in the chamber of finance, and the privy council was occupied with the administration of justice and the civil regulation of the country, and issued all letters of grace and pardon. The governments of the provinces, which had fallen vacant, were either filed up afresh, or the former governors were confirmed.

Count Egmont received Flanders and Artois; the prince of Orange, Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and West Friesland. Other provinces were given to some who have less claim to our attention. Philip de Montmorency, count of Horn [Hoorn], was confirmed as admiral of the Belgian navy. Brabant, alone, was placed under the immediate jurisdiction of the regent, who, according to custom, chose Brussels for her constant residence. The induction of the prince of Orange into his governments was, properly speaking, an infraction of the constitution, since he was a foreigner; but several estates which he either himself possessed in the provinces or managed as guardian of his son, his long residence in the country, and above all the unlimited confidence the nation reposed in him, gave him substantial claims in default of a real title of citizenship. But at the very time when Philip obliged the prince with these public marks of his esteem, he privately inflicted the most cruel injury on him. Apprehensive lest an alliance with the powerful house of Lorraine might encourage this suspected vassal to bolder measures, he thwarted the negotiation for a marriage between him and a princess of that family, and crushed his hopes on the very eve of their accomplishment — an injury which the prince never forgave.

The establishment of the council of state was intended rather to flatter the vanity of the Belgian nobility than to impart to them any real influence. The historian Strada<sup>h</sup> (who drew his information with regard to the regent from her own papers) has preserved a few articles of the secret instructions which the Spanish ministry gave her. Among other things it is there stated, if she observed that the councils were divided by factions, or, what would be far worse, prepared by private conferences before the session, and in league with one another, then she was to prorogue all the chambers and dispose arbitrarily of the disputed articles in a more select council or committee. In this select committee, which was called the *consulta*, sat the archbishop of Arras, the president Viglius [or Wigele], and the count of Barlaymont. A

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second maxim which the regent was especially to observe was to select the very members of council who had voted against any decree, to carry it into execution. By this means, not only would the people be kept in ignorance of the originators of such a law, but the private quarrels also of the members would be restrained, and a greater freedom insured in voting in compliance with the wishes of the court.

In order, at the same time, to assure himself of the fidelity of the regent, Philip subjected her, and through her all the affairs of the judicature, to the higher control of the bishop of Arras, Granvella. In this single individual he possessed an adequate counterpoise to the most dreaded cabal. To him, as an infallible oracle of majesty, the duchess was referred, and in him there watched a stern supervisor of her administration. Among all his contemporaries, Granvella was the only one whom Philip II appears to have excepted from his universal distrust: as long as he knew that this man was in Brussels, he could sleep calmly in Segovia.<sup>6</sup>

## GRANVELLA AND THE REGENCY

This man, an immoral ecclesiastic, an eloquent orator, a supple courtier, and a profound politician, bloated with pride, envy, insolence, and vanity, was the real head of the government. Next to him among the royalist party was Viglius, president of the privy council, an erudite schoolman, attached less to the broad principles of justice than to the letter of the laws, and thus carrying pedantry into the very councils of the state. Next in order came the count of Barlaymont, head of the financial department — a stern and intolerant satellite of the court, and a furious enemy to those national institutions which operated as checks upon fraud. These three individuals formed the governante's privy council. The remaining creatures of the king were mere subaltern agents.

A government so composed could scarcely fail to excite discontent, and create danger to the public weal. The first proof of incapacity was elicited by the measures required for the departure of the Spanish troops. The period fixed by the king had already expired, and these obnoxious foreigners were still in the country, living in part on pillage, and each day committing some new excess. Complaints were carried in successive gradation from the government to the council, and from the council to the king. The Spaniards were removed to Zealand; but instead of being embarked at any of its ports, they were detained there on various pretexts; until, the king requiring his troops in Spain for some domestic project, they took their long-desired departure in the beginning of the year 1561. The public discontent at this just cause was soon, however, overwhelmed by one infinitely more important and lasting. The Belgian clergy had hitherto formed a free and powerful order in the state, governed and represented by four bishops chosen by the chapters of the towns, or elected by the monks of the principal abbeys. These bishops, possessing an independent territorial revenue, and not directly subject to the influence of the crown, had interests and feelings in common with the nation. But Philip had prepared, and the pope had sanctioned, a new system of ecclesiastical organisation, and the provisional government now put it into execution. Instead of four bishops, it was intended to appoint eighteen, their nomination being vested in the king. By a wily system of trickery the subserviency of the abbeys was also aimed at. The consequences of this vital blow to the integrity of the national institutions were evident; and the indignation of both clergy and laity was universal. Every legal

means of opposition was resorted to, but the people were without leaders; the states were not in session. The new bishops were appointed; Granvella securing for himself the archiepiscopal see of Mechlin, with the title of primate of the Low Countries. At the same time the pope put the crowning point to the capital of his ambition, by presenting him with a cardinal's hat.

The new bishops were to a man most violent, intolerant, and it may be conscientious opponents to the wide-spreading doctrines of reform. The execution of the edicts against heresy was confided to them. The provincial governors and inferior magistrates were commanded to aid them with a strong arm; and the most unjust and frightful persecution immediately commenced. The prince of Orange, stadholder of Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht, and the count of Egmont, governor of Flanders and Artois, permitted no persecutions in those five provinces.

Among the various causes of the general confusion, the situation of Brabant gave to that province a peculiar share of suffering. Brussels, its capital, being the seat of government, had no particular chief magistrate, like the other provinces. William penetrated the cause, and proposed the remedy in moving for the appointment of a provincial governor.

Granvella energetically dissented from the proposed measure, and William immediately desisted from his demand. But he at the same time claimed, in the name of the whole country, the convocation of the states-general. This assembly alone was competent to decide what was just, legal, and obligatory for each province and every town. Granvella found himself at length forced to avow that an express order from the king forbade the convocation of the states, on any pretext, during his absence.

The veil was thus rent asunder, which had in some measure concealed the deformity of Philip's despotism. The result was a powerful confederacy in 1562 for the overthrow of Granvella, to whom they chose to attribute the king's conduct; thus bringing into practical result the sound principle of ministerial responsibility, without which the name of constitutional government is but a mockery. Many of the royalist nobles united for the national cause; and even the governante joined her efforts to theirs, for an object which would relieve her from the tyranny which none felt more than she did. The duchess of Parma hated the minister, as a domestic spy robbing her of all real authority; the royalist nobles, as an insolent upstart at every instant mortifying their pride. But it is doubtful if any of the confederates except the prince of Orange clearly saw that they were putting themselves in direct and personal opposition to the king himself. William alone, clear-sighted in politics and profound in his views, knew, in thus devoting himself to the public cause, the adversary with whom he entered the lists.

This great man, for whom the national traditions still preserve the sacred title of "father" (*Vader-Willem*), and who was in truth not merely the parent but the political creator of the country, was at this period in his thirtieth year. He already joined the vigour of manhood to the wisdom of age.

He boldly put himself at the head of the confederacy. He wrote to the king, in 1563, conjointly with counts Egmont and Horn, faithfully portraying the state of affairs. The duchess of Parma backed this remonstrance with a strenuous request for Granvella's dismissal. Philip's reply to the three noblemen was a mere tissue of duplicity to obtain delay.

In the meantime every possible indignity was offered to the cardinal by private pique and public satire. Philip, driven before the popular voice, found himself forced to the choice of throwing off the mask at once, or of sacrificing Granvella. An invincible inclination for manœuvring and deceit



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decided him on the latter measure; and the cardinal, recalled but not disgraced, quitted the Netherlands on the 13th of March, 1564. The secret instructions to the governant remained unrevoked; the president Viglius succeeded to the post which Granvella had occupied; and it was clear that the projects of the king had suffered no change.

The public fermentation subsided; the patriot lords reappeared at court; and the prince of Orange acquired an increasing influence in the council and over the governant, who by his advice adopted a conciliatory line of conduct — a fallacious but still a temporary hope for the nation. But the calm was of short duration. Scarcely was this moderation evinced by the government, than Philip, obstinate in his designs and outrageous in his resentment, sent an order to have the edicts against heresy put into most rigorous execution, and to proclaim throughout the seventeen provinces the furious decree of the council of Trent.

