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## **The rise of the Dutch Republic**

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Chapter I. Birth, education, marriage, and youthful character of Alexander Farnese ...

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## PART VI.

### ALEXANDER OF PARMA.

1578-1584.

#### CHAPTER I.

Birth, education, marriage, and youthful character of Alexander Farnese—His private adventures—Exploits at Lepanto and at Gemblours—He succeeds to the government—Personal appearance and characteristics—Aspect of affairs—Internal dissensions—Anjou at Mons—John Casimir's intrigues at Ghent—Anjou disbands his soldiers—The Netherlands ravaged by various foreign troops—Anarchy and confusion in Ghent—Imbize and Ryhove—Fate of Hessels and Visch—New Pacification drawn up by Orange—Representations of Queen Elizabeth—Remonstrance of Brussels—Riots and image-breaking in Ghent—Displeasure of Orange—His presence implored at Ghent, where he establishes a Religious Peace—Painful situation of John Casimir—Sharp rebukes of Elizabeth—He takes his departure—His troops apply to Farnese, who allows them to leave the country—Anjou's departure and manifesto—Elizabeth's letters to the states-general with regard to him—Complimentary addresses by the Estates to the Duke—Death of Bossu—Calumnies against Orange—Venality of the Malcontent grandes—La Motte's treason—Intrigues of the Prior of Renty—Saint Aldegonde at Arras—The Prior of St. Vaast's exertions—Opposition of the clergy in the Walloon provinces to the taxation of the general government—Triangular contest—Municipal revolution in Arras led by Gosson and others—Counter-revolution—Rapid trials and executions—"Reconciliation" of the malcontent chieftains—Secret treaty of Mount St. Eloi—Mischief made by the Prior of Renty—His accusations against the reconciled lords—Vengeance taken upon him—Counter movement by the liberal party—Union of Utrecht—The Act analysed and characterised.

A FIFTH governor now stood in the place which had been successively vacated by Margaret of Parma, by Alva, by the Grand Commander, and by Don John of Austria. Of all the eminent personages to whom Philip had confided the reins of that most difficult and dangerous administration, the man who was now to rule was by far the ablest and the best fitted for his post. If there were living charioteer skilful enough to guide the wheels of state, whirling now more dizzily than ever through "*confusum chaos*," Alexander Farnese was the charioteer to guide—his hand the only one which could control.

He was now in his thirty-third year—his uncle Don John, his cousin Don Carlos, and himself, having all been born within a few months of each other. His father was Ottavio Farnese, the faithful lieutenant of Charles the Fifth, and grandson of Pope Paul the Third; his mother was Margaret of Parma, first Regent of the Netherlands after the departure of Philip from the provinces. He was one of the twins by which the reunion of Margaret and her youthful husband had been blessed, and the only one that survived. His great-grandfather, Paul, whose secular name of Alexander he had received, had placed his hand upon the new-

born infant's head, and prophesied that he would grow up to become a mighty warrior.<sup>1</sup> The boy, from his earliest years, seemed destined to verify the prediction. Though apt enough at his studies, he turned with impatience from his literary tutors to military exercises and the hardiest sports. The din of arms surrounded his cradle. The trophies of Ottavio, returning victorious from beyond the Alps, had dazzled the eyes of his infancy, and when but six years of age he had witnessed the siege of his native Parma, and its vigorous defence by his martial father. When Philip was in the Netherlands—in the years immediately succeeding the abdication of the Emperor—he had received the boy from his parents as a hostage for their friendship. Although but eleven years of age, Alexander had begged earnestly to be allowed to serve as a volunteer on the memorable day of Saint Quentin, and had wept bitterly when the amazed monarch refused his request.<sup>2</sup> His education had been completed at Alcalá, and at Madrid, under the immediate supervision of his royal uncle, and in the companionship of the Infante Carlos and the brilliant Don John. The imperial bastard was alone able to surpass, or even to equal the Italian prince in all martial and manly pursuits. Both were equally devoted to the chase and to the tourney; both longed impatiently for the period when the irksome routine of monkish pedantry, and the fictitious combats which formed their main recreation, should be exchanged for the substantial delights of war. At the age of twenty he had been affianced to Maria of Portugal, daughter of Prince Edward, granddaughter of King Emanuel, and his nuptials with that peerless princess were, as we have seen, celebrated soon afterwards with much pomp in Brussels. Sons and daughters were born to him in due time, during his subsequent residence in Parma. Here, however, the fiery and impatient spirit of the future illustrious commander was doomed for a time

to fret under restraint, and to corrode in distasteful repose. His father, still in the vigour of his years, governing the family duchies of Parma and Piacenza, Alexander had no occupation in the brief period of peace which then existed. The martial spirit, pining for a wide and lofty sphere of action, in which alone its energies could be fitly exercised, now sought delight in the pursuits of the duellist and gladiator. Nightly did the hereditary prince of the land perambulate the streets of his capital, disguised, well armed, alone, or with a single confidential attendant.<sup>3</sup> Every chance passenger of martial aspect whom he encountered in the midnight streets was forced to stand and measure swords with an unknown, almost unseen, but most redoubtable foe, and many were the single combats which he thus enjoyed, so long as his incognito was preserved. Especially, it was his wont to seek and defy every gentleman whose skill or bravery had ever been commended in his hearing. At last, upon one occasion it was his fortune to encounter a certain Count Torelli, whose reputation as a swordsman and duellist was well established in Parma. The blades were joined, and the fierce combat had already been engaged in the darkness, when the torch of an accidental passenger flashed full in the face of Alexander. Torelli, recognising thus suddenly his antagonist, dropped his sword and implored forgiveness,<sup>4</sup> for the wily Italian was too keen not to perceive that even if the death of neither combatant should be the result of the fray, his own position was, in every event, a false one. Victory would ensure him the hatred, defeat the contempt of his future sovereign. The unsatisfactory issue and subsequent notoriety of this encounter put a termination to these midnight joys of Alexander, and for a season he felt obliged to assume more pacific habits, and to solace himself with the society of that "phœnix of Portugal," who had so long sat brooding on his domestic hearth.

<sup>1</sup> Strada, ix. 451, x. 508.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 458.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 454, 455.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 455.

At last the holy league was formed, the new and last crusade proclaimed, his uncle and bosom friend appointed to the command of the united troops of Rome, Spain, and Venice. He could no longer be restrained. Disdaining the pleadings of his mother and of his spouse, he extorted permission from Philip, and flew to the seat of war in the Levant. Don John received him with open arms, just before the famous action of Lepanto, and gave him an excellent position in the very front of the battle, with the command of several Genoese galleys. Alexander's exploits on that eventful day seemed those of a fabulous hero of romance. He laid his galley alongside of the treasure-ship of the Turkish fleet, a vessel, on account of its importance, doubly manned and armed. Impatient that the Crescent was not lowered, after a few broadsides, he sprang on board the enemy alone, waving an immense two-handed sword—his usual weapon—and mowing a passage right and left through the hostile ranks for the warriors who tardily followed the footsteps of their vehement chief. Mustapha Bey, the treasurer and commander of the ship, fell before his sword, besides many others, whom he hardly saw or counted. The galley was soon his own, as well as another, which came to the rescue of the treasure-ship, only to share its defeat. The booty which Alexander's crew secured was prodigious, individual soldiers obtaining two and three thousand ducats each.<sup>1</sup> Don John received his nephew after the battle with commendations, not, however, unmingled with censure. The successful result alone had justified such insane and desperate conduct, for had he been slain or overcome, said the commander-in-chief, there would have been few to applaud his temerity. Alexander gaily replied by assuring his uncle that he had felt sustained by a more than mortal confidence, the prayers which his saintly wife was incessantly offering in his behalf since he went to the wars being a sufficient

support and shield in even greater danger than he had yet confronted.<sup>2</sup>

This was Alexander's first campaign, nor was he permitted to reap any more glory for a few succeeding years. At last, Philip was disposed to send both his mother and himself to the Netherlands, removing Don John from the rack where he had been enduring such slow torture. Granvelle's intercession proved fruitless with the Duchess, but Alexander was all eagerness to go where blows were passing current, and he gladly led the reinforcements which were sent to Don John at the close of the year 1577. He had reached Luxemburg on the 18th of December of that year, in time, as we have seen, to participate, and, in fact, to take the lead in the signal victory of Gemblours. He had been struck with the fatal change which disappointment and anxiety had wrought upon the beautiful and haughty features of his illustrious kinsman.<sup>3</sup> He had since closed his eyes in the camp, and erected a marble tablet over his heart in the little church. He now governed in his stead.

His personal appearance corresponded with his character. He had the head of a gladiator, round, compact, combative, with something alert and snake-like in its movements. The black, closely-shorn hair was erect and bristling. The forehead was lofty and narrow. The features were handsome, the nose regularly aquiline, the eyes well opened, dark, piercing, but with something dangerous and sinister in their expression.<sup>4</sup> There was an habitual look askance, as of a man seeking to parry or inflict a mortal blow—the look of a swordsman and professional fighter. The lower part of the face was swallowed in a bushy beard; the mouth and chin being quite invisible. He was of middle stature, well formed, and graceful in person, princely in demeanour, sumptuous and stately in apparel.<sup>5</sup> His high ruff of point lace, his badge of the Golden Fleece, his gold-inlaid Milan armour, marked him

<sup>1</sup> Strada, ix. 456, 457.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 458.     <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, ix. 460.

<sup>4</sup> "Een fel gezicht," says Bor, 3, xxix. 661;

and the portraits confirm the statement.

<sup>5</sup> "Kostelijk en overdadig in kleederen."

—Bor, loc. cit.

at once as one of high degree. On the field of battle he possessed the rare gift of inspiring his soldiers with his own impetuous and chivalrous courage. He ever led the way upon the most dangerous and desperate ventures, and, like his uncle and his imperial grandfather, well knew how to reward the devotion of his readiest followers with a poniard, a feather, a riband, a jewel, taken with his own hands from his own attire.<sup>1</sup>

His military abilities—now for the first time to be largely called into employment—were unquestionably superior to those of Don John, whose name had been surrounded with such splendour by the world-renowned battle of Lepanto. Moreover, he possessed far greater power for governing men, whether in camp or cabinet. Less attractive and fascinating, he was more commanding than his kinsman. Decorous and self-poised, he was only passionate before the enemy, but he rarely permitted a disrespectful look or word to escape condign and deliberate chastisement. He was no schemer or dreamer. He was no knight errant. He would not have crossed seas and mountains to rescue a captive queen, nor have sought to place her crown on his own head as a reward for his heroism. He had a single and concentrated kind of character. He knew precisely the work which Philip required, and felt himself to be precisely the workman that had so long been wanted. Cool, incisive, fearless, artful, he united the unscrupulous audacity of a *condottiere* with the wily patience of a Jesuit. He could coil unperceived through unsuspected paths, could strike suddenly, sting mortally. He came prepared, not only to smite the Netherlanders in the open field, but to cope with them in tortuous policy; to outwatch and outweary them in the game to which his impatient predecessor had fallen a baffled victim. He possessed the art and the patience—as time was to prove—not only to undermine their most impregnable cities, but to delve

below the intrigues of their most accomplished politicians. To circumvent at once both their negotiators and their men-at-arms was his appointed task. Had it not been for the courage, the vigilance, and the superior intellect of a single antagonist, the whole of the Netherlands would have shared the fate which was reserved for the more southern portion. Had the life of William of Orange been prolonged, perhaps the evil genius of the Netherlands might have still been exercised throughout the whole extent of the country.

