

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REGENT'S AUTHORITY REESTABLISHED.

Reaction.—Appeal to Arms.—Tumult in Antwerp.—Siege of Valenciennes.—The Government triumphant.

1566, 1567.

THE excesses of the iconoclasts, like most excesses, recoiled on the heads of those who committed them. The Roman Catholic members of the league withdrew, as we have seen, from an association which connected them, however remotely, with deeds so atrocious. Other Catholics, who had looked with no unfriendly eye on the revolution, now that they saw it was to go forward over the ruins of their religion, were only eager to show their detestation of it, and their loyalty to the government. The Lutherans, who, as already noticed, had never moved in much harmony with the Calvinists, were anxious to throw the whole blame of the excesses on the rival sect; and thus the breach, growing wider and wider between the two great divisions of the Protestants, worked infinite prejudice to the common cause of reform. Lastly, men like Egmont, who from patriotic motives had

been led to dally with the revolution in its infancy, seeming indeed almost ready to embrace it, now turned coldly away, and hastened to make their peace with the regent.

Margaret felt the accession of strength she was daily deriving from these divisions of her enemies, and she was not slow to profit by it. As she had no longer confidence in those on whom she had hitherto relied for support, she was now obliged to rely more exclusively on herself. She was indefatigable in her application to business. "I know not," writes her secretary, Armenteros, "how the regent contrives to live, amidst the disgusts and difficulties which incessantly beset her. For some months she has risen before dawn. Every morning and evening, sometimes oftener, she calls her council together. The rest of the day and night she is occupied with giving audiences, or with receiving despatches and letters, or in answering them."¹

Margaret now bent all her efforts to retrace the humiliating path into which she had been led, and to reëstablish the fallen authority of the crown. If she did not actually revoke the concessions wrung from her, she was careful to define them so narrowly that they should be of little service to any one. She wrote to the governors of the provinces, that her license for public preaching was to be taken literally,

¹ "Il y a plus de trois mois, qu'elle se lève avant le jour, et que le plus souvent elle tient conseil le matin et le soir; et tout le reste de la journée et de la nuit, elle le consacre à donner des audiences, à lire les lettres et les avis qui arrivent

de toutes parts, et à déterminer les réponses à y faire." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 496.

Sleep seems to have been as superfluous to Margaret as to a hero of romance.

and was by no means intended to cover the performance of other religious rites, as those of baptism, marriage, and burial, which she understood were freely practised by the reformed ministers. She published an edict reciting the terrible penalties of the law against all offenders in this way, and she enjoined the authorities to enforce the execution of it to the letter.²

The Protestants loudly complained of what they termed a most perfidious policy on the part of the regent. The right of public preaching, they said, naturally included that of performing the other religious ceremonies of the Reformed Church. It was a cruel mockery to allow men to profess a religion, and yet not to practise the rites which belong to it.

—The construction given by Margaret to her edict must be admitted to savor somewhat of the spirit of that given by Portia to Shylock's contract. The pound of flesh might indeed be taken; but if so much as a drop of blood followed, woe to him that took it!

This measure was succeeded by others on the part of the government of a still more decisive character. Instead of the civil magistracy, Margaret now showed her purpose to call in the aid of a strong military force to execute the laws. She ordered into the country the levies lately raised for her in Germany. These she augmented by a number of Walloon regiments; and she placed them under the command of Aremberg, Megen, and other leaders in whom she confided. She did not even omit the prince of

² Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. pp. 289, 290.

Orange, for though Margaret had but little confidence in William, she did not care to break with him. To the provincial governors she wrote to strengthen themselves as much as possible by additional recruits; and she ordered them to introduce garrisons into such places as had shown favor to the new doctrines.

The province of Hainault was that which gave the greatest uneasiness to the regent. The spirit of independence was proverbially high amongst the people; and the neighborhood of France gave easy access to the Huguenot ministers, who reaped an abundant harvest in the great towns of that district. The flourishing commercial city of Valenciennes was particularly tainted with heresy. Margaret ordered Philip de Noircarmes, governor of Hainault, to secure the obedience of the place by throwing into it a garrison of three companies of horse and as many of foot.

