

behaviour a certain ridicule on the cause which he espoused. The Duke, the courtly chief of the great House of Croy, was a self-seeking, restless, unprincipled intriguer, without tenacity of purpose, yet stung with ambition to reach high places which he



had no capacity to fill. The Baron of Montigny, Horn's brother, and the Marquess of Berghen, were honest men who were averse to oppression and hated persecution, who meant well and died nobly, but who are remembered rather for their misfortunes than for their ability in the desperate game in which they found themselves principal players. Philip de Marnix, Baron of St. Alde-

gonde, was perhaps the only fellow-labourer who was also the intellectual equal of William of Orange. Superior to the Prince in the cultivation and variety of his faculties, he belongs to that select order of all accomplished minds of which Bacon is the chief. An approved soldier and diplomatist, a profound scholar and theologian, a skilful orator and poet, and a writer whose style is still a model of French prose, he failed in one point only to attain the level of William of Orange; for he could never learn to regard religious toleration as a philosophical necessity or as a Christian duty.

During the three years and a half which elapsed between the retirement of Granvelle and the close of the regency of Margaret of Parma, the struggle between royal might and popular right was wholly in favour of the people. Early in 1565 Egmont was sent by the Regent and her council to Madrid to urge upon the King's attention the alarming state of affairs, the emptiness of the treasury, the growing disaffection of the people, and the necessity of concession. The brilliant courtier, though deeply impressed with the gravity of his message, unfortunately thought fit to take the opportunity presented by his mission to apply for grants of land and other favours for himself. Graciously conceding all the Count's personal requests, Philip, as regarded those made in behalf of the Provinces, wrapped himself in his usual mantle of reserve and evasion. Egmont returned to the Regent at Bruxelles with a little money and some faint hope of the further consideration of his proposals. The King seemed to think that the withdrawal of the Cardinal ought to have satisfied all demands. He would rather lose a thousand lives, if he had so many, he said, than consent to anything which would bring about any change in religion.¹ He would neither abolish nor even suspend the Inquisition. On this point he wrote to his sister in so peremptory a tone that Orange, Egmont, and others of the State Council who had never concealed their disapproval of the policy, admitted that no room was left for discussion, and that the Regent had no alternative but to enforce the edicts.

When it was found that the persecuting system was to be maintained with all its novel and hateful machinery, the cry of popular discontent rose as loudly as before. The Provinces protested, each in its several way, against the continued infraction of their ancient charters. The four chief cities of Brabant—Bruxelles, Ghent, Antwerp, and Mechlin—stated their case in a joint-petition,

¹ Gachard: *Don Carlos et Philippe II.*, i. 315-318.

in which the chief point was that no ecclesiastical tribunal was recognized by the Brabantine constitution except that of the Bishop of Cambray, and that he had no jurisdiction except over marriages and wills. The Duchess-Regent submitted the petition to the Council of Brabant, trusting to the influence of her creatures in that body. But, in spite of all the efforts of the president and his friends of the Spanish party, the case was so clear that the council reported that the cities were right. Brabant was therefore proclaimed free of the Inquisition.

In other Provinces the Inquisitors for a while continued to burn their victims, but always in the face of increasing opposition and increasing danger to themselves. From the ashes of each martyr ten heretics seemed to arise. Amongst the upper ranks heresy was defended by men who had no sympathy with its doctrines, and with whom loyalty to the crown was still a faith. These men said to each other: "I am the King's vassal and servant: I would give my estate and my life for his service. But what has the King to do with my soul? If I choose to give it to the devil, what is that to him?"¹ Amongst the vulgar the new sectaries grew bolder in their aggressions. Content at first with caricaturing ecclesiastical costume, they began to insult the clergy and their processions, and in the church itself some reckless enthusiasts would snatch the holy wafer from the hands of the priest and trample it under foot. The frightful cruelties which punished these outrages only stimulated the disposition to commit them. In the seats of commerce and industry, trade and manufactures began to be disastrously affected by the unsettled state of public affairs. The tide of emigration was setting steadily towards the English shore. The cloth and silk weavers of Flanders sought safety and religious freedom under the sceptre of Elizabeth, and by her wise policy Leeds and Norwich successfully vied with the staple products and rose on the misfortunes of Ghent and Antwerp.

The revenues of the Government, deeply indebted and forestalled, declined even more rapidly than the resources of the country. The produce of the taxes and the Crown domains naturally fell off in provinces where tax-payers and rent-payers were ceasing to exist. The Regent knew not where to look for means to meet the salaries of public servants, the pay of troops,

¹ Memoir addressed to Philip II. by Fray Lorenzo de Villavicencio in 1565. Quoted by Gachard: *Don Carlos et Philippe II.*, Bruxelles, 1863, 2 vols. 8vo, i. p. 309, note 3. A similar statement will be found in the *Discours de la Pacification de Gand*, 1579, 8vo, p. 27.

the maintenance of fortresses, and other current expenses of the State; and she was obliged to inform the King that if the criminals in the gaols could not be removed to Spain they must either be put to death or set at liberty, as the treasury was unable to supply the cost of their wretched existence.¹

Orange, Egmont, Berghen, and some of their friends who held high offices under the Crown, tendered their resignations, which the perplexed Regent refused to accept, or entreated them to recall. These great nobles endeavoured as long as they could to act as mediators between the royal authority and the lesser nobles and gentry, who were now, almost to a man, in the ranks of opposition. Even their influence could hardly restrain their order, staunch Catholics as well as Protestants, or favourers of the Protestant doctrines, from indulging in political demonstrations hardly less extravagant than the religious excesses of their humbler countrymen. A meeting of provincial nobles agreed upon a covenant, founded on their grievances against the Government, which was called the Compromise, and which in less than two months received upwards of two thousand signatures.

The association thus formed determined to present to the Regent, in a public and solemn manner, a statement of their complaints under the name of a Request. The greater nobles in general kept aloof both from the Compromise and the Request. Orange thought it his duty as a member of the Council of State to inform the Regent of the step that was in preparation, and he also used his influence with the framers of the Request to make its language temperate and respectful. Two hundred gentlemen, who were deputed to be the bearers of the document, rode into Bruxelles on an April evening in gallant and imposing cavalcade. Next day (14th of April 1566) they filed through the streets on foot, walking two and two, to the palace. Margaret, surrounded by her councillors, received them in the council-chamber. Brederode was the leader, and introduced them in a brief speech. The Request was then read aloud. The language was moderate and loyal, and breathed the most entire devotion to the King and the Regent. But the paper also stated with perfect plainness that the edicts and the Inquisition were driving the country to rebellion; that those who signed it had long hoped that the great lords or the Estates would interpose and stay the evil; and that being disappointed in this hope, they themselves, being exposed to the double danger of being pillaged in civil commo-

¹ Duchess of Parma to Philip II., Jan. 6, 1564, *Correspondance de Philippe II.*

tions or of being cast into prison and stripped of their property at the pleasure of any enemy who chose to denounce them to the Inquisition, had ventured to petition the Duchess to send an envoy to Madrid to implore His Majesty to abolish the edicts, and in the meantime to suspend the action of the Inquisition, as well as the execution of its sentences already pronounced, until the King's will should be known. The Regent, as the reading went on, became greatly agitated, and tears rolled down her cheeks before it was ended. She briefly replied, saying that she must consult her council as to the nature of her more formal answer.

When the deputies retired an important debate arose in the council. Orange pointed out the weight and influence of the petitioners, the reality of the evils of which they complained, and the earnestness and apparent sincerity with which they sought to avert from their country calamities which were obviously impending. The partisans of the royal policy were violent on the other side. The Count of Aremberg wanted the Regent to order the confederates to quit Bruxelles. Barlaymont, the finance minister, was for driving them out of the palace with ignominy, exclaiming: "Can your Highness really be a friend of these "beggars (*gueux*)?"

The result of two sittings of the council was communicated to Brederode and his friends two days after the presentation of the Request. The document was returned to them with a written assurance that the Regent would immediately send an envoy to Madrid to lay their wishes before His Majesty, and that she and her advisers were considering a scheme for moderating the edicts, which would also be submitted to the King. But as her authority did not enable her to suspend the edicts and the Inquisition, Margaret added that she could only order the Inquisitors "to proceed modestly and discreetly" in their functions; and she trusted that the petitioners on their part would behave loyally, and avoid political agitation and religious innovation. Two or three further communications passed between Brederode and the Regent, the one pressing for further concessions and the other refusing them.

The proceedings connected with the presentation of the Request closed with a great banquet given by Brederode, in which a fitting name for the confederacy of nobles who adhered to it was a topic of after-dinner discussion. Brederode had already provided a name, which he now produced with the aid of

premeditated circumstances. In a set speech he informed his guests of the sarcastic remarks made upon them by Barlaymont. "They call us beggars," he cried, "and beggars let us be!" A page in waiting here handed him a wallet and wooden bowl, such as were commonly worn by beggars. Amidst the acclamations of the company the speaker hung the wallet round his neck, and filling the bowl with wine, drained it to the prosperity of the new fraternity. The beggar's badges then went the round of the table, passing from neck to neck and from mouth to mouth with universal enthusiasm; and thus, with copious libations, and from the hand of one of its most foolish members, the popular party in the Netherlands received its baptism, and a name which, in various forms, was destined to become famous in history. Brederode and his friends afterwards adopted a costume of coarse gray cloth, in which they appeared in public with bag and bowl by their



PHILIP II. MEDAL OF THE BEGGARS.

sides, or with buttons or medals, stamped with those insignia, on their coats and hats.