The revolting cruelty and illegality of the first edicts were already admitted. As to the decrees of this memorable council, they were only adapted for countries in submission to an absolute despotism. They were received in the Netherlands with general reprobation. Even the new bishops loudly denounced them as unjust innovations; and thus Philip found zealous opponents in those on whom he had reckoned as his most servile tools. The governant was not the less urged to implicit obedience to the orders of the king by Viglius and Barlaymont, who took upon themselves an almost menacing tone. The duchess assembled a council of state, and asked its advice as to her proceedings. The prince of Orange at once boldly proposed disobedience to measures fraught with danger to the monarchy and ruin to the nation. The council could not resist his appeal to their best feelings. His proposal that fresh remonstrances should be addressed to the king met with almost general support. The president Viglius, who had spoken in the opening of the council in favour of the king's orders, was overwhelmed by William's reasoning, and demanded time to prepare his reply. His agitation during the debate, and his despair of carrying the measures against the patriot party, brought on in the night an attack of apoplexy.

It was resolved to despatch a special envoy to Spain, to explain to Philip the views of the council, and to lay before him a plan proposed by the prince of Orange for forming a junction between the two councils and that of finance, and forming them into one body. The object of this measure was at once to give greater union and power to the provisional government, to create a central administration in the Netherlands, and to remove from some obscure and avaricious financiers the exclusive management of the national resources. The count of Egmont, chosen by the council for this important mission, set out for Madrid in the month of January, 1565. Philip received him with profound hypocrisy; loaded him with the most flattering promises; sent him back in the utmost elation: and when the credulous count returned to Brussels, he found that the written orders, of which he was the bearer, were in direct variance with every word which the king had uttered.

These orders were chiefly concerning the reiterated subject of the persecution to be inflexibly pursued against the religious reformers. Not satisfied with the hitherto established forms of punishment, Philip now expressly commanded that the more revolting means decreed by his father in the rigour of his early zeal, such as burning, living burial, and the like, should be adopted; and he somewhat more obscurely directed that the victims should be no longer publicly immolated, but secretly destroyed. He endeavoured, by this vague phraseology, to avoid the actual utterance of the word "inqui-

sition"; but he thus virtually established that atrocious tribunal, with attributes still more terrific than even in Spain; for there the condemned had at least the consolation of dying in open day, and of displaying the fortitude which is rarely proof against the horror of a private execution.

Even Viglius was terrified by the nature of Philip's commands; and the patriot lords once more withdrew from all share in the government, leaving to the duchess of Parma and her ministers the whole responsibility of the new measures. They were at length put into actual and vigorous execution in the beginning of the year 1566. The inquisitors of the faith, with their familiars, stalked abroad boldly in the devoted provinces, carrying persecution and death in their train. Numerous but partial insurrections opposed these odious intruders. Every district and town became the scene of frightful executions or tumultuous resistance.<sup>9</sup>

#### THE INQUISITION

The great cause of the revolt which, within a few years, was to break forth throughout the Netherlands, was the Inquisition. It is almost puerile to look further or deeper, when such a source of convulsion lies at the very outset of any investigation. There has been a good deal of somewhat superfluous discussion concerning the different kinds of inquisition. The distinction drawn between the papal, the episcopal, and the Spanish inquisitions did not, in the sixteenth century, convince many unsophisticated minds of the merits of the establishment in any of its shapes.<sup>1</sup> However classified or entitled, it was a machine for inquiring into a man's thoughts, and for burning him if the result was not satisfactory. The Spanish inquisition — technically so called — was, according to Cabrera, the biographer of Philip, a "heavenly remedy, a guardian angel of Paradise, a lion's den in which Daniel and other just men could sustain no injury, but in which perverse sinners were torn to pieces."

The Spanish inquisition had never flourished in any soil but that of the peninsula. It is possible that the king and Granvella were sincere in their protestations of entertaining no intention of introducing it into the Netherlands, although the protestations of such men are entitled to but little weight. The truth was that the Inquisition existed already in the provinces. This establishment, like the edicts, was the gift of Charles V.

In the reign of Philip the Good, the vicar of the inquisitor-general gave sentence against some heretics, who were burned in Lille (1448). In 1459, Peter Troussart, a Jacobin monk, condemned many Waldenses, together with some leading citizens of Artois, accused of sorcery and heresy. Charles V had in the year 1522 applied for a staff of inquisitors to his ancient tutor, whom he had placed on the papal throne.

Adrian, accordingly, commissioned Van der Hulst to be universal and general inquisitor for all the Netherlands. At the same time it was expressly stated that his functions were not to supersede those exercised by the bishops as inquisitors in their own sees. In 1537, Ruard Tapper and Michael Drutius were appointed by Paul III. The powers of the papal inquisitors had been gradually extended, and they were, by 1545, not only entirely independent of the episcopal inquisition, but had acquired right of jurisdiction over bishops and archbishops, whom they were empowered to arrest and imprison.

[<sup>1</sup> The history and methods of the Inquisition in its various forms have been fully treated in Appendix A to Volume X.]

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The instructions to the inquisitors had been renewed and confirmed by Philip, in the very first month of his reign (28th Nov. 1555).

Among all the inquisitors, the name of Peter Titelman was now pre-eminent. He executed his infamous functions throughout Flanders, Douai, and Tournay, the most thriving and populous portions of the Netherlands, with a swiftness, precision, and even with a jocularity which hardly seemed human. He burned men for idle words or suspected thoughts; he rarely waited, according to his frank confession, for deeds.

This kind of work, which went on daily, did not increase the love of the people for the inquisition or the edicts. It terrified many, but it inspired more with that noble resistance to oppression, particularly to religious oppression, which is the sublimest instinct of human nature. Men confronted the terrible inquisitors with a courage equal to their cruelty. At Tournay, one of the chief cities of Titelman's district, and almost before his eyes, one Bertrand le Blas, a velvet manufacturer, committed what was held an almost incredible crime. Having begged his wife and children to pray for a blessing upon what he was about to undertake, he went on Christmas-day to the cathedral of Tournay and stationed himself near the altar. Having awaited the moment in which the priest held on high the consecrated host, Le Blas then forced his way through the crowd, snatched the wafer from the hands of the astonished ecclesiastic, and broke it into bits, crying aloud, as he did so, "Misguided men, do ye take this thing to be Jesus Christ, your Lord and Saviour?" With these words, he threw the fragments on the ground and trampled them with his feet.

The amazement and horror were so universal at such an appalling offence, that not a finger was raised to arrest the criminal. Priests and congregation were alike paralysed, so that he would have found no difficulty in making his escape. He did not stir, however; he had come to the church determined to execute what he considered a sacred duty, and to abide the consequences. After a time he was apprehended. The inquisitor demanded if he repented of what he had done. He protested, on the contrary, that he gloried in the deed, and that he would die a hundred deaths to rescue from such daily profanation the name of his Redeemer, Christ. He was then put thrice to the torture, that he might be forced to reveal his accomplices. Bertrand had none, however, and could denounce none. A frantic sentence was then devised as a feeble punishment for so much wickedness. He was dragged on a hurdle, with his mouth closed with an iron gag, to the market-place. Here his right hand and foot were burned and twisted off between two red-hot irons. His tongue was then torn out by the roots, and because he still endeavoured to call upon the name of God, the iron gag was again applied. With his arms and legs fastened together behind his back, he was then hooked by the middle of his body to an iron chain, and made to swing to and fro over a slow fire till he was entirely roasted. His life lasted almost to the end of these ingenious tortures, but his fortitude lasted as long as his life.

In the next year, Titelman caused one Robert Ogier, of Lille, to be arrested, together with his wife and two sons. Their crime consisted in not going to mass, and in practising private worship at home. They confessed the offence, for they protested that they could not endure to see the profanation of their Saviour's name in the idolatrous sacraments. They were asked what rites they practised in their own house. 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 prosperous, and his life peaceful. We also pray for the magistrates and others

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in authority, that God may protect and preserve them all." The boy's simple eloquence drew tears even from the eyes of some of his judges; for the inquisitor had placed the case before the civil tribunal. The father and eldest son were, however, condemned to the flames. "O God!" prayed the youth at the stake, "Eternal Father, accept the sacrifice of our lives, in the name of thy beloved Son." "Thou liest, scoundrel!" fiercely interrupted a monk, who was lighting the fire; "God is not your father; ye are the devil's children." As the flames rose about them, the boy cried out once more, "Look, my 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!" again screamed the monk; "all hell is opening, and you see ten thousand devils thrusting you into eternal fire." Eight days afterwards, the wife of Ogier and his other son were burned; so that there was an end of that family. Such are a few isolated specimens of the manner of proceeding in a single district of the Netherlands.