As for religion, Alexander Farnese was, of course, strictly Catholic, regarding all seceders from Romanism as mere heathen dogs. Not that he practically troubled himself much with sacred matters—for, during the lifetime of his wife, he had cavalierly thrown the whole burden of his personal salvation upon her saintly shoulders. She had now flown to higher spheres, but Alexander was, perhaps, willing to rely upon her continued intercessions in his behalf. The life of a bravo in time of peace—the deliberate project in war to exterminate whole cities full of innocent people, who had different notions on the subject of image-worship and ecclesiastical ceremonies from those entertained at Rome, did not seem to him at all incompatible with the precepts of Jesus. Hanging, drowning, burning and butchering heretics were the legitimate deductions of his theology. He was no casuist nor pretender to holiness: but in those days every man was devout, and Alexander looked with honest horror upon the impiety of the heretics, whom he persecuted and massacred. He attended mass regularly—in the winter mornings by torch-light—and would as soon have foregone his daily tennis as his religious exercises. Romanism was the creed of his caste. It was the religion of princes and gentlemen of high degree. As for Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, Calvinism, and similar systems, they were but the fantastic rites of weavers,

<sup>1</sup> Strada, 2. iii. 150.

brewers, and the like—an ignoble herd, whose presumption in entitling themselves Christian, while rejecting the Pope, called for their instant extermination. His personal habits were extremely temperate. He was accustomed to say that he ate only to support life; and he rarely finished a dinner without having risen three or four times from table to attend to some public business which, in his opinion, ought not to be deferred.<sup>1</sup>

His previous connexions in the Netherlands were of use to him, and he knew how to turn them to immediate account. The great nobles, who had been uniformly actuated by jealousy of the Prince of Orange, who had been baffled in their intrigue with Matthias, whose half-blown designs upon Anjou had already been nipped in the bud, were now peculiarly in a position to listen to the wily tongue of Alexander Farnese. The Montignys, the La Mottes, the Meluns, the Egmonts, the Aerschots, the Havrés, foiled and doubly foiled in all their small intrigues and their base ambition, were ready to sacrifice their country to the man they hated, and to the ancient religion which they thought that they loved. The Malcontents ravaging the land of Hainault and threatening Ghent, the "Paternoster Jacks" who were only waiting for a favourable opportunity and a good bargain to make their peace with Spain, were the very instruments which Parma most desired to use at this opening stage of his career. The position of affairs was far more favourable for him than it had been for Don John when he first succeeded to power. On the whole, there seemed a bright prospect of success. It seemed quite possible that it would be in Parma's power to reduce, at last, this chronic rebellion, and to re-establish the absolute supremacy of Church and King. The pledges of the Ghent treaty had been broken, while in the unions of Brussels which had succeeded, the fatal religious cause had turned the instrument of peace into a sword. The "religion-peace"

which had been proclaimed at Antwerp had hardly found favour anywhere. As the provinces, for an instant, had seemingly got the better of their foe, they turned madly upon each other, and the fires of religious discord, which had been extinguished by the common exertions of a whole race trembling for the destruction of their fatherland, were now re-lighted with a thousand brands plucked from the sacred domestic hearth. Fathers and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, were beginning to wrangle, and were prepared to persecute. Catholic and Protestant, during the momentary relief from pressure, forgot their voluntary and most blessed Pacification, to renew their internecine feuds. The banished Reformers, who had swarmed back in droves at the tidings of peace and good-will to all men, found themselves bitterly disappointed. They were exposed in the Walloon provinces to the persecutions of the Malcontents, in the Frisian regions to the still powerful coercion of the royal stadholders.

Persecution beget counter-persecution. The city of Ghent became the centre of a system of insurrection, by which all the laws of God and man were outraged under the pretence of establishing a larger liberty in civil and religious matters. It was at Ghent that the opening scenes in Parma's administration took place. Of the high-born suitors for the Netherland bride, two were still watching each other with jealous eyes. Anjou was at Mons, which city he had secretly but unsuccessfully attempted to master for his own purposes. John Casimir was at Ghent,<sup>2</sup> fomenting an insurrection which he had neither skill to guide, nor intelligence to comprehend. There was a talk of making him Count of Flanders,<sup>3</sup> and his paltry ambition was dazzled by the glittering prize. Anjou, who meant to be Count of Flanders himself, as well as Duke or Count of all the other Netherlands, was highly indignant at this report, which he chose to consider true. He wrote

<sup>1</sup> Bor, xxix. 061<sup>b</sup>. d. iii.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, xiii. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

to the estates to express his indignation. He wrote to Ghent to offer his mediation between the burghers and the Malcontents. Casimir wanted money for his troops. He obtained a liberal supply, but he wanted more. Meantime, the mercenaries were expatiating on their own account throughout the southern provinces; eating up every green leaf, robbing and pillaging, where robbery and pillage had gone so often that hardly anything was left for rapine.<sup>1</sup> Thus dealt the soldiers in the open country, while their master at Ghent was plunging into the complicated intrigues spread over that unfortunate city by the most mischievous demagogues that ever polluted a sacred cause. Well had Cardinal Granvelle, his enemy, William of Hesse, his friend and kinsman, understood the character of John Casimir. Robbery and pillage were his achievements, to make chaos more confounded was his destiny. Anjou—disgusted with the temporary favour accorded to a rival whom he affected to despise—disbanded his troops in dudgeon, and prepared to retire to France.<sup>2</sup> Several thousand of these mercenaries took service immediately with the Malcontents<sup>3</sup> under Montigny, thus swelling the ranks of the deadliest foes to that land over which Anjou had assumed the title of protector. The states' army, meanwhile, had been rapidly dissolving. There were hardly men enough left to make a demonstration in the field, or properly to garrison the more important towns. The unhappy provinces, torn by civil and religious dissensions, were overrun by hordes of unpaid soldiers of all nations, creeds, and tongues—Spaniards, Italians, Burgundians, Walloons, Germans, Scotch and English; some who came to attack and others to protect, but who all achieved nothing and agreed in nothing save to maltreat and to outrage the defenceless peasantry and denizens of the smaller towns. The contemporary chronicles are full of harrowing domestic tragedies, in which the actors are always

the insolent foreign soldiery and their desperate victims.<sup>4</sup>

Ghent—energetic, opulent, powerful, passionate, unruly Ghent—was now the focus of discord, the centre from whence radiated not the light and warmth of reasonable and intelligent liberty, but the bale-fires of murderous licence and savage anarchy. The second city of the Netherlands, one of the wealthiest and most powerful cities of Christendom, it had been its fate so often to overstep the bounds of reason and moderation in its devotion to freedom, so often to incur ignominious chastisement from power which its own excesses had made more powerful, that its name was already becoming a bye-word. It now, most fatally and for ever, was to misunderstand its true position. The Prince of Orange, the great architect of his country's fortunes, would have made it the keystone of the arch which he was labouring to construct. Had he been allowed to perfect his plan, the structure might have endured for ages, a perpetual bulwark against tyranny and wrong. The temporary and slender frame by which the great artist had supported his arch while still unfinished, was plucked away by rude and ribald hands; the keystone plunged into the abyss, to be lost for ever, and the great work of Orange remained a fragment from its commencement. The acts of demagogues, the conservative disgust at licence, the jealousy of rival nobles, the venality of military leaders, threw daily fresh stumbling-blocks in his heroic path. It was not six months after the advent of Farnese to power, before that bold and subtle chieftain had seized the double-edged sword of religious dissension as firmly as he had grasped his celebrated brand when he boarded the galley of Mustapha Bey, and the Netherlands were cut in twain, to be re-united nevermore. The separate treaty of the Walloon provinces was soon destined to separate the Celtic and Romanesque elements from the Batavian and Frisian

<sup>1</sup> Bor. 3. xiii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.   <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Meteren, viii. 114<sup>l</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Bor. b. xiii. Hoofd, b. xiv. Meteren, b. viii. *passim*.

portion of a nationality, which, thoroughly fused in all its parts, would have formed as admirable a compound of fire and endurance as history has ever seen.

Meantime, the grass was growing and the cattle were grazing in the streets of Ghent,<sup>1</sup> where once the tramp of workmen going to and from their labour was like the movement of a mighty army.<sup>2</sup> The great majority of the burghers were of the Reformed religion, and disposed to make effectual resistance to the Malcontents, led by the disaffected nobles. The city, considering itself the natural head of all the southern country, was indignant that the Walloon provinces should dare to reassert that supremacy of Romanism which had been so effectually suppressed, and to admit the possibility of friendly relations with a sovereign who had been virtually disowned. There were two parties, however, in Ghent. Both were led by men of abandoned and dangerous character.<sup>3</sup> Imbize, the worse of the two demagogues, was inconstant, cruel, cowardly, and treacherous, but possessed of eloquence and a talent for intrigue. Ryhove was a bolder ruffian—wrathful, bitter, and unscrupulous. Imbize was at the time opposed to Orange, disliking his moderation, and trembling at his firmness. Ryhove considered himself the friend of the Prince. We have seen that he had consulted him previously to his memorable attack upon Aerschot, in the autumn of the preceding year, and we know the result of that conference.

The Prince, with the slight dissimulation which belonged less to his character than to his theory of politics, and which was perhaps not to be avoided, in that age of intrigue, by any man who would govern his fellow-men, whether for good or evil, had winked at a project which he would not openly approve. He was not thoroughly acquainted, however, with the desperate character of the man, for he would have scorned an instrument so tho-

roughly base as Ryhove subsequently proved. The violence of that personage on the occasion of the arrest of Aerschot and his colleagues was mildness compared with the deed with which he now disgraced the cause of freedom. He had been ordered out from Ghent to oppose a force of Malcontents which was gathering in the neighbourhood of Courtray;<sup>4</sup> but he swore that he would not leave the gates so long as two of the gentlemen whom he had arrested on the twenty-eighth of the previous October, and who yet remained in captivity, were still alive.<sup>5</sup> These two prisoners were ex-procurator Visch and Blood-Councillor Hessels. Hessels, it seemed, had avowed undying hostility to Ryhove for the injury sustained at his hands, and he had sworn, "by his grey beard," that the ruffian should yet hang for the outrage. Ryhove, not feeling very safe in the position of affairs which then existed, and knowing that he could neither trust Imbize, who had formerly been his friend, nor the imprisoned nobles, who had ever been his implacable enemies, was resolved to make himself safe in one quarter at least, before he set forth against the Malcontents. Accordingly, Hessels and Visch, as they sat together in their prison, at chess, upon the 4th of October, 1578, were suddenly summoned to leave the house, and to enter a carriage which stood at the door. A force of armed men brought the order, and were sufficiently strong to enforce it. The prisoners obeyed, and the coach soon rolled slowly through the streets, left the Courtray gate, and proceeded a short distance along the road towards that city.<sup>6</sup>

After a few minutes a halt was made. Ryhove then made his appearance at the carriage-window, and announced to the astonished prisoners that they were forthwith to be hanged upon a tree which stood by the roadside. He proceeded to taunt the aged Hessels with his threat against himself, and with his vow "by his grey

<sup>1</sup> Van d. Vynekt, iii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Guicciardini, Descript. Gandav.

<sup>3</sup> Van d. Vynekt, iii. 38, 39. Bor, xlii. 5,

sqq. Hoofd, xiv. 589, 599.