The Regent redeemed her promise that she and her council were to produce a scheme, to be submitted to the King, by which the edicts were to be pruned of their excessive severity. It came forth in the shape of a paper entitled a Moderation, and consisting of fifty-three articles, many of them of doubtful or double meaning. It was little more than a repetition of the obnoxious edicts, with the substitution of hanging for burning, and, in some few cases, of banishment for death. Preaching or teaching the new doctrines, expounding the Scriptures, or holding any office in the new sects, were still capital offences. The people laughed at the document, and called it, by a quibble nearly the same in our language as in theirs, the Murderation instead of the Moderation. The Baron Montigny and the Marquess of Berghen were now sent to Spain by the Regent, ostensibly to lay the complaints of the nobles and the people before the King, but really to be punished for the part which they had taken in defence of the national liberties. For

while Margaret was promulgating her Moderation, and giving the two lords their credentials and instructions, she was in possession of private letters from Philip assuring her that he meant to maintain and execute the edicts in their full integrity and rigour.

Encouraged by the apparent successes of their leaders, and by the temporary lull in the persecution, the people grew daily bolder in their assertion of their right to the ministrations of their reformed teachers. Heretical sermons were publicly preached outside the towns, and vast crowds collected to hear them. In the summer days, and sometimes at midnight, the multitudes thus assembled near Tournay and Ghent, Haarlem and Antwerp, were estimated at six, eight, ten, fifteen, twenty, and on one occasion at thirty thousand. Most of the men were armed, and the accesses to the place of meeting barricaded with carts and waggons. The preachers were sometimes converted monks or priests, sometimes tanners, dyers, and weavers. Although the Regent offered seven hundred crowns for every captured orator, not one was betrayed or taken. On Sundays the cities and churches were deserted; for one person who worshipped in the ancient temples five were out in the country at the field preachings, where book-hawkers likewise resorted and sold the forbidden books of devotion by thousands. In vain the Regent ordered the magistrates to send their burgher-guard to disperse these illegal assemblages. She was told that the multitudes were too great and too well armed to be thus dealt with, and, besides, that the burgher-guards formed part of the heretic congregations.

The policy of the nobles and the enthusiasm of the people acted and reacted on each other. While the people flocked into the fields after their favourite preachers, the supporters of the Request assembled to harangue each other. Upwards of fifteen hundred of them, with their attendants, met at St. Trond, filling the village taverns, the country mansions, and the farm-houses of the district with noisy political talk and drunken revelry. The topics chiefly discussed indicated councils greatly in need of firm and sagacious leaders. The main questions were, first—Supposing the claims of the Request conceded by the Regent, were they to make any further claims? and, secondly—Were they now to insist on the Government giving a pledge not to punish them for their past conduct? Some of the men who discussed these questions also took upon themselves the grave responsibility of announcing to the people that they would guarantee them against violent interference with their religious opinions, and of engaging,

by a retaining fee, the services of some thousands of German horse and foot.

Orange was at this time at Antwerp, whither he had gone, at the earnest desire both of the magistrates and the Regent, to endeavour to calm the excitement of the people. Margaret now entreated him to go and meet a deputation of the St. Trond assembly at Duffel. He could be ill spared from Antwerp, yet he undertook the mission, in which Egmont was also associated with him. Brederode, Culemborg, and others represented the confederate nobles. Orange told them that they ought not to hold these riotous meetings so long as the Regent adhered to her promises made in April; that she had sent envoys to Madrid to state their case to the King; that, until His Majesty's reply was received, she had a right to expect that they would discourage all armed assemblies; and lastly, that if they would undertake to aid in suppressing the illegal and tumultuous gatherings she was ready to declare, in her own name and the King's, that their Request had been attended with beneficial results. The latter offer appeared to imply the promise of impunity for past acts which some of the confederates had been so anxious to secure. The representatives from St. Trond, however, met the concession with fresh demands. They said that, the Moderation being a mere mockery, the Regent had not fulfilled her pledge; that while a price was set on the head of each reformed preacher the persecution could not be held to be relaxed; and that the camp-meetings, far from being tumultuous or disloyal, were held for no other purpose than to afford men a peaceable opportunity of worshipping God in their own way. Orange and Egmont found their arguments of no avail. The result of the conference was a new address from the confederates to the Regent, a second and stronger edition of the Request. It was presented to Margaret at the end of July by Louis of Nassau and twelve associates, who were called his twelve apostles. In this document the nobles told her that while they were ever ready to meet the King's enemies in the field, they would not draw a sword against their innocent countrymen; and they declined to answer for the public peace, unless they were assured of safety from prosecutions for themselves and their friends, of the advice of Horn, Egmont, and Orange being adopted in the council, and above all, of the speedy assembling of the States-General. Although the Duchess replied, in a style sufficiently haughty, that this address was even more distasteful than the last, she permitted the deputies to open

a parley, in which things still more bold and bitter were said on each side. Complaining that their actions were daily misrepresented and calumniated, the nobles demanded to be confronted with their slanderers. The Regent replied that it was evident they wished both to administer justice and to conduct the Government. They retorted that if they were driven by violence to measures of self-defence it would be found that they were not without friends abroad. The bewildered Duchess demanded explanations; and she was told that they had resources both in the Provinces and in Germany. To such an address followed by such menaces the Regent and her council could give but one answer—a refusal to entertain the proposals of the confederacy. In her letters to Madrid Margaret had good reason to draw an alarming picture of the attitude of the nobles and the prospects of her helpless Government.

The public mind being in a state of the highest combustibility, the spark which was wanting to set the nation in a blaze was supplied by the concurrence of a religious festival and a civic blunder. From the beautiful church of Our Lady at Antwerp, enriched within and without by the genius, the wealth, and the piety of ages, the great image of the Virgin was carried forth on the Feast of her Assumption, in customary and solemn procession. During an August afternoon the sacred figure, once the object of every citizen's affectionate reverence, accompanied by the usual pomp of pall and canopy, gorgeous banners and robes, and long lines of churchmen of various degrees, and members of trading guilds and charitable societies, went glittering through the tapestried streets. But the ancient and familiar splendour was received by the people in a new and hostile spirit. The customary prostrations and plaudits were wanting, and the divine effigy passed on through an angry silence, now and then broken by cries of "Molly, this is your last round," or by the whizzing of a few missiles from the crowd. When the dismayed clergy regained the church they thought it prudent to place the statue, not, as usual, in the centre of the building where the majestic nave is crossed by the soaring transepts, but within the tall and strong iron screen of the choir. This precaution became next day the jest of a jeering crowd. One of the rabble, a saddler, mounted the pulpit and began a mock sermon, which became the signal for a party brawl. After some missiles had been exchanged between the preacher and his congregation, a Catholic skipper stormed the pulpit, and after a severe struggle rolled

down the steps with the orator in his grasp. Arms now began to gleam amongst the combatants, and a pistol-shot was fired, lodging a ball in the arm of the orthodox sailor. Nevertheless the mob dispersed at nightfall without doing further damage. Next day they again assembled and the scenes of riot were renewed. The magistrates were summoned, and remained in the church till evening endeavouring to quell the disturbance. Observing that the crowd was thinning, they flattered themselves that they had accomplished their mission, and went home, leaving only a side door of the church open for the egress of the loiterers. No sooner, however, had the authorities departed than the rioters returned, flung open the doors, and led the fierce worship of destruction and revenge. Before the advancing throng the little band of vergers and wardens was at once swept away, and no civic dignitary or municipal halberdier ventured himself that night within the portals. To the hoarse music of vernacular psalms howled forth by a thousand throats, the ringleaders rushed upon the image of Our Lady, dragged it from its pedestal, and hewed it in pieces. The colossal crucifix of the high altar shared the same fate, the tall companion crosses, with the two thieves, being left standing, as if these, as a Catholic historian remarked, had been the gods of the vile marauders. Ropes and ladders were brought, and as long as anything remained to overturn and to shatter, the axe, the hammer, and the crowbar were plied by strong and skilful arms; women of the town lighting the labourers at their work with the massive waxen torches of the desecrated altars, and refreshing them with wine from the precious chalices of the sacristy. At daybreak the lofty shrine of the Host, a miracle of woven stone, whose fretted pinnacles rose to the groinings of the vaulted roof; the painted windows; the mural monuments; the countless statues and pictures; the illuminated books of the choir; the silver candlesticks, and vases, and jewelled reliquaries, lay heaped together, a mass of rubbish and ruin. The number of the actual destroyers was supposed not to exceed a hundred. While they offered every possible outrage to the furniture and implements of devotion—dancing on holy wafers with shoes smeared with consecrated oil—they appear to have abstained from vulgar pillage. Broken, torn, and destroyed, the property of the church was left within the building. It was also noted as remarkable that in carrying on the dangerous and difficult work of destruction in haste and by dim uncertain light, tearing vast masses of wood and stone and

metal from organs and choir and pillars, exploring dizzy heights of wall and arch for the sacred symbols or saintly statues which crowned every coign or nestled in every niche, no injury was suffered in life or limb by the busy and furious iconoclasts. It seemed to the horrified Catholic as if the devil and his angels had taken them into their especial favour and keeping.¹

The cathedral sacked, the spoilers rushed to the other churches. Ere the sun was high thirty of these were swept with the besom of destruction. The friaries and nunneries were also attacked, their chapels devastated, their libraries burnt, their recluses sent flying through the streets. Bands of marauders ravaged the country, gutting the churches, and eating and drinking at the monasteries, where they paid for their entertainment by diligent use of the torch and hammer. The spirit of destruction was carried through the land with the tidings of it. In Flanders alone it was computed that four hundred churches were laid waste. As it was in the Cathedral of Antwerp, so it was in other venerable and splendid shrines of devotion and precious depositories of learning—at Ypres and Tournay; at Ghent, Bois-le-Duc, and Mechlin; at Utrecht, and Delft, and Amsterdam. Of the accumulated treasures of art and literature, the persecuting policy of Philip II. had in three days lost to the world a hundredfold more than his utmost munificence could ever hope to gather into the galleries and libraries of his Escorial. The monotony of mischief was varied at Amsterdam by the gallant and successful defence of a favourite chapel by the ladies who worshipped there, and at Delft by the hardihood of a company of female iconoclasts, who stormed a Franciscan monastery, routed the monks, and gutted their church. Bruxelles was almost the only town of any note whose shrines were unvisited by the whirlwind of image-breaking frenzy. There it was arrested by the wisdom and courage of the magistracy, backed by Orange and Egmont and their friends in the council. But, deplorable as was the destruction of so many fine works of art and relics of antiquity, it must not be forgotten that the popular fury was expended only upon inanimate objects which had become associated in the vulgar mind with a haughty and cruel superstition. Not a drop of blood was spilt; nor did any priest or monk or other clerical person, however active he may have been in torturing or burning heretics, suffer any injury or outrage beyond the destruction of the tools of his trade, or the clearing of his larder or his cellar. The instincts of

¹ Strada : *De Bello Belgico*, lib. v.

a furious and triumphant rabble need not fear comparison with the reason of Inquisitorial boards, which had goaded the mob to madness, and of statesmen who were soon to visit its excesses upon the noblest heads of the nation.