Are these things related merely to excite superfluous horror? Are the sufferings of these obscure Christians beneath the dignity of history? Is it not better to deal with murder and oppression in the abstract, without entering into trivial details? The answer is that these things are the history of the Netherlands at this epoch; that these hideous details furnish the causes of that immense movement out of which a great republic was born and an ancient tyranny destroyed; and that Cardinal Granvella was ridiculous when he asserted that the people would not open their mouths if the seigniors did not make such a noise. Because the great lords "owned their very souls," because convulsions might help to pay their debts and furnish forth their masquerades and banquets, because the prince of Orange was ambitious and Egmont jealous of the cardinal — therefore superficial writers found it quite natural that the country should be disturbed, although that "vile and mischievous animal, the people," might have no objection to a continuance of the system which had been at work so long. On the contrary, it was exactly because the movement was a popular and a religious movement that it will always retain its place among the most important events of history. Dignified documents, state papers, solemn treaties, are often of no more value than the lambskin on which they are engrossed. Ten thousand nameless victims, in the cause of religious and civil freedom, may build up great states and alter the aspect of whole continents.

Upon some minds, declamation concerning liberty of conscience and religious tyranny makes but a vague impression, while an effect may be produced upon them, for example, by a dry, concrete, cynical entry in an account book, such as the following, taken at hazard from the register of municipal expenses at Tournay, during the years with which we are now occupied:

"To M. Jacques Barra, executioner, for having tortured, twice, Jean de Lannoy, ten sous. To the same, for having executed, by fire, said Lannoy, sixty sous. For having thrown his cinders into the river, eight sous."

This was the treatment to which thousands had been subjected in the provinces. Men, women, and children were burned, and their "cinders" thrown away, for idle words against Rome, spoken years before, for praying alone in their closets, for not kneeling to a wafer when they met it in the streets, for thoughts to which they had never given utterance, but which, on inquiry, they were too honest to deny. Certainly with this work going on year after year in every city in the Netherlands, and now set into renewed and vigorous action by a man who wore a crown only that he might the better

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torture his fellow creatures, it was time that the very stones in the streets should be moved to mutiny.

Thus it may be seen of how much value were the protestations of Philip and of Granve!la, on which much stress has latterly been laid, that it was not their intention to introduce the Spanish inquisition. With the edicts and the Netherland inquisition, such as we have described them, the step was hardly necessary.

In fact, the main difference between the two institutions consisted in the greater efficiency of the Spanish in discovering such of its victims as were disposed to deny their faith. The invisible machinery was less requisite for the Netherlands. There was comparatively little difficulty in ferreting out the "vermin" — to use the expression of a Walloon historian of that age (Renon de France?) — so that it was only necessary to maintain in good working order the apparatus for destroying the noxious creatures when unearthed. Philip, who did not often say a great deal in a few words, once expressed the whole truth of the matter in a single sentence: "Wherefore introduce the Spanish inquisition?" said he; "the inquisition of the Netherlands is much more pitiless than that of Spain."

Such was the system of religious persecution commenced by Charles, and perfected by Philip. The king could not claim the merit of the invention, which justly belonged to the emperor. At the same time, his responsibility for the unutterable woe caused by the continuance of the scheme is not a jot diminished.<sup>d</sup>

## THE COMPROMISE OF FEBRUARY, 1566

At length the moment came when the people had reached that pitch of despair which is the great force of the oppressed. Up to the present moment the prince of Orange and the counts Egmont and Horn, with their partisans and friends, had sincerely desired the public peace, and acted in the common interest of the king and the people. But all the nobles had not acted with the same constitutional moderation. Many of those, disappointed on personal accounts, others professing the new doctrines, and the rest variously affected by manifold motives, formed a body of violent and sometimes of imprudent malcontents. The marriage of Alessandro prince of Parma, son of the government, which was celebrated in 1565 at Brussels, brought together an immense number of these dissatisfied nobles.

Nothing seemed wanting but a leader, to give consistency and weight to the confederacy which was as yet but in embryo. This was doubly furnished in the persons of Louis of Nassau and Henry of Brederode. The former, brother of the prince of Orange, was possessed of many of those brilliant qualities which mark men as worthy of distinction in times of peril. Educated at Geneva, he was passionately attached to the reformed religion, and identified in his hatred the Catholic church and the tyranny of Spain. Brave and impetuous, he was, to his elder brother, but as an adventurous partisan compared with a sagacious general. He loved William as well as he did their common cause, and his life was devoted to both.

Henry of Brederode, lord of Vianen and marquis of Utrecht, was descended from the ancient counts of Holland. This illustrious origin, which in his own eyes formed a high claim to distinction, had not procured him any of those employments or dignities which he considered his due.<sup>e</sup>

Louis of Nassau, Nicholas de Hames, and certain other gentlemen met at the baths of Spa. At this secret assembly, the foundations of the Com-

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promise were definitely laid.<sup>1</sup> A document was afterwards drawn up, which was circulated for signatures in the early part of 1566. It is a mistake to suppose that this memorable paper was simultaneously signed and sworn to at any solemn scene like that of the Declaration of American Independence, or like some of the subsequent transactions in the Netherland revolt arranged purposely for dramatic effect. Several copies of the Compromise were passed secretly from hand to hand, and in the course of two months some two thousand signatures had been obtained. The original copy bore but three names



A COSTUME OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

— those of Brederode, Charles of Mansfeld, and Louis of Nassau. The composition of the paper is usually ascribed to Philip van Marnix, lord of Sainte-Aldegonde, although the fact is not indisputable.

At any rate, it is very certain that he was one of the originators and main supporters of the famous league. The language of the document was such that patriotic Catholics could sign as honestly as Protestants. It inveighed bitterly against the tyranny of "a heap of strangers," who, influenced only by private avarice and ambition, were making use of an affected zeal for the Catholic religion, to persuade the king into a violation of his oaths. It denounced the refusal to mitigate the severity of the edicts. It declared the Inquisition, which it seemed the intention of government to fix permanently upon them, as "iniquitous, contrary to all laws, human and divine, surpassing the greatest barbarism which was ever practised by tyrants, and as redounding to the dishonour of God and to the total desolation of the country."

The signers protested, therefore, that "having a due regard to their duties as faithful vassals of his majesty, and especially as noblemen, and in order not to be deprived of their estates and their lives by those who, under pretext of religion, wished to enrich themselves by plunder and murder," they had bound themselves to each other by holy covenant and solemn oath to resist the Inquisition. They mutually promised to op-

pose it in every shape, open or covert, under whatever mask it might assume, whether bearing the name of inquisition, placard, or edict, "and to extirpate and eradicate the thing in any form, as the mother of all iniquity and disorder." They protested before God and man that they would attempt nothing to the dishonour of the Lord or to the diminution of the king's grandeur, majesty, or dominion. They declared, on the contrary, an honest purpose to "maintain the monarch in his estate, and to suppress all seditious,

<sup>1</sup> This appears from the sentence pronounced against De Hames (Toisin d'Or) by the Blood-Council on the 17th May, 1568. "*Charge d'avoir este ung des auteurs de la seditieuse et perniciose conjuration et ligue des confederez (qui'ls appellent Compromis) et' dicelle premierement avoir jecte les fondemens à la fontaine de Spa, avecq le Comte Loys de Nassau et aultres et après environ le mois de Decembre, 1565, l'arreste la signe et jure en ceste ville de Bruzelle en sa maison et icelle attire et induict plusieurs aultres.*" — *Registre des Condamnés et Bannis a cause des Troubles des Pays-Bas dep. l'an 1568 à 1572.*

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tumults, monopolies, and factions." They engaged to preserve their confederation, thus formed, forever inviolable, and to permit none of its members to be persecuted in any manner, in body or goods, by any proceeding founded on the Inquisition, the edicts, or the present league.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Compromise was in its origin a covenant of nobles. It was directed against the foreign influence by which the Netherlands were exclusively governed, and against the Inquisition, whether papal, episcopal, or by edict. There is no doubt that the country was controlled entirely by Spanish masters, and that it was intended to reduce the ancient liberty of the Netherlands into subjection to a junta of foreigners sitting at Madrid. Nothing more legitimate could be imagined than a constitutional resistance to such a policy.<sup>d</sup>

Men of all ranks and classes offered their signatures, and several Catholic priests among the rest. The prince of Orange and the counts Egmont, Horn, and Meghem declined becoming actual parties to this bold measure; and when the question was debated as to the most appropriate way of presenting an address to the governante, these noblemen advised the mildest and most respectful demeanour on the part of the purposed deputation.