When the regent's will was announced to the people of Valenciennes, it met at first with no opposition. But among the ministers in the town was a Frenchman named La Grange, a bold enthusiast, gifted with a stirring eloquence, which gave him immense ascendancy over the masses. This man told the people, that to receive a garrison would be the death-blow to their liberties, and that those of the reformed religion would be the first victims. Thus warned, the citizens were now even more unanimous in refusing a garrison than they had before been in their consent to admit one. Noircarmes, though much surprised by this sudden change, gave the inhabitants some days to consider the matter before

placing themselves in open resistance to the government. The magistrates and some of the principal persons in the town were willing to obey his requisition, and besought La Grange to prevail on the people to consent to it. "I would rather," replied the high-spirited preacher, "that my tongue should cleave to the roof of my mouth, and that I should become dumb as a fish, than open my lips to persuade the people to consent to so cruel and outrageous an act."³ Finding the inhabitants still obstinate, the general, by Margaret's orders, proclaimed the city to be in a state of rebellion, — proscribed the persons of the citizens as traitors to their sovereign, and confiscated their property. At the same time, active preparations were begun for laying siege to the place, and proclamation was made in the regent's name prohibiting the people of the Netherlands from affording any aid, by counsel, arms, or money, to the rebellious city, under the penalties incurred by treason.

But the inhabitants of Valenciennes, sustained by the promises of their preacher, were nothing daunted by these measures, nor by the formidable show of troops which Noircarnes was assembling under their walls. Their town was strongly situated, tolerably well victualled for a siege, and filled with a population of hardy burghers devoted to the cause, whose spirits were raised by the exhortations of the consistories in

³ "J'aimerais mieux que my langue fût attachée au palais, et devenir muet, comme un poisson, que d'ouvrir la bouche pour persuader au peuple chose tant cruelle

et déraisonnable." *Chronique contemporaine*, cited by Gachard. *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. i. p. 561. note.

the neighboring provinces to be of good courage, as their brethren would speedily come to their relief.

The high-handed measures of the government caused great consternation through the country, especially amongst those of the reformed religion. A brisk correspondence went on between the members of the league and the consistories. Large sums were raised by the merchants well affected to the cause, in order to levy troops in Germany, and were intrusted to Brederode for the purpose. It was also determined that a last effort should be made to soften the duchess by means of a petition, which that chief, at the head of four hundred knights, was to bear to Brussels. But Margaret had had enough of petitions, and she bluntly informed Brederode, that, if he came in that guise, he would find the gates of Brussels shut against him.

Still the sturdy cavalier was not to be balked in his purpose; and, by means of an agent, he caused the petition to be laid before the regent. It was taken up mainly with a remonstrance on the course pursued by Margaret, so much at variance with her promises. It particularly enlarged on the limitation of her license for public preaching. In conclusion, it besought the regent to revoke her edict, to disband her forces, to raise the siege of Valenciennes, and to respect the agreement she had made with the league; in which case they were ready to assure her of their support in maintaining order.

Margaret laid the document before her council, and on the sixteenth of February, 1567, an answer which might be rather said to be addressed to the country

at large than to Brederode, was published. The duchess intimated her surprise that any mention should be made of the league, as she had supposed that body had ceased to exist, since so many of its members had been but too glad, after the late outrages, to make their peace with the government. As to her concession of public preaching, it could hardly be contended that that was designed to authorize the sectaries to lay taxes, levy troops, create magistrates, and to perform, among other religious rites, that of marriage, involving the transfer of large amounts of property. She could hardly be thought mad enough to invest them with powers like these. She admonished the petitioners not to compel their sovereign to forego his native benignity of disposition. It would be well for them, she hinted, to give less heed to public affairs, and more to their own; and she concluded with the assurance, that she would take good care that the ruin which they so confidently predicted for the country should not be brought about by them.⁴

The haughty tone of the reply showed too plainly that the times were changed; that Margaret was now conscious of her strength, and meant to use it. The confederates felt that the hour had come for action. To retrace their steps was impossible. Yet their present position was full of peril. The rumor went that King Philip was soon to come, at the head of a