When the news reached the capital from city after city that the people were destroying the churches, the Regent fell into alternate paroxysms of rage and terror. At three o'clock in the morning of the 22d of August she suddenly called her council together. The members found her equipped for the road, and the courtyard of the palace filled with horses and mules saddled and packed for flight to the fortress of Mons. Persuaded to relinquish so unwise a step, she was in the evening of the same day again on the point of taking it. Better counsels again prevailed; and she was saved the disgrace of flying from her capital, because in the other cities there had been outbreaks upon stocks and stones without bloodshed or any single act of personal violence. Within a week the disturbances had come to an end. In each town there either were no more churches to sack, or a party of order had appeared, armed and resolute against further outrage. But the threatening aspect of affairs, and the universal antagonism which the Government had raised up against itself, compelled Margaret to adopt a course of which she was probably much more ashamed than flight, and which her bad faith rendered in the end much more disgraceful. On the 25th of August she signed an agreement with Count Louis of Nassau and the confederates, by which she abolished the Inquisition, guaranteed oblivion of all past transactions, and conceded to the reformed sects liberty of religious worship in all places where it already existed. The nobles, on their part, engaged that their confederacy should be considered as dissolved so long as the Regent adhered to her own conditions, and that they would give every assistance in their power to the maintenance of her authority and that of the King. The publication of the Accord, a decree so called in which this bargain was ratified, was received with universal joy. Order was restored. The reformed congregations assembled in vast numbers to hear their favourite preachers; sometimes, as in Antwerp, in some of the desecrated churches; sometimes, as in Tournay, in suburban spots, until suitable buildings could be erected for their reception. Some of the ringleaders in the image-breaking, being convicted of that outrage by the ordinary tribunals, were hanged like ordinary malefactors. For a moment peace and prosperity appeared to be returning to the Netherlands.

Never, however, were appearances more delusive. The Regent had signed the Accord, partly under the influence of panic, partly as a means of gaining time, and without any intention of binding the King or herself. She wrote to him that she hoped he would not think it necessary to abide by the engagement. In her communications, indeed, she generally took for granted the royal repudiation of her bond, which she excused herself for signing, solely on the ground that want of men and money rendered a bolder policy for the time impossible. Availing herself to the utmost of the aid of Orange, Egmont, Horn, and all the other nobles who supported the popular rights, and loading them with thanks and caresses, this faithless woman was at the same time, in her secret letters to the King, daily painting them as traitors, with slight differences in their treason's depth of dye.

The King met the crisis with his usual resources of deceit and delay. Highly displeased at the Request, he nevertheless received Berghen and Montigny with a show of cordiality, and in frequent private conferences encouraged them to state, with all frankness, the popular objections to his Inquisition and edicts, and their opinion as to the probable consequences of maintaining these measures. He listened and took notes with apparent calmness, but with a secret resolve that the two honest and loyal gentlemen should pay with their lives for taking him at his word and speaking without reserve. He professed to object rather to the form than to the principle of their proposals; he said that the Papal Inquisition—meaning that which had existed in the last reign—might be abolished if the Episcopal Inquisition were maintained; he required to have a draft of a new Moderation; and as to the desired indemnity for past transactions, he said it might be necessary to make certain exceptions. Even when the rapid stream of events, submerging these topics beneath weightier matters, had rendered further discussion of them futile, he still made them subjects of tedious analysis. The news of the image-breaking, indeed, startled him out of his usual frigid self-possession. He swore by the soul of his father that it should cost the Provinces dear, and he went to bed with a tertian fever, which his attendants attributed to his rage and vexation.¹ Yet in his public despatches, and in his letters to some of the great nobles, he still dissembled, still talked of mildness and grace, and of his intention of speedily visiting the Netherlands to superintend their complete pacification. By private letters, however, the Regent

¹ Gachard : *Don Carlos et Philippe II.*, Bruxelles, 1863, 2 vols. 8vo, ii. p. 355.

was secretly instructed that under no circumstances would he ever permit the States-General to be assembled; and the Pope, the inexorable persecutor Pius V., was implored not to take offence at the temporizing policy which Philip's necessities imposed upon him, but to be assured that he would not mitigate his severities against heresy, or ever consent to reign over heretics. To us, to whom the whole web of Philip's treachery lies patent, there is some satisfaction in observing that even in his own day, and without means of gauging the lower depths of his falsity, men did not trust him. Orange never believed that he would be bound by the Regent's promises. The Regent did not believe that he would visit Flanders, nor did Granvelle, nor Perez. Some part of every statement which he made the person to whom it was addressed felt to be a lie.

The Spanish members of the Spanish Council of the Netherlands, who discussed the affairs of the Provinces in the summer of 1566 at the country palace of the Wood of Segovia, were, as might be expected, unanimous in holding the attempt of the people to maintain their charters and defend their rights to be rank treason. In the eyes of those dutiful sons of the Church the image-breaking riots added to the popular movement a new and unheard-of horror. They conceived that the Netherlanders had revolted at once against their King and against God; and they were for treating the whole country as Charles V. had treated Ghent. There were differences as to the best mode of giving effect to that policy; but no man was wise enough to see its folly or bold enough to express a fear of its success, or sufficiently far-sighted even to suspect the vast resistance which was to rise up against the gigantic power of the Spanish Crown.

Philip sufficiently conquered his habits of procrastination and parsimony to supply the Regent with money wherewith to increase and pay her troops. Under the care of officers whom she could entirely trust, she had been secretly raising fresh levies. This operation was much aided by the reaction which immediately followed the image-breaking. Men wiser than those who formed the ranks of the Catholic nobility and gentry would have been deeply moved by the wholesale destruction of temples in which they had worshipped from childhood, and in which they had laid, in stately ancestral tombs, the bones of their kindred. Persons still in middle life could remember the abominations of the Anabaptists, a sect born of the Belgic soil, and how Leyden and Amsterdam had trembled before inspired butchers and bakers

who had led a rabble rout across the Rhine to practise rapine and preach polygamy. It was natural to look with distrust and dislike on a movement which seemed to revive those evil times, and, in the interest of order and property, to rally to the cause of royalty and superstition. Even of those who sympathized with the reformed doctrines and who were concerned for the national charters, many were deterred by the iconoclastic excesses from taking any part against the measures of the Government. Town after town therefore found itself in the power of a garrison which, from a handful of men, had mysteriously grown to a considerable force. In every place in which the military commander was strong enough to enforce the orders he had received from Bruxelles against religious toleration, the conditions of the Accord ceased to be observed. The reformed worship was suppressed, the congregations dispersed, and the preachers thrown into prison. If a town demurred about receiving a garrison a strong body of royal troops immediately appeared before it. The civic authorities were generally disposed to yield, being desirous of quiet, or friendly to the Catholic cause, or unprovided with means of resistance. The greater cities, however, being the strongholds of the reformed doctrines and much under the influence of their popular preachers, were less tractable. Antwerp, Bois-le-Duc, Maestricht, and Valenciennes, resolutely refused to admit the royal troops. Some of the confederate nobles promised aid from without; and even Orange approved of a resistance founded on strict constitutional right. Valenciennes was selected by the Regent as the place of which it was most advisable to make an example. The town was invested by the Count of Noircarmes, one of the staunchest and fiercest of the adherents of despotism. The siege lasted from the middle of December (1566) to the middle of March (1567). At first the townsmen made bold and successful sallies, while their friends in the country rose in desultory parties to make diversions in their favour. Noircarmes remained purposely inactive until a band of three thousand reformers ventured themselves within his reach. At these he struck his first blow, and left two thousand of them dead on the swampy meadows. Other attempts to relieve the place being equally unsuccessful, it was compelled to surrender under a capitulation whereby the lives and property of the inhabitants were to be respected. Technically these conditions were observed, because the town was not sacked. But a garrison quartered on the inhabitants exercised permanent pillage with impunity, and the restored Inquisition entered with new

rigour on a long career of judicial murder. Intimidated by the fate of Valenciennes, the other cities submitted to receive the royal troops and to relinquish the liberty of worship. Antwerp was the last to yield, "being shaken," says a Catholic historian, "by its heretical ministers like a possessed body under the power of the exorcist."¹ But even the proud Antwerpers could not hold out alone; the royal banner floated on their walls; and the Regent heard a *Te Deum* sung in the desecrated and ruined cathedral.

During the winter and spring, in various parts of the country, collisions took place between undisciplined mobs of reformers and the royal troops. In all cases the victory of the soldiers was easy, and in most the defeat of the rabble was bloody. Some of the confederate nobles fought and fell on the popular side. Others, like Brederode, were in their hereditary towns languidly raising their followers, and diligently carousing to the confusion of the Government. Their proceedings showed little concert and no judgment. Some of the chiefs of the party—who, while they hated the pretensions of despotism, had no taste for rebellion—allied themselves more closely to the Government, and openly supported its efforts to repress disorder. Egmont was in command of troops at the surrender of Valenciennes; Hoogstraaten, in a religious riot at Antwerp, slew three men with his own hand, and hanged several of the ringleaders without trial. At a still more formidable tumult in that city, Orange, although always protesting against the bad faith of the Regent, in his efforts to repress the outbreak narrowly escaped being shot by the infuriated Calvinists.