<sup>4</sup> Bor, xlii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Hoofd, xiv. 593. Bor, xlii. 5.

beard." "Such grey beard shalt thou never live thyself to wear, ruffian," cried Hessels, stoutly—furious rather than terrified at the suddenness of his doom. "There thou liest, false traitor!" roared Ryhove in reply; and to prove the falsehood, he straightway tore out a handful of the old man's beard, and fastened it upon his own cap like a plume. His action was imitated by several of his companions, who cut for themselves locks from the same grey beard, and decorated themselves as their leader had done. This preliminary ceremony having been concluded, the two aged prisoners were forthwith hanged on a tree, without the least pretence of trial or even sentence.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the end of the famous councillor who had been wont to shout "*ad patibulum*" in his sleep. It was cruel that the fair face of civil liberty shewing itself after years of total eclipse, should be insulted by such bloody deeds on the part of her votaries. It was sad that the crimes of men like Imbize and Ryhove should have cost more to the cause of religious and political freedom than the lives of twenty thousand such ruffians were worth. But for the influence of demagogues like these, counteracting the lofty efforts and pure life of Orange, the separation might never have occurred between the two portions of the Netherlands. The Prince had not power enough, however, nor the nascent commonwealth sufficient consistency, to repress the disorganising tendency of a fanatical Romanism on the one side, and a retaliatory and cruel ochlocracy on the other.

Such events, with the hatred growing daily more intense between the Walloons and the Ghenters, made it highly important that some kind of an accord should be concluded, if possible. In the country, the Malcontents, under pretence of protecting the Catholic clergy, were daily abusing and plundering the people, while in

Ghent the clergy were maltreated, the cloisters pillaged, under the pretence of maintaining liberty.<sup>2</sup> In this emergency the eyes of all honest men turned naturally to Orange.

Deputies went to and fro between Antwerp and Ghent. Three points were laid down by the Prince as indispensable to any arrangement—firstly, that the Catholic clergy should be allowed the free use of their property; secondly, that they should not be disturbed in the exercise of their religion; thirdly, that the gentlemen kept in prison since the memorable twenty-eighth of October should be released.<sup>3</sup> If these points should be granted, the Archduke Matthias, the states-general, and the Prince of Orange would agree to drive off the Walloon soldiery, and to defend Ghent against all injury.<sup>4</sup> The two first points were granted, upon condition that sufficient guarantees should be established for the safety of the Reformed religion. The third was rejected, but it was agreed that the prisoners, Champagny, Sweveghem, and the rest—who, after the horrid fate of Hessels and Visch, might be supposed to be sufficiently anxious as to their own doom—should have legal trial, and be defended in the meantime from outrage.<sup>5</sup>

On the 3d of November, 1578, a formal act of acceptance of these terms was signed at Antwerp.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, there was murmuring at Ghent, the extravagant portion of the liberal party averring that they had no intention of establishing the "religious peace" when they agreed not to molest the Catholics. On the 11th of November, the Prince of Orange sent messengers to Ghent in the name of the Archduke and the states-general, summoning the authorities to a faithful execution of the act of acceptance. Upon the same day the English envoy, Davidson, made an energetic representation to the same magistrates, declaring that the conduct of the Ghenters was exciting regret throughout the

<sup>1</sup> Hoofd, xiv. 593, 594. Bor, xiii. 5, seq. Meteren, viii. 143. Wagenaer, Vad. Hist., vii. 234.

<sup>2</sup> Bor, xiii. Hoofd, xiv. Van der Vynckt,

3, iii. 33, sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Bor, xiii. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> See the Act of Acceptance; Bor, xiii. 5. sqq.

<sup>6</sup> Bor, xiii. 6, 7.

world, and affording a proof that it was their object to protract, not suppress, the civil war which had so long been raging. Such proceedings, he observed, created doubts whether they were willing to obey any law or any magistracy. As, however, it might be supposed that the presence of John Casimir in Ghent at that juncture was authorised by Queen Elizabeth—inasmuch as it was known that he had received a subsidy from her—the envoy took occasion to declare that her Majesty entirely disavowed his proceedings. He observed further that, in the opinion of her Majesty, it was still possible to maintain peace by conforming to the counsels of the Prince of Orange and of the states-general. This, however, could be done only by establishing the three points which he had laid down. Her Majesty likewise warned the Ghenters that their conduct would soon compel her to abandon the country's cause altogether, and, in conclusion, she requested, with characteristic thriftiness, to be immediately furnished with a city bond for forty-five thousand pounds sterling.<sup>1</sup>

Two days afterwards, envoys arrived from Brussels to reiterate, in their turn, with the sister city, and to save her, if possible, from the madness which had seized upon her. They recalled to the memory of the magistrates the frequent and wise counsels of the Prince of Orange. He had declared that he knew of no means to avert the impending desolation of the fatherland save union of all the provinces and obedience to the general government. His own reputation, and the honour of his house, he felt now to be at stake; for, by reason of the offices which he now held, he had been ceaselessly calumniated as the author of all the crimes which had been committed at Ghent. Against these calumnies he had avowed his intention of publishing his defence.<sup>2</sup> After thus citing the

opinion of the Prince, the envoys implored the magistrates to accept the religious peace which he had proposed, and to liberate the prisoners as he had demanded. For their own part, they declared that the inhabitants of Brussels would never desert him; for, next to God, there was no one who understood their cause so entirely, or who could point out the remedy so intelligently.<sup>3</sup>

Thus reasoned the envoys from the states-general and from Brussels, but even while they were reasoning, a fresh tumult occurred at Ghent. The people had been inflamed by demagogues, and by the insane howlings of Peter Dathenus, the unfrocked monk of Poperingen, who had been the servant and minister both of the Pope and of Orange, and who now hated each with equal fervour. The populace, under these influences, rose in its wrath upon the Catholics, smote all their images into fragments, destroyed all their altar pictures, robbed them of much valuable property, and turned all the Papists themselves out of the city. The riot was so furious that it seemed, says a chronicler, as if all the inhabitants had gone raving mad.<sup>4</sup> The drums beat the alarm, the magistrates went forth to expostulate, but no commands were heeded till the work of destruction had been accomplished, when the tumult expired at last by its own limitation.

Affairs seemed more threatening than ever. Nothing more excited the indignation of the Prince of Orange than such senseless iconomachy. In fact, he had at one time procured an enactment by the Ghent authorities, making it a crime punishable with death.<sup>5</sup> He was of Luther's opinion, that idol-worship was to be eradicated from the heart, and that then the idols in the churches would fall of themselves. He felt too with Landgrave William, that "the destruction of such worthless idols was ever avenged

<sup>1</sup> Bor, xiii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> "Als naest God niemand kennende die de gemeine sake en inwendigen nood beter verstaet en de remedien beter kan dirigeren."—Bor, ubi sup.

<sup>4</sup> "Met sulken geres, getier en gebaer datmen geseid soude hebben dat alle de inwoonders dol en rasende waren."—Bor, xiii. 9. Meteren, ix. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Gh. Gesch., ii. 39; cited by Groen, v. Prinst., vi. 465.

by torrents of good human blood."<sup>1</sup> Therefore it may be well supposed that this fresh act of senseless violence, in the very teeth of his remonstrances, in the very presence of his envoys, met with his stern disapprobation. He was on the point of publishing his defence against the calumnies which his toleration had drawn upon him from both Catholic and Calvinist. He was deeply revolving the question, whether it were not better to turn his back at once upon a country which seemed so incapable of comprehending his high purposes, or seconding his virtuous efforts. From both projects he was dissuaded; and although bitterly wronged by both friend and foe, although feeling that even in his own Holland,<sup>2</sup> there were whispers against his purity, since his favourable inclinations towards Anjou had become the general topic, yet he still preserved his majestic tranquillity, and smiled at the arrows which fell harmless at his feet. "I admire his wisdom, daily more and more," cried Hubert Lanquet; "I see those who profess themselves his friends causing him more annoyance than his foes; while, nevertheless, he ever remains true to himself, is driven by no tempests from his equanimity, nor provoked by repeated injuries to immoderate action."<sup>3</sup>

The Prince had that year been chosen unanimously by the four "members" of Flanders to be governor of that province, but had again declined the office.<sup>4</sup> The inhabitants, notwithstanding the furious transactions at Ghent, professed attachment to his person, and respect for his authority. He was implored to go to the city. His presence, and that alone, would restore the burghers to their reason, but the task was not a grateful one. It was also not unattended with danger; although this was a consideration which never influenced him, from the commencement of his career to its close. Imbize and

his crew were capable of resorting to any extremity or any ambush, to destroy the man whom they feared and hated. The presence of John Casimir was an additional complication; for Orange, while he despised the man, was unwilling to offend his friends. Moreover, Casimir had professed a willingness to assist the cause, and to defer to the better judgment of the Prince. He had brought an army into the field, with which, however, he had accomplished nothing except a thorough pillaging of the peasantry, while, at the same time, he was loud in his demands upon the states to pay his soldiers' wages. The soldiers of the different armies who now overran the country, indeed, vied with each other in extravagant insolence. "Their outrages are most execrable," wrote Marquis Havré; "they demand the most exquisite food, and drink Champagne and Burgundy by the bucketful."<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, on the 4th of December, the Prince came to Ghent.<sup>6</sup> He held constant and anxious conferences with the magistrates. He was closeted daily with John Casimir, whose vanity and extravagance of temper he managed with his usual skill. He even dined with Imbize, and thus, by smoothing difficulties and reconciling angry passions, he succeeded at last in obtaining the consent of all to a religious peace, which was published on the 27th of December 1578. It contained the same provisions as those of the project prepared and proposed during the previous summer throughout the Netherlands. Exercise of both religions was established; mutual insults and irritations—whether by word, book, picture, song, or gesture,—were prohibited, under severe penalties, while all persons were sworn to protect the common tranquillity by blood, purse, and life. The Catholics, by virtue of this accord, re-entered into possession of their churches and clois-

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Landgrave William of Hesse.—Groen v. Prinst., Archives et Correspondance, vi. 451, sqq.

<sup>2</sup> Groen v. Prinst., Archives, etc., 481, 482.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Sir P. Sidney.

<sup>4</sup> Bor, xiii. 9. Apologie d'Orange, pp. 108, 109.

<sup>5</sup> Kervyn de Volckersbeke et Diegerick, Documents Historiques, i. 156, 157.

<sup>6</sup> Bor, xiii. 10.

ters, but nothing could be obtained in favour of the imprisoned gentlemen.<sup>1</sup>

The Walloons and Malcontents were now summoned to lay down their arms; but, as might be supposed, they expressed dissatisfaction with the religious peace, proclaiming it hostile to the Ghent treaty and the Brussels union.<sup>2</sup> In short, nothing would satisfy them but total suppression of the Reformed religion; as nothing would content Imbize and his faction but the absolute extermination of Romanism. A strong man might well seem powerless in the midst of such obstinate and worthless fanatics.

