

CHAPTER X

THE SWAY OF OLDEN-BARNEVELD

[1598-1609 A.D.]

THE first act of the young sovereign of Spain, Philip III, was one of more bitter hostility against the provinces than his father had ever exercised; since he not only arrested all their ships in his ports (which had been often done heretofore) but made the whole of the crews prisoners; caused such as were suspected of having taken part in the expeditions of the English to be put to the torture, and forced the remainder to work as galley-slaves. Coincident with this proceeding was an edict issued in the Spanish Netherlands, February, 1599, forbidding the inhabitants to traffic in any manner with Holland and Zealand, or their adherents, till they had returned to obedience under their lawful prince. But these measures, like most others devised by Spain against her former subjects, recoiled upon herself, and tended ultimately to the advantage of those whom they were designed to injure. The states, on their part, issued a decree, prohibiting the ships, not only of their own subjects but those of foreign powers, from carrying provisions or other wares to Spain; all goods belonging to that country, wherever found, were declared lawful prizes; permits or safe-conducts to the enemy were forbidden; and indemnity for all injuries done by them, and for the extortion of exorbitant ransoms, was to be levied on the hostile territories of Flanders and Brabant.

They followed up this measure by the immediate equipment of seventy-three vessels of war, containing eight thousand men, for the purpose of either making a descent on Spain, or intercepting the India fleets. Setting sail from the Maas, under the command of Peter van der Does, the armament reached in safety the harbour of Corunna, where they found the Spanish fleet anchored under cover of the artillery on the shore. Unable to draw out the enemy to a combat, and not venturing to attack them thus protected, Van der Does changed his purpose, and, directing his course to the Canary

Islands, effected a landing on the largest of them, called the Gran Canaria, which he occupied and plundered with but trifling loss. Gomra next shared the same fate.

Sailing along the coast of Africa, he arrived at St. Thomas, an island in the gulf of Guinea, where they found a numerous colony of Portuguese established. The principal town surrendered at the first summons. But the burning summer heats combined with imprudent indulgence to produce a pestilential sickness of the most terrific description; which, in a short time, carried off great numbers, and among the rest the admiral himself and his nephew, George van der Does, son of the heroic defender of Leyden. The admiral was buried in the island, and the sailors, to secure his remains from insult, heaped the ruins of the whole town of P. voasa upon his grave. After the death of their commander, the ships immediately set out on their return homewards; above one thousand perished on the voyage in the space of fifteen days: and on their arrival in Holland, at the end of the winter, not more than two captains were left alive. Such was the end of the fleet, which had cost vast sums in preparation, and from which the most important results had been expected. But however unprosperous the expedition, it had produced the effect of exciting great alarm in Spain, as appearing a prelude to others of the same nature, and had put the king to considerable charges in providing convoys for his fleets from the Indies.

It was September, 1599, before the new sovereigns arrived in their dominions, which they found the scene of universal discontent. The soldiery were on the brink of a general insurrection for want of pay, for which the treasury was too much exhausted to provide funds; and the people, oppressed and impoverished, were offended alike with the footing of lavish expenditure on which the court was placed, and the Spanish manners, dress, and customs which they remarked in its members. The "archdukes" having immediately on their coming summoned the states of the provinces, preparatory to their inauguration, the latter required as a preliminary to the acknowledgment of the new sovereigns the removal of the foreign troops in garrison in the Netherlands; that the public offices should be filled only by natives; and the conclusion of a definitive peace with the United Provinces. To these requisitions Isabella haughtily replied that she had received the Netherlands from her father, as a free gift without any conditions whatsoever; and the states, bowed down by poverty and sorrow, did not venture to persevere in this last struggle for a remnant of their former freedom.

Prince Maurice, anxious to take advantage of the widely-spread insurrection which prevailed among the archduke's troops, more especially those in the forts of Crèvecoeur and St. Andrew, laid siege to the former, which he mastered with little difficulty. The garrison of St. Andrew accepted the offer of a payment of 125,000 guilders which he made them, and delivered the fort into his hands. Nearly the whole of the troops entered into the service of the states, and being formed into a separate regiment (to which the soldiers gave the name of the "New Gueux" from the ragged appearance they made on coming out of the fort) were placed under the command of the young prince Frederick Henry.

From hence Prince Maurice was desirous of pursuing his success along the course of the Maas; but at the vivid instances of the Zealanders, who were greatly vexed and incommoded by the near neighbourhood of the enemy, he, in concert with the states-general determined upon the invasion of Flanders. The rendezvous of the troops was, accordingly, appointed at Rammekens, in Walcheren, where nearly one thousand boats were collected,

[1600 A.D.]

on board of which were embarked twelve thousand infantry, with three thousand cavalry, four field-pieces, and thirty smaller pieces of artillery. Having waited in vain for some days for a fair wind to carry them to Ostend, they sailed up the Maas, and landed at the Sas de Gand; the fort of Philippine, by which it is defended, having been first captured by Count Ernest of Nassau.

From thence, the prince began his march overland towards Nieupoort. Maurice sat down before the town, hoping to effect its reduction ere the enemy could collect sufficient forces for its relief. But the archduke repairing in person with the infantina to Diest, of which his mutinous troops held possession, the latter employed her entreaties, persuasions, and promises with such effect that she prevailed with them again to join her husband's standard, though under the banner of their own "cletto." With these, and the troops already in Brabant and Flanders, Albert found himself at the head of ten thousand infantry and fifteen hundred horse. Marching from Bruges, he first attacked Oldenburg, a fort commanding the passage between that town and Nieupoort, and lately captured by Prince Maurice, which surrendered without resistance. The loss of this fort was followed by that of Snaaskerke, of which the garrison was massacred in cold blood after the surrender; and of Breden, which was abandoned.

THE BATTLE OF NIEUPOORT (1600)

Maurice sent forward Count Ernest of Nassau, with the Scottish regiment, under Colonel Edmonds, and a regiment of Zealanders, making together about nineteen hundred men, with four troops of horse, to occupy a bridge at Leffingham on the road to Ostend, over which the hostile army must pass. Though he used all possible expedition, Ernest found on his arrival the enemy already in possession of the post, who, remarking the smallness of his force, immediately advanced to the attack. His cavalry, seized with a sudden panic, rapidly gave way, and communicating their terror to the infantry, the rout soon became universal; the Zealanders fled towards Ostend, but the Scottish soldiers, heedlessly directing their course over the sand-hills towards the sea, were pursued and cut in pieces by the victors. Nine hundred were slain, and all their standards taken; but none were made prisoners, since the archduke, who deemed himself certain of the destruction of Maurice's army, had, it is said, given orders that no lives should be spared except those of the prince himself and his brother, Frederick Henry, whom he had determined to send prisoners, bound hand and foot, into Spain.