At the first intelligence of these proceedings, the duchess of Parma, absorbed by terror, had no resource but to assemble hastily such members of the council of state as were at Brussels; and she entreated, by the most pressing letters, the prince of Orange and Count Horn to resume their places at this council. But three courses of conduct seemed applicable to the emergency: to take up arms; to grant the demands of the confederates; or to temporise and to amuse them with a feint of moderation, until the orders of the king might be obtained from Spain. It was not, however, till after a lapse of four months that the council finally met to deliberate on these important questions; and during this long interval at such a crisis, the confederates gained constant accession to their numbers, and completely consolidated their plans.

The opinions in the council were greatly divided as to the mode of treatment towards those whom one party considered patriots acting in their constitutional rights, and the other as rebels in open revolt against the king. The princes of Orange and Barlaymont were the principal leaders and chief speakers at either side. But the reasonings of the former, backed by the urgency of events, carried the majority of the suffrages; and a promised redress of grievances was agreed on beforehand, as the anticipated answer to the coming demands.

#### THE "REQUEST" OF THE "BEGGARS"

Even while the council of state held its sittings, the report was spread through Brussels that the confederates were approaching. And at length they did enter the city, to the amount of some hundreds of the representatives of the first families in the country.<sup>1</sup> On the following day, the 5th of April, 1566, they walked in solemn procession to the palace. Their demeanour was highly imposing, from their mingled air of forbearance and determination. All Brussels thronged out to gaze and sympathise with this extraordinary spectacle, of men whose resolute step showed they were no common suppliants, but whose modest bearing had none of the seditious air of faction. The government received the distinguished petitioners with courtesy, listened

[<sup>1</sup> The total number was about four hundred instead of the thirty-five thousand soldiers the regent had been warned to expect. — BLOK. c]

to their detail of grievances [called "the Request"], and returned a moderate, conciliatory, but evasive answer.

The confederation, which owed its birth to and was cradled in social enjoyments, was consolidated in the midst of a feast. The day following this first deputation to the government, Brederode gave a grand repast to his associates in the hôtel Kuilenburg. Three hundred guests were present. Inflamed by joy and hope, their spirits rose high under the influence of wine, and temperance gave way to temerity. In the midst of their carousing, some of the members remarked that, when the governante received the written petition, Count Barlaymont observed to her that she had "nothing to fear from such a band of beggars" (*tas de gueux*). The fact was that many of the confederates were, from individual extravagance and mismanagement, reduced to such a state of poverty as to justify in some sort the sarcasm. The chiefs of the company being at that very moment debating on the name which they should choose for this patriotic league, the title of *gueux* was instantly proposed, and adopted with acclamation.<sup>1</sup>

The reproach it was originally intended to convey became neutralised, as its general application to men of all ranks and fortunes concealed its effect as a stigma on many to whom it might be seriously applied. Neither were examples wanting of the most absurd and apparently dishonouring nicknames being elsewhere adopted by powerful political parties. "Long live the gueux!" was the toast given and tumultuously drunk by this madbrained company; and Brederode, setting no bounds to the boisterous excitement which followed, procured immediately and slung across his shoulders a wallet such as was worn by pilgrims and beggars; drank to the health of all present, in a wooden cup or porringer; and loudly swore that he was ready to sacrifice his fortune and life for the common cause. Each man passed round the bowl, which he first put to his lips, repeated the oath, and thus pledged himself to the compact.

The tumult caused by this ceremony, so ridiculous in itself but so sublime in its results, attracted to the spot the prince of Orange and counts Egmont and Horn, whose presence is universally attributed by the historians

[<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the scepticism of Gachard \* it is probable that the seigneur of Barlaymont will retain the reputation of originating the famous name of the "beggars." Gachard cites Wesenbeke,<sup>1</sup> Bor,<sup>m</sup> Le Petit,<sup>n</sup> Meteren,<sup>o</sup> among contemporaries, and Strada,<sup>h</sup> and Van der Vynekt<sup>p</sup> among later writers, as having sanctioned the anecdote in which the taunt of Barlaymont is recorded. The learned and acute critic is disposed to question the accuracy of the report, both upon *a priori* grounds, and because there is no mention made of the circumstance either in the official or confidential correspondence of the duchess Margaret with the king. It is possible, however, that the duchess in her agitation did not catch the expression of Barlaymont, or did not understand it, or did not think it worth while to chronicle it, if she did. It must be remembered that she was herself not very familiar with the French language, and that she was writing to a man who thought that "*pistolle* meant some kind of knife." She certainly did not and could not report everything said upon that memorable occasion. On the other hand, some of the three hundred gentlemen present might have heard and understood better than Madame de Parma the sarcasm of the finance minister, whether it were uttered upon their arrival in the council-chamber, or during their withdrawal into the hall. The testimony of Pontus Payen,<sup>q</sup> a contemporary, almost always well informed, and one whose position as a Catholic Walloon, noble and official, necessarily brought him into contact with many personages engaged in the transactions which he describes, is worthy of much respect. It is to be observed, too, that this manuscript alludes to a repetition by Barlaymont of his famous sarcasm upon the same day. To the names of contemporary historians, cited by Gachard, may be added those of Van der Haer<sup>r</sup> and of two foreign writers, President De'Thou<sup>s</sup> and Cardinal Bentivoglio;<sup>t</sup> Hoof<sup>u</sup>, not a contemporary certainly, but born within four or five years of the event, relates the anecdote, but throws a doubt upon its accuracy. Those inclined to acquit the baron of having perpetrated the immortal witticism will give him the benefit of the doubt if they think it a reasonable one. That it is so, they have the high authority of M. Gachard and of the provost Hoof<sup>t</sup>. — MOTLEY.<sup>d</sup>]



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to accident. They entered; and Brederode, who did the honours of the mansion, forced them to be seated, and to join in the festivity. The appearance of three such distinguished personages heightened the general excitement; and the most important assemblage that had for centuries met together in the Netherlands mingled the discussion of affairs of state with all the burlesque extravagance of a *débauch*.

But this frantic scene did not finish the affair. What they resolved on while drunk, they prepared to perform when sober. Rallying-signs and watchwords were adopted and soon displayed. It was thought that nothing better suited the occasion than the immediate adoption of the costume as well as the title of beggary. In a very few days the city streets were filled with men in grey cloaks, fashioned on the model of those used by mendicants and pilgrims. Each confederate caused this uniform to be worn by every member of his family, and replaced with it the livery of his servants. Several fastened to their girdles or their sword-hilts small wooden drinking-cups, clasp-knives, and other symbols of the begging fraternity; while all soon wore on their breasts a medal of gold or silver, representing on one side the effigy of Philip, with the words, "Faithful to the king," and on the reverse, two hands clasped, with the motto, "*Jusqu'à la besace*" (even to the wallet). From this origin arose the application of the word *gueux*, in its political sense, as common to all the inhabitants of the Netherlands who embraced the cause of the Reformation, and took up arms against their tyrant.

Having presented two subsequent remonstrances to the governante and obtained some consoling promises of moderation, the chief confederates quitted Brussels, leaving several directors to sustain their cause in the capital; while they themselves spread into the various provinces, exciting the people to join the legal and constitutional resistance with which they were resolved to oppose the march of bigotry and despotism.

A new form of edict was now decided on by the governante and her council; and after various insidious and illegal but successful tricks, the consent of several of the provinces was obtained to the adoption of measures that, under a guise of comparative moderation, were little less abominable than those commanded by the king. These were formally signed by the council, and despatched to Spain to receive Philip's sanction, and thus acquire the force of law. The embassy to Madrid was confided to the marquis of Bergen and the baron of Montigny, the latter of whom was brother to Count Horn, and had formerly been employed on a like mission. Montigny appears to have had some qualms of apprehension in undertaking this new office. His good genius seemed for a while to stand between him and the fate which awaited him. An accident which happened to his colleague allowed an excuse for retarding his journey. But the governante urged him away: he



A MAN OF INFERIOR RANK, SIXTEENTH CENTURY

set out, and reached his destination — not to defend the cause of his country at the foot of the throne, but to perish a victim to his patriotism.