The arrival of the Prince in Ghent was, on the whole, a relief to John Casimir. As usual, this addle-brained individual had plunged headlong into difficulties, out of which he was unable to extricate himself. He knew not what to do, or which way to turn. He had tampered with Imbize and his crew, but he had found that they were not the men for a person of his quality to deal with. He had brought a large army into the field, and had not a stiver in his coffers. He felt bitterly the truth of the Langrave's warning—"that 'twas better to have thirty thousand devils at one's back than thirty thousand German troopers, with no money to give them; it being possible to pay the devils with the sign of the cross, while the soldiers could be discharged only with money or hard knocks."<sup>3</sup> Queen Elizabeth, too, under whose patronage he had made this most inglorious campaign, was incessant in her reproofs, and importunate in her demands for reimbursement. She wrote to him personally, upbraiding him with his high pretensions and his shortcomings. His visit to Ghent, so entirely unjustified and mischievous; his failure to effect that junction of his army with the states' force under Bossu, by which the royal army was to have been surprised and annihilated; his having given reason to the common people to suspect her Majesty and the Prince of

Orange of collusion with his designs, and of a disposition to seek their private advantage and not the general good of the whole Netherlands; the imminent danger, which he had aggravated, that the Walloon provinces, actuated by such suspicions, would fall away from the "generality" and seek a private accord with Parma; these and similar sins of omission and commission were sharply and shrewdly set forth in the Queen's epistle.<sup>4</sup> 'Twas not for such marauding and intriguing work that she had appointed him her lieutenant, and furnished him with troops and subsidies. She begged him forthwith to amend his ways, for the sake of his name and fame, which were sufficiently soiled in the places where his soldiers had been plundering the country which they came to protect.<sup>5</sup>

The Queen sent Daniel Rogers with instructions of similar import to the states-general, repeatedly and expressly disavowing Casimir's proceedings and censuring his character. She also warmly insisted on her bonds. In short, never was unlucky prince more soundly berated by his superiors, more thoroughly disgraced by his followers. In this contemptible situation had Casimir placed himself by his rash ambition to prove before the world that German princes could bite and scratch like griffins and tigers as well as carry them in their shields. From this position Orange partly rescued him. He made his peace with the states-general. He smoothed matters with the extravagant Reformers, and he even extorted from the authorities of Ghent the forty-five thousand pounds bond, on which Elizabeth had insisted with such obduracy.<sup>6</sup> Casimir repaid these favours of the Prince in the coin with which narrow minds and jealous tempers are apt to discharge such obligations—ingratitude. The friendship which he openly manifested at first grew almost immediately cool. Soon afterwards he left Ghent and departed for Germany, leaving behind

<sup>1</sup> Groen v. Prin., Archives, etc., vi. 507, sqq. See the Accord in Bor, 2, xlii. 10, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Bor, xlii. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Archives et Correspondance, vi. 479.

<sup>4</sup> Bor, 3, xlii. 13, sqq. <sup>5</sup> Ibid., xlii. 13.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., xlii. 11, sqq.

him a long and tedious remonstrance, addressed to the states-general, in which document he narrated the history of his exploits, and endeavoured to vindicate the purity of his character. He concluded this very tedious and superfluous manifesto by observing that—for reasons which he thought proper to give at considerable length—he felt himself “neither too useful nor too agreeable to the provinces.” As he had been informed, he said, that the states-general had requested the Queen of England to procure his departure, he had resolved, in order to spare her and them inconvenience, to return of his own accord, “leaving the issue of the war in the high and mighty hand of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The estates answered this remonstrance with words of unlimited courtesy; expressing themselves “obliged to all eternity” for his services, and holding out vague hopes that the monies which he demanded on behalf of his troops should ere long be forthcoming.<sup>2</sup>

Casimir having already answered Queen Elizabeth’s reproachful letter by throwing the blame of his apparent misconduct upon the states-general, and having promised soon to appear before her Majesty in person, tarried accordingly but a brief season in Germany, and then repaired to England. Here he was feasted, flattered, caressed, and invested with the order of the Garter.<sup>3</sup> Pleased with royal blandishments, and highly enjoying the splendid hospitalities of England, he quite forgot the “thirty thousand devils” whom he had left running loose in the Netherlands, while these wild soldiers, on their part, being absolutely in a starving condition—for there was little left for booty in a land which had been so often plundered—now had the effrontery to apply to the Prince of Parma for payment of their wages.<sup>4</sup> Alexander Farnese laughed heartily at the proposition, which he considered

an excellent jest. It seemed in truth, a jest, although but a sorry one. Parma replied to the messenger of Maurice of Saxony who had made the proposition, that the Germans must be mad to ask him for money, instead of offering to pay him a heavy sum for permission to leave the country. Nevertheless, he was willing to be so far indulgent as to furnish them with passports, provided they departed from the Netherlands instantly. Should they interpose the least delay, he would set upon them without further preface, and he gave them notice, with the arrogance becoming a Spanish general, that the courier was already waiting to report to Spain the number of them left alive after the encounter. Thus deserted by their chief, and hectoring by the enemy, the mercenaries, who had little stomach for fight without wages, accepted the passports proffered by Parma.<sup>5</sup> They revenged themselves for the harsh treatment which they had received from Casimir and from the states-general, by singing, everywhere as they retreated, a doggerel ballad—half Flemish, half German—in which their wrongs were expressed with uncouth vigour.

Casimir received the news of the departure of his ragged soldiery on the very day which witnessed his investment with the Garter by the fair hands of Elizabeth herself.<sup>6</sup> A few days afterwards he left England, accompanied by an escort of lords and gentlemen, especially appointed for that purpose by the Queen. He landed in Flushing, where he was received with distinguished hospitality, by order of the Prince of Orange, and on the 14th of February, 1579, he passed through Utrecht.<sup>7</sup> Here he conversed freely at his lodgings in the “German House” on the subject of his vagabond troops, whose final adventures and departure seemed to afford him considerable amusement; and he, moreover, diverted his com-

<sup>1</sup> See the document at length in Bor, xiii. 13-17.

<sup>2</sup> Bor, 3, xiii. 17 (ii.)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii. 34, 35. Hoofd, xiv. 609.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, xiii. 34, sqq. Strada, Dec. 2, i.

26, sqq.

<sup>5</sup> Strada, 2, i. 27, 28.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, i. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Langnet. ad Sydneum, 90; Groen v. Prinst., Archives, etc., vi. 571, 572. Dor, xiii. 84 (ii.)

pany by singing, after supper, a few verses of the ballad already mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

The Duke of Anjou, meantime, after disbanding his troops, had lingered for a while near the frontier. Upon taking his final departure, he sent his resident minister, Des Pruniaux, with a long communication to the states-general, complaining that they had not published their contract with himself, nor fulfilled its conditions. He excused, as well as he could, the awkward fact that his disbanded troops had taken refuge with the Walloons, and he affected to place his own departure upon the ground of urgent political business in France, to arrange which his royal brother had required his immediate attendance. He furthermore most hypocritically expressed a desire for a speedy reconciliation of the provinces with their sovereign, and a resolution that—although for their sake he had made himself a foe to his Catholic Majesty—he would still interpose no obstacle to so desirable a result.<sup>2</sup>

To such shallow discourse the states answered with infinite urbanity, for it was the determination of Orange not to make enemies, at that juncture, of France and England in the same breath. They had foes enough already, and it seemed obvious at that moment, to all persons most observant of the course of affairs, that a matrimonial alliance was soon to unite the two crowns. The probability of Anjou's marriage with Elizabeth was, in truth, a leading motive with Orange for his close alliance with the Duke. The political structure, according to which he had selected the French Prince as protector of the Netherlands, was sagaciously planned; but unfortunately its foundation was the shifting

sandbank of female and royal coquetry. Those who judge only by the result, will be quick to censure a policy which might have had very different issue. They who place themselves in the period anterior to Anjou's visit to England, will admit that it was hardly human not to be deceived by the political aspects of that moment. The Queen, moreover, took pains to upbraid the states-general, by letter, with their disrespect and ingratitude towards the Duke of Anjou—behaviour with which he had been “justly scandalised.” For her own part, she assured them of her extreme displeasure at learning that such a course of conduct had been held with a view to her especial contentment—“as if the person of Monsieur, son of France, brother of the King, were disagreeable to her, or as if she wished him ill;” whereas, on the contrary, they would best satisfy her wishes by shewing him all the courtesy to which his high degree and his eminent services entitled him.<sup>3</sup>

The estates, even before receiving this letter, had, however, acted in its spirit. They had addressed elaborate apologies and unlimited professions to the Duke. They thanked him heartily for his achievements, expressed unbounded regret at his departure, with sincere hopes for his speedy return, and promised “eternal remembrance of his heroic virtues.”<sup>4</sup> They assured him, moreover, that should the first of the following March arrive without bringing with it an honourable peace with his Catholic Majesty, they should then feel themselves compelled to declare that the King had forfeited his right to the sovereignty of these provinces. In this case they concluded that, as the inhabitants would

<sup>1</sup> Bor—who heard the Duke sing the song at the “German House” in Utrecht, 3, xiii. 34.

A translation of a single verse may serve as a specimen of the song:—

“O, have you been in Brabant, fighting for the states?  
O, have you brought back anything except your broken pates?  
O, I have been in Brabant, myself and all my mates.

We'll go no more to Brabant, unless our brains were addle,

We're coming home on foot, we went there in the saddle;

For there's neither gold nor glory got, in fighting for the states,” etc., etc.

<sup>2</sup> Bor, xii. 12, sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Archives, etc., de la Maison d'Orange, vi. 535, sqq.

<sup>4</sup> “Sijn bewesen bystand en sijne heroïcke deugt souden sy nimmermeer vergeten.”—Bor, xiii. 12, sqq.

be then absolved from their allegiance to the Spanish monarch, it would then be in their power to treat with his Highness of Anjou concerning the sovereignty, according to the contract already existing.<sup>1</sup>

These assurances were ample, but the states, knowing the vanity of the man, offered other inducements, some of which seemed sufficiently puerile. They promised that "his statue, in copper, should be placed in the public squares of Antwerp and Brussels, for the eternal admiration of posterity," and that a "crown of olive-leaves should be presented to him every year."<sup>2</sup> The Duke—not inexorable to such courteous solicitations—was willing to achieve both immortality and power by continuing his friendly relations with the states, and he answered accordingly in the most courteous terms. The result of this interchange of civilities it will be soon our duty to narrate.

At the close of the year the Count of Bossu died, much to the regret of the Prince of Orange, whose party—since his release from prison by virtue of the Ghent treaty—he had warmly espoused. "We are in the deepest distress in the world," wrote the Prince to his brother, three days before the Count's death, "for the dangerous malady of M. de Bossu. Certainly, the country has much to lose in his death, but I hope that God will not so much afflict us."<sup>3</sup> Yet the calumniators of the day did not scruple to circulate, nor the royalist chroniclers to perpetuate, the most senseless and infamous fables on the subject of this nobleman's death. He died of poison, they said, administered to him "*in oysters*,"<sup>4</sup> by command of the Prince of Orange, who had likewise made a point of standing over him on his death-bed, for the express purpose of sneering at the Catholic ceremonies by which his dying agonies were solaced.<sup>5</sup> Such were the tales which grave historians

have recorded concerning the death of Maximilian of Bossu, who owed so much to the Prince. The command of the states' army, a yearly pension of five thousand florins, granted at the especial request of Orange but a few months before, and the profound words of regret in the private letter just cited, are a sufficient answer to such slanders.<sup>6</sup>

The personal courage and profound military science of Parma were invaluable to the royal cause; but his subtle, unscrupulous, and subterranean combinations of policy were even more fruitful at this period. No man ever understood the art of bribery more thoroughly or practised it more skilfully. He bought a politician, or a general, or a grandee, or a regiment of infantry, usually at the cheapest price at which those articles could be purchased, and always with the utmost delicacy with which such traffic could be conducted. Men conveyed themselves to government for a definite price—fixed accurately in florins and groats, in places and pensions—while a decent gossamer of conventional phraseology was ever allowed to float over the nakedness of unblushing treason. Men high in station, illustrious by ancestry, brilliant in valour, huckstered themselves, and swindled a confiding country for as ignoble motives as ever led counterfeiters or braves to the gallows, but they were dealt with in public as if actuated only by the loftiest principles. Behind their ancient shields, ostentatiously emblazoned with fidelity to church and king, they thrust forth their itching palms with the mendicency which would be hardly credible, were it not attested by the monuments more perennial than brass, of their own letters and recorded conversations.

Already, before the accession of Parma to power, the true way to dis sever the provinces had been indicated by the famous treason of the Seigneur

<sup>1</sup> Bor. xiii. 12, seqq.

<sup>2</sup> Meteren, ix. 145.—"Accompanied, however, by substantial presents to the value of 100,000 livres Artois."—Meteren, ubi sup.