The time occupied by this calamitous encounter enabled Maurice to transport his whole army across the harbour of Nieupoort, which is fordable at low water, to the right bank of the Yperlee, where he drew up on the sands and adjacent downs to await the coming of the hostile forces. The van of his army was occupied by two thousand six hundred English infantry and eighteen hundred Frieslanders, commanded by Sir Francis Vere, and his brother Horatio; on the left of which, towards the sea, were placed Vere's ten troops of cavalry, and six pieces of artillery; the remainder of the cavalry under Louis of Nassau being stationed so as to be ready to give assistance where it was required. The main army, composed of French, Swiss, and Prince Frederick Henry's regiment of New Gueux, was commanded by Count George de Solmes; while the Hollanders and Utrechters, forming the reserve, were under the special direction of Maurice himself, and led by Sir Oliver Temple. With the hostile town of Nieupoort in the rear, the river and enemy's forts on the right, and the sea on the left, the only mode of retreat

in case of a defeat was on board the ships, which must inevitably be attended with extreme confusion and danger; and it was not improbable that during the engagement the vessels might themselves be attacked by the garrison of Nieuport.

Maurice, therefore, determined upon the bold and wise measure of cutting off all hopes of safety but in victory, by commanding the vessels to set sail for Ostend, as soon as the tide should serve.¹ Before their departure, he earnestly exhorted the young prince Frederick Henry to retire on board, that both might not perish at one blow; but his entreaties were without effect on the heroic boy, who expressed his resolute determination to share equally with his brother the dangers and glory of the day. At this juncture, a straggler from the enemy's camp, who allowed himself to be taken, gave intelligence of the defeat and flight of Count Ernest's detachment, which the prince was careful to conceal from the troops, causing a report to be spread that they had entered Ostend in safety.

After the repulse of Count Ernest, the archduke continued his march along the sands.² The returning tide having narrowed the space between the sea and the downs, or sand hills, a portion of the cavalry were obliged to proceed along a road in the latter, considerably harassed by two field-pieces, which Maurice had stationed so as to command it. The number of troops which the prince had left in the forts, with the loss of Count Ernest's detachment, had reduced his army to an equality with that of his opponent. In other respects also, their strength was nicely balanced; the situation depriving the allied troops of the advantage to be reaped from their superior dexterity, and from the quick and agile movements of their battalions, in which they greatly surpassed the Spaniards. On both sides were disciplined and experienced troops, full of courage and ardour, these hoping to achieve by an easy victory, won under the eyes of their sovereign, the termination of a thirty years' war; those fighting for their freedom, their religion, the sanctity of their homes, and even for life itself.

The shock of battle was commenced by the English, under Vere, who was attacked by the van of the enemy's horse, followed by the musketeers: here were concentrated the strength and fury of the contest; Vere had told Prince Maurice that, living or dead, he would this day deserve his thanks; and he well redeemed his pledge. Every foot of the slippery and uncertain ground was alternately lost and won, with an intensity of toil of which it is scarcely possible to form an idea. Vere himself was twice wounded, and had his horse killed under him; he, nevertheless, remained at his post till his brother Horatio came up to take the command.

The artillery played incessantly on both sides; but after two or three murderous discharges, the enemy's cannon sank deep into the sand, which rendered their subsequent fire of little effect; the Dutch had prudently raised theirs on floors formed of planks and hurdles, a circumstance which contributed, in no small degree, to the result of the battle. The combat had lasted four hours, each side pouring in fresh troops, until the whole of both armies, except a reserve of about three hundred cavalry on the side of the Dutch, were engaged in a sharp and desperate struggle. Maurice and his brother presented themselves in every part of the field, rousing the fainting and

[¹ No more heroic decision was ever taken by fighting man. — MOTLEY.^b]

^a This is one of the many instances to prove the error of passing judgment on the conduct of a general according to the event; had the archduke not attacked the enemy on this occasion, there is little doubt that he would have been accused of having wantonly thrown away an opportunity of effecting the entire destruction of the states' army.

[1600 A.D.]

cheering the strong; the efforts of the archduke were no less strenuous; but the soldiers of both, who had tasted but little food or refreshment during the day, were now grown feeble and wearied.

At length the English, from utter exhaustion, began slowly to retreat towards the cannon in the rear, when the archduke, hoping to achieve the victory by one bold stroke, ordered a general pursuit: at this moment, Prince Maurice, who had been on the watch to seize some such opportunity, made an unexpected and rapid charge with his reserve of cavalry — a movement which caused some confusion among the enemy. Perceiving this, the troops raised a sudden shout of victory, and rushed on to the attack with renewed ardour. The archduke, eager to seize a chance that remained of restoring the fortune of the day, rode with his helm set off, before the mutineers of Diest, and vehemently exhorted them to renew the fight. While thus engaged, he received a severe wound in the face from the pike of a German soldier, which forced him to leave the field. His departure was the signal for a general flight. The soldiers, scattered in every direction, made their escape, favoured by the approaching darkness. About three thousand were killed in the battle and pursuit, of whom two hundred and fifty were officers, and the whole of their artillery and standards taken; the admiral of Aragon and many other noblemen were made prisoners; the archduke himself narrowly escaped capture, but the superb white charger, on which he had made his *joyeuse entrée*, and several pages and officers of his household, fell into the hands of Prince Maurice, who immediately restored the latter without ransom.

Tears gushed from the eyes of Maurice, when he beheld the victory certain: he felt that his country was saved; and, dismounting for a moment, he knelt down on the field of battle, and offered up a short but heartfelt thanksgiving to the Almighty: "What are we, O Lord," he exclaimed, "that thou hast enlarged us with thy bounty! Glory be to thy name forever."

The wearied condition of the troops, and the number of wounded, together with the darkness of the night and the danger from the hostile forts in the vicinity, deterred Maurice from pursuing the fugitives to any distance. Neither was the victory purchased without bloodshed on the side of the conqueror; ten hundred remained dead on the field, of whom six hundred were English, besides those who had perished in the defeat of the morning. The prince continued the whole night in a tent pitched upon the spot, and entertained at supper his illustrious captive, the admiral Mendoza, to whom he observed, in a tone of good-humoured raillery, that he was more fortunate than all his army, since, having for four years desired to visit Holland, he had now an opportunity of doing so. The admiral was sent, a few days after, to Woerden, and subsequently exchanged, together with the rest of the captives, and the governors of the Canary and St. Thomas's islands, for all the prisoners of war, inhabitants or allies of the United Provinces, within the dominions of the king of Spain and the archduke, including those whom the king had seized in the Dutch ships and forced to work as galley-slaves. The standards, more than one hundred in number, were deposited in the great saloon of the provincial court at the Hague.

The situation of the states-general who had followed the army to Ostend, to be ready with their assistance and advice, and to provide necessaries for the campaign, had been anxious in the extreme: their own safety and that of the republic was now, they felt, placed upon the cast of a single die. But they neglected to send six hundred cavalry, in garrison there, to secure the bridge of Leffingham; which, if they had done, they would inevitably have made themselves master of the person of the archduke.

[1601-1604 A.D.]