The situation of the patriot lords was at this crisis peculiarly embarrassing. The conduct of the confederates was so essentially tantamount to open rebellion, that the prince of Orange and his friends found it almost impossible to preserve a neutrality between the court and the people. All their wishes urged them to join at once in the public cause; but they were restrained by a lingering sense of loyalty to the king, whose employments they still held, and whose confidence they were, therefore, nominally supposed to share. Be their individual motives or reasoning what they might, they at length adopted the alternative, and resigned their places. Count Horn retired to his estates; Count Egmont repaired to Aix-la-Chapelle [Aachen], under the pretext of being ordered thither by his physicians; the prince of Orange remained for a while at Brussels.

In the meanwhile the confederation gained ground every day. Its measures had totally changed the face of affairs in all parts of the nation. The general discontent now acquired stability and consequent importance. The chief merchants of many of the towns enrolled themselves in the patriot band.

#### THE CALVINIST OUTBREAK

An occasion so favourable for the rapid promulgation of the new doctrines was promptly taken advantage of by the French Huguenots and their Protestant brethren of Germany. The disciples of reform poured from all quarters into the Low Countries, and made prodigious progress, with all the energy of proselytes, and too often with the fury of fanatics. The three principal sects into which the reformers were divided were those of the Anabaptists, the Calvinists, and the Lutherans. The first and least numerous were chiefly established in Friesland. The second were spread over the eastern provinces. Their doctrines being already admitted into some kingdoms of the north, they were protected by the most powerful princes of the empire. The third, and by far the most numerous and wealthy, abounded in the southern provinces, and particularly in Flanders. They were supported by the zealous efforts of French, Swiss, and German ministers; and their dogmas were nearly the same as those of the established religion of England. The city of Antwerp was the central point of union for the three sects; but the only principle they held in common was their hatred against popery, the Inquisition, and Spain.

The governante had now issued orders to the chief magistrates to proceed with moderation against the heretics — orders which were obeyed in their most ample latitude by those to whose sympathies they were so congenial. Until then, the Protestants were satisfied to meet by stealth at night; but under this negative protection of the authorities they now boldly assembled in public. Field-preachings commenced in Flanders; and the minister who first set this example was Herman Stricker, a converted monk, a native of Overysse, a powerful speaker and a bold enthusiast. He soon drew together an audience of seven thousand persons. A furious magistrate rushed among this crowd, and hoped to disperse them sword in hand; but he was soon struck down, mortally wounded, with a shower of stones. Irritated and emboldened by this rash attempt, the Protestants assembled in still greater numbers near Alost; but on this occasion they appeared with poniards, guns, and halberds. They entrenched themselves under the protection of wagons and all sorts of obstacles to a sudden attack; placed outposts and

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videttes; and thus took the field in the doubly dangerous aspect of fanaticism and war.

Similar assemblies soon spread over the whole of Flanders, inflamed by the exhortations of Stricker and another preacher, called Peter Dathen, of Poperinghe. It was calculated that fifteen thousand men attended some of these preachings; while a third apostle of Calvinism, Ambrose Ville, a Frenchman, successfully excited the inhabitants of Tournay, Valenciennes, and Antwerp, to form a common league for the promulgation of their faith. The sudden appearance of Brederode at the latter place decided their plan, and gave the courage to fix on a day for its execution. An immense assemblage simultaneously quitted the three cities at a preconcerted time; and when they united their forces at the appointed rendezvous, the preachings, exhortations, and psalm-singing commenced, under the auspices of several Huguenot and German ministers, and continued for several days in all the zealous extravagance which may be well imagined to characterise such a scene.

The citizens of Antwerp were terrified for the safety of the place, and courier after courier was despatched to the governante at Brussels to implore her presence. The duchess, not daring to take such a step without the authority of the king, sent Count Meghem as her representative, with proposals to the magistrates to call out the garrison. The populace soon understood the object of this messenger; and assailing him with a violent outcry, forced him to fly from the city. Then the Calvinists petitioned the magistrates for permission to openly exercise their religion, and for the grant of a temple in which to celebrate its rites. The magistrates in this conjuncture renewed their application to the governante, and entreated her to send the prince of Orange, as the only person capable of saving the city from destruction. The duchess was forced to adopt this bitter alternative; and the prince, after repeated refusals to mix again in public affairs, yielded at length, less to the supplications of the governante than to his own wishes to do another service to the cause of his country. At half a league from the city he was met by Brederode, with an immense concourse of people of all sects and opinions, who hailed him as a protector from the tyranny of the king, and a saviour from the dangers of their own excess. Nothing could exceed the wisdom, the firmness, and the benevolence with which he managed all conflicting interests and preserved tranquillity amidst a chaos of opposing prejudices and passions.

From the first establishment of the field-preachings the governante had implored the confederate lords to aid her for the re-establishment of order. Brederode seized this excuse for convoking a general meeting of the associates, which consequently took place at the town of St. Trond, in the district of Liège (July 13th, 1566). Full two thousand of the members appeared on the summons. The language held in this assembly was much stronger and less equivocal than that formerly used. The delay in the arrival of the king's answer presaged ill as to his intentions; while the rapid growth of the public power seemed to mark the present as the time for successfully demanding all that the people required. Several of the Catholic members, still royalists at heart, were shocked to hear a total liberty of conscience spoken of as one of the privileges sought for. The young count of Mansfeld, among others, withdrew immediately from the confederation; and thus the first stone seemed to be removed from this imperfectly constructed edifice.

The prince of Orange and Count Egmont were applied to, and appointed by the governante, with full powers to treat with the confederates. Twelve of

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the latter, among whom were Louis of Nassau, Brederode, and Kuilenburg [or Culenborg], met them by appointment at Duffle, a village not far from Mechlin. The result of the conference was a respectful but firm address to the governante, repelling her accusations of having entered into foreign treaties; declaring their readiness to march against the French troops, should they set foot in the country; and claiming, with the utmost force of reasoning, the convocation of the states-general. This was replied to by an entreaty that they would still wait patiently for twenty-four days, in hopes of an answer from the king; and she sent the marquis of Bergen in all speed to Madrid, to support Montigny in his efforts to obtain some prompt decision from Philip.

The king, who was then at Segovia, assembled his council, consisting of the duke of Alva and eight other grandees. The two deputies from the Netherlands attended the deliberations, which were held for several successive days; but the king was never present. The whole state of affairs being debated with what appears a calm and dispassionate view, considering the hostile prejudices of this council, it was decided to advise the king to adopt generally a more moderate line of conduct in the Netherlands, and to abolish the Inquisition; at the same time prohibiting under the most awful threats all confederation, assemblage, or public preachings, under any pretext whatever.

The king's first care on receiving this advice was to order, in all the principal towns of Spain and the Netherlands, prayer and procession to implore the divine approbation on the resolutions which he had formed. He appeared then in person at the council of state, and issued a decree, by which he refused his consent to the convocation of the states-general, and bound himself to take several German regiments into his pay. He ordered the duchess of Parma, by a private letter, to immediately cause to be raised three thousand cavalry and ten thousand foot, and he remitted to her for this purpose three hundred thousand florins in gold. He next wrote with his own hand to several of his partisans in the various towns, encouraging them in their fidelity to his purposes, and promising them his support. He rejected the adoption of the moderation recommended to him; but he consented to the abolition of the Inquisition in its most odious sense, re-establishing that modified species [the Episcopal inquisition] which had been introduced into the Netherlands by Charles V. The people of that devoted country were thus successful in obtaining one important concession from the king, and in meeting unexpected consideration from this Spanish council. Whether these measures had been calculated with a view to their failure, it is not now easy to determine: at all events they came too late [Aug. 12th, 1566]. When Philip's letters reached Brussels, the iconoclasts or image-breakers were abroad.

It requires no profound research to comprehend the impulse which leads a horde of fanatics to the most monstrous excesses. That the deeds of the iconoclasts arose from the spontaneous outburst of mere vulgar fury, admits of no doubt.<sup>g</sup>

The historian Strada <sup>h</sup> was a contemporary of these scenes and has vividly described them, from the Spanish and Jesuit point of view. The old translation of Sir Robert Stapleton well accords with the spirit of the times.<sup>a</sup>

#### STRADA'S ACCOUNT OF THE IMAGE-BREAKING FRENZY (1566)

The people, partly corrupted with heresie, partly dreading the Inquisition, exceedingly favoured the hereticks that fought to overthrow that judicature. Upon Assumption-eve, they began to rifle the low-countrey churches; first

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rising in the lower Flanders. In these parts a few of the raskall sort of hereticks met and joynd themselves with some companies of thieves, upon the day appointed for proclaiming war against heaven, led on by no commander but impictie; their arms were staves, hatchets, hammers, and ropes, fitter to pull down houses than to fight withall; some few of them had swords and muskets. Thus accoutred, as if they had been furies vomited from hell, they broke into the towns and villages about St. Omer, and if they had found the doors of churches or monasteries shut, forced them open, fighting away their religious inhabitants; and overturning the altars, they defaced the monuments of saints, and broke to pieces their sacred images. Whatsoever they saw dedicated to God, and to the blessed, they pulled it down and trod it under their feet to dirt, whilst their ringleaders clapt them on the backs and encouraged them with all their force to destroy the idols.