⁴ "Suadere itaque illis, ut à publicis certè negotiis abstineant, ac res quique suas in posterum curent: néve Regem brevi affectu- rum ingenitæ benignitatis oblivisci

cogant. Se quidem omni ope curaturam, ne, quam ipsi ruinam comminentur, per hæc vulgi turbamenta Belgium patiatur." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 295.

powerful force, to take vengeance on his enemies. To remain as they were, without resistance, would be to offer their necks to the stroke of the executioner. An appeal to arms was all that was left to them. This was accordingly resolved on. The standard of revolt was raised. The drum beat to arms in the towns and villages, and recruits were everywhere enlisted. Count Louis was busy in enforcing levies in Germany. Brederode's town of Viana was named as the place of rendezvous. That chief was now in his element. His restless spirit delighted in scenes of tumult. He had busied himself in strengthening the works of Viana, and in furnishing it with artillery and military stores. Thence he had secretly passed over to Amsterdam, where he was occupied in organizing resistance among the people, already, by their fondness for the new doctrines, well disposed to it.

Hostilities first broke out in Brabant, where Count Megen was foiled in an attempt on Bois-le-Duc, which had refused to receive a garrison. He was more fortunate in an expedition against the refractory city of Utrecht, which surrendered without a struggle to the royalist chief.

In other quarters the insurgents were not idle. A body of some two thousand men, under Marnix, Lord of Thoulouse, brother of the famous St. Aldegonde, made a descent on the island of Walcheren, where it was supposed Philip would land. But they were baffled in their attempts on this place by the loyalty and valor of the inhabitants. Failing in this scheme, Thoulouse was compelled to sail up the Scheldt, until

he reached the little village of Austruweel, about a league from Antwerp. There he disembarked his whole force, and took up his quarters in the dwellings of the inhabitants. From this place he sallied out, making depredations on the adjoining country, burning the churches, sacking the convents, and causing great alarm to the magistrates of Antwerp by the confidence which his presence gave to the reformed party in that city.

Margaret saw the necessity of dislodging the enemy without delay from this dangerous position. She despatched a body of Walloons on the service, under command of an experienced officer named Launoy. Her orders show the mood she was in. "They are miscreants," she said, "who have placed themselves beyond the pale of mercy. Show them no mercy then, but exterminate with fire and sword!"⁵ Launoy, by a rapid march, arrived at Austruweel. Though taken unawares, Thoulouse and his men made a gallant resistance; and a fierce action took place almost under the walls of Antwerp.

The noise of the musketry soon brought the citizens to the ramparts; and the dismay of the Calvinists was great, as they beheld the little army of Thoulouse thus closely beset by their enemies. Furious at the spectacle, they now called on one another to rush to the rescue of their friends. Pouring down from the ramparts, they hurried to the gates of the city. But the gates were locked. This had been done by the

⁵ "Nec ullis conditionibus flecti te patere ad clementiam; sed homines scelestos, atque indeprecabile

supplicium commeritos, ferro et igni quamprimum dele." Ibid., p. 300.

order of the Prince of Orange, who had moreover caused a bridge across the Scheldt to be broken down, to cut off all communication between the city and the camp of Thoulouse.

The people now loudly called on the authorities to deliver up the keys, demanding for what purpose the gates were closed. Their passions were kindled to madness by the sight of the wife—now, alas! the widow—of Thoulouse, who, with streaming eyes and dishevelled hair, rushing wildly into the crowd, besought them piteously to save her husband and their own brethren from massacre.

It was too late. After a short though stout resistance, the insurgents had been driven from the field, and taken refuge in their defences. These were soon set on fire. Thoulouse, with many of his followers, perished in the flames. Others, to avoid this dreadful fate, cut their way through the enemy, and plunged into the Scheldt, which washes the base of the high land occupied by the village. There they miserably perished in its waters, or were pierced by the lances of the enemy, who hovered on its borders. Fifteen hundred were slain. Three hundred, who survived, surrendered themselves prisoners. But Launoy feared an attempt at rescue from the neighboring city; and, true to the orders of the regent, he massacred nearly all of them on the spot!⁶