<sup>3</sup> Archives et Corresp., vi. 513.

<sup>4</sup> J. B. Tassis, Comment., lib. v. 329.

<sup>5</sup> Strada, 2. i. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Compare Groen v. Prinst., vi. 511, 512. Bor. 2. xiii. 25<sup>b</sup>. Wagenaer, Vad. Hist., vii. 243, 244.

de la Motte. This nobleman commanded a regiment in the service of the states-general, and was Governor of Gravelines. On promise of forgiveness for all past disloyalty, of being continued in the same military posts under Philip which he then held for the patriots, and of a "merced" large enough to satisfy his most avaricious dreams, he went over to the royal government.<sup>1</sup> The negotiation was conducted by Alonzo Curiel, financial agent of the King, and was not very nicely handled. The paymaster, looking at the affair purely as a money transaction—which in truth it was—had been disposed to drive rather too hard a bargain. He offered only fifty thousand crowns for La Motte and his friend Baron Montigny, and assured his government that those gentlemen, with the soldiers under their command, were very dear at the price.<sup>2</sup> La Motte higgled very hard for more, and talked pathetically of his services and his wounds—for he had been a most distinguished and courageous campaigner—but Alonzo was implacable.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, one Robert Bien-Aimé, Prior of Renty, was present at all the conferences. This ecclesiastic was a busy intriguer, but not very adroit. He was disposed to make himself useful to government, for he had set his heart upon putting the mitre of Saint Omer upon his head, and he had accordingly composed a very ingenious libel upon the Prince of Orange, in which production, "although the Prior did not pretend to be Apelles or Lysippus," he hoped that the Governor-General would recognise a portrait coloured to the life.<sup>4</sup> This accomplished artist was, however, not so successful as he was picturesque and industrious. He was inordinately vain of his services, thinking himself, said Alonzo, splenetically, worthy to be carried in a pro-

cession like a little saint,<sup>5</sup> and as he had a busy brain, but an unruly tongue, it will be seen that he possessed a remarkable faculty of making himself unpleasant. This was not the way to earn his bishopric. La Motte, through the candid communications of the Prior, found himself the subject of mockery in Parma's camp and cabinet, where treachery to one's country and party was not, it seemed, regarded as one of the loftier virtues, however convenient it might be at the moment to the royal cause. The Prior intimated especially that Ottavio Gonzaga had indulged in many sarcastic remarks at La Motte's expense. The brave but venal warrior, highly incensed at thus learning the manner in which his conduct was estimated by men of such high rank in the royal service, was near breaking off the bargain. He was eventually secured, however, by still larger offers—Don John allowing him three hundred florins a month, presenting him with the two best horses in his stable, and sending him an open farm, which he was to fill out in the most stringent language which he could devise, binding the government to the payment of an ample and entirely satisfactory "merced."<sup>6</sup> Thus La Motte's bargain was completed—a crime which, if it had only entailed the loss of the troops under his command, and the possession of Gravelines, would have been of no great historic importance. It was, however, the first blow of a vast and carefully sharpened treason, by which the country was soon to be cut in twain for ever—the first in a series of bargains by which the noblest names of the Netherlands were to be contaminated with bribery and fraud.

While the negotiations with La Motte were in progress, the government of the states-general at Brussels

<sup>1</sup> Reconciliation des Provinces Wallones, i. 2-12, 202, 213-216, 227-234, 271, 272. Letters of La Motte and Don John of Austria, etc., MS., Royal Archives at Brussels.

<sup>2</sup> Lettres interceptées du Contador Alonzo Curiel au P<sup>re</sup> de Parme. Plantin. Anvers, 1579.—"parece á me que son soldados comprados á muy alto precio."

<sup>3</sup> "— con cien mil remonstraciones y

historias de sus servicios y heridas," etc.—Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Renty to Prince of Parma, Rec. Prov. Wall., iii. 97. MS.

<sup>5</sup> "— que avia V<sup>a</sup>. Alteza de mandar traer en palmas o andas," etc. Lettres interceptées de Curiel.

<sup>6</sup> Don John to La Motte, Rec. Prov. Wall., MS. i. 271, 272. Lettres de Curiel.

had sent Saint Aldegonde to Arras. The states of Artois, then assembled in that city, had made much difficulty in acceding to an assessment of seven thousand florins laid upon them by the central authority. The occasion was skilfully made use of by the agents of the royal party to weaken the allegiance of the province, and of its sister Walloon provinces, to the patriot cause. Saint Aldegonde made his speech before the assembly, taking the ground boldly, that the war was made for liberty of conscience and of fatherland, and that all were bound, whether Catholic or Protestant, to contribute to the sacred fund. The vote passed, but it was provided that a moiety of the assessment should be paid by the ecclesiastical branch, and the stipulation excited a tremendous uproar. The clerical bench regarded the tax as both a robbery and an affront. "We came nearly to knife-playing," said the most distinguished priest in the assembly, "and if we had done so, the ecclesiastics would not have been the first to cry enough."<sup>1</sup> They all withdrew in a rage, and held a private consultation upon "these exorbitant and more than Turkish demands." John Sarrasin, Prior of Saint Vaast, the keenest, boldest, and most indefatigable of the royal partisans of that epoch, made them an artful harangue. This man—a better politician than the other prior—was playing for a mitre too, and could use his cards better. He was soon to become the most invaluable agent in the great treason preparing. No one could be more delicate, noiseless, or unscrupulous, and he was soon recognised both by Governor-General and King as the individual above all others to whom the re-establishment of the royal authority over the Walloon provinces was owing.

<sup>1</sup> "— les communs forcerent les ecclésiastiques d'en prendre la juste moitié a leur charge—et de fait la chose étoit venue jusques de venir aux mains et jouer des couteaux pour veoir quy aurait belle amyé—les ecclésiastiques n'eussent fait joué," etc.—MS. letter of the Prior of Saint Vaast, Rec. Prov. Wall., i. 76, 135, 136. The whole history of these Walloon intrigues is narrated in the numerous letters—entirely unpublished—of the Prior, with much piquancy

and spirit. They are in the Collection of Correspondence between Don John, Parma, and others, and the Malcontent nobles, entitled "Reconciliation des Provinces Wallones," five vols., Royal Archives in Brussels. An examination of these most interesting documents is indispensable to a thorough understanding of the permanent separation of the Netherlands effected in the years 1578 and 1579.

With the shoes of swiftness on his feet, the coat of darkness on his back, and the wishing purse in his hand, he sped silently and invisibly from one great Malcontent chieftain to another, buying up centurions, and captains, and common soldiers; circumventing Orangists, Ghent democrats, Anjou partisans; weaving a thousand intrigues, ventilating a hundred hostile mines, and passing unharmed through the most serious dangers and the most formidable obstacles. Eloquent, too, at a pinch, he always understood his audience, and upon this occasion unsheathed the most incisive, if not the most brilliant weapon which could be used in the debate. It was most expensive to be patriotic, he said, while silver was to be saved, and gold to be earned by being loyal. They ought to keep their money to defend themselves, not give it to the Prince of Orange, who would only put it into his private pocket on pretence of public necessities. The Ruward would soon be slinking back to his lair, he observed, and leave them all in the fangs of their enemies. Meantime, it was better to rush into the embrace of a bountiful king, who was still holding forth his arms to them. They were approaching a precipice, said the Prior; they were entering a labyrinth; and not only was the "sempiternal loss of body and soul impending over them, but their property was to be taken also, and the cat to be thrown against their legs." By this sudden descent into a very common proverbial expression, Sarrasin meant to intimate that they were getting themselves into a difficult position, in which they were sure to reap both danger and responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

The harangue had much effect upon his hearers, who were now more than ever determined to rebel against the

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Saint Vaast, before cited.

government which they had so recently accepted, preferring, in the words of the Prior, "to be maltreated by their prince, rather than to be barbarously tyrannised over by a heretic." So much anger had been excited in celestial minds by a demand of thirty-five hundred florins.

Saint Aldegonde was entertained in the evening at a great banquet, followed by a theological controversy, in which John Sarrasin complained that "he had been attacked upon his own dung-hill." Next day the distinguished patriot departed on a canvassing tour among the principal cities; the indefatigable monk employing the interval of his absence in aggravating the hostility of the Artesian orders to the pecuniary demands of the general government. He was assisted in his task by a peremptory order which came down from Brussels, ordering, in the name of Matthias, a levy upon the ecclesiastical property, "rings, jewels, and reliquaries," unless the clerical contribution should be forthcoming. The rage of the bench was now intense, and by the time of Saint Aldegonde's return a general opposition had been organised. The envoy met with a chilling reception; there were no banquets any more—no discussions of any kind. To his demands for money, "he got a fine *nil*," said Saint Vaast; and as for polemics, the only conclusive argument for the country would be, as he was informed on the same authority, the "finishing of Orange and of his minister along with him." More than once had the Prior intimated to government—as so many had done before him—that to "despatch Orange, author of all the troubles," was the best preliminary to any political arrangement. From Philip and his Governor-General, down to the humblest partisan, this conviction had been daily strengthening. The knife or bullet of an assassin

was the one thing needful to put an end to this incarnated rebellion.<sup>1</sup>

Thus matters grew worse and worse in Artois. The Prior, busier than ever in his schemes, was one day arrested along with other royal emissaries, kept fifteen days "in a stinking cellar, where the scullion washed the dishes," and then sent to Antwerp to be examined by the states-general. He behaved with great firmness, although he had good reason to tremble for his neck. Interrogated by Leoninus on the part of the central government, he boldly avowed that these pecuniary demands upon the Walloon estates, and particularly upon their ecclesiastical branches, would never be tolerated. "In Alva's time," said Sarrasin, "men were flayed, but not shorn." Those who were more attached to their skin than their fleece might have thought the practice in the good old times of the Duke still more objectionable. Such was not the opinion of the Prior and the rest of his order. After an unsatisfactory examination and a brief duresse, the busy ecclesiastic was released; and as his secret labours had not been detected, he resumed them after his return more ardently than ever.<sup>2</sup>

A triangular intrigue was now fairly established in the Walloon country. The Duke of Alençon's head-quarters were at Mons; the rallying-point of the royalist faction was with La Motte at Gravelines; while the ostensible leader of the states' party, Viscount Ghent, was governor of Artois, and supposed to be supreme in Arras. La Motte was provided by government with a large fund of secret-service money, and was instructed to be very liberal in his bribes to men of distinction; having a tender regard, however, to the excessive demands of this nature now daily made upon the royal purse.<sup>3</sup> The "little Count," as the Prior called

<sup>1</sup> "Ils commencent à desestimer leur Rouart et ont opinion que si les affaires bastent mal, il se retirera en sa tansière. Il semble aux bons que sy l'on peut dépescher le chef des troubles, que ce seroit le moyen pour réunir ce quy est tant divisé. S<sup>re</sup> Aldegonde s'est bien apercheu que chacun se desgoute du P<sup>re</sup> d'Orange. Et où aupara-

vant tout le monde l'adorait et tenoit pour son sauveur, maintenant l'on ose bien dire qu'il le fault tuer et son ministre aussi."—MS. letters of Saint Vaast, before cited.

<sup>2</sup> MS. letters of Saint Vaast, Rec. Prov. Wall., i. 269, 270, MS.

<sup>3</sup> Parma to La Motte, Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 140-142, MS.