Emboldened by the reaction in her favour, and by the successes of her arts and her arms, the Duchess of Parma determined, in the course of the winter (1556-7), to test the loyalty of official persons by requiring from all the servants of the Crown a new oath of allegiance which bound them to obey the orders of the King in all places and against all persons without limitation or exception. The supporters of her policy at once accepted it. Egmont hesitated for a while, but at last took it. Orange boldly declared that he had already taken all necessary oaths and had broken none of them; that there were certain things in which obedience to the King might be a violation of other engagements to which he had also sworn fidelity; and that he would on no account take this oath. At the same time he offered his resignation of all appointments held by him under the Crown. His example

¹ Strada: *De Bello Belgico*, lib. vi.

was followed by Horn, Hoogstraaten, and other nobles. Margaret again temporized and dissembled. She was not prepared to make enemies whom she feared and could not crush. She refused the resignation of the greater recusants, and entered into courteous negotiations with them. It was after the refusal of Orange to take the oath, and after he might be said to have retired from the service of the Crown, that he rendered to the King and the Regent the signal good office of preserving the peace at Antwerp and dispersing a vast multitude of Lutherans, Calvinists, and Catholics, who had assembled in arms to fight out their religious quarrel. He effected this service at the peril of his life, and by inducing all parties to acquiesce in an agreement based on the concessions of the previous year, and by which freedom of religious worship was secured and a foreign garrison debarred. This agreement was accepted by the Regent so long as the tranquillity which it purchased was of importance to her. But, in her letters to the King, she founded on its conditions a grave charge against Orange; and she repudiated the agreement as soon as successes elsewhere enabled her to overawe the citizens of Antwerp.

The negotiations between Orange and the Regent on the subject of the new oath, conducted by means of letters and agents, were protracted, on the part of the Regent, for several months. The Prince adhered on all occasions to his distinct refusal to take the oath. His final answer was given to a deputation of nobles sent by the Duchess to confer with him, one of them being his friend Egmont. He then resigned all his employments, and retired beyond the Rhine to his principality of Dillenburg. He saw that the time was come when Netherlanders must choose between allegiance to their Spanish King and fidelity to their ancient liberties. As a member of the Council of State he had long been privy to the principal acts of the provincial Government at Bruxelles, and familiar with the public policy of the supreme Government at Madrid. Since accident had made him acquainted with the secret designs of Philip against his heretic subjects, he had provided himself with means of knowing what passed in the King's own closet. The silent, mysterious, suspicious Philip, who maintained spies in every Court in Europe, was foiled at his own weapons by his vassal. Copies of the most secret State Papers were in the hands of Orange almost as soon as the originals could be conveyed to those of the Duchess at Bruxelles. He was as well informed of what was resolved at the Escorial, in the King's private cabinet, as of what was discussed in the orgies of

Brederode and his Beggars in Holland. The flattering letters of Philip and the cajoleries of Margaret deceived him therefore no more than the drunken swagger of the confederate lords. He knew that a great blow was preparing, which it was too late to avert, and which there was now no means of resisting. Before he retired to Germany he warned his friends, especially those who had been shocked by the excesses of the heretics and deluded by the professions of the Regent, of the danger which threatened and the treachery which surrounded them. To Egmont his parting words were that he would find himself a bridge which the Spaniards would use to aid their passage into the Netherlands and afterwards destroy. He left the country in the middle of April. At the end of May an edict appeared re-establishing in the whole land the reign of the Inquisition. The new worship was rigidly suppressed, the congregations were dispersed by soldiers, the new temples were pulled down, and their timbers made into gallows whereon to hang the preachers. The tide of emigration began to flow with ominous rapidity. From every port, and over every frontier, men who professed the reformed doctrines, and who were not wholly blind to the signs of the times, hastened, according to their pursuits and sympathies, to the seats of peaceful industry in England and Germany, or to the banners of the Huguenot leaders in France.

From the moment when the news of the image-breaking reached Spain, the King began, slowly as was his wont, to perceive that the Netherlands must be conquered by force of arms. He resolved that every man who had embraced heretical opinions, or who, being still a Catholic, had been in any manner implicated in the opposition to his Government, should die. As the instrument of his vengeance he selected the Duke of Alba, on account of his military capacity, his entire loyalty, his iron nature, and his Castillian antipathy to the Netherlands and their people. The autumn and winter of 1566 were devoted to diligent preparation. In the spring of 1567 the regiments of Lombardy, Sardinia, Naples, and Sicily, the flower of the armies of Spain, were concentrated in the Milanese; and the garrisons from which they had been withdrawn were filled up with young troops, sent by sea from Cartagena. When the Duke of Alba reviewed his force at Asti, he found himself at the head of eight thousand seven hundred foot and twelve hundred horse, all veterans and perfectly equipped—a sight satisfactory to a commander, one of whose military maxims it was to prefer stout men to a long muster-roll.

Crossing Mont Cenis, he led these choice battalions through Burgundy and Lorraine to Luxemburg; the more direct road through France having been refused by Charles IX. on the plea that the march of a Spanish army would exasperate his Huguenot subjects. Alba reached Luxemburg about the middle of August. The country, which had only a few years before compelled the dismissal of the Spanish troops, again beheld with silent dismay, streaming across its frontier, the red-and-yellow flags and dark faces of the southern soldiery. The bold citizens who had maintained its rights were some of them dead, most of them in exile; while some, deluded by superstition or bought with royal smiles or a coarser price, were doing homage, hat in hand, to the haughty Castillian who had come to put his foot on their necks. In a few days Alba was at Bruxelles, installed as Governor-General with new and extraordinary powers. The Duchess-Regent, often as she had entreated Philip to ease her of the burden of power, was by no means pleased when the relief was granted. She received her successor very ungraciously, and had the effrontery to pretend a sympathy with the popular feeling against him. Nor, indeed, when mollified with gifts and pensions she departed for Italy, was she wholly unregretted by the Provinces which she had misgoverned; so completely were the whips, with which she had chastised them, forgotten when they writhed under the scorpion lash of Alba.

For many weeks before the Duke's arrival, and for some time after it, every effort was made by the Government to revive the threadbare belief in the coming of the King. Preparations were made in the palace for his reception; eight sail were kept in readiness to put out to meet him at sea the moment when the news of his embarkation should be received; prayers for his safe voyage were ordered in the churches—prayers which some sceptics said "His Majesty needed not, meaning to stay at home."¹ Under cover of this expected royal visit Alba posted his troops to the best advantage in Bruxelles, Antwerp, and Ghent, and by every art of flattery and dissimulation lured to the capital the chief nobles who had belonged to the Beggars' confederacy, or who had at any time shown a disposition to maintain the independence of their country.

Orange was of course too wise to be drawn into the snare Hoogstraaten, enticed from Germany, was saved from destruction by the accident of wounding himself with a pistol, which confined

¹ Strada: *De Bello Belgico*, lib. vi.

him to bed at Cologne. Egmont and Horn were arrested while guests of Alba on the 9th of September 1567. From that moment the Duke ceased to observe any form of law or usage which impeded the march of his purely arbitrary government. The Council of State and all the ordinary tribunals were superseded in their functions by a new Court filled with the creatures of Alba, and called the Council of Troubles. It was created without any direct or sufficient authority from the King, and its members held their places by simple nomination and without any commission in writing even from the Duke. Its acts were to be guided by a code of instructions which defined treason and prescribed its punishment in the most compendious manner. To have presented or signed any petition against any of the obnoxious measures or institutions of the previous Government, against the new Bishoprics, or the Inquisition, or the edicts; to have tolerated the preaching of the new doctrines; to have failed to resist the image-breaking and the delivery of the Request to the Duchess-Regent; to question the right of the King, his deputy, or this council, to set aside any charter or constitutional privilege; to do or to have done any of those acts which for several years had been constantly, openly, and legally done by a majority of the people of the Low Countries, was declared to be treason. All treason was punishable with death.

Before this terrible Court, Orange, his brothers, and their chief adherents were summoned, and on their non-appearance proclaimed traitors and outlaws, and received capital sentence. The eldest son of Orange, a lad who had been incautiously left to pursue his studies at the University of Louvain, was seized and sent to Spain. The Inquisition was of course ready to second the new governor in all his lawless violence. In February 1568 it pronounced a sentence which in extravagant absurdity has rarely been equalled even by an ecclesiastical tribunal, and by which all the inhabitants of the Netherlands, except a few who were exempted from it by name, were condemned to death as heretics. Within three months Alba's new Court had sent eighteen hundred persons to the scaffold, justifying the name, which the popular instinct had given it on its creation, of the Council of Blood. In or near the principal cities were erected strong fortresses, amongst which that of Antwerp was considered a model of military architecture; and the cities were lawlessly compelled to defray a great part of the expense of the works constructed for the purpose of overawing them.

The origin and the progress thus far of the contest between despotism and liberty in the Netherlands have been here narrated with considerable minuteness of detail, because the key of later events is to be found in the early history of the long struggle. Until the image-breaking riots the King believed that he could annihilate the obnoxious constitutional rights of the Provinces by the patient use of chicanery and fraud within certain constitutional forms, and without having recourse to open military violence. That outburst of fury from a few of the dregs of the populace, and the alacrity with which the people at large availed themselves of it for the purpose of dictating terms to a feeble Government, convinced him of his error. Duchess Margaret was therefore furnished with the means of violating her engagements, and she began the conquest of the country which the Duke of Alba was sent to complete. Between the institution of Alba's Blood Council and the arrival of Don John, the chief intervening events were judicial murders together with encounters between the two hostile camps into which the unhappy land was henceforward for two generations to be divided. Of these events a very brief indication will here suffice.