While this dismal tragedy was passing, the mob

⁶ "Periere in eâ pugnâ quæ prima cum rebellibus commissæ est in Belgio, Gheusiorum mille ac quingenti: capti circiter trecenti, jugulatique pænè omnes Beavorii

jussu, quod erupturi Antverpienses, opemque reliquiis victæ factionis allaturi crederentur." Ibid., p. 301.

imprisoned within the walls of Antwerp was raging and bellowing like the waves of the ocean chafing wildly against the rocks that confine them. With fierce cries, they demanded that the gates should be opened, calling on the magistrates with bitter imprecations to deliver up the keys. The magistrates had no mind to face the infuriated populace. But the prince of Orange fortunately, at this crisis, did not hesitate to throw himself into the midst of the tumult, and take on himself the whole responsibility of the affair. It was by his command that the gates had been closed, in order that the regent's troops, if victorious, might not enter the city, and massacre those of the reformed religion. This plausible explanation did not satisfy the people. Some called out that the true motive was, not to save the Calvinists in the city, but to prevent their assisting their brethren in the camp. One man, more audacious than the rest, raised a musket to the prince's breast, saluting him, at the same time, with the epithet of "traitor!" But the fellow received no support from his companions, who, in general, entertained too great respect for William to offer any violence to his person.

Unable to appease the tumult, the prince was borne along by the tide, which now rolled back from the gates to the Meer Bridge, where it soon received such accessions that the number amounted to more than ten thousand. The wildest schemes were then agitated by the populace, among whom no one appeared to take the lead. Some were for seizing the *Hôtel de Ville*, and turning out the magistrates. Others were for sacking the convents, and driving their inmates,

as well as all priests, from the city. Meanwhile, they had got possession of some pieces of artillery from the arsenal, with which they fortified the bridge. Thus passed the long night; — the armed multitude gathered together like a dark cloud, ready at any moment to burst in fury on the city, while the defenceless burghers, especially those who had any property at stake, were filled with the most dismal apprehensions.

Yet the Catholics contrived to convey some casks of powder, it is said, under the Meer Bridge, resolving to blow it into the air with all upon it, as soon as their enemies should make a hostile movement.

All eyes were now turned on the prince of Orange as the only man at all capable of extricating them from their perilous situation. William had stationed a guard over the mint, and another at the *Hôtel de Ville*, to protect these buildings from the populace. A great part of this anxious night he spent in endeavoring to bring about such an understanding between the two great parties of the Catholics and the Lutherans as should enable them to act in concert. This was the less difficult, on account of the jealousy which the latter sect entertained of the Calvinists. The force thus raised was swelled by the accession of the principal merchants and men of substance, as well as most of the foreigners resident in the city, who had less concern for spiritual matters than for the security of life and fortune. The following morning beheld the mob of Calvinists formed into something like a military array, their green and white banners bravely unfurled, and the cannon which they had

taken from the arsenal posted in front. On the opposite side of the great square before the *Hôtel de Ville* were gathered the forces of the prince of Orange, which, if wanting artillery, were considerably superior in numbers to their adversaries. The two hosts now stood face to face, as if waiting only the signal to join in mortal conflict. But no man was found bold enough to give the signal — for brother to lift his hand against brother.

At this juncture William, with a small guard, and accompanied by the principal magistrates, crossed over to the enemy's ranks, and demanded an interview with the leaders. He represented to them the madness of their present course; which, even if they were victorious, must work infinite mischief to the cause. It would be easy for them to obtain by fair means all they could propose by violence; and for his own part, he concluded, however well disposed to them he now might be, if a single drop of blood were shed in this quarrel, he would hold them from that hour as enemies.

The remonstrance of the prince, aided by the conviction of their own inferiority in numbers, prevailed over the stubborn temper of the Calvinists. They agreed to an accommodation, one of the articles of which was, that no garrison should be admitted within the city. The prince of Orange subscribed and swore to the treaty, on behalf of his party; and it is proof of the confidence that even the Calvinists reposed in him, that they laid down their arms sooner than either the Lutherans or the Catholics. Both these, however, speedily followed their example. The martial array,

which had assumed so menacing an aspect, soon melted away. The soldier of an hour, subsiding into the quiet burgher, went about his usual business; and tranquillity and order once more reigned within the walls of Antwerp.—Thus, by the coolness and discretion of a single man, the finest city in the Netherlands was saved from irretrievable ruin.⁷

It was about the middle of March, 1567, that the disturbances occurred at Antwerp. During this time Noircarmes was enforcing the blockade of Valenciennes, but with little prospect of bringing it to a speedy issue. The inhabitants, confident in their strength, had made more than one successful sally, burning the cloisters in which the general had lodged part of his troops, and carrying back considerable booty into the city. It was evident that to reduce the place by blockade would be a work of no little time.