The results of this famous battle were, except in regard to the moral effects it produced on the feelings of the belligerents, chiefly negative: a defeat would probably have involved the subjugation, if not the utter destruction of the republic, in the loss of her only army, and all her most eminent men; but the consequences of the victory were in surprising disproportion to its magnitude. The states at this juncture committed a grave fault, by insisting that Prince Maurice should pursue the design upon Nieuport, instead of at once attacking the surrounding forts, which would have given them the command of the open country in Flanders, and which they, in consequence, left the archduke leisure to strengthen. The prince, in obedience to their dictates, though contrary to his own judgment, recommenced the siege, but Albert, having rapidly reassembled his scattered troops, enabled La Parlotte to throw a succour of twenty-five hundred men into the town, which circumstance, coupled with the incessant heavy rains, induced Maurice to retire within a few days; when, hopeless of being able to undertake any further enterprise of importance, he sent his cavalry to Brabant, and embarking his infantry for Zealand, returned himself to Holland.^c

Early in the spring Prince Maurice opened the campaign at the head of sixteen thousand men, chiefly composed of English and French. The town of Rheinberg soon fell into the hands of the prince. His next attempt was against Bois-le-Duc, but he was forced to raise the siege, and turn his attention in another direction.

THE SIEGE OF OSTEND (1601-1604)

The archduke Albert had now resolved to invest Ostend,¹ a place of great importance to the United Provinces, but little worth to either party in comparison with the dreadful waste of treasure and human life which was the consequence of its memorable siege. Sir Francis Vere commanded in the place at the period of its final investment; but governors, garrisons, and besieging forces were renewed and replaced with a rapidity which gives one of the most frightful instances of the ravages of war. The siege of Ostend lasted upwards of three years. It became a school for the young nobility of all Europe, who repaired to either one or the other party to learn the principles and the practise of attack and defence. Everything that the art of strategy could devise was resorted to on either side. The slaughter in the various assaults, sorties, and bombardments was enormous. Squadrons at sea gave a double interest to the land operations; and the celebrated brothers Federigo and Ambrogio Spinola founded their reputation on these opposing elements. Federigo was killed in one of the naval combats with the Dutch galleys, and the fame of reducing Ostend was reserved for Ambrogio. This afterwards celebrated general had undertaken the command at the earnest entreaties of the archduke and the king of Spain, and by the firmness and vigour of his measures he revived the courage of the worn-out assailants of the place. Redoubled attacks and multiplied mines at length reduced the town to a mere mass of ruin, and scarcely left its still undaunted garrison sufficient footing on which to prolong their desperate defence.

Ostend at length surrendered, on the 22nd of September, 1604, and the victors marched in over its crumbled walls and shattered batteries. Scarcely a vestige of the place remained beyond those terrible evidences of destruction. Its ditches, filled up with the rubbish of ramparts, bastions, and redoubts, left no distinct line of separation between the operations of its attack and its

[¹ Haestens ^d called it, from the length of its siege, "the modern Troy."]

[1601-1604 A.D.]

defence. It resembled rather a vast sepulchre than a ruined town, a mountain of earth and rubbish, without a single house in which the wretched remnant of the inhabitants could hide their heads — a monument of desolation on which victory might have sat and wept.^g

Ostend had surrendered, after a siege of three years and two months, the garrison being permitted to march out with all the honours of war. On their arrival in the camp near Sluys, they received, before the whole army, the thanks of the prince and states for the eminent services they had rendered



STREET SCENE, LOW LIFE, AFTER BROUWER

(1606-1637)

their country. The defence had cost the states the sum of 4,000,000 guilders, and the loss of 50,000 men — an expenditure which, however enormous, was yet far surpassed by that of the besiegers. Immediately after the surrender, the archdukes came to visit the city, and found that they had lavished blood, time, and treasure, to gain a heap of ruins.¹ They subsequently offered valuable privileges to any persons who would fix their residence in Ostend; but years elapsed before the people could endure the sight of a spot defiled with the blood and whitening bones of their countrymen. The greater portion of the citizens settled permanently at Sluys.^c

During the progress of this memorable siege Queen Elizabeth of England had died. With respect to the United Provinces she was a harsh protectress

[¹ Upon that miserable sandbank more than a hundred thousand men had laid down their lives. The numbers of those who were killed or who died of disease in both armies during this memorable siege have been placed as high as one hundred and forty thousand by Gallucci.^e Meteren^f says that on the body of a Spanish officer, who fell in one of the innumerable assaults, was found a list of all the officers and privates killed in the Catholic army up to that date (which he does not give), and the amount was 72,124 — MOTLEY.^h]

[1604-1605 A.D.]

and a capricious ally. She in turns advised them to remain faithful to the old impurities of religion and to their intolerable king; refused to incorporate them with her own states; and then used her best efforts for subjecting them to her sway. She seemed to take pleasure in the uncertainty to which she reduced them, by constant demands for payment of her loans and threats of making peace with Spain. Thus the states-general were not much affected by the news of her death: and so rejoiced were they at the accession of James I to the throne of England, that all the bells of Holland rang out merry peals; bon-fires were set blazing all over the country;¹ a letter of congratulation was despatched to the new monarch; and it was speedily followed by a solemn embassy, composed of Prince Frederick Henry, the grand pensionary Barneveld and others of the first dignitaries of the republic. These ambassadors were grievously disappointed at the reception given to them by James, who treated them as little better than rebels to their lawful king.

The states-general considered themselves amply recompensed for the loss of Ostend, by the taking of Sluys, Rheinberg, and Graves, all of which had in the interval surrendered to Prince Maurice; but they were seriously alarmed on finding themselves abandoned by King James who concluded a separate peace with Philip III of Spain in the month of August of this year.

The two monarchs stipulated in the treaty that "neither was to give support of any kind to the revolted subjects of the other." It is nevertheless true that James did not withdraw his troops from the service of the states; but he authorised the Spaniards to levy soldiers in England. The United Provinces were at once afflicted and indignant at this equivocal conduct. Their first impulse was to deprive the English of the liberty of navigating the Schelde. They even arrested the progress of several of their merchant ships. But soon after, gratified at finding that James received their deputy with the title of ambassador, they resolved to dissimulate their resentment.

THE CAMPAIGNS OF 1605-1606

In 1605, Prince Maurice and Spinola took the field with their respective armies; and a rapid series of operations placing them in direct contact displayed their talents in the most striking points of view. The first steps on the part of the prince were a new invasion of Flanders and an attempt on Antwerp, which he hoped to carry before the Spanish army could arrive to its succour. But the promptitude and sagacity of Spinola defeated this plan, which Maurice was obliged to abandon after some loss; while the royalist general resolved to signalise himself by some important movement; and, ere his design was suspected, he had penetrated into the province of Overysse, and thus retorted his rival's favourite measure of carrying the war into the enemy's country.

Several towns were rapidly reduced; but Maurice flew towards the threatened provinces, and by his active measures forced Spinola to fall back on the Rhine and take up a position near Ruhrort, where he was impetuously attacked by the Dutch army. But the cavalry having followed up too slowly the orders of Maurice, his hopes of surprising the royalists were frustrated; and the Spanish forces, gaining time by this hesitation, soon changed the fortune of the day. The Dutch cavalry shamefully took to flight, despite the gallant endeavours of both Maurice and his brother Frederick Henry; and at this juncture a large reinforcement of Spaniards arrived under the

[¹ According to certain authorities this ostentatious celebration was conceived in some anxiety, purely as a measure to conciliate James I of whom they well felt uncertain.]