Lalain, together with his brother, Baron Montigny, were considered highly desirable acquisitions for government, if they could be gained. It was thought, however, that they had the "*fleur-de-lys* imprinted too deeply upon their hearts,"<sup>1</sup> for the effect produced upon Lalain, governor of Hainault, by Margaret of Valois, had not yet been effaced. His brother also had been disposed to favour the French prince, but his mind was more open to conviction. A few private conferences with La Motte, and a course of ecclesiastical tuition from the Prior—whose golden opinions had irresistible resonance—soon wrought a change in the Malcontent chieftain's mind. Other leading seigniors were secretly dealt with in the same manner. Lalain, Héze, Havré, Capres, Egmont, and even the Viscount of Ghent, all seriously inclined their ears to the charmer, and looked longingly and lovingly as the wily Prior rolled in his tangles before them—"to mischief swift." Few had yet declared themselves; but of the grandees who commanded large bodies of troops, and whose influence with their order was paramount, none were safe for the patriot cause throughout the Walloon country.<sup>2</sup>

The nobles and ecclesiastics were ready to join hands in support of church and king, but in the city of Arras, the capital of the whole country, there was a strong Orange and liberal party. Gosson, a man of great wealth, one of the most distinguished advocates in the Netherlands, and possessing the gift of popular eloquence to a remarkable degree, was the leader

of this burghess faction. In the earlier days of Parma's administration, just as a thorough union of the Walloon provinces in favour of the royal government had nearly been formed, these Orangists of Arras risked a daring stroke. Inflamed by the harangues of Gosson, and supported by five hundred foot soldiers and fifty troopers under one Captain Ambrose, they rose against the city magistracy, whose sentiments were unequivocally for Parma, and thrust them all into prison.<sup>3</sup> They then constituted a new board of fifteen, some Catholics and some Protestants, but all patriots, of whom Gosson was chief. The stroke took the town by surprise, and was for a moment successful. Meantime, they depended upon assistance from Brussels. The royal and ecclesiastical party was, however, not so easily defeated, and an old soldier, named Bourgeois, loudly denounced Captain Ambrose, the general of the revolutionary movement, as a vile coward, and affirmed that with thirty good men-at-arms he would undertake to pound the whole rebel army to powder—"a pack of scarecrows," he said, "who were not worth as many owls for military purposes."

Three days after the imprisonment of the magistracy, a strong Catholic rally was made in their behalf in the Fishmarket, the ubiquitous Prior of Saint Vaast flitting about among the Malcontents, blithe and busy as usual when storms were brewing. Matthew Doucet, of the revolutionary faction—a man both martial and pacific in his pursuits, being eminent both as a gingerbread baker and a sword-player<sup>4</sup>—swore he would have the little monk's

<sup>1</sup> Moncheaux to Parma, Rec. Prov. Wall., 216-218, MS. Emmanuel de Lalain, Seigneur de Montigny, and afterwards Marquis de Renty, was brother to Count de Lalain, governor of Hainault, and cousin to Count Hoogstraeten and Count Renneberg. He was not related to the unfortunate Baron Montigny, whose tragical fate has been recorded in a previous part of this history, and who was a Montmorency.

<sup>2</sup> MS. correspondence of Parma with Saint Vaast, La Motte, Lalain, Montigny, Capres, Longueval, and others. Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 3, 4, 19, 20, 31-42, 44, 61-77, 87, 88, 104, 105, 115, 116, 140-142.

<sup>3</sup> MS. anonymous letter from Arras (Oct.

26, 1578) in Rec. Prov. Wall., i. 440-442.—The whole episode is also most admirably related in a manuscript fragment by an eyewitness, entitled "*Discours Véritable de ce que s'est passé en la ville d'Arras*," Bibl. de Bourgogne, N<sup>o</sup>. 6042. The author was Pontus Payen, Seigneur des Essarts, a warm Catholic and partisan of the royal cause, whose larger work—also unpublished—upon the earlier troubles in the Netherlands, has been often cited in previous parts of this history. A chapter in the history of Renom de France is also devoted to this series of events; *Troubles des P. B.*, iv. c. 3.

<sup>4</sup> "*Faiseur des pains d'espices—epicier et joueur d'espée.*"—Letter from Arras, be-

life if he had to take him from the very horns of the altar; but the Prior had braved sharper threats than these. Moreover, the grand altar would have been the last place to look for him on that occasion. While Gosson was making a tremendous speech in favour of conscience and fatherland at the Hotel de Ville, practical John Sarasin, purse in hand, had challenged the rebel general, Ambrose, to private combat. In half an hour, that warrior was routed, and fled from the field at the head of his scarecrows,<sup>1</sup> for there was no resisting the power before which the Montignys and the La Mottes had succumbed. Eloquent Gosson was left to his fate. Having the Catholic magistracy in durance, and with nobody to guard them, he felt, as was well observed by an ill-natured contemporary, like a man holding a wolf by the ears, equally afraid to let go or to retain his grasp.

His dilemma was soon terminated. While he was deliberating with his colleagues—Mordacq, an old campaigner, Crugeot, Bertoul, and others—whether to stand or fly, the drums and trumpets of the advancing royalists were heard. In another instant the Hotel de Ville was swarming with men-at-arms, headed by Bourgeois, the veteran who had expressed so slighting an opinion as to the prowess of Captain Ambrose. The tables were turned, the miniature revolution was at an end, the counter-revolution effected. Gosson and his confederates escaped out of a back door, but were soon afterwards arrested. Next morning, Baron Capres, the great Malcontent seignior, who was stationed with his regiment in the neighbourhood, and who had long been secretly coquetting with the Prior and Parma, marched into the city at the head of a strong detachment, and straightway proceeded to erect a very tall gibbet in front of the Hotel de Ville.<sup>2</sup> This looked practical in the eyes of the liberated and reinstated magistrates, and Gosson, Crugeot, and the rest were

summoned at once before them. The advocate thought, perhaps, with a sigh, that his judges, so recently his prisoners, might have been the fruit for another gallows-tree, had he planted it when the ground was his own; but taking heart of grace, he encouraged his colleagues—now his fellow-culprits. Crugeot, undismayed, made his appearance before the tribunal, arrayed in a corset of proof, with a golden hilted sword, a scarf embroidered with pearls and gold, and a hat bravely plumed with white, blue, and orange feathers—the colours of William the Silent—of all which finery he was stripped, however, as soon as he entered the court.<sup>3</sup>

The process was rapid. A summons from Brussels was expected every hour from the general government, ordering the cases to be brought before the federal tribunal, and as the Walloon provinces were not yet ready for open revolt, the order would be an inconvenient one. Hence the necessity for haste. The superior court of Artois, to which an appeal from the magistrates lay, immediately held a session in another chamber of the Hotel de Ville while the lower court was trying the prisoners, and Bertoul, Crugeot, Mordacq, with several others, were condemned in a few hours to the gibbet. They were invited to appeal, if they chose, to the council of Artois, but hearing that the court was sitting next door, so that there was no chance of a rescue in the streets, they declared themselves satisfied with the sentence. Gosson had not been tried, his case being reserved for the morrow.

Meantime, the short autumnal day had drawn to a close. A wild, stormy, rainy night then set in, but still the royalist party—citizens and soldiers intermingled—all armed to the teeth, and uttering fierce cries, while the whole scene was fitfully illuminated with the glare of flambeaux and blazing tar-barrels, kept watch in the open square around the city hall. A series of terrible Rembrandt-like night-pieces

fore cited, P. Payen, *Troubles d'Arras*, MS.

<sup>1</sup> Letter from Arras, MS.

<sup>2</sup> P. Payen, *Troubles d'Arras*, MS.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

succeeded—grim, fantastic, and gory. Bertoul, an old man, who for years had so surely felt himself predestined to his present doom that he had kept a gibbet in his own house to accustom himself to the sight of the machine, was led forth the first, and hanged at ten in the evening.<sup>1</sup> He was a good man, of perfectly blameless life, a sincere Catholic, but a warm partisan of Orange.

Valentine de Mordacq, an old soldier, came from the Hotel de Ville to the gallows at midnight. As he stood on the ladder, amid the flaming torches, he broke forth into furious execrations, wagging his long white beard to and fro, making hideous grimaces, and cursing the hard fate which, after many dangers on the battle-field and in beleaguered cities, had left him to such a death. The cord strangled his curses. Crugeot was executed at three in the morning, having obtained a few hours' respite in order to make his preparations, which he accordingly occupied himself in doing as tranquilly as if he had been setting forth upon an agreeable journey. He looked like a phantom, according to eye-witnesses, as he stood under the gibbet, making a most pious and Catholic address to the crowd.

The whole of the following day was devoted to the trial of Gosson. He was condemned at nightfall, and heard by appeal before the superior court directly afterwards. At midnight of the 25th of October 1578, he was condemned to lose his head, the execution to take place without delay. The city guards and the infantry under Capres still bivouacked upon the square; the howling storm still continued, but the glare of fagots and torches made the place as light as day. The ancient advocate, with haggard eyes and features distorted by wrath, walking between the sheriff and a Franciscan monk, advanced through the long lane of halberdiers, in the grand hall of the Town House, and thence emerged upon the scaffold erected before the door. He shook his fists with rage at

the released magistrates, so lately his prisoners, exclaiming that to his misplaced mercy it was owing that his head, instead of their own, was to be placed upon the block. He bitterly reproached the citizens for their cowardice in shrinking from dealing a blow for their fatherland, and in behalf of one who had so faithfully served them. The clerk of the court then read the sentence amid a silence so profound that every syllable he uttered, and every sigh and ejaculation of the victim, were distinctly heard in the most remote corner of the square. Gosson then, exclaiming that he was murdered without cause, knelt upon the scaffold. His head fell while an angry imprecation was still upon his lips.<sup>2</sup>

Several other persons of lesser note were hanged during the week—among others, Matthew Doucet, the truculent man of gingerbread, whose rage had been so judiciously but so unsuccessfully directed against the Prior of Saint Vaast. Captain Ambrose, too, did not live long to enjoy the price of his treachery. He was arrested very soon afterwards by the states' government in Antwerp, put to the torture, hanged and quartered.<sup>3</sup> In troublous times like those, when honest men found it difficult to keep their heads upon their shoulders, rogues were apt to meet their deserts, unless they had the advantage of lofty lineage and elevated position.

"Ille crucem sceleris pretium tulit, hic diadema."

This municipal revolution and counter-revolution, obscure though they seem, were in reality of very grave importance. This was the last blow struck for freedom in the Walloon country. The failure of the movement made that scission of the Netherlands certain, which has endured till our days, for the influence of the ecclesiastics in the states of Artois and Hainault, together with the military power of the Malcontent *grandeas*, whom Parma and John Sarrasin had purchased, could no longer be resisted.

<sup>1</sup> P. Payen, *Troubles d'Arras*, MS.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Letter of Saint Vaast, Rec. Prov. Wall. ii. 41, 42, MS.