The hereticks, glad of this successe, with unanimous consent, shouted and cryed aloud — “Let us to Ypres!” that being a city much frequented by the Calvinists. And they were drawn thither, as well out of hope of protection, as out of hatred they bare to the bishop of that city, Martin Rithovins, an eminently virtuous and learned man, and therefore meriting the spleen of hereticks. Whereupon they ran violently thither, gathering upon the way such vagabonds and beggars as joynd with them out of hope of plunder. And as a snowball rolling from the top of a hill grows still greater by the accesse of new snow, through which it passes, and wherein it is involved; so these thievish vagabonds multiplying by the way, the farther they go the more they rage, and the more considerable their thievish strength appears.

And when they had pillaged a few small villages about Ypres, upon the very day of the assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the citizens of Ypres opening their gates unto them, they entered the town, and went directly to the cathedral church, where everyone fell to work. Some set ladders to the walls, with hammers and staves battering the pictures. Others broke asunder the iron work, seats, and pulpits. Others, casting ropes about the great statues of our Saviour Christ and the saints, pulled them down to the ground. Others stole the consecrated plate, burnt the sacred books, and stript the altars of their holy ornaments; and that, with so much securitie, with so little regard of the magistrate or prelates, as you would think they had been sent for by the common counsell, and were in pay with the citie. With the same fury they likewise burnt the bishop of Ypres’ library and destroyed the rest of the churches and religious houses of the town, reacting their villanies, and because the first prospered, still presuming. This sacrilegious robbery continued a whole day. Part of the people being amazed to see them, not taking them for men, but devils in human shapes; and part rejoicing, that now those things were done which they themselves had long ago designed. Nor had the magistrate and senatours any greater care of religion.

#### *The Sack of the Antwerp Cathedral*

Upon the 21st of August, the hereticks, increasing in their number, came into the great church with concealed weapons; as if they had resolved, after some light skirmishes for a few days past, to come now to a battel. And expecting till even-song was done, they shouted with a hideous cry — “Long live the Gheuses!” nay, they commanded the image of the Blessed Virgin to repeat their acclamation, which, if she refused to do, they madly swore they would beat and kill her.

Hearing the clock strike the last houre of the day, and darkness adding

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confidence, one of them (lest their wickedness should want formality) began to sing a Geneva Psalme, and as if the trumpet had sounded a charge, the spirit moving them altogether, they fell upon the effigies of the mother of God, and upon the pictures of Christ and his saints: some tumbled them down and trod upon them; others thrust swords into their sides; others chopped off their heads with axes — with so much concord and forecast in their sacrilege that you would think everyone had his severall work assigned him. For the very harlots, those common appurtenances to thieves and drunkards, catching up the wax candles from the altars, and from the vestry, held them to light the men that were at work.<sup>1</sup> Part whereof, getting upon the altars, cast down the sacred plate, broke asunder the picture frames, defaced the painted walls; part, setting up ladders, shattered the goodly organes, broke the windows flourished with a new kind of paint.

Huge statues of saints that stood in the walls upon pedestalls, they un-



THE PORT OF ANTWERP IN 1520  
(Facsimile of a drawing by Albert Dürer)

fastened and hurled down, among which, an ancient and great crucifix with the two thieves hanging on each hand of our Saviour, that stood right against the high altar, they pulled down with ropes and hewed it in pieces; but touched not the two thieves, as if they onely worshipped them, and desired them to be their good lords. Nay, they presumed to break open the conservatory of the celestial bread; and putting in their polluted hands, to pull out the blessed body of Our Lord.

Those base offscourings of men trod upon the Deity adored and dreaded by the angels. The pixes and chalices which they found in the vestry they filled with wine prepared for the altar, and drank them off in derision. They greased their shoes with the chrisme or holy oyl; and after the spoyle of all these things, laughed and were very merry at the matter. My meaning is not lest I should scandalise mankind, nor suits it with history to repeat all these foul actions wherewith, in the destruction of holy things, these traitours to God and his saints glutted their cruelty.

But the greatest wonder was to see them make so quick dispatch that one of the fairest and greatest churches of Europe, full of pictures and statues, richly adorned with about seventy-five altars, by a few men (for they were not above one hundred as the governess wrote to the king that she was certainly informed), should before midnight, when they began but in the evening, have nothing at all left entire or unprofaned. Truly if the hundred men had not an hundred hands apiece, that in so short a space demolished such a

[<sup>1</sup> Gresham, the English agent, is quoted by his biographer Burgon, as follows: "And coming into Our Lady Church, yt looked like hell where were above 1,000 torches brannying and syche a noise! as yf heven and erth had gone together, with fallyng of images and fallyng down of costly works."]

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multitude of things, it is not unreasonable to believe (which I know some at that time suspected) that devils, mixing with them, joyned in dispatching their own work; or at least that the furious violence which (in scorn of religion) stript the altars, mangled the statues and pictures, defaced the tombes, and in foure houres' time robbed and laid waste so goodly a church, could not have any other cause but the immediate repulsion of those rebellious and infernall spirits, that add both rage and strength to sacrilegious villains, offering an acceptable sacrifice to hell.

While this was done at and about Antwerp, the rage of these traitours was no lesse, upon the very same dayes at Ghent, Oudenarde, and other towns in Flanders, from the river of Lys as farre as Schelde and Dender, all the churches and holy ornaments going to wrack. For this destruction was more like an earthquake, that devours all at once, than like the plague that steals upon a country by degrees. Insomuch, as the same tainture and whirlwind of religion, in an in tant, miserably involved and laid waste Brabant, Flanders, Holland, Zealand, Gèlderland, Friesland, Overysse, and almost all the low countreys except three or four provinces — *viz.*, Namür, Luxemburg, Artois, and part of Hainault. And as of old, in the reign of Tiberius Caesar, they tell us that twelve cities were swallowed by an earthquake in one night, so in the low countreys, not the like number of cities, but provinces, by the spirit, struggling and bursting out from hell, were devoured, with so sudden, with so great a ruine, that the Netherlands, which had as many populous cities, towns, and villages, as any part of Europe, within ten days was overwhelmed in this calamitie; the particular province of Flanders having four hundred consecrated houses either profaned or burnt to the ground.<sup>h</sup>

## RESULTS OF THE OUTBREAK; THE ACCORD

Such, in general outline and in certain individual details, was the celebrated iconomachy of the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> The movement was a sudden explosion of popular revenge against the symbols of that Church by which the reformers had been enduring such terrible persecution. It was also an expression of the general sympathy for the doctrines which had taken possession of the national heart. It was the depravation of that instinct which had in the beginning of the summer drawn Calvinists and Lutherans forth in armed bodies, twenty thousand strong, to worship God in the open fields. The difference between the two phenomena was that the field-preaching was a crime committed by the whole mass of the reformers — men, women, and children confronting the penalties of death, by a general determination; while the image-breaking was the act of a small portion of the populace. A hundred persons belonging to the lowest order of society sufficed for the desecration of the Antwerp churches. It was, said Orange, "a mere handful of rabble" who did the deed. Sir Richard Clough saw ten or twelve persons entirely sack church after church, while ten thousand spectators looked on, indifferent or horror-struck. The bands of iconoclasts were of the lowest character, and few in number. Perhaps the largest assemblage was that which ravaged the province of Tournay, but this was so weak as to be entirely routed by a small and determined force. The duty of repression devolved upon both Catholics and Protestants. Neither party stirred. All seemed overcome with special wonder as the tempest swept over the land.

[<sup>1</sup> This incident is not to be confused with the iconoclasm of the eighth century, which was far more bloody: it is described in the history of the Eastern Empire, volume VII, chapter 7, and in the history of the Papacy, volume VIII.]

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The ministers of the reformed religion, and the chiefs of the liberal party, all denounced the image-breaking. The prince of Orange, in his private letters, deplored the riots, and stigmatised the perpetrators.