[1605 A.D.]

command of Velasco. Maurice now brought forward some companies of English and French infantry under Horatio Vere and D'Omerville, also a distinguished officer.

The battle was again fiercely renewed; and the Spaniards now gave way, and had been completely defeated, had not Spinola put in practice an old and generally successful stratagem. He caused almost all the drums of his army to beat in one direction, so as to give the impression that a still larger reinforcement was approaching. Maurice, apprehensive that the former panic might find a parallel in a fresh one, prudently ordered a retreat, which he was able to effect in good order, in preference to risking the total disorganisation of his troops. The loss on each side was nearly the same; but the glory of this hard-fought day remained on the side of Spinola, who proved himself a worthy successor of the great duke of Parma, and an antagonist with whom Maurice might contend without dishonour.

The naval transactions of this year restored the balance which Spinola's successes had begun to turn in favour of the royalist cause. A squadron of ships, commanded by Hautain [or William de Zoete], admiral of Zealand attacked a superior force of Spanish vessels close to Dover, and defeated them with a considerable loss. But the victory was sullied by an act of great barbarity. All the soldiers found on board the captured ships were tied two and two and mercilessly flung into the sea.¹ Some contrived to extricate themselves, and gained the shore by swimming; others were picked up by the English boats, whose crews witnessed the scene and hastened to their relief.

The Dutch vessels pursuing those of Spain, which fled into Dover harbour, were fired on by the cannon of the castle and forced to give up the chase. The English loudly complained that the Dutch had on this occasion violated their territory;² and this transaction laid the foundation of the quarrel which subsequently broke out between England and the republic, and which the jealousies of rival merchants in either state unceasingly fomented. In this year also the Dutch succeeded in capturing the chief of the Dunkirk privateers, which had so long annoyed their trade; and they cruelly ordered sixty of the prisoners to be put to death. But the people, more humane than the authorities, rescued them from the executioners and set them free.

But these domestic instances of success and inhumanity were trifling, in comparison with the splendid train of distant events, accompanied by a course of wholesale benevolence that redeemed the traits of petty guilt. The maritime enterprises of Holland, forced by the imprudent policy of Spain to seek a wider career than in the narrow seas of Europe, were day by day extended in the Indies. To ruin if possible their increasing trade, Philip III sent out the admiral Hurtado, with a fleet of eight galleons and thirty-two galleys. The Dutch squadron of five vessels, commanded by Wolfert Hermanszoon, attacked them off the coast of Malabar, and his temerity was crowned with great success. He took two of their vessels, and completely drove the remainder from the Indian seas. He then concluded a treaty

[¹ This barbarous custom, called in the provinces *voetspoelen* (feetwashing), was constantly enforced by the authority of the states and admiralty, against the pirates of Dunkirk. At length the sailors refused to go to sea unless it were abolished, when it was allowed to fall into disuse.—DAVIES. c]

[² The English, during the combat, siding with their newly-reconciled foes, pointed the fire of the cannon at Dover against their ancient allies, of whom they killed more than one hundred. The king afterwards justified this act, by complaining that the neutrality of the English shores had been violated by the too near approach of the Dutch; an insulting pretext, the harder to be borne by the latter, as the pirates of Dunkirk were allowed to pursue the Holland and Zealand merchant-ships into every port of England.—DAVIES. c]

with the natives of the isle of Banda, by which he promised to support them against the Spaniards and Portuguese on condition that they were to give his fellow countrymen the exclusive privilege of purchasing the spices of the island. This treaty was the foundation of the influence which the Dutch soon succeeded in forming in the East Indies; and they established it by a candid, mild, and tolerant conduct, strongly contrasted with the pride and bigotry which had signalised every act of the Portuguese and Spaniards.

The states-general now resolved to confine their military operations to a war merely defensive.¹ Spinola had, by his conduct during the late campaign, completely revived the spirits of the Spanish troops, and excited at least the caution of the Dutch. He now threatened the United Provinces with invasion; and he exerted his utmost efforts to raise the supplies necessary for the execution of his plan. He not only exhausted the resources of the king of Spain and the archduke, but obtained money on his private account from all those usurers who were tempted by his confident anticipations of conquest. He soon equipped two armies of about twelve thousand men each. At the head of one of those he took the field; the other, commanded by the count of Buquoy, was destined to join him in the neighbourhood of Utrecht; and he was then resolved to push forward with the whole united force into the very heart of the republic.

Prince Maurice in the meantime concentrated his army, amounting to twelve thousand men, and prepared to make head against his formidable opponents. By a succession of the most prudent manœuvres he contrived to keep Spinola in check, disconcerted all his projects, and forced him to content himself with the capture of two or three towns — a comparatively insignificant conquest. Desiring to wipe away the disgrace of this discomfiture, and to risk everything for the accomplishment of his grand design, Spinola used every method to provoke the prince to a battle, even though a serious mutiny among his troops, and the impossibility of forming a junction with Buquoy, had reduced his force below that of Maurice; but the latter, to the surprise of all who expected a decisive blow, retreated from before the Italian general — abandoning the town of Groenlo, which immediately fell into Spinola's power, and gave rise to manifold conjectures and infinite discontent at conduct so little in unison with his wonted enterprise and skill.² Even Henry IV acknowledged it did not answer the expectation he had formed from Maurice's splendid talents for war. The fact seems to be that the prince, much as he valued victory, dreaded peace more; and that he was resolved to avoid a decisive blow, which, in putting an end to the contest, would at the same time have decreased the individual influence in the state, which his ambition now urged him to augment by every possible means.

The Dutch naval expeditions of 1606 were not more brilliant than those on land. Admiral Hautain, with twenty ships, was surprised off Cape St.

[¹ As Blok ^a points out, Holland had carried so much more than her share of expense, that the burden was growing intolerable. The debt alone was 26,000,000 florins, and in August, 1606, a secret commission with Olden-Barneveld at the head declared that further war was growing impossible. Olden-Barneveld even felt inclined to offer the sovereignty to a foreign monarch.]

[² The campaign was closed. And thus the great war, which had run its stormy course for nearly forty years, dribbled out of existence, sinking away that rainy November in the dismal fens of Zutphen. The long struggle for independence had come, almost unperceived, to an end. Peace had not arrived, but the work of the armies was over for many a long year. Freedom and independence were secured. A deed or two, never to be forgotten by Netherland hearts, was yet to be done on the ocean, before the long and intricate negotiations for peace should begin, and the weary people permit themselves to rejoice; but the prize was already won. — MOTLEY.^b]

[1606-1607 A. D.]

Vincent by the Spanish fleet. The formidable appearance of their galleons inspired on this occasion a perfect panic among the Dutch sailors. They hoisted their sails and fled, with the exception of one ship, commanded by Vice-Admiral Klaazoon, whose desperate conduct saved the national honour. Having held out until his vessel was quite unmanageable, and almost his whole crew killed or wounded, he prevailed on the rest to agree to the resolution he had formed, knelt down on the deck, and putting up a brief prayer for pardon for their act, thrust a light into the powder magazine, and was instantly blown up with his companions. Only two men were snatched from the sea by the Spaniards; and even these, dreadfully burned and mangled, died in the utterance of curses on the enemy.