In the spring of 1568 the Prince of Orange took the decisive step of appearing in arms against the King of Spain. He endeavoured indeed to preserve some appearance of loyalty by levying troops in the name of Philip himself, whose royal authority he asserted had been abused and jeopardized by the arbitrary and illegal conduct of his Viceroy. The troops were raised in Germany with funds supplied by Orange himself, his brothers, the great nobles, and many of the cities of the Netherlands. Of the first operations the fortune was doubtful. In April the Spaniards cut to pieces two thousand patriots at Dalem; but in May Louis of Nassau destroyed a force of about one thousand five hundred picked Spaniards under Aremberg at Heiliger Zee in the swampy pastures between the Ems and the Lippe. This disaster awoke Alba from his dream of easy victory over the antagonists whom he called men of butter. His first measure of retaliation was to hurry on the execution of Egmont and Horn, who were beheaded at Bruxelles early in June. He then led an army of chosen veterans into Friesland, and utterly annihilated the patriot forces at Jemmingem. In that fatal field seven Spaniards were slain, and seven thousand rebels. Louis of Nassau escaped to Germany, and the terror-stricken Netherlands remained helpless in the hands of the brutal Spanish soldiery.

In September, however, Orange at the head of his main army of thirty thousand men, crossing the Rhine and the Meuse, marched into Brabant. Alba adopted a policy of delay, manœuvred with admirable skill, refused every invitation to a general action, but obtained considerable advantage in several smart skirmishes. After losing several thousand men in a month's campaign, Orange was compelled at the approach of winter to retire into Germany, baffled in arms, lowered in military reputation, and beggared in resources.

Alba, who was not the man to enjoy his victory with moderation, celebrated it by erecting, in the citadel of Antwerp, a colossal statue of himself, trampling on a double-headed monster, emblematical of heresy and rebellion. For nearly two years (1569-1570) he reigned, in tolerable tranquillity, over a population, cowed and prostrate, from which his Blood Council selected every month a hecatomb of victims for the scaffold. His chief difficulty lay in his finances. His confiscations were less productive, and his fortifications and his troops more costly, than he had anticipated. To his schemes of arbitrary taxation the States and the people offered a passive but effectual resistance; and his master lent a deaf ear to his appeals for aid from Spain. Not only did he find it impossible to collect the revenues, but the sources of revenue were daily dried up by the decay of commerce and manufacture, and by the constant outflow of the wealth and the skill of the country to more peaceful lands. His policy and his personal demeanour were daily alienating even those of the nobles who adhered to the royal cause.

Their loyalty was further shaken by the shameful treatment of Berghen and Montigny, who had been sent in 1567 on a joint mission, by the Duchess of Parma and the confederate nobles, to lay before the King the grievances of the Netherlands. These unhappy gentlemen had been detained in Spain, on various pretexts, long after they had ceased to entertain hopes of effecting anything for their country; and they soon found that their position was that of hostages, or prisoners within the limits of the Court. When Alba was sent to govern the Netherlands, they felt themselves to be doomed men. Berghen soon after sickened and died of fever, not without suspicion of poison; and his property in the Netherlands was confiscated by the Crown. In the autumn of 1567 Montigny was arrested and immured at Segovia, and while there underwent a mock trial, in his absence, before the Blood Council of Bruxelles. In March 1570 that

tribunal condemned him to die. The Spanish Council of the Netherlands, sitting at Madrid, perceiving, it seems, that the severities of Alba had not been successful in pacifying the Provinces, advised the King against the public execution of another distinguished Netherlander, but recommended that he should be taken off in prison by slow poison. The King declared in favour of a private execution, but agreed that it was better that it should be given out that the victim had died of fever. Montigny was therefore strangled in the castle of Simancas, in the night between the 15th and 16th of October 1570. Of this assassination, with its forged letters, by which the poor prisoner was to be seduced into an attempt to escape, the minutest details were planned by Philip himself, as well as the elaborate contrivances by which the world was to be prepared for the death, and induced to believe it natural.¹ These contrivances, though very ingenious, were not very successful. Although the precise course of this crime has only recently been traced and discovered, the death of Montigny was at once generally attributed to violence and its true author; and it afforded a new proof to the nobles and the people of the Netherlands, if proof were still wanting, that no faith could be placed in the word of their King.

Driven for a season from the land, the champions of liberty took refuge on the ocean. Furnished with letters of marque from Orange, the bold sailors of Holland, or the "Beggars of the Sea," as they were called, levied large contributions on the commerce of Spain, beginning among the isles and estuaries of the Low Countries that determined and successful warfare against the Spanish flag which they soon carried into the North Sea and the Channel, and ere long into the oceans of both hemispheres. Their daring and profitable exploits replenished the coffers and raised the hopes of their party. At last, in April 1572, William de la Marck surprised the seaport and fortress of Brill, and gave Dutch freedom its first firm foothold on the soil of Holland. Flushing also was taken and garrisoned partly with English volunteers.

As the prospects of Orange brightened the attitude of foreign powers also became more promising. In his low estate the Emperor Maximilian and the Catholic electors had frowned upon his schemes and bade him beware of giving umbrage to the King of

¹ The original documents, or abstracts of them, will be found in Gachard: *Correspondance de Philippe II. sur les Affaires des Pays-Bas*, ii. pp. 152-162. The narrative of the transaction, followed through the windings of its turpitude, may be most advantageously read in Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, vol. ii. pp. 262-270.

Spain. Even the Protestant Princes had looked coldly on the struggle. But when it became evident that the spirit of rebellion in the Netherlands was to be broken neither by the victories of Alba nor by the fury of his Blood Council, and when successes at sea began to repair disasters on shore, Maximilian, changing his tone, urged Philip to make some concession before it should be too late. Queen Elizabeth became more convinced that the interests of England were bound up in the fortunes of the patriot Netherlanders. The Huguenots having gained an apparent ascendancy in the councils of Charles IX., efficient French aid swelled the strength of Orange. This support, indeed, was lent but for a very brief space, because the peace between the Catholic and Protestant parties was a mere device of the Queen-Mother to insure the success of the treachery of St. Bartholomew. But it enabled Louis of Nassau to capture the southern fortress of Mons almost at the same time that Alkmaar and Dort, Leyden, Haarlem, and other northern cities declared for Orange.¹

These successes of the despised patriots were wormwood and gall to the haughty Alba, who was compelled to watch, without being able to check, their progress. He had also to contend with the difficulties of an empty treasury, of troops mutinous for pay, and the deep hatred of the whole population. His temper, never very enduring, utterly gave way. He quarrelled bitterly with the councillors who had hitherto been his most obsequious tools, because they hesitated to approve of his attempt to cure the evils of an absurd and cruel policy by remedies still more cruel and absurd. An arbitrary tax of the tenth penny on all articles bought and sold had closed the shops and almost put an end to buying and selling. A simple plan for restoring commercial confidence by hanging eighteen of the chief tradesmen of Bruxelles at their shop-doors would have been carried out but for the opportune arrival of the tidings of the capture of Brill. The King

¹ In the *Apologie du Prince d'Orange*, 1581, 4to, p. 24, occurs the following curious passage relating to the religious opinions of Maximilian II. After saying that but for the services of his ancestors of the Houses of Nassau and Orange to the House of Austria Philip II. would not have been able to place so proud an array of titles at the head of the Ban against him, he proceeds thus, proclaiming him a traitor and malefactor: "Mais qu'on me responde por le commandement de qui le Cardinal de Granvelle a empoisonné l'Empereur Maximilian dernier, n'estant encore Roi des Romains? Je scai ce qu'il m'en a dit, et que depuis il a eu telle crainte du Roi et des Espagnols, qu'il en a este plus craintif à faire profession de la Religion laquelle il cognoissoit toutes fois estre la meilleure." Can this attempt at poisoning have taken place on the occasion of one of the visits of Maximilian—then King of Bohemia—to Charles V. at Bruxelles shortly before his abdication, or after it, in 1555 or 1556, when Granvelle was all-powerful in the Netherlands?

added to the perplexities of Alba by teasing him with elaborate and ridiculous schemes for the assassination of Queen Elizabeth, the invasion of her kingdom, and the transfer of her crown to the captive Queen of Scots, schemes which the Duke was required to execute so secretly that they were neither to come to the knowledge of his council nor to disturb his relations with England. The unhappy Viceroy, while admitting the wisdom and justice of these projects, urged the necessity of postponing them to a more convenient season: and at last, driven to his wits' end, he begged to be relieved from his complicated and arduous duties. Philip, as usual, took counsel with the Duke's enemies, spoke him fair, and temporized in interminable and unmeaning despatches. At length, yielding to Alba's entreaties, he nominated the Duke of Medina-Celi as his successor. But although Medina-Celi received his commission in September 1571 he was not allowed to reach the Netherlands till June 1572. Off the mouth of the Scheldt his fleet was thrown into disorder by a light squadron of the Beggars of the Sea, a foretaste of the disgrace which he was to sustain when, sixteen years later, he led the great Armada into the English Channel. Alba had permission to use his own discretion as to the moment of his resignation; and the arrival of his successor seemed at once to lessen his desire to relinquish power, and to increase the vexations which attended its possession.

The Massacre of St. Bartholomew (August 23, 1572) was a heavy blow to the hopes of freedom in the Netherlands, and a great and unexpected advantage to the policy of the Spanish King. It is no wonder that Philip II. received the news with a burst of unwonted laughter. By paralysing the Huguenot party, that worst of Catholic crimes deprived Orange of his best support, and the loathing which it excited through Europe converted Charles IX. from a jealous and dangerous rival of Philip, for a time at least, into Philip's firm and subservient ally. On the struggle in the Netherlands its effect was at once visible. Louis of Nassau was compelled to evacuate Mons; and there and at Mechlin Alba had once more the satisfaction of wreaking his vengeance on the unhappy population. Orange concentrated his forces in Holland and Zeland, where the war continued to rage during the ensuing year (1572-3). The contest was maintained with the greatest determination; and acts of the noblest daring, the most gallant endurance, or the most frightful ferocity, were performed on both sides. Perhaps the most memorable achievements were the Spanish relief of Tergoes and the Dutch defence

of Haarlem. Beleaguered and hard pressed by the patriots, Tergoes was relieved by Mondragone, who, in the darkness of an October night, led three thousand veterans, wading, often to their necks, across ten miles of water, and drove the besiegers from their entrenchments. Haarlem, defended by very insufficient fortifications, held out against the whole power of Alba for seven months. It was necessary to march three regiments from Milan to supply the losses of the besiegers and to carry on the siege. The Spaniards lost twelve thousand men before the place, and the cruelties with which they avenged its resistance went far to render the quarrel between Philip and his Dutch subjects irreconcilable. Alkmaar also held out with equal courage and happier fortune; and the siege was raised in consequence of the discovery of Orange's determination to cut the dykes and sacrifice North Holland and its persecutors to the ocean. The deliverance of Alkmaar was closely followed by a great naval victory, in which the patriot squadron took and destroyed a considerable Spanish fleet in the Zuyder Zee.