Margaret wrote to her brother to obtain his permission to resort to more vigorous measures, and, without further delay, to bombard the place. But Philip peremptorily refused. It was much to his regret, he said, that the siege of so fair a city had been undertaken. Since it had been, nothing remained but to trust to a blockade for its reduction.⁸

At this time an army of the confederates, some

⁷ For the account of the troubles in Antwerp, see *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche*, p. 226. et seq.—*Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, tom. iii. p. 59. —*Strada, De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. pp. 300-303.—*Brandt, Reformation in the Low Countries*, vol.

i. p. 247.—*Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. i. pp. 526, 527.—*Vander Haer, De Initiis Tumultuum*, pp. 314-317.—*Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes*, MS.

⁸ *Strada, De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 310.

three or four thousand strong, appeared in the neighborhood of Tournay, designed partly to protect that town, which had refused a garrison, and partly to create a diversion in favor of Valenciennes. No sooner had Noircarmes got tidings of this, than, leaving a sufficient detachment to carry on the blockade, he made a rapid march with the rest of his forces, came suddenly on the enemy, engaged him in a pitched battle, completely routed him, and drove his scattered legions up to the walls of Tournay. That city, now incapable of resistance, opened its gates at once, and submitted to the terms of the conqueror, who soon returned, with his victorious army, to resume the siege of Valenciennes.

But the confidence of the inhabitants was not shaken. On the contrary, under the delusive promises of their preacher, it seemed to rise higher than ever, and they rejected with scorn every invitation to surrender. Again the regent wrote to her brother, that, unless he allowed more active operations, there was great danger the place would be relieved by the Huguenots on the frontier, or by the *Gueux*, whose troops were scattered through the country.

Urged by the last consideration, Philip yielded a reluctant assent to his sister's wishes. But in his letter, dated on the thirteenth of March, he insisted that, before resorting to violence, persuasion and menace should be first tried; and that, in case of an assault, great care should be had that no harm came to the old and infirm, to women or children, to any, in short, who were not found actually in arms against

the government.⁹—The clemency shown by Philip on this occasion reflects infinite credit on him; and if it be disposed of by some as mere policy, it must be allowed to be a policy near akin to humanity. It forms a striking contrast with the ferocious mood in which Margaret indulged at this time, when she seems to have felt that a long arrear of vengeance was due for the humiliations she had been compelled to endure.

The regent lost no time in profiting by the royal license. She first, however, proposed, in obedience to her instructions, to see what could be done by milder measures. She sent two envoys, Count Egmont and the duke of Arschoot, to Valenciennes, in order to expostulate with the citizens, and if possible bring them to reason. The two nobles represented to the people the folly of attempting to cope, thus single-handed, as it were, with the government. Their allies had been discomfited one after another. With the defeat before Tournay must have faded the last ray of hope. They besought the citizens to accept, while there was time, the grace proffered them by the duchess, who was willing, if the town submitted, that such as chose to leave it might take their effects and go wherever they listed.

But the people of Valenciennes, fortified by the promises of their leaders, and with a blind confidence in their own resources, which had hitherto proved

⁹ Strada gives an extract from the letter: "Deinde si deditio non sequeretur, invaderent quidem urbem, quodque militum est, agerent; à cædibus tamen non puero-

rum modò, senúmque ac mulierum abstinerent; sed civium nullus, nisi dum inter propugnandum se hostem gereret, enecaretur." Ibid., p. 311.

effectual, held lightly both the arguments and offers of the envoys, who returned to the camp of Noircarmes greatly disgusted with the ill-success of their mission. There was no room for further delay, and preparations were made for reducing the place by more active operations.