HEEMSKERK AT GIBRALTAR (1607)

This disastrous occurrence was soon, however, forgotten in the rejoicings for a brilliant victory gained in 1607 by Heemskerk, so celebrated for his voyage to Nova Zembla and by his conduct in the East. He set sail from the ports of Holland in the month of March, determined to signalise himself by some great exploit, now necessary to redeem the disgrace which had begun to sully the reputation of the Dutch navy. He soon got intelligence that the Spanish fleet lay at anchor in the bay of Gibraltar, and he speedily prepared to offer them battle. Before the combat began he held a council of war, and addressed the officers in an energetic speech, in which he displayed the imperative call on their valour to conquer or die in the approaching conflict. He led on to the action in his own ship; and, to the astonishment of both fleets, he bore right down against the enormous galleon in which the flag of the Spanish admiral-in-chief was hoisted. Avila could scarcely believe the evidence of his eyes at this audacity: he at first burst into laughter at the notion; but as Heemskerk approached he cut his cables, and attempted to escape under the shelter of the town. The heroic Dutchman pursued him through the whole of the Spanish fleet, and soon forced him to action. At the second broadside Heemskerk had his left leg carried off by a cannon ball, and he almost instantly died. Verhoef, the captain of the ship, concealed the admiral's death; and the whole fleet continued the action with a valour worthy of the spirit in which it was commenced. The victory was soon decided: four of the Spanish galleons were sunk or burned, the remainder fled; and the citizens of Cadiz trembled with the apprehension of sack and pillage. But the death of Heemskerk, when made known to the surviving victors, seemed completely to paralyse them: they attempted nothing further; but sailing back to Holland with the body of their lamented chief, thus paid a greater tribute to his importance than was to be found in the mausoleum erected to his memory in the city of Amsterdam.

The news of this battle, reaching Brussels before it was known in Holland, contributed not a little to quicken the anxiety of the archdukes for peace. The king of Spain, worn out by the war which drained his treasury, had for some time ardently desired it. The Portuguese made loud complaints of the ruin that threatened their trade and their East Indian colonies. The Spanish ministers were fatigued with the apparently interminable contest which baffled all their calculations. Spinola, even in the midst of his brilliant career, found himself so overwhelmed with debts, and so oppressed by the reproaches of the numerous creditors who were ruined by his default of payment, that he joined in the general demand for repose. In the month of May, 1607, proposals were made by the archdukes, in compliance with the

general desire; and their two plenipotentiaries, Van Wittenhorst and Gevaerts, repaired to the Hague.

Public opinion in the united states was divided on this important question. An instinctive hatred against the Spaniards, and long habits of warfare, influenced the great mass of the people to consider any overture for peace as some wily artifice aimed at their religion and liberty. War seemed to open inexhaustible sources of wealth; while peace seemed to threaten the extinction of the courage which was now as much a habit as war appeared to be a want. This reasoning was particularly convincing to Prince Maurice, whose fame, with a large portion of his authority and revenues, depended on the continuance of hostilities: it was also strongly relished and supported in Zealand generally, and in the chief towns which dreaded the rivalry of Antwerp.¹ But those who bore the burden of the war saw the subject under a different aspect: they feared that the present state of things would lead to their conquest by the enemy, or to the ruin of their liberty by the growing power of Maurice. They hoped that peace would consolidate the republic and cause the reduction of the debt, which now amounted to 26,000,000 florins. At the head of the party who so reasoned was Barneveld; and his name is a guarantee with posterity for the wisdom of the opinion.

To allow the violent opposition to subside, and to prevent any explosion of party feuds, the prudent Barneveld suggested a mere suspension of arms, during which the permanent interests of both states might be calmly discussed: he even undertook to obtain Maurice's consent to the armistice. The prince listened to his arguments, and was apparently convinced by them. He, at any rate, sanctioned the proposal; but he afterwards complained that Barneveld had deceived him, in representing the negotiation as a feint for the purpose of persuading the kings of France and England to give greater aid to the republic. It is more than likely that Maurice reckoned on the improbability of Spain's consenting to the terms of the proposed treaty; and, on that chance, withdrew an opposition which could scarcely be ascribed to any but motives of personal ambition. It is, however, certain that his discontent at this transaction, either with himself or Barneveld, laid the foundation of that bitter enmity which proved fatal to the life of the latter, and covered his own name, otherwise glorious, with undying reproach.

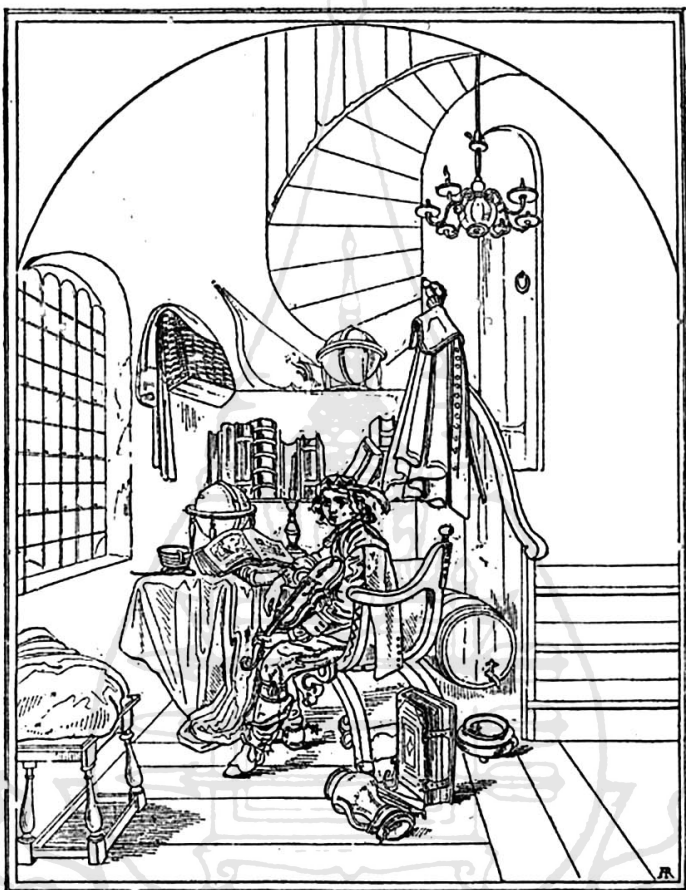
The United Provinces positively refused to admit even the commencement of a negotiation without the absolute recognition of their independence by the archdukes. A new ambassador was accordingly chosen on the part of these sovereigns. He was a monk of the order of St. Francis, named John Neyen, a native of Antwerp. The suspicions of the states-general seem fully justified by the dubious tone of the various communications, which avoided the direct admission of the required preliminary as to the independence of the United Provinces. It was at length concluded in explicit terms; and a suspension of arms for eight months was the immediate consequence.