As the difficulties of Alba became more formidable, his policy became more contemptible. Finding that he could not subdue the patriots by force he resorted to the expedient of a proclamation, in which he promised pardon to those who would submit to the royal authority, and threatened vengeance yet more cruel against those who continued to resist it. His promises and his threats excited nothing but scorn. He had rejoiced in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, as placing an impassable barrier between Orange and the French King; but he had the mortification of learning, within a year of that event, that the ever-treacherous Valois was negotiating with Louis of Nassau a bargain whereby French aid was to be given to the Netherlanders at the price of a French Protectorate, and on the condition that the influence of Orange should be exercised on the side of the Duke of Anjou at the approaching election to the throne of Poland. Money was growing scarcer every day, and Alba was driven to the sorry shift of evading his creditors at Amsterdam, by making a midnight retreat from that city. In his council, composed as it was of tools and creatures, there was not a single native member with whom he had remained on decent terms; and he had formally advised the King to dismiss them all and fill their places with Spaniards. In his despatches even the savage and unscrupulous Noircarmes was painted as an object of distrust and suspicion. The presence of Medina-Celi was a per-

petual and increasing annoyance to Alba, and their hatred for each other became every day more hearty. Medina-Celi criticized Alba's measures, and Alba sneered at Medina-Celi's incapacity. The reigning Viceroy would rather remain in an employment which he detested, than resign it to the expectant Viceroy, whom he detested still more. His victory over his rival's pretensions and patience was the sole success that marked the close of his administration. The commission of Medina-Celi was transferred to the Grand-Commander Requesens,¹ and the discomfited Duke departed from Bruxelles without taking leave of the governor whom he had come to replace. For a few weeks Alba remained to enjoy his triumph, spending most of his time in bed to nurse his gout and shun his creditors. On the 18th of December 1573 he turned his face southward, complaining that he had lost the King's favour and incurred the hatred of every inhabitant of the Netherlands, but deriving some consolation from the thought that of these unjust Netherlanders he had sent eighteen thousand six hundred to the scaffold.² During his administration forty million of ducats had been spent; and he left behind him upwards of sixty-two thousand men in arms, a force too great for the King of Spain to maintain, yet too small to complete the conquest of the country. His parting advice to his master was a sufficient confession of the failure of his policy. Conciliation, he said, was hopeless; extermination was the sole

¹ Sir Roger Williams (*The Actions of the Lowe Countries*, London, printed by Humphrey Lownes, 1618) gives the following estimate, most likely the popular one, of the character of Don Luis de Requesens:—"Don Lewis de Requesence, Commendador Maior de Castillia, a souldier of great reputation for counsaile, but nobody for execution, as the battaile of Lapanta could witness. For the Commendador being chiefe Counciller to Don John de Austria, did what he could to procure the Christian armie not to hazard battaile with the Turkes. Also being in the fight, he aduanced so slowly with a rere-guarde of Gallies, that he nor his came to any blowes; so as bothe there and in other places, alwaies the Commendador was reputed a coward. But belike in respect of his wit and mildnesse the King sent him into the Lowe Countries, perhaps perswaded that a milde Captain would winne the hearts of the people farre better with faire meanes then Duke d'Alva with his cruelty. But in troth both King and Councill deceiued themselves in calling away Duke d'Alva and in making choyce of such a Generall as the Commendador Maior. For by all reason, if the Duke had bene royally maintained as he ought, he had made his master absolute King over all the seaventeene Prouinces. To say troth, furie and resolution well used or executed had been the onely waies to suppress that nation . . . which had bene farre more easie in the hands of Duke d'Alva then of the poor Commendador."—pp. 116, 117.

² In 1550 Don Pedro de Toledo, Viceroy of Naples, discussing with the Tuscan agent the robbery of a courier, said that during his administration of eight years eighteen thousand people had died by the hands of the hangman; "he did not know what more he could do." Franc. Babbi to Duke Cosmo de Medici; Naples, March 12, 1550. Quoted by F. Palermo: *Documenti nella storia di Napoli*, p. 124, Firenze, 1846, 8vo. See Reumont's *Carafes of Maddaloni*, pp. 28-9.

remaining course ; and all the towns which could not be garrisoned by royal troops ought to be burned to the ground.¹

The new Viceroy was received at Bruxelles with great rejoicings, less because the people desired to do him honour than because they wished to make it apparent to the departing governor that any change was welcome which relieved them of his hated rule. Alba remained in the country for nearly three weeks after Requesens had assumed the reins, in order, as he said, to render him every assistance. But he did little beyond handing him the key of a treasury, empty of money and stored with nothing but unintelligible accounts and obligations, upon which Alba declined to throw any light. With no insight into the financial position of his government, but with bitter experience which taught him to believe the worst, Requesens had to encounter far greater difficulties upon still more slender resources than he had left behind him at Milan.² Without a revenue, without supplies from Spain, with nothing remaining to confiscate, and with troops clamorous for pay, he had to relieve Middelburg, hard pressed by the patriots by sea and land, and to conduct the siege of the important city of Leyden. An attempt to effect the first of these objects led to a great naval action, in which the Spanish fleet of seventy-five sail was utterly defeated and in great part destroyed (29th January 1574). Mondragone was compelled to surrender Middelburg on honourable terms to the Prince of Orange, he himself undertaking to obtain the release of Sainte Aldegonde and other important patriot prisoners, or to return into captivity—a bargain which Requesens would neither ratify nor permit Mondragone on his own part to fulfil.

Count Louis of Nassau soon after crossed the Rhine at the head of eight or nine thousand men, and, advancing upon Maestricht, forced the Royalists to raise the siege of Leyden. But by the superior generalship of Don Sancho de Avila, he was defeated at Mookerheyde with great slaughter, he himself and his brother Henry being among the slain. This loss to the House of Nassau was, however, the sole gain accruing from this victory to the royal cause. An empty military chest here, as in many other cases, presented to the Spanish leader an obstacle more formidable than a siege or a battle. Instead of pursuing their advantages his troops mutinied for pay, deposed their officers, marched upon Antwerp, and remained there for many weeks in full possession of the town, defying the Viceroy and pillaging the unhappy

¹ Gachard : *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, ii. 1293.

² Vol. I. p. 479.

citizens. Requesens was at last obliged to come to their terms ; and while they were noisily celebrating their triumph and their return to duty, the patriot Admiral Boisot sailed up the Scheldt and destroyed the remainder of the royal fleet which had escaped from before Middelburg.

Notwithstanding this disaster the abandoned leaguer of Leyden was resumed in May. The Royalist assailants were commanded by Don Francisco de Valdes ; the defence was conducted by John Van der Does. It lasted for four months, and is one of the noblest passages in the long war. To effect the reduction of the place the Spanish power in the Netherlands was strained to the uttermost. To aid its resistance no external land force was available, the destruction of Louis and his army having exhausted the military resources, and for a time paralysed the movements of the patriots. To save Leyden Orange could look only to his Beggars of the Sea and his old ally the ocean. A flotilla having been collected, dyke after dyke was resolutely pierced, until the salt waves flowed in upon the fair pastures and fruit-laden orchards of Rhyndland. Boisot and his sailors followed the advancing tide, making boat attacks upon the outposts of the Spaniards, and chafing at the long delays opposed to their progress by incessant easterly gales. Within the town, famine and pestilence were even more deadly than the artillery of the enemy ; but in spite of these calamities and the heart-sickness of deferred hope, the citizens were ever ready to harass and repulse the besieger. The Spaniards fought with their accustomed bravery, on one side pushing on their operations against the walls, and on the other launching light vessels to meet the relieving flotilla. Post after post, however, was driven in by the slow but sure rise of the tide ; and as regiment after regiment found its encampment turning into an island, communications with headquarters became daily more difficult and dangerous. At length, after many a fierce conflict on the water and on the half-drowned land, where the northern sailors harpooned the pikemen and musketeers like seals, a storm arose in the south-west, and swept the fleet of Boisot up to the walls of Lammen Fort, the key of the Spanish position. The town was at its last gasp, but the country around was no longer tenable. On the hundred and thirty-fourth day of the siege, in the darkness of a tempestuous midnight, fifty paces length of the wall fell down, undermined by the surging waters. The foe was, however, in no condition to take advantage of this unexpected breach, for at the moment when it was opened he was stealing

from his entrenchments, and retreating eastwards with great confusion and loss along pathways half submerged beneath the sea. On the morrow (3d October 1574) Leyden welcomed her deliverers. Amongst the many striking and touching manifestations of joy and thankfulness, the most lasting was the foundation of the famous Protestant university, endowed with the spoils of rich abbeys, under a charter granted by Orange in the name of the King of Spain, in which, with grave and humorous irony, Philip was made to say that he desired to reward his good city of Leyden for its faithfulness in bearing the heavy burdens of the war.