The next remarkable characteristic of these tumults was the almost entire abstinence of the rioters from personal outrage and from pillage. The testimony of a very bitter, but honest Catholic at Valenciennes, is remarkable upon this point: "Certain chroniclers," said he, "have greatly mistaken the character of this image-breaking. It has been said that the Calvinists killed a hundred priests in this city, cutting some of them into pieces, and burning others over a slow fire. I remember very well everything which happened upon that abominable day, and I can affirm that not a single priest was injured. The Huguenots took good care not to injure in any way the living images." This was the case everywhere. Catholic and Protestant writers agree that no deeds of violence were committed against man or woman.



TOWER OF ST. BAVON, WHERE THE PURITANICAL OUTHAGES TOOK PLACE

It would be also very easy to accumulate a vast weight of testimony as to their forbearance from robbery. They destroyed for destruction's sake, not for purposes of plunder. Although belonging to the lowest classes of society, they left heaps of jewelry, of gold and silver plate, of costly embroidery, lying unheeded upon the ground. They felt instinctively that a great passion would be contaminated by admixture with paltry motives. In Flanders a company of rioters hanged one of their own number for stealing articles to the value of five shillings.

At Tournay, the greatest scrupulousness was observed upon this point. The floor of the cathedral was strewn with "pearls and precious stones, with chalices and reliquaries of silver and gold"; but the ministers of the reformed religion, in company with the magistrates, came to the spot, and found no difficulty, although utterly without power to prevent the storm, in taking quiet possession of the wreck. Who will dare to censure in very severe language this havoc among stocks and stones in a land where so many living men and women, of more value than many statues, had been slaughtered by the Inquisition, and where Alva's "blood tribunal" was so soon to eclipse even that terrible institution in the number of its victims and the amount of its confiscations?

Yet the effect of the riots was destined to be most disastrous for a time to the reforming party. It furnished plausible excuses for many lukewarm friends of their cause to withdraw from all connection with it. Egmont denounced the proceedings as highly flagitious, and busied himself with punishing the criminals in Flanders. The regent was beside herself with indignation and terror. Philip, when he heard the news, fell into a paroxysm of frenzy.



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"It shall cost them dear!" he cried, as he tore his beard for rage; "it shall cost them dear! I swear it by the soul of my father!"

Nevertheless, the first effect of the tumults was a temporary advantage to the reformers. A great concession was extorted from the fears of the duchess regent, who was certainly placed in a terrible position.

On the 25th of August came the crowning act of what the reformers considered their most complete triumph, and the regent her deepest degradation. It was found necessary, under the alarming aspect of affairs, that liberty of worship, in places where it had been already established, should be accorded to the new religion. Articles of agreement to this effect were accordingly drawn up and exchanged between the government and Louis of Nassau, attended by fifteen others of the confederacy. A corresponding pledge was signed by them that, so long as the regent was true to her engagement, they would consider their previously existing league annulled, and would assist cordially in every endeavour to maintain tranquillity and support the authority of his majesty. The important "accord" was then duly signed by the duchess. It declared that the Inquisition was abolished, that his majesty would soon issue a new general edict, expressly and unequivocally protecting the nobles against all evil consequences from past transactions, that they were to be employed in the royal service, and that public preaching according to the forms of the new religion was to be practised in places where it had already taken place. Letters general were immediately despatched to the senates of all the cities, proclaiming these articles of agreement and ordering their execution. Thus for a fleeting moment there was a thrill of joy throughout the Netherlands. The Inquisition was thought forever abolished, the era of religious reformation arrived.<sup>d</sup>

#### A BRIEF RESPITE

Soon after this the several governors repaired to their respective provinces, and their efforts for the re-establishment of tranquillity were attended with various degrees of success. Several of the ringleaders in the late excesses were executed; and this severity was not confined to the partisans of the Catholic church. The prince of Orange and Count Egmont, with others of the patriot lords, set the example of this just severity.

Again the Spanish council appears to have interfered between the people of the Netherlands and the enmity of the monarch; and the offered mediation of the emperor was recommended to his acceptance, to avoid the appearance of a forced concession to the popular will. Philip was also strongly urged to repair to the scene of the disturbances; and a main question of debate was whether he should march at the head of an army or confide himself to the loyalty and good faith of his Belgian subjects. But the indolence or the pride of Philip was too strong to admit of his taking so vigorous a measure; and all these consultations ended in two letters to the government. In the first he declared his firm intention to visit the Netherlands in person; refused to convoke the states-general; passed in silence the treaties concluded with the Protestants and the confederates; and finished by a declaration that he would throw himself wholly on the fidelity of the country. In his second letter, meant for the governante alone, he authorised her to assemble the states-general if public opinion became too powerful for resistance, but on no account to let it transpire that he had under any circumstances given his consent.

During these deliberations in Spain, the Protestants in the Netherlands

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amply availed themselves of the privileges they had gained. They erected numerous wooden churches with incredible activity. Young and old, noble and plebeian, of these energetic men, assisted in the manual labours of these occupations: and the women freely applied the produce of their ornaments and jewels to forward the pious work. But the furious outrages of the iconoclasts had done infinite mischief to both political and religious freedom: many of the Catholics, and particularly the priests, gradually withdrew themselves from the confederacy, which thus lost some of its most firm supporters. And, on the other hand, the severity with which some of its members pursued the guilty offended and alarmed the body of the people, who could not distinguish the shades of difference between the love of liberty and the practice of licentiousness.

The governante and her satellites adroitly took advantage of this state of things to sow dissension among the patriots. Autograph letters from Philip to the principal lords were distributed among them with such artful and mysterious precautions as to throw the rest into perplexity, and give each suspicions of the other's fidelity. The report of the immediate arrival of Philip had also considerable effect over the less resolute or more selfish; and the confederation was dissolving rapidly under the operations of intrigue, self-interest, and fear.<sup>1</sup> Even Count Egmont was not proof against the subtle seductions of the wily monarch, whose severe yet flattering letters half frightened and half soothed him into a relapse of royalism. But with the prince of Orange Philip had no chance of success. It is unquestionable that, by his means of acquiring information what they might, he did succeed in procuring minute intelligence of all that was going on in the king's most secret council.<sup>2</sup>

William summoned his brother Louis, the counts Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraten, to a secret conference at Dendermonde; and he there submitted to them letters which he had received from Spain, confirmatory of his worst fears. Louis of Nassau voted for open and instant rebellion; William recommended a cautious observance of the projects of government, not doubting but that a fair pretext would be soon given to justify the most vigorous overt acts of revolt: but Egmont at once struck a death-blow to the energetic project of one brother and the cautious amendment of the other, by declaring his present resolution to devote himself wholly to the service of the king, and on no inducement whatever to risk the perils of rebellion. He expressed his perfect reliance on the justice and the goodness of Philip, when once he should see the determined loyalty of those whom he had hitherto had so much reason to suspect; and he exhorted the others to follow his example.

[<sup>1</sup> The nobles made a great mistake in permitting the dissolution of the confederation at this juncture. They should not have trusted a promise forced from a hard-pressed and reluctant government. They actually threw their best weapon away, voluntarily. They thought that all was won — at least the majority thought so, and thus they separated rejoicing over the success finally obtained. — BLOK.<sup>e</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> Philip had here to do with a head which, in cunning, was superior to his own. The prince of Orange had, for a long time, held watch over him and his privy council in Madrid and Segovia, through a host of spies, who reported to him everything of importance that was transacted there. The court of this most secret of all despots had become accessible to his intriguing spirit, and his money; in this manner, he had gained possession of several autograph letters of the regent, which she had secretly written to Madrid, and had caused copies to be circulated in triumph in Brussels, and, in a measure, under her own eyes, insomuch that she saw with astonishment in everybody's hands what she thought was preserved with so much care, and entreated the king for the future to destroy her despatches immediately they were read. William's vigilance did not confine itself simply to the court of Spain: he had spies in France, and even in more distant courts. He is also charged with not having been overscrupulous in regard to the means by which he acquired his intelligence. — SCHILLER.<sup>b</sup>]

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The two brothers and Count Horn implored him in their turn to abandon this blind reliance on the tyrant; but in vain. His new and unlooked-for profession of faith completely paralysed their plans. He possessed too largely the confidence of both the soldiery and the people to make it possible to attempt any serious measure of resistance in which he would not take a part. The meeting broke up without coming to any decision. All those who bore a part in it were expected at Brussels to attend the council of state; Egmont alone repaired thither.