But the negotiation for peace was on the point of being completely broken, in consequence of the conduct of Neyen, who justified every doubt of his

[¹ Blok has stated various reasons for the war-party's action: "In time of war, the supremacy of Holland and Zealand, the soul of the union, had been endured. In time of peace, jealousy would be excited by this dominance, and the lack of a strong central government would become more patent. Moreover, the Calvinist minority now in power would have to yield, more or less, to the majority composed of nominal Catholics, of libertines, and of indifferent people. The house of Orange, whose reputation Maurice had sustained during active hostilities, might find its influence weaken. Maurice could not stand in his father's shadow as statesman, and wholly lacked capacity to revise the articles of union. Thus there was much ground for reluctance to make peace. Moreover, the war had become a source of commercial prosperity, which could not be checked without affecting the existence of many thousands."]

[1607-1608 A.D.]

sincerity by an attempt to corrupt Aarssens the greffier of the states-general, or at least to influence his conduct in the progress of the treaty. Neyen presented him, in the name of the archdukes, and as a token of his esteem, with a diamond of great value and a bond for 50,000 crowns. Aarssens accepted these presents with the approbation of Prince Maurice, to whom he had confided the circumstance, and who was no doubt delighted at what promised



AN INTERIOR — AFTER GERARD DOUW

(1613-1675)

a rupture of the negotiations. Verreyken, a counsellor of state, who assisted Neyen in his diplomatic labours, was formally summoned before the assembled states-general, and there Barneveld handed to him the diamond and the bond; and at the same time read him a lecture of true republican severity on the subject. Verreyken was overwhelmed by the violent attack: he denied the authority of Neyen for the measure he had taken.

In the month of January, 1608, the various ambassadors were assembled at the Hague. Spinola was the chief of the plenipotentiaries appointed by the king of Spain; and Jeannin, president of the parliament of Dijon, a man of rare endowments, represented France. Prince Maurice, accompanied

by his brother Frederick Henry, the various counts of Nassau his cousins, and a numerous escort, advanced some distance to meet Spinola, conveyed him to the Hague in his own carriage, and lavished on him all the attentions reciprocally due between two such renowned captains during the suspension of their rivalry. The president Richardot was, with Neyen and Verreyken, ambassador from the archdukes; but Barneveld and Jeannin appear to have played the chief parts in the important transaction which now filled all Europe with anxiety. Every state was more or less concerned in the result; and the three great monarchies of England, France, and Spain had all a vital interest at stake. The conferences were therefore frequent; and the debates assumed a great variety of aspects, which long kept the civilised world in suspense.

The main points for discussion, and on which depended the decision for peace or war, were those which concerned religion; and the demand, on the part of Spain, that the United Provinces should renounce all claims to the navigation of the Indian seas. Philip required for the Catholics of the United Provinces the free exercise of their religion; this was opposed by the states-general: and the archduke Albert, seeing the impossibility of carrying that point, despatched his confessor Fra Inigo de Brizuela to Spain.

The conferences at the Hague were not interrupted on this question; but they went on slowly, months being consumed in discussions on articles of trifling importance. They were resumed in the month of August with greater vigour. It was announced that the king of Spain abandoned the question respecting religion; but that it was in the certainty that his moderation would be recompensed by ample concessions on that of the Indian trade, on which he was inexorable. This article became the rock on which the whole negotiation eventually split. The court of Spain on the one hand, and the states-general on the other, inflexibly maintained their opposing claims. It was in vain that the ambassadors turned and twisted the subject with all the subtleties of diplomacy. Every possible expedient was used to shake the determination of the Dutch. But the influence of the East India Company, the islands of Zealand, and the city of Amsterdam prevailed over all. Reports of the avowal on the part of the king of Spain that he would never renounce his title to the sovereignty of the United Provinces, unless they abandoned the Indian navigation and granted the free exercise of religion, threw the whole diplomatic corps into confusion; and, on the 25th of August, the states-general announced to the marquis of Spinola and the other ambassadors that the congress was dissolved, and that all hopes of peace were abandoned.

Nothing seemed now likely to prevent the immediate renewal of hostilities, when the ambassadors of France and England proposed the mediation of their respective masters for the conclusion of a truce for several years. The king of Spain and the archdukes were well satisfied to obtain even this temporary cessation of the war; but Prince Maurice and a portion of the provinces strenuously opposed the proposition. The French and English ambassadors, however, in concert with Barneveld, who steadily maintained his influence, laboured incessantly to overcome those difficulties; and finally succeeded in overpowering all opposition to the truce. A new congress was agreed on, to assemble at Antwerp for the consideration of the conditions; and the states-general agreed to remove from the Hague to Bergen-op-Zoom, to be more within reach and ready to co-operate in the negotiation.

But, before matters assumed this favourable turn, discussion and disputes had intervened on several occasions to render fruitless every effort of those who so incessantly laboured for the great causes of humanity and the

[1595-1609 A.D.]

general good. On one occasion Barneveld, disgusted with the opposition of Prince Maurice and his partisans, had actually resigned his employments; but brought back by the solicitations of the states-general, and reconciled to Maurice by the intervention of Jeannin, the negotiations for the truce were resumed; and, under the auspices of the ambassadors, they were happily terminated. After two years' delay, this long-wished-for truce was concluded and signed on the 9th of April, 1609, to continue for the space of twelve years.

THE TWELVE YEARS' TRUCE

This celebrated treaty contained thirty-two articles; and its fulfilment on either side was guaranteed by the kings of France and England. Notwithstanding the time taken up in previous discussions, the treaty is one of the most vague and unspecific state papers that exist. The archdukes, in their own names and in that of the king of Spain, declared the United Provinces to be free and independent states, on which they renounced all claim whatever. By the third article each party was to hold respectively the places which they possessed at the commencement of the armistice. The fourth and fifth articles grant to the republic, but in a phraseology obscure and even doubtful, the right of navigation and free trade to the Indies. The eighth contains all that regards the exercise of religion; and the remaining clauses are wholly relative to points of internal trade, custom-house regulations, and matters of private interest. Ephemeral and temporary as this peace appeared, it was received with almost universal demonstrations of joy by the population of the Netherlands in their two grand divisions.

The ten southern provinces, now confirmed under the sovereignty of the house of Austria, and from this period generally distinguished by the name of Belgium, immediately began, like the northern division of the country, to labour for the great object of repairing the dreadful sufferings caused by their long and cruel war. Their success was considerable. Albert and Isabella, their sovereigns, joined to considerable probity of character and talents for government a fund of humanity which led them to unceasing acts of benevolence. The whole of their dominions quickly began to recover from the ravages of war. Agriculture and the minor operations of trade resumed all their wonted activity. But the manufactures of Flanders were no more; and the grander exercise of commerce seemed finally removed to Amsterdam and the other chief towns of Holland.