Requesens approved, and would have adopted if he could, all the violent policy of Alba and all the treacherous policy of Philip. But with every disposition he soon found that he lacked the power to crush the rebellion. He had, therefore, almost from the first, in his timid hesitating way, urged upon the King the propriety of making some compromise with the disaffected Provinces. Before the second siege of Leyden had been raised he had obtained leave to publish an amnesty, in which, although there were no real concessions, there were no menaces, and few excepted names. This document was treated with as little respect as Alba's last attempt of the same kind. The Emperor, also, had been in active correspondence both with Philip and Orange, labouring to impress upon each the advantages of making peace. After the relief of Leyden, as the war languished, the efforts of diplomacy were doubled. They were so far successful, that on the 3d of March 1575 ten commissioners from the refractory States met five commissioners on the part of the King at Breda. The conferences of these personages—fruitless, except in the interval of repose which they gave to the unhappy country—lasted for more than four months. The King would yield absolutely nothing. He denied that the privileges of the Netherlands had been infringed, and he insisted on the complete and exclusive re-establishment of the Roman Catholic religion, even in Provinces where there were no Roman Catholic inhabitants. The patriots desired, and the King appeared to consent, that all matters in dispute should be submitted to the decision of a general assembly of the Estates. But when the question of guarantees came to be discussed, the royal commissioners offered the word and sign-manual of the King, of which the worthlessness had been so amply tested, together with those of the Emperor; and they demanded the oaths of the Estates and of the Prince of Orange, together with the surrender, as hostages, not only of several

eminent persons, but of four maritime cities. The manifest inequality between the offer and the demand broke up the negotiations (4th July 1575).

The war was soon after reopened, with some advantages on the side of the King. The troops of Requesens captured, after an obstinate resistance, the town of Oudewater, and butchered the inhabitants with the usual barbarity. This success was soon followed by the most brilliant feat of arms which illustrated his brief vicerealty. Of the larger islands of the Scheldt, Tholen still remained in the hands of the Spaniards. The adjacent island of Duiveland was held by the patriots. A channel, six miles wide, separated them; but athwart it there lay a narrow sandbank, always in great part submerged, but at low water affording a dangerous fording-place. Across this perilous pass, in a September midnight, Don Osorio de Ulloa led a force of three thousand foot. The patriots were aware of the attempt, and their flotilla was moored along the sandbank for the purpose of frustrating it. The daring adventurers, however, marching through water generally breast high and a storm of artillery and musketry, effected their purpose, though with considerable loss; and they landed in Duiveland in sufficient numbers to overthrow the troops that opposed them. Crossing a narrow channel, they next occupied the neighbouring island of Schouwen, and, aided by a fleet of light vessels bringing reinforcements and supplies, they laid siege to the town of Zierick-Zee.

Soon after the recommencement of hostilities the Provinces of Holland and Zeland took the step of proclaiming in form that which had so long been accomplished in fact—their independence of the King of Spain. Some months before their abortive negotiations with the royal commissioners at Breda, they had reconsidered and readjusted their relations with the Prince of Orange. The powers which Orange had hitherto exercised as Stadtholder were large, but somewhat indefinite; and they had brought him into occasional conflict with the Estates, and especially with the cities. On one of these occasions he offered to resign his authority if the Estates were prepared either to exercise it themselves or to dispose of it otherwise to better public advantage. The discussion which ensued terminated in the investiture of the Prince with still more ample powers. On the declaration of independence these powers were confirmed to him. The supreme executive authority, both civil and military, was placed in his hands, the Estates retaining the right of voting the supplies and ratifying his

appointments to the higher judicial and financial offices. To the discretion of William was also committed the delicate task of negotiating with the great neighbouring powers, and selecting for the Provinces a sovereign able and willing to protect them against the attacks of Spain.

In the discharge of these high functions the noble character of Orange, his singleness of purpose, his gentle courage, his patient industry, and his consummate ability, won every day more and more the love and confidence of his country. At home his power was ever exerted on the side of justice, of equal rights, and of that liberty of conscience which the Romish sect—which he had now quitted—hated, and the Protestants—whom he had joined—had not yet learned to love. Abroad he entered into active negotiations with all who were able to aid the Provinces in their struggle—with the Emperor, with the King of France, and the Queen of England. It was to France and England that he looked for a sovereign and protector of his native land. Elizabeth was not averse to accept for herself the sceptre of the Netherlands, but she dreaded the expense of acquiring and defending it. Henry II. (who had lately succeeded Charles IX.) wished to obtain it for his worthless brother Francis, Duke of Alençon. Both were lavish of promises, niggardly in performance, desirous of flattering the hopes of the Provinces, and afraid of offending the powerful monarch of Spain.

These negotiations were in progress, and the Spanish troops were besieging Zierick-Zee, when Requesens died of a sudden fever at Bruxelles on the 5th of March 1576. Like most governors of the Netherlands, he was heartily weary of his work. He was wont often to say that he desired nothing in life so much as to leave the Provinces, were it only for the affronts which he daily looked for from his own countrymen; and that the Spaniards would certainly lose the Netherlands for their King, unless they amended their insolence and learned discipline and justice.¹

This event happened at the moment most inopportune for the King's interests. Seldom has the removal of so commonplace a man produced effects so important. It paralysed the military operations from which the Spanish party, not without reason, hoped for the reconquest of the Provinces. To the achievement of this object it was essential that the vacant post

¹ Frederic Perrenot, Seigneur de Champagny, to the King; Antwerp, 10th August 1576. Gachard: *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, iv. p. 293.

should be filled by the ablest man that could be found with the least possible delay. Philip for once saw the necessity of promptitude, and made up his mind within a fortnight.

Requesens having died too suddenly to name an interim successor, the supreme power fell into the hands of the Council of State. By this body, presided over by the Duke of Aerschot, and now recruited by royal decree with one Spaniard and three Netherlanders, a semblance of government was carried on for some months. Don John of Austria was named Governor, as we have already seen, in April, and he accepted the post towards the end of May. But the aspect of affairs was so black, and the royal preparations so little promising, that, in spite of positive orders to proceed direct to Bruxelles, he thought it necessary first to visit Madrid, to take his instructions from the King's lips, and to urge his own views and requirements on the King's ear. If any justification of the step were necessary, it was furnished by the letter of congratulation addressed to Don John, on the 6th of August, by the Belgian Council of State.¹ This dismal document, after the usual compliments, expressed hopes that His Highness would soon appear in the Low Countries, bringing with him those remedies of pacification promised by His Majesty for the troubles, and enabling the Provinces to escape "from the dangerous strait and labyrinth into which affairs had during past years been brought by the attempt to place the government on a footing different from the old one, the ill success of which all men saw and knew." The new Governor was warned that he must bring no more troops, "the country already groaning under the weight of fifty or sixty thousand of them of all nations, so badly paid that it is impossible to get any service out of them, or employ them otherwise than in living in the towns and eating up the people;" that some of these troops were already in open mutiny, and had seized Alost; and that fresh disturbances between the soldiery and the population were expected to break out every day. Finally, he was entreated to help them to "some provision of funds, the want of which is the chief cause of the troubles;" to send them some immediate remittance, "were it but a hundred thousand crowns," for without money "all would go to ruin." To this appeal Don John, of course, could make no reply beyond assuring the Council (11th September) that he hoped to meet them very shortly,² and by laying it before the

¹ Gachard : *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, iv. pp. 285-7. No. 1680.

² *Ibid.* p. 371. No. 1717.

King, before whom so many similar petitions had been fruitlessly laid. But it confirmed the opinion, which he had expressed with tolerable distinctness in accepting the appointment, that the want of money was the greatest of the difficulties in the Netherlands; and it justified his anxiety to come to a clear understanding on this and other difficulties before plunging into the chaos of Belgian affairs. The delay of his northern journey may have been partly the result and partly the cause of events now to be briefly sketched, which added fresh perils and troubles to the career on which he was entering, and shook to its foundations the royal authority in the Low Countries.

The military successes of Requesens, by reawakening public alarm, had considerably increased the influence of Orange. The



ARMS OF DON JOHN.

adherents of the various reformed sects saw in him their sole protector against renewed persecution. The Provinces of Holland and Zeland, uniting themselves by closer ties, conferred upon him fuller powers. His envoys, both in London and Paris, were enabled to point not only to the dangers which threatened him, but also to the confidence which the people of the Netherlands reposed in him. Both Elizabeth and Henry entered into more serious negotiations than they had yet ventured to open.

The military enterprises of Orange were less promising than his diplomatic affairs. Towards the end of May his fleet failed in an attempt to relieve Zierick-Zee, and some weeks afterwards that town capitulated to Mondragone. But this was the last success which attended the operations planned by Requesens. The Spanish army entered upon a career which neutralized its

previous victories, and ended in its second ignominious expulsion from the Netherlands. The troops of Mondragone took possession of Zierick-Zee in very ill humour. At the end of a long and severe winter siege they found themselves defrauded of the prize which they had marched through the sea to obtain. Without plunder, they were likewise left without pay, without clothing, and but scantily provided with food. In vain the officers applied to the State Council for remittances and supplies. The council was powerless because the treasury was empty. The soldiers, becoming outrageous, plundered the island of Schouwen and moved into Brabant under leaders of their own choosing. The terrified council sent Mansfeldt and some other officers to treat with them. Immediate payment of the arrears due, or the delivery into their hands of a town by way of pledge, were the terms which the troops demanded. The emissaries could accept neither alternative, and returned discomfited to Bruxelles.

Similar causes of dissatisfaction being at work elsewhere, other garrisons and divisions of the army sent large reinforcements to the mutineers. After threatening Mechlin and other towns the roving band finally stormed and occupied Alost, and laid the adjacent country under heavy contribution. The burghers of Bruxelles rose in arms to defend the capital; and the State Council, governing in the name of the King of Spain, issued an edict proclaiming his soldiers outlaws, and empowering the citizens to slay them wherever they could be found. This edict exasperated the troops who had not joined the mutiny, and even the Spanish officers, whom the insurgent regiments had expelled from their commands. Antwerp and its citadel became at once two hostile camps. Don Sancho de Avila, who commanded in the citadel, pronounced the edict infamous and refused to publish it. Champagny, the governor of the city, armed the burghers, and, fearing the temper of some German infantry quartered in the place, obtained its withdrawal and the substitution in its stead of another regiment less likely to sympathize with the Spaniards. A similar movement prevailed over the whole country. The Spanish army was arrayed on one side, the nation on the other.