## EARLY FAILURES OF THE REBELS

The governante now applied her whole effort to destroy the union among the patriot lords. She in the mean time ordered levies of troops to the amount of some thousands, the command of which was given to the nobles on whose attachment she could reckon. The most vigorous measures were adopted. Noircarmes, governor of Hainault, appeared before Valenciennes, which being in the power of the Calvinists had assumed a most determined attitude of resistance. He vainly summoned the place to submission, and to admit a royalist garrison; and on receiving an obstinate refusal, he commenced the siege in form. An undisciplined rabble of between three thousand and four thousand gueux, under the direction of John de Soresas, gathered together in the neighbourhood of Lille and Tournay, with a show of attacking these places. But the governor of the former town dispersed one party of them; and Noircarmes surprised and almost destroyed the main body — their leader falling in the action.

These were the first encounters of the civil war, which raged without cessation for upwards of eighty years in these devoted countries, and which is universally allowed to be the most remarkable that ever desolated any isolated portion of Europe. Fierce events succeeded each other with frightful rapidity.

While Valenciennes prepared for a vigorous resistance, a general synod of the Protestants was held at Antwerp, and Brederode undertook an attempt to see the governante, and lay before her the complaints of this body; but she refused to admit him into the capital. He then addressed to her a remonstrance in writing, in which he reproached her with her violation of the treaties, on the faith of which the confederates had dispersed, and the majority of the Protestants laid down their arms. He implored her to revoke the new proclamations, by which she prohibited them from the free exercise of their religion; and above all things he insisted on the abandonment of the siege of Valenciennes, and the disbanding of the new levies. The governante's reply was one of haughty reproach and defiance. The gauntlet was now thrown down; no possible hope of reconciliation remained; and the whole country flew to arms. A sudden attempt on the part of the royalists, under Count Meghem, against Bois-le-duc, was repulsed by eight hundred men, commanded by an officer named Bomberg, in the immediate service of Brederode, who had fortified himself in his garrison town of Vianen.

The prince of Orange maintained at Antwerp an attitude of extreme firmness and caution.<sup>1</sup> His time for action had not yet arrived; but his advice and protection were of infinite importance on many occasions. John van Marnix, lord of Toulouse, brother of Philip of Sainte-Aldegonde, took posses-

[<sup>1</sup> The Calvinists and beggars implored William to take the leadership. They blamed his refusal to act for their defeats, and were so exasperated at his caution that the Antwerp Calvinists threatened even to kill him. But he was immovable.]

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sion of Osterweel on the Schelde, a quarter of a league from Antwerp, and fortified himself in a strong position. But he was impetuously attacked by Lannoy of Beauvoir with a considerable force, and perished, after a desperate defence, with full one thousand of his followers. Three hundred who laid down their arms were immediately after the action butchered in cold blood.

Antwerp was on this occasion saved from the excesses of its divided and furious citizens, and preserved from the horrors of pillage, by the calmness and intrepidity of the prince of Orange. Valenciennes at length capitulated to the royalists, disheartened by the defeat and death of Marnix, and terrified by a bombardment of thirty-six hours. The governor, two preachers, and about forty of the citizens were hanged by the victors, and the reformed religion was prohibited. Noircarmes promptly followed up his success. Maestricht, Turnhout, and Bois-le-duc submitted at his approach; and the insurgents were soon driven from all the provinces, Holland alone excepted. Brederode fled to Germany, where he died the following year.<sup>1</sup>

The governante showed, in her success, no small proofs of decision. She and her counsellors, acting under orders from the king, were resolved on embarrassing to the utmost the patriot lords; and a new oath of allegiance, to be proposed to every functionary of the state, was considered as a certain means for attaining this object without the violence of an unmerited dismissal. The terms of this oath were strongly opposed to every principle of patriotism and toleration. Count Mansfeld was the first of the nobles who took it. The duke of Aerschot, counts Meghem, Barlaymont, and Egmont, followed his example. The counts of Horn, Hoogstraten, Brederode, and others, refused on various pretexts. Every artifice and persuasion was tried to induce the prince of Orange to subscribe to this new test; but his resolution had been for some time formed. He saw that every chance of constitutional resistance to tyranny was for the present at an end. The time for petitioning was gone by. The confederation was dissolved. A royalist army was in the field; the duke of Alva was notoriously approaching at the head of another, more numerous. It was worse than useless to conclude a hollow convention with the governante, of mock loyalty on his part and mock confidence on hers. Many other important considerations convinced William that his only honourable, safe, and wise course was to exile himself from the Netherlands altogether, until more propitious circumstances allowed of his acting openly, boldly, and with effect.

#### WILLIAM OF ORANGE WITHDRAWS (1567)

Before he put this plan of voluntary banishment into execution, he and Egmont had a parting interview, at the village of Willebroeck, between Antwerp and Brussels. Count Mansfeld, and Berti, secretary to the governante, were present at this memorable meeting. The details of what passed were reported to the confederates by one of their party, who contrived to conceal himself in the chimney of the chamber. Nothing could exceed the

[<sup>1</sup> The utter annihilation of the popular party at this period proves how erroneous is the assertion of the Jesuit Strada<sup>h</sup> and others, who state that the revolt of the Netherlands was to be attributed not to the Inquisition or the introduction of the new bishops, but solely to the machinations of some impoverished and disappointed nobles. In the first formation of the confederacy the nobles rather obeyed than excited the popular impulse, which, instead of contributing to sustain, they, by their vacillation and dissensions, served but to divide and weaken. So far as they were concerned, the movement was now entirely at an end; and it is to their selfishness, treachery, or inconstancy that the temporary ruin of the people's cause is to be ascribed. — DAVIES.]

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energetic warmth with which the two illustrious friends reciprocally endeavoured to turn each other from their respective line of conduct; but in vain. Egmont's fatal confidence in the king was not to be shaken; nor was Nassau's penetrating mind to be deceived by the romantic delusion which led away his friend. They separated with most affectionate expressions; and Nassau was even moved to tears. His parting words were to the following effect: "Confide, then, since it must be so, in the gratitude of the king; but a painful presentiment (God grant it may prove a false one!) tells me that you will serve the Spaniards as the bridge by which they will enter the country, and which they will destroy as soon as they have passed over it!"<sup>1</sup>

On the 11th of April, a few days after this conference, the prince of Orange set out for Germany, with his three brothers and his whole family, with the exception of his eldest son, Philip William count of Buren, whom he left behind a student in the university of Louvain. He believed that the privileges of the college and the franchises of Brabant would prove a sufficient protection to the youth; and this appears the only instance in which William's vigilant prudence was deceived. The departure of the prince seemed to remove all hope of protection or support from the unfortunate Protestants, now the prey of their implacable tyrant. The confederation of the nobles, was completely broken up. The counts of Hoogstraten, Bergen, and Kuilenburg followed the example of the prince of Orange, and escaped to Germany; and the greater number of those who remained behind took the new oath of allegiance, and became reconciled to the government.

This total dispersion of the confederacy brought all the towns of Holland into obedience to the king. But the emigration which immediately commenced threatened the country with ruin.<sup>2</sup> England and Germany swarmed with Dutch and Belgian refugees; and all the efforts of the governante could not restrain the thousands that took to flight. She was not more successful in her attempts to influence the measures of the king. She implored him, in repeated letters, to abandon his design of sending a foreign army into the country, which she represented as being now quite reduced to submission and tranquillity. She added that the mere report of this royal invasion (so to call it) had already deprived the Netherlands of many thousands of its best inhabitants; and that the appearance of the troops would change it into a desert. These arguments, meant to dissuade, were the very means of encouraging Philip in his design. He conceived his project to be now ripe for the complete suppression of freedom.

On the 5th of May, 1567, Alva, the celebrated captain whose reputation was so quickly destined to sink into the notoriety of an executioner, began his memorable march.<sup>3</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Hooft alludes to a rumour, according to which Egmont said to Orange at parting, "Adieu, landless prince!" and was answered by his friend with "Adieu, headless count!" "*Men voeght'er by dat zy voorts elkandre, Prins zonder goet, Graaf zonder hooft, zouden adieu gezeit hebben.*" The story has been often repeated, yet nothing could well be more insipid than such an invention. Hooft observes that the whole conversation was reported by a person whom the Calvinists had concealed in the chimney of the apartment where the interview took place. It would be difficult to believe in such epigrams even had the historian himself been in the chimney. He, however, only gives the anecdote as a rumor, which he does not himself believe. — MOTLEY.<sup>4</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> Blok accepts an estimate that, in thirty or forty years, four hundred thousand people emigrated.]