The liberty of the Celtic provinces was sold, and a few high-born traitors received the price. Before the end of the year (1578) Montigny had signified to the Duke of Alençon that a prince who avowed himself too poor to pay for soldiers was no master for him.<sup>1</sup> The Baron, therefore, came to an understanding with La Motte and Sarrasin, acting for Alexander Farnese, and received the command of the infantry in the Walloon provinces, a merced of four thousand crowns a year, together with as large a slice of La Motte's hundred thousand florins for himself and soldiers, as that officer could be induced to part with.<sup>2</sup>

Baron Capres, whom Sarrasin—being especially enjoined to purchase him—had, in his own language, “sweated blood and water” to secure, at last agreed to reconcile himself with the King's party upon condition of receiving the government-general of Artois, together with the particular government of Hesdin—very lucrative offices, which the Viscount of Ghent then held by commission of the states-general.<sup>3</sup> That politic personage, however, whose disinclination to desert the liberty party which had clothed him with such high functions, was apparently so marked that the Prior had caused an ambush to be laid both for him and the Marquis Havré, in order to obtain bodily possession of two such powerful enemies,<sup>4</sup> now, at the last moment, displayed his true colours. He consented to reconcile himself also, on condition of receiving the royal appointment to the same government which he then held from the patriot authorities, together with

the title of Marquis de Richebourg, the command of all the cavalry in the royalist provinces, and certain rewards in money besides. By holding himself at a high mark, and keeping at a distance, he had obtained his price. Capres, for whom Philip, at Parma's suggestion, had sent the commission as governor of Artois and of Hesdin, was obliged to renounce those offices, notwithstanding his earlier “reconciliation,” and the “blood and water” of John Sarrasin.<sup>5</sup> Ghent was not even contented with these guerdons, but insisted upon the command of all the cavalry, including the band of ordnance which, with handsome salary, had been assigned to Lalain, as a part of the wages for his treason,<sup>6</sup> while the “little Count”—fiery as his small and belligerent cousin<sup>7</sup> whose exploits have been recorded in the earlier pages of this history—boldly taxed Parma and the King with cheating him out of his promised reward, in order to please a noble whose services had been less valuable than those of the Lalain family.<sup>8</sup> Having thus obtained the lion's share, due, as he thought, to his well known courage and military talents, as well as to the powerful family influence which he wielded—his brother, the Prince of Espinoy, hereditary seneschal of Hainault, having likewise rallied to the King's party—Ghent jocosely intimated to Parma his intention of helping himself to the two best horses in the Prince's stables in exchange for those lost at Gembours,<sup>9</sup> in which disastrous action he had commanded the cavalry for the states. He also sent two terriers to Farnese, hoping that they would “prove

<sup>1</sup> Mémoire de ce qui s'est passé à l'entrevue entre le Sr. de Montigny, Comte de Lalain, Duc d'Archeot, Marquis d'Havré, et al.; Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 104, 105, MS.

<sup>2</sup> MS. letters of Parma, Saint Vaast, Montigny, La Motte, et al.; Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 35-37, 115; iii. 120; iv. 221.

<sup>3</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 130-133, MS.

<sup>4</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., ii., f. 73. MS.—Compare Corresp. Alex. Farnese, p. 61.—Parma to Philip II.

<sup>5</sup> MS. letters of Vicomte de Gand to Philip II., and of Philip II. to Vicomte de Gand, Marquis de Richebourg; Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 197, 210.—Compare Correspondance, Alex. Farnese, 81, 85, 89, 97.

<sup>6</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., iv. 223, Lalain to Parma, MS.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony, Count of Hoogstraaten, the friend of Orange.

<sup>8</sup> “— j'espère que S. M. ne jugera les services que j'ay fait et fais journellement à icelle moins que ceux du dit Marquis de Richebourg, et que pour son seul respect elle ne m'estimera si peu, de me frauder, de ce que le Comte de Mansfeld m'avait auparavant fait entendre de la part de V. E.,” etc.—Lalain to Parma, Rec. Prov. Wall., iv. 278. MS. Parma to Lalain, Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 75-77.

<sup>9</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 202-204, MS.

more useful than beautiful."<sup>1</sup> The Prince might have thought, perhaps, as much of the Viscount's treason.

John Sarrasin, the all-accomplished Prior, as the reward of his exertions, received from Philip the abbey of Saint Vaast, the richest and most powerful ecclesiastical establishment in the Netherlands. At a subsequent period his grateful sovereign created him Archbishop of Cambray.<sup>2</sup>

Thus the "troubles of Arras"—as they were called—terminated. Gosson, the respected, wealthy, eloquent, and virtuous advocate, together with his colleagues—all Catholics, but at the same time patriots and liberals—died the death of felons for their unfortunate attempt to save their fatherland from an ecclesiastical and venal conspiracy; while the actors in the plot, having all performed well their parts, received their full meed of prizes and applause.

The private treaty by which the Walloon provinces of Artois, Hainault, Lille, Douay, and Orchies, united themselves in a separate league was signed upon the 6th of January 1579, but the final arrangements for the reconciliation of the Malcontent nobles and their soldiers were not completed until April 6th, upon which day a secret paper was signed at Mount Saint Eloi.

The secret current of the intrigue had not, however, flowed on with perfect smoothness until this placid termination. On the contrary, there had been much bickering, heart-burning, and mutual suspicions and recriminations. There had been violent wranglings among the claimants of the royal rewards. Lalain and Capres were not the only Malcontents who had cause to complain of being cheated of the promised largess. Montigny, in whose favour Parma had distinctly commanded La Motte to be liberal of the King's secret-service money, furiously charged

the Gouverneur of Gravelines with having received a large supply of gold from Spain, and of "locking the rascal counters from his friends," so that Parma was obliged to quiet the Baron, and many other barons in the same predicament, out of his own purse. All complained bitterly, too, that the King, whose promises had been so profuse to the nobles while the reconciliation was pending, turned a deaf ear to their petitions and left their letters unanswered, after the deed was accomplished.<sup>3</sup>

The unlucky Prior of Renty, whose disclosures to La Motte concerning the Spanish sarcasms upon his venality, had so nearly caused the preliminary negotiation with that seignior to fail, was the cause of still further mischief through the interception of Alonzo Curiel's private letters. Such revelations of corruption, and of contempt on the part of the corrupters, were eagerly turned to account by the states' government. A special messenger was despatched to Montigny<sup>4</sup> with the intercepted correspondence, accompanied by an earnest prayer that he would not contaminate his sword and his noble name by subserviency to men who despised even while they purchased traitors. That noble, both confounded and exasperated, was for a moment inclined to listen to the voice of honour and patriotism, but reflection and solitude induced him to pocket up his wrongs and his "merced" together. The states-general also sent the correspondence to the Walloon provincial authorities, with an eloquent address, begging them to study well the pitiful part which La Motte had enacted in the private comedy then performing, and to behold as in a mirror their own position, if they did not recede ere it was too late.<sup>5</sup>

The only important effect produced by the discovery was upon the Prior of Renty himself. Ottavio Gonzaga,

<sup>1</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., iii. 127, Marquis de Richebourg to Parma, MS.

<sup>2</sup> Correspondance Alex. Farnese, 41, 46, 55.

<sup>3</sup> Montigny to La Motte, Rec. Prov. Wall., iii. 120, and v. 145. MS. Mansfeld to Parma.—Compare Corresp. Alex. Farnese, 135.

<sup>4</sup> Groen v. Prinsterer, Archives, vi. 606.

<sup>5</sup> MS. letter of the states-general to the estates of Artois, Hainault, Lille, Douay, and Orchies; Ord. Depêchen Boek der St. gl. A. 1579, f. 200. Royal Archives at the Hague.

the intimate friend of Don John, and now high in the confidence of Parma, wrote to La Motte, indignantly denying the truth of Bien Aimé's tattle, and affirming that not a word had ever been uttered by himself or by any gentleman in his presence to the disparagement of the Governor of Gravelines. He added that if the Prior had worn another coat, and were of quality equal to his own, he would have made him eat his words or a few inches of steel. In the same vehement terms he addressed a letter to Bien Aimé himself.<sup>1</sup> Very soon afterwards, notwithstanding his coat and his quality, that unfortunate ecclesiastic found himself beset one dark night by two soldiers, who left him severely wounded and bleeding nearly to death upon the high road,<sup>2</sup> but escaping with life, he wrote to Parma, recounting his wrongs and the "sword-thrust in his left thigh," and made a demand for a merced.

The Prior recovered from this difficulty only to fall into another, by publishing what he called an apologue, in which he charged that the reconciled nobles were equally false to the royal and to the rebel government, and that, although "the fatted calf had been killed for them, after they had so long been feeding with perverse heretical pigs," they were, in truth, as mutinous as ever, being bent upon establishing an oligarchy in the Netherlands, and dividing the territory among themselves, to the exclusion of the sovereign. This naturally excited the wrath of the Viscount and others. The Seigneur d'Auberlieu, in a letter written in what the writer himself called the "gross style of a gendarme," charged the Prior with maligning honourable lords and—in the favourite colloquial phrase of the day—with attempting "to throw the cat against their legs." The real crime of the meddling priest, however, was to have let that troublesome animal out of the bag. He was accordingly waylaid again, and thrown into prison

by Count Lalain. While in durance he published an abject apology for his apologue, explaining that his allusions to "returned prodigals," "heretic swine," and to "Sodom and Gomorrah," had been entirely misconstrued. He was, however, retained in custody until Parma ordered his release on the ground that the punishment had been already sufficient for the offence. He then requested to be appointed Bishop of Saint Omer, that see being vacant. Parma advised the King by no means to grant the request—the Prior being neither endowed with the proper age nor discretion for such a dignity—but to bestow some lesser reward, in money or otherwise, upon the discomfited ecclesiastic, who had rendered so many services and incurred so many dangers.<sup>3</sup>

The states-general and the whole national party regarded, with prophetic dismay, the approaching dismemberment of their common country. They sent deputation on deputation to the Walloon states, to warn them of their danger, and to avert, if possible, the fatal measure. Meantime, as by the already accomplished movement, the "generality" was fast disappearing, and was indeed but the shadow of its former self, it seemed necessary to make a vigorous effort to restore something like unity to the struggling country. The Ghent Pacification had been their outer wall, ample enough and strong enough to enclose and to protect all the provinces. Treachery and religious fanaticism had undermined the bulwark almost as soon as reared. The whole beleaguered country was in danger of becoming utterly exposed to a foe who grew daily more threatening. As in besieged cities, a sudden breastwork is thrown up internally, when the outward defences are crumbling—so the energy of Orange had been silently preparing the Union of Utrecht, as a temporary defence until the foe should be beaten back, and there should be time to decide on their future course of action.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., ii. 270 and 270<sup>o</sup>. MS. letters of Ottavio Gonzaga.

<sup>2</sup> Prieur de Renty to Parma, MS., Rec. Prov. Wall., iii. 140.

<sup>3</sup> Rec. Prov. Wall., iv. 81–83, 264, 275, sqq., 336, v. 25. MS. letters of Renty, Auberlieu, and Parma.—Compare Corresp. Alex. Farnese, 74, 99.

<sup>4</sup> Groen v. Prinsterer, vi. 537.

During the whole month of December, an active correspondence had been carried on by the Prince and his brother John with various agents in Gelderland, Friesland, and Groningen, as well as with influential personages in the more central provinces and cities.<sup>1</sup> Gelderland, the natural bulwark to Holland and Zealand, commanding the four great rivers of the country, had been fortunately placed under the government of the trusty John of Nassau, that province being warmly in favour of a closer union with its sister provinces, and particularly with those more nearly allied to itself in religion and in language.

Already, in December (1578), Count John, in behalf of his brother, had laid before the states of Holland and Zealand, assembled at Gorcum, the project of a new union with "Gelderland, Ghent, Friesland, Utrecht, Overysse, and Groningen."<sup>2</sup> The proposition had been favourably entertained, and commissioners had been appointed to confer with other commissioners at Utrecht, whenever they should be summoned by Count John. The Prince, with the silence and caution which belonged to his whole policy, chose not to be the ostensible mover in the plan himself. He did not choose to startle unnecessarily the Archduke Matthias—the cipher who had been placed by his side, whose sudden subtraction would occasion more loss than his presence had conferred benefit. He did not choose to be cried out upon as infringing the Ghent Pacification, although the whole world knew that treaty to be hopelessly annulled. For these and many other weighty motives, he proposed that the new Union should be the apparent work of other hands, and only offered to him and to the country, when nearly completed.