Meanwhile the sole depositary of the royal authority, the perplexed and feeble State Council, itself disappeared from the scene. Its Spanish member, Jerome de Roda, secretly fled to Antwerp citadel, and, installing himself there, asserted his right to exercise the whole power of the entire body on the plea that his colleagues were acting under the dictation of the mob at

Bruxelles. The rest of the council continued for some time to sit and deliberate until their proceedings were abruptly closed by De Heze, to whom they had lately entrusted the government of Bruxelles, and who, professing to act under the authority of the Estates of Brabant, and backed by five hundred soldiers, arrested them all in their council-chamber. The individual councillors were most of them soon set at liberty; but from the day of the arrest the power of the council was annihilated, and public affairs were languidly administered in the name of the Brabantine Estates acting professedly on behalf of the King. Troops, levied by the Estates, soon afterwards laid siege to the citadel of Ghent.

For this eclipse of the royal authority the chief actors in it afterwards disowned their responsibility; but it was with good reason believed to have been contrived by the Prince of Orange, although neither he nor any of his leading adherents appeared in the transaction. For the purpose of extending and consolidating the national party he entered into communications with each of the Provinces, and induced nearly all of them to send representatives to a Congress, or unofficial States-General, which, it was determined, should meet at Ghent to deliberate on the affairs of the country. By the middle of October a considerable number of the delegates had assembled in that city, and one of the first acts of the congress was to appoint the Duke of Aerschot superintendent of military affairs.

During the summer various conflicts took place between the mutinous Spanish soldiery and the national militia, or bodies of volunteers, hastily mustered against the marauders. The victory was usually with the skilful and disciplined Spaniards, who were joined by most of the German mercenaries. The field of Tisnacq was a battle of Jemmingem on a small scale. Two thousand Netherlanders were slain there, with the loss of two Spaniards. At Maestricht only, the national cause, to which some German troops had there allied themselves, obtained a partial success. The Spaniards were expelled from the town, and driven across the Meuse to the village of Wieck. There, however, they rallied, and devised the infernal scheme of attacking the batteries, which were erected to prevent their return, from behind a file of women, who had taken refuge at Wieck, and whom they placed in front of their van. The stratagem succeeded, the batteries were carried, and the town was stormed and sacked with the usual barbarity.

The mutineers, however, did not venture to march upon the

capital, or even to relieve the beleaguered citadel of Ghent. The Brabantines, on their side, were not strong enough in regularly-trained troops to effect the reduction of that fortress. At length they applied to the Prince of Orange for reinforcements. The Catholic patriots did not venture upon this step without much hesitation, and the negotiations were more than once in danger of being broken off. Orange finally furnished from his own levies twenty-eight companies to the siege of the Ghent citadel, and received in security of the payment of their expenses the town of Nieuport. The siege was thenceforwards pushed on with great vigour.

As exasperation grew between the foreign army and the armed nation, the line which at first divided the royalist party and the mutineers was absolutely effaced. Sancho de Avila, the commander of Antwerp citadel, was tacitly recognized by the mutineers, as well as the loyal troops, as their leader for all purposes of combined action against the country. His policy was approved and partly guided by Roda, the State councillor who claimed to be the State Council. They now determined to gratify the soldiery and overawe the Provinces by the sack of the city of Antwerp. Partly suspected by Champagny, their design was at last wholly revealed to him by Count Oberstein, a German colonel, who, while drunk, was drawn into complicity in the plot, of which, when sober, he repented. A strong body of troops, three thousand foot, and eight hundred to a thousand horse,¹ under the Marquess of Havrech, was despatched from Ghent to the assistance of the devoted town. Havrech brought with him intercepted letters, proving that Avila had ordered or incited the concentration of various bodies of troops upon Antwerp. This concentration was nevertheless effected whilst the national officers—all of them, except Champagny, lamentably unequal to the crisis—disputed as to the means of meeting the danger. A ditch and breastwork were, however, thrown up on the side of the town which fronted the citadel, 4th November,² and with ordinary skill and prudence Antwerp might have been saved. The garrison and the troops from without numbered but four thousand, while the forces of Havrech and the armed townsmen were estimated at fifteen or sixteen thousand. But the skill of the Spanish leaders, and the discipline of their soldiers, more than counterbalanced the difference of one to three. The attack

¹ George Gascoyne: *The Spoyle of Antwerp*, London, 1576, sm. 8vo, reprinted 1872, p. 21.

² *Ibid.*

was made about ten o'clock in the morning of the 4th of November, and ere noon all the defences were carried. The richest mart in Europe, "the Indies in a single city," was sacked and pillaged with a ferocity and a devastation which paralleled the excesses of the reign of Alba. "In this conflict there were slain six hundred Spaniards or thereabouts, and on the Thursday next following, a view of the dead bodies in the town being taken, it was estimated at seventeen thousand men, women, and children."¹ In this Spanish Fury as the massacre was called, eight thousand Netherlanders were slain, and two hundred Spaniards. Five thousand Spanish soldiers shared among them plunder estimated at five or six millions. "For person and country," said the English poet Gascoyne, who was there, "they spared neither friend nor foe, Portugal nor Turk. The rich was spoiled because he had, the poor were hanged because they had nothing. And this I must needs say for them, that as their continual training in service doth make them expert in all warlike stratagem, so their daily trade in spoiling hath made them the cunningest ransackers of houses, and the best able to bring their spoil unto a quick market, of any soldiers or master-thieves that ever I heard of."² Many of them obtained so much bullion that they sought to secure and conceal it by causing it to be made into sword-hilts and pieces of armour, which they painted black and wore on their persons.

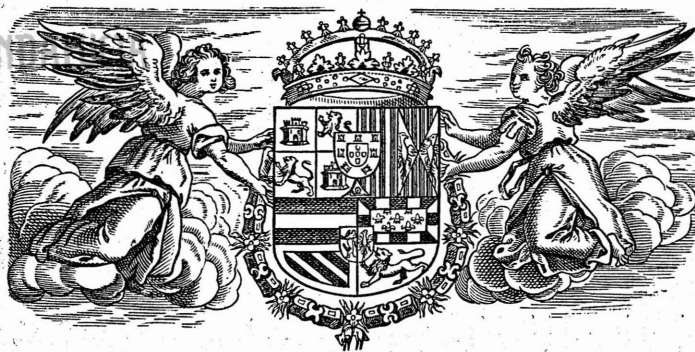
Against the Spanish army the wrath and hatred of the whole country were now inextinguishably aroused. The Antwerp Fury and the undisguised approval of it, expressed in some intercepted despatches addressed by Roda to the King, quickened the deliberations of the Congress at Ghent. On the 8th of November the treaty known as the Pacification of Ghent was signed by the representatives of Holland and Zeland on one side, and by those of Brabant, Flanders, Artois, Hainault, Valenciennes, Lille, Douay, Orchies, Namur, Tournay, Utrecht, and Mechlin, on the other. It was a treaty of friendship and close alliance, by which these contracting parties bound themselves to expel the Spanish troops from the land. When relieved from their hated presence, a States-General was to be summoned, on the basis of that which received the abdication of the Emperor. Until then the affairs of religion were to remain on their present footing, Holland and Zeland professing the new religion, and the Catholic Provinces

¹ George Gascoyne : *The Spoyle of Antwerp*, London, 1576, sm. 8vo, reprinted 1872, p. 27.

² *Ibid.* pp. 28-31.

the old, each without molestation from the other. All prisoners were to be released without ransom, the Inquisition was formally abolished, all edicts and ordinances against heresy were suspended, and all confiscations since 1566 were declared null and void. To the States-General all questions of internal policy were to be referred, such as the restoration of fortresses to the King and the repayment to the Prince of Orange of his expenses in the war. The treaty was open to the adhesion of the rest of the Provinces. On the day when it was signed, the 8th of November, the castle of Ghent surrendered to the national troops. About the same time Mondragone, who had hitherto maintained himself in Zierick-Zee with a handful of loyal soldiers, evacuated that dear-bought town and the isle of Schouwen; and almost the whole of Zeland returned to the possession of the adherents of Orange.¹

¹ For the above account of the affairs in the Netherlands previous to the arrival of Don John of Austria, I am mainly indebted to Mr. Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* (London, 1858, 3 vols. 8vo), a work which, in patient research, lucid arrangement, and graphic power, has few equals in modern literature.



ROYAL ARMS OF SPAIN.

P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

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CHAPTER V.

THE NETHERLANDS; JOURNEY THITHER OF DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA, AND EVENTS THERE FROM THE END OF OCTOBER 1576 TO THE 1ST OF MAY 1577.



AVING set forward on his northern ride, as we have seen, towards the end of October, from Abrojo, near Valladolid, Don John of Austria was accompanied by Ottavio Gonzaga¹ and two or three servants, amongst whom was a French postilion who in after days, travelling with the historian Brantôme, was described by that writer as a Frenchified Swiss, or half Savoyard, half Spaniard, knowing all the posts, highroads, and byways of France.² Don

John is said by his biographer to have travelled disguised, with stained face and dyed frizzled hair, as the Moorish slave of Gonzaga.³ Of this disguise, which may, as we have seen, have been adopted partly in imitation of his father at Innsbruck,⁴ no

¹ Son to Ferrante, so famous formerly in arms, who was Viceroy in Sicily, and afterwards under Charles V. governor of Milan. Bartidoglio: *Warre of Flanders*, translated by Henry, Earl of Monmouth, London, 1654, fol., p. 150.

² *Vies des Hommes Illustres et Grandes Capitaines Estrangers. Discours XLI. Euvres de Brantôme.* Paris, 1787, 8 tomes 8vo, iv. p. 344.

³ Vanderhammen: *Don Juan de Austria*, f. 292.

⁴ See p. 116.