Valenciennes stands on the crest of an eminence that sweeps down by a gradual slope towards the river Scheldt, which, washing the walls of the city, forms a good defence on that quarter. The ramparts encompassing the town, originally strong and of great thickness, were now somewhat impaired by age. They were protected by a wide ditch, which in some places was partially choked up with rubbish. The walls were well lined with artillery, and the magazines provided with ammunition. In short, the place was one which, in earlier days, from the strength of its works as well as its natural position, might have embarrassed an army more formidable than that which now lay before it.

The first step of Noircarmes was to contract his lines, and closely to invest the town. He next availed himself of a dark and stormy night to attack one of the suburbs, which he carried after a sharp engagement, and left in the charge of some companies of Walloons.

The following day these troops opened a brisk fire on the soldiers who defended the ramparts, which was returned by the latter with equal spirit. But while amusing the enemy in this quarter, Noircarmes ordered a battery to be constructed, consisting at first of ten, afterwards of twenty, heavy guns and mortars,

besides some lighter pieces. From this battery he opened a well-directed and most disastrous fire on the city, demolishing some of the principal edifices, which, from their size, afforded a prominent mark. The great tower of St. Nicholas, on which some heavy ordnance was planted, soon crumbled under this fierce cannonade, and its defenders were buried in its ruins. At length, at the end of four hours, the inhabitants, unable longer to endure the storm of shot and shells which penetrated every quarter of the town, so far humbled their pride as to request a parley. To this Noircarmes assented, but without intermitting his fire for a moment.

The deputies informed the general, that the city was willing to capitulate on the terms before proposed by the Flemish nobles. But Noircarmes contemptuously told them that "things were not now as they then were, and it was not his wont to talk of terms with a fallen enemy."¹⁰ The deputies, greatly discomfited by the reply, returned to report the failure of their mission to their townsmen.

Meanwhile the iron tempest continued with pitiless fury. The wretched people could find no refuge from it in their dwellings, which filled the streets with their ruins. It was not, however, till two-and-thirty hours more had passed away that a practicable breach was made in the walls; while the rubbish which had tumbled into the fosse from the crumbling ramparts afforded a tolerable passage for the be-

¹⁰ "Quasi verò, inquit, vestra conditio eadem hodie sit, ac nudius tertius. Serò sapitis Valencena-

tes: ego certè conditionibus non transigo cadente cum hoste." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 314.

siegers, on a level nearly with the breach itself. By this passage Noircarmes now prepared to march into the city, through the open breach, at the head of his battalions.

The people of Valenciennes too late awoke from their delusion. They were no longer cheered by the voice of their fanatical leader, for he had provided for his own safety by flight; and, preferring any fate to that of being delivered over to the ruthless soldiery of Noircarmes, they offered at once to surrender the town at discretion, throwing themselves on the mercy of their victor. Six-and-thirty hours only had elapsed since the batteries of the besiegers had opened their fire, and during that time three thousand bombs had been thrown into the city¹¹; which was thought scarcely less than a miracle in that day.

On the second of April, 1567, just four months after the commencement of the siege, the victorious army marched into Valenciennes. As it defiled through the long and narrow streets, which showed signs of the dismal fray in their shattered edifices, and in the dead and dying still stretched on the pavement, it was met by troops of women and young maidens bearing green branches in their hands, and deprecating with tears and piteous lamentations the wrath of the conquerors. Noircarmes marched at once to the town-house, where he speedily relieved the municipal functionaries of all responsibility, by turning them out of office. His next care was to seize the persons of the zealous ministers and the other

¹¹ "Feruntque ter millies explosas murales machinas, mœnium quàm hominum majori strage." Ibid., ubi suprâ.

leaders. Many had already contrived to make their escape. Most of these were soon after taken, the preacher La Grange among the rest, and to the number of thirty-six were sentenced either to the scaffold or the gallows.¹² The general then caused the citizens to be disarmed, and the fortifications, on which were mounted eighty pieces of artillery, to be dismantled. The town was deprived of its privileges and immunities, and a heavy fine imposed on the inhabitants to defray the charges of the war. The Protestant worship was abolished, the churches were restored to their former occupants, and none but the Roman Catholic service was allowed henceforth to be performed in the city. The bishop of Arras was invited to watch over the spiritual concerns of the inhabitants, and a strong garrison of eight battalions was quartered in the place, to secure order and maintain the authority of the crown.¹³