DUTCH COMMERCE AND EXPLORATION

The year 1595 is signalised in the annals of Dutch commerce as being that of the commencement of the trade between the United Provinces and the East Indies. The arrest of their ships by the king of Spain, in 1586, had induced the merchants to undertake more distant voyages; since which time, the scarcity that had prevailed for some years in Italy had afforded them a rich harvest of traffic in carrying corn thither from the countries of the Baltic. The restoration of plenty in that quarter caused these speculations, in great measure, to cease, which obliged the mariners of Holland and Zealand to seek out some new market for their industry; while, at the same time, their emulation was roused by the fame of the voyages and discoveries of the English and Portuguese.

One Cornelis Houtman, of Gouda, having spent some years in Lisbon, returned to Amsterdam, with such tempting accounts of the profits to be

[1595-1597 A.D.]

gained by a trade with the spice islands of India, that he induced nine merchants of that city to form themselves into a company for the establishment of a commerce with the nations of the East. They equipped, entirely at their own cost, four vessels, equally fitted for war and the transport of merchandise. Setting sail from the Texel on the 2nd of April, it was June of the next year before they reached the island of Java. Here they had to encounter the hostility of a company of Portuguese merchants, settled at Bantam, the capital. Three ships returned in 1597, after a voyage of more than two years, to Amsterdam, where their arrival, laden with pepper, nutmegs, and mace, was the signal for a general jubilee, though but 90 out of 250 of their crews were left alive.

Arctic Exploration

This enterprise had been preceded by an expedition undertaken in the last year, towards the north pole, with a view of discovering a shorter and safer passage to China than that round the cape of Good Hope. For this purpose two Vlie-boats (so called from being built expressly for the difficult navigation of the Vlie) were fitted out, one in Holland and the other in Zealand, the admiralty of these provinces providing half the expense, with instructions to attempt the passage into the sea of Tatar, through the straits of Weygat between Nova Zembla and Russia. At the same time, some merchants of Amsterdam, at the suggestion of the celebrated geographer and divine, Petrus Plancius, prepared another vessel, with the view of discovering if it were possible to effect a passage into the same sea to the north of Nova Zembla. The three vessels parted company at the island of Kildin (69° 40'), when the two former, shaping their course north-northeast, discovered Staten Island; and passing the Weygat, to which they gave the name of the straits of Nassau, succeeded, though frequently in danger of being enclosed by the ice or dashed in pieces by the floating bergs, in effecting their passage into the sea of Tatar, along which they sailed as far as the mouth of the Obi.

The Amsterdam vessel reached Lombsbay (lat. 74° 20'), but was prevented from advancing further by the continual mists and the quantity of ice, as well as the unwillingness of the crew to continue the voyage. On the report brought by the two former vessels, the states-general were induced to fit out seven ships in this year for the same expedition, but they added nothing to the previous discoveries, their navigation being impeded by the ice. Determined, however, if possible, to effect their purpose, the merchants of Amsterdam once more equipped two vessels — the one commanded by Jan Corneliszoon Rijp, the other by Jakob van Heemskerck, both resolute, able, and enterprising captains, with one Willem Barentz, famed for his skill as a pilot. Setting sail in company on the 10th of May, they separated on the coast of Norway, when the ship of Rijp, steering towards the northwest discovered the island of Spitzbergen, to which they gave this name from the pointed appearance of its mountains.¹

They had reached the 75th degree of north latitude, when their vessel became firmly locked in the ice at no great distance from the shore. Hopeless of moving, they had no other resource left than to make the best preparations they might for a residence there during the whole winter. Happily they were well supplied with clothing, wine, and food, except meat, and hav-

¹ From the Dutch words "spitz," pointed, and "berg," mountain.

[1596-1598 A.D.]

ing found a quantity of drift-wood in a fresh-water stream, at about three miles distance, which singularly enough remained unfrozen, they soon completed a spacious and tolerably commodious hut; from the same source, also, they obtained ample provision of firewood. Here they ran imminent risk of destruction from the multitude of bears which, attracted probably by the smell, prowled day and night around their new habitation; some of these they killed, and found their fat highly serviceable in keeping their lamps burning during the season of darkness, which lasted from the 4th of November to the 24th of January.

They remained here ten months, and the middle of June, 1596, arrived without any appearance of probability of their being able to float the vessel; and fearing lest, if they delayed longer, the ice might again accumulate and prevent their return, they set out in two open boats on their voyage homeward. After a series of incredible hardships and perils, from the effect of which their pilot, Willem Barentz, died, they arrived at Waardhuys, on the coast of Norway, where they met with their consort, which they supposed to have perished long ago. Rijp, the commander, having taken them on board his vessel, set sail for Amsterdam, where they were received as men risen from the dead, the failure in the object of their expedition being wholly forgotten in admiration at the surpassing courage and patience with which they had endured their sufferings.¹



JAKOB VAN HEEMSKERK
(1567-1607)

A quarrel between the queen of England and the Hanse towns, which had existed for some years, became so violent in 1598 that the emperor banished from the empire the company of English merchant adventurers resident in the town of Stade. Intelligence of the circumstance no sooner reached the United Provinces, than all the principal towns sent to offer the merchants extensive privileges, in the hope of inducing them to settle there. After some consideration, they chose the town of Middelburg in Zeeland, whither they drew an immense trade in cloths, serges, and baize; the queen

¹ In the relation of this voyage, we meet with an instance of the extraordinary elasticity of spirit, and of the predilection for their national customs, peculiar to this people. The 5th of January, the eve of the day of the Three Kings, is one of those periodical seasons consecrated by the Dutch to idleness and frolic. The sufferings of the ship's crew from cold were intense; they had not seen the sun for two months, and many more must be passed before they could be released from their ice-girt prison; but, philosophically observing that because they expected so many sad days was no reason they should not have one merry one, they chose the chief boatswain as their king (a potentate of like authority and functions with the Lord of Misrule in our Christmas revels); drank to the health of the new sovereign of Nova Zembla in bumpers of wine, which they had spared for the occasion; tossed the pancake (*de rigueur* on such occasions) with the prescribed ceremonies, and made the dreary realms of the snow-king re-echo for the first time to the sounds of human mirth and jollity.

commanding that all the wools exported from England should be consigned to them. About the same time, the city of Amsterdam was enriched by the settlement of an immense number of wealthy Jews, who had fled from Portugal to avoid the renewed persecutions exercised against them on account of their religion.

A new source of foreign commerce, also, was at this period opened to the provinces by a treaty with the grand signior of Constantinople, from whom they obtained entire liberty of traffic to Syria, Greece, Egypt, and Turkey, for all their vessels sailing under the protection of the king of France. The expedition to the East Indies undertaken by the merchants of Amsterdam, in 1595, though attended with some disasters, had roused the emulation of the other towns of Holland and Zealand. Eighty ships of considerable size sailed this summer to the East and West Indies, to Brazil, and to the coast of Guinea, whence they brought large quantities of ivory and gold-dust. Nor did these novel and exciting enterprises divert them from their long-established and profitable trade with the countries of the north; 640 vessels from the Baltic arrived early in the next year in the port of Amsterdam, bearing one hundred thousand tons of merchandise, (timber, corn, hemp, tar, etc.), of which each ton paid a duty of twenty guilders.