After various preliminary meetings in December and January, the deputies of Gelderland and Zutphen, with Count John, stadholder of these provinces,

at their head, met with the deputies of Holland, Zealand, and the provinces between the Ems and the Lauwers, early in January, 1579, and on the 23d of that month, without waiting longer for the deputies of the other provinces, they agreed provisionally upon a treaty of union which was published afterwards on the 29th, from the Town House of Utrecht.<sup>3</sup>

This memorable document—which is ever regarded as the foundation of the Netherland Republic—contained twenty-six articles.<sup>4</sup>

The preamble stated the object of the union. It was to strengthen, not to forsake the Ghent Pacification, already nearly annihilated by the force of foreign soldiery. For this purpose, and in order more conveniently to defend themselves against their foes, the deputies of Gelderland, Zutphen, Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and the Frisian provinces, thought it desirable to form a still closer union. The contracting provinces agreed to remain eternally united, as if they were but one province. At the same time, it was understood that each was to retain its particular privileges, liberties, laudable and traditional customs, and other laws. The cities, corporations, and inhabitants of every province were to be guaranteed as to their ancient constitutions. Disputes concerning these various statutes and customs were to be decided by the usual tribunals, by "good men," or by amicable compromise. The provinces, by virtue of the Union, were to defend each other "with life, goods, and blood," against all force brought against them in the King's name or behalf. They were also to defend each other against all foreign or domestic potentates, provinces, or cities, provided such defence were controlled by the "generality" of the union.<sup>5</sup> For the expense occasioned by the protection of the provinces, certain imposts and excises were to be equally assessed and collect-

<sup>1</sup> Groen v. Prinsterer, vi. 479, sqq., 536, sqq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, vi. 479, sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Kluit, *Hist. der Holl. Staatsreg.*, i. 170, sqq. Bor, xiii. 21, sqq.

<sup>4</sup> The whole document is given by Bor, xiii. 26-30, and, somewhat abridged, by Wagener, vii. 251-262; Meteren, ix. 151, 152; Tassis, v. 339, sqq.; Hoofd, xiv. 609-615.

<sup>5</sup> Articles, 1, 2, 3.

ed. No truce or peace was to be concluded, no war commenced, no impost established affecting the "generality," but by unanimous advice and consent of the provinces. Upon other matters the majority was to decide; the votes being taken in the manner then customary in the assembly of states-general. In case of difficulty in coming to a unanimous vote when required, the matter was to be referred to the stadholders then in office. In case of their inability to agree, they were to appoint arbitrators, by whose decision the parties were to be governed. None of the united provinces, or of their cities or corporations, were to make treaties with other potentates or states, without consent of their confederates. If neighbouring princes, provinces, or cities, wished to enter into this confederacy, they were to be received by the unanimous consent of the united provinces. A common currency was to be established for the confederacy. In the matter of divine worship, Holland and Zealand were to conduct themselves as they should think proper. The other provinces of the union, however, were either to conform to the religious peace already laid down by Archduke Matthias and his council, or to make such other arrangements as each province should for itself consider appropriate for the maintenance of its internal tranquillity—provided always that every individual should remain free in his religion, and that no man should be molested or questioned on the subject of divine worship, as had been already established by the Ghent Pacification.<sup>1</sup> As a certain dispute arose concerning the meaning of this important clause, an additional paragraph was inserted a few days afterwards. In this it was stated that there was no intention of excluding from the confederacy any

province or city which was wholly Catholic, or in which the number of the Reformed was not sufficiently large to entitle them, by the religious peace, to public worship. On the contrary, the intention was to admit them, provided they obeyed the articles of union, and conducted themselves as good patriots; it being intended that no province or city should interfere with another in the matter of divine service. Disputes between two provinces were to be decided by the others, or—in case the generality were concerned—by the provisions of the ninth article.

The confederates were to assemble at Utrecht whenever summoned by those commissioned for that purpose. A majority of votes was to decide on matters then brought before them, even in case of the absence of some members of the confederacy, who might, however, send written proxies. Additions or amendments to these articles could only be made by unanimous consent. The articles were to be signed by the stadholders, magistrates, and principal officers of each province and city, and by all the train-bands, fraternities, and sodalities which might exist in the cities or villages of the union.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the simple provisions of that instrument which became the foundation of the powerful Commonwealth of the United Netherlands. On the day when it was concluded, there were present deputies from five provinces only.<sup>3</sup> Count John of Nassau signed first, as stadholder of Gelderland and Zutphen. His signature was followed by those of four deputies from that double province; and the envoys of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht and the Frisian provinces, then signed the document.<sup>4</sup>

The Prince himself, although in

<sup>1</sup> Articles, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 19, 22.

<sup>3</sup> *Bor.*, 3, xiii. 26. Kluit, *Holl. Staatsreg.*, i. 173, sqq. Wagenaer, *Vad. Hist.* vii. 263, sqq.

<sup>4</sup> *Bor.*, Kluit, Wagenaer, *ubi sup.*—Count Renneberg, as stadholder of Friesland, Overijssel, Groningen, Drente, etc., did not give his final adhesion until June 11, 1579.

His subsequent treason kept the city of Groningen out of the union, and it was not admitted till the year 1594.—(*Wag.* vii. 266.) On the other hand, several cities which were not destined eventually to form parts of the confederacy became members soon after its formation—as Ghent, on Feb. 4, 1579; Antwerp, July 28, 1579; Bruges, Feb. 1, 1580, etc.—*Bor.*, xiii. 31, et sqq.

reality the principal director of the movement, delayed appending his signature until May the 3d, 1579.<sup>1</sup> Herein he was actuated by the reasons already stated, and by the hope which he still entertained that a wider union might be established, with Matthias for its nominal chief. His enemies, as usual, attributed this patriotic delay to baser motives. They accused him of a desire to assume the governor-generalship himself, to the exclusion of the Archduke—an insinuation which the states of Holland took occasion formally to denounce as a calumny.<sup>2</sup> For those who have studied the character and history of the man, a defence against such slander is superfluous. Matthias was but the shadow, Orange the substance. The Archduke had been accepted only to obviate the evil effects of a political intrigue, and with the express condition that the Prince should be his lieutenant-general in name, his master in fact. Directly after his departure in the following year, the Prince's authority, which nominally departed also, was re-established in his own person, and by express act of the states-general.<sup>3</sup>

The Union of Utrecht was the foundation-stone of the Netherland Republic; but the framers of the confederacy did not intend the establishment of a Republic, or of an independent commonwealth of any kind. They had not forsworn the Spanish monarch. It was not yet their intention to forswear him. Certainly the act of union contained no allusion to such an important step. On the contrary, in the brief preamble they expressly stated their intention to strengthen the Ghent Pacification, and the Ghent Pacification acknowledged obedience to the King. They intended no political innovation of any kind. They expressly accepted matters as they were. All statutes, charters, and privileges of provinces, cities, or corporations were to remain untouched. They intended to form neither an independent state nor an

independent federal system.<sup>4</sup> No doubt the formal renunciation of allegiance, which was to follow within two years, was contemplated by many as a future probability; but it could not be foreseen with certainty.

The simple act of union was not regarded as the constitution of a commonwealth. Its object was a single one—defence against a foreign oppressor. The contracting parties bound themselves together to spend all their treasure and all their blood in expelling the foreign soldiery from their soil. To accomplish this purpose, they carefully abstained from intermeddling with internal politics and with religion. Every man was to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience. Every combination of citizens, from the provincial states down to the humblest rhetoric club, was to retain its ancient constitution. The establishment of a Republic, which lasted two centuries, which threw a girdle of rich dependencies entirely round the globe, and which attained so remarkable a height of commercial prosperity and political influence, was the result of the Utrecht Union; but it was not a premeditated result. A state, single towards the rest of the world, a unit in its external relations, while permitting internally a variety of sovereignties and institutions—in many respects the prototype of our own much more extensive and powerful union—was destined to spring from the act thus signed by the envoys of five provinces. Those envoys were acting, however, under the pressure of extreme necessity, and for what was believed an evanescent purpose. The future confederacy was not to resemble the system of the German empire, for it was to acknowledge no single head. It was to differ from the Achaian league, in the far inferior amount of power which it permitted to its general assembly, and in the consequently greater proportion of sovereign attributes which were re-

<sup>1</sup> Bor, 2, xiii. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Resol. Holl., 8 Mei., f. 93. Kluit, Holl. Staatsreg., i. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Kluit, i. 180, 181, note 15.

<sup>4</sup> Kluit, Holl. Staatsreg., i. 182, sqq.—Compare Groen v. Prinst., Archives, de la Maison d'Orange, vi. 536-564.

tained by the individual states. It was, on the other hand, to furnish a closer and more intimate bond than that of the Swiss confederacy, which was only a union for defence and external purposes, of cantons otherwise independent.<sup>1</sup> It was, finally, to differ from the American federal commonwealth in the great feature that it was to be merely a confederacy of sovereignties, not a representative Republic. Its foundation was a compact, not a constitution. The contracting parties were states and corporations, who considered themselves as representing small nationalities *de jure et de facto*, and as succeeding to the supreme power at the very instant in which allegiance to the Spanish monarch was renounced. The general assembly was a collection of diplomatic envoys, bound by instructions from independent states. The voting was not by heads, but by states. The deputies were not representatives of the people, but of the states; for the people of the United States of the Netherlands never assembled—as did the people of the United States of America two centuries later—to lay down a constitution, by which they granted a generous amount of power to the union, while they reserved enough of sovereign attributes to secure that local self-government which is the life-blood of liberty.

The Union of Utrecht, narrowed as it was to the nether portion of that country which, as a whole, might have formed a commonwealth so much more powerful, was in origin a proof of this

lamentable want of patriotism. Could the jealousy of great nobles, the rancour of religious differences, the Catholic bigotry of the Walloon population on the one side, contending with the democratic insanity of the Ghent populace on the other, have been restrained within bounds by the moderate counsels of William of Orange, it would have been possible to unite seventeen provinces instead of seven, and to save many long and blighting years of civil war.

The Utrecht Union was, however, of inestimable value. It was time for some step to be taken, if anarchy were not to reign until the inquisition and absolutism were restored. Already, out of Chaos and Night, the coming Republic was assuming substance and form. The union, if it created nothing else, at least constructed a league against a foreign foe whose armed masses were pouring faster and faster into the territory of the provinces. Farther than this it did not propose to go. It maintained what it found. It guaranteed religious liberty, and accepted the civil and political constitutions already in existence. Meantime, the defects of those constitutions, although visible and sensible, had not grown to the large proportions which they were destined to attain.

Thus by the Union of Utrecht on the one hand, and the fast approaching reconciliation of the Walloon provinces on the other, the work of decomposition and of construction went hand in hand.

## CHAPTER II.

Parma's feint upon Antwerp—He invests Maestricht—Deputation and letters from the states-general, from Brussels, and from Parma, to the Walloon provinces—Active negotiations by Orange and by Farnese—Walloon envoys in Parma's camp before Maestricht—Festivities—The Treaty of Reconciliation—Rejoicings of the royalist party—Comedy enacted at the Paris theatres—Religious tumults in Antwerp, Utrecht, and other cities—Religious Peace enforced by Orange—Philip Egmont's unsuccessful attempt upon Brussels—Siege of Maestricht—Failure at the Tongres gate—Mining and countermining—Partial destruction of the Tongres ravelin—Simultaneous attack upon the Tongres and Bois-le-Duc gates—The Spaniards repulsed with great loss—Gradual encroachments of the besiegers—Bloody contests—The town taken—Horrible massacre—Triumphal entrance and solemn thanksgiving—Calumnious attacks upon Orange—Renewed troubles in Ghent—Imbize and Dathenus—The presence of the Prince solicited—Coup d'état of Imbize—Order restored, and Imbize expelled by Orange.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Kluit, i. 193, 194.