The Dutch East India Company

In the year 1602 is dated the erection of the famed Dutch East India Company, a source of immense wealth to Holland, and of continual heart-burnings and jealousies between herself and other nations. The groundwork of this company had been formed by a few merchants of Amsterdam in 1595; and, notwithstanding the losses and disasters subsequently occasioned by the combined hostility of the natives and Portuguese, the trade had become yearly more profitable, and the public appetite for it had constantly and rapidly increased. The commanders of the Dutch vessels had been able to obviate in some measure the effects of the misrepresentations of the Spaniards and Portuguese on the minds of the people of India, and had made alliances with the islanders of Banda, the king of Ternate, and of Kandy in the island of Ceylon, and the sovereign of Achin.

Under these favourable circumstances, companies were established in several towns both of Holland and Zealand; but they perceived, ere long, that they unconsciously inflicted extensive damage on each other. For this reason, the states determined upon consolidating all the companies into one general East India Company, which for a term of twenty-one years should have the exclusive privilege of navigating east of the cape of Good Hope, and west of the straits of Magellan. The capital amounted to 6,600,000 guilders; the company was empowered to make alliances with the sovereigns of India in the name of the states or chief magistrate of the provinces, to build forts, and appoint governors taking the oath to the states. The company commenced operations by the equipment of a fleet of fourteen armed vessels, of which Wybrand van Warwyk was appointed admiral. Wybrand remained nearly five years abroad, and in the year 1606 discovered the island to which he gave the name of Mauritius.

The commencement of the career of the new East India Company was one of almost uninterrupted prosperity. In 1603 another fleet of thirteen ships, under the command of Stephen van der Hagen, sailing to the coast of Malabar, made with the king of Calicut an advantageous treaty of commerce and alliance against the Portuguese; and early in this year arrived

[1603-1608 A. D.]

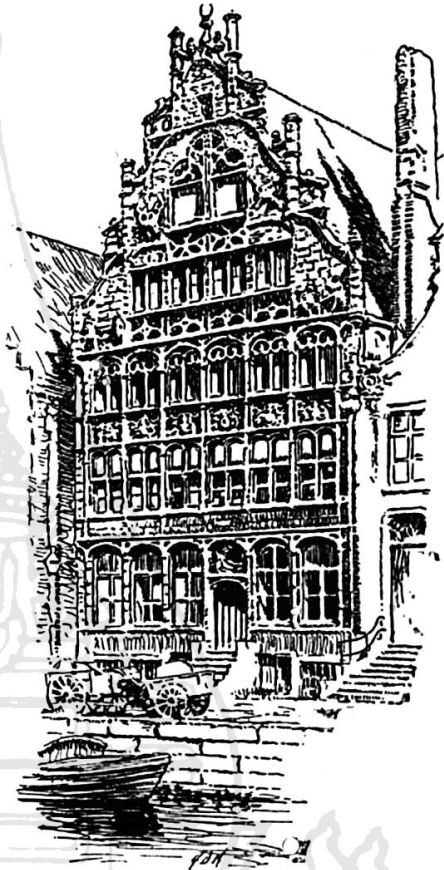
before Amboyna, the citadel of which the Portuguese were forced to surrender. It was a remarkable proof of the bitter and savage hatred which subsisted between the Dutch and Spaniards that the former on this, as on most other occasions, when they captured an enemy's ship, put the whole of the Spaniards to death, while the Portuguese they brought safely to land, and often released them without a ransom.

During the negotiations for the truce the greater number of deputies in the states were determined at all hazards to insist upon the continuation of a commerce which had now become actually necessary to their well-being; which employed 190 ships, and above eight thousand men; and of which the annual returns were estimated at 43,000,000 guilders. The trade with Spain, which was offered in the stead, was of far inferior value. It was in vain that they had fought during forty years for their liberty, and against the duke of Alva's tenth, as destructive of commerce, if they were now to endure the slavery of being excluded from the greater portion of the world.

The provinces were the less disposed to make the immense sacrifice required of them by Spain, in consequence of the tidings which reached them in 1608, of the successes obtained by their countrymen, and the rich prizes they had captured in the Indian seas. A fleet of thirteen vessels, which had been equipped for India in 1605, under the admiral Matelief, one of the directors of the company, sailing to the peninsula of Malay, made alliances with the four kings then reigning in Johore, whose ancestors had been deprived of

Malacca by the Portuguese, and, in concert with them, in 1608, undertook the siege of that city. He had lain before it four months, when Don Alonzo de Castro, viceroy of India, came to its relief with a fleet of fourteen galleons and twenty smaller vessels, on board of which were 3,700 men. The number of the Dutch amounted to no more than 1,200. At the approach of the enemy, Matelief broke up the siege, and re-embarked his artillery; when, advancing to meet the Spanish fleet, a sharp contest ensued, in which each side lost three vessels; but the Dutch had no more than eight men killed, while a considerable number perished on the side of the Spaniards. A second engagement, fought not long after, was far more decisive; two ships of Castro's fleet were captured, a third destroyed by fire, and the remainder so entirely disabled that, retreating into the roads of Malacca, they were burned by the Spaniards themselves.

The advantages of this victory were counterbalanced by the loss of Tidor,



OLD HOUSES OF GHENT

[1609 A.D.]

where, the citadel having been destroyed, in compliance with the wishes of the king, the Portuguese regained possession of the island without difficulty.

The publication of the truce had been received in the Spanish Netherlands with unbounded acclamations; but the inhabitants of the United Provinces, in whose naturally pacific disposition the long war, and the successes attendant on it, had worked a vast change, manifested a joy less lively and universal. The feelings with which it was regarded by foreign nations were those of unbounded astonishment and admiration.^c

Motley has thus summed up the war: "A commonwealth of sand-banks, lagoons, and meadows, less than fourteen thousand square miles in extent, had done battle for nearly half a century with the greatest of existing powers, a realm whose territory was nearly a third of the globe, and which claimed universal monarchy. And this had been done with an army averaging forty-six thousand men, half of them foreigners hired by the job, and by a seafaring population, volunteering into ships of every class and denomination, from a fly-boat to a galleot of war. And when the republic had won its independence, after this almost eternal warfare, it owed four or five millions of dollars, and had sometimes an annual revenue of nearly that amount."^b

In his biography of Olde.-Barneveld, Motley has thus summed up the truce:

"The convention was signed in the spring of 1609. The ten ensuing years in Europe were comparatively tranquil, but they were scarcely to be numbered among the full and fruitful sheaves of a pacific epoch. It was a pause, a breathing spell during which the sulphurous clouds which had made the atmosphere of Christendom poisonous for nearly half a century had sullenly rolled away, whilst at every point of the horizon they were seen massing themselves anew in portentous and ever-accumulating strength. To us of a remote posterity the momentary division of epochs seems hardly discernible. So rapidly did that fight of demons which we call the Thirty Years' War tread on the heels of the forty years' struggle for Dutch Independence which had just been suspended, that we are accustomed to think and speak of the Eighty Years' War as one pure, perfect, sanguinary whole."ⁱ