The keys of Valenciennes, it was commonly said, opened to the regent the gates of all the refractory cities of the Netherlands. Maestricht, Tornhut, Ghent, Ypres, Oudenarde, and other places which

¹² So states Margaret's historian, who would not be likely to exaggerate the number of those who suffered. The loyal president of Mechlin dismisses the matter more summarily, without specifying any number of victims. "El señor de Noilcarmes se aseguró de muchos prisioneros principales Borgeses y de otros que avian sido los autores de la rebelion, á los quales se hizo luego en diligencia su pleyto." (Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes, MS.) Brandt, the historian of the Reformation, (vol. i. p. 251.) tells us that two hundred

were said to have perished by the hands of the hangman at Valenciennes, on account of the religious troubles, in the course of this year.

¹³ For information, more or less minute, in regard to the siege of Valenciennes, see Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. pp. 303-315. — Vander Haer, De Initiis Tumultuum, pp. 319-322. — Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 49. — Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne, tom. ii. p. 501. — Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes, MS.

had refused to admit a garrison within their walls, now surrendered, one after another, to Margaret, and consented to receive her terms. In like manner Megen established the royal authority in the province of Gueldres, and Aremberg, after a more prolonged resistance, in Gröningen and Friesland. In a few weeks, with the exception of Antwerp and some places in Holland, the victorious arms of the regent had subdued the spirit of resistance in every part of the country.¹⁴ The movement of the insurgents had been premature.

¹⁴ Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. pp. 315. 323. et seq.



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

CHAPTER XIV.

TRANQUILLITY RESTORED.

Oath imposed by Margaret.—Refused by Orange.—He leaves the Netherlands.—Submission of the Country.—New Edict.—Order restored.

1567.

THE perplexities in which the regent had been involved had led her to conceive a plan, early in January, 1567, the idea of which may have been suggested by the similar plan of Viglius. This was to require an oath from the great nobles, the knights of the Golden Fleece, and those in high stations, civil or military, that they would yield implicit and unqualified obedience to the commands of the king, of whatever nature they might be. Her object in this measure was not to secure a test of loyalty. She knew full well who were the friends and who were the foes of the government. But she wished a decent apology for ridding herself of the latter; and it was made a condition, that those who refused to take the oath were to be dismissed from office.

The measure seems to have met with no opposition when first started in the council; where Mansfield, Arschot, Megen, Barlaimont, all signified their readi-

ness to sign the oath. Egmont indeed raised some scruples. After the oath of allegiance he had once taken, a new one seemed superfluous. The bare word of a man of honor and a chevalier of the Toison ought to suffice.¹ But after a short correspondence on the subject, his scruples vanished before the arguments or persuasions of the regent.

Brederode, who held a military command, was not of so accommodating a temper. He indignantly exclaimed, that it was a base trick of the government, and he understood the drift of it. He refused to subscribe the oath, and at once threw up his commission. The Counts Hoorne and Hoogstraten declined also, but in more temperate terms, and resigning their employments, withdrew to their estates in the country.

The person of most importance was the prince of Orange; and it was necessary to approach him with the greatest caution. Margaret, it is true, had long since withdrawn from him her confidence. But he had too much consideration and authority in the country for her to wish to break with him. Nor would she willingly give him cause of disgust. She accordingly addressed him a note, couched in the most insinuating terms she had at her command.

She could not doubt he would be ready to set a good example, when his example would be so im-

¹ "Il ne comprenait pas pourquoi la gouvernante insistait, après qu'il lui avait écrit une lettre de sa main, contenant tout ce que S. A. pouvait désirer d'un gentilhomme d'honneur, chevalier de

l'Ordre, naturel vassal du Roi, et qui toute sa vie avait fait le devoir d'homme de bien, comme il le faisait encore journellement." Correspondance de Philippe II. tom. i. p. 321.

portant in the perplexed condition of the country. Rumors had been circulated to the prejudice of his loyalty. She did not give them credit. She could not for a moment believe that he would so far dishonor his great name and his illustrious descent as to deserve such a reproach; and she had no doubt he would gladly avail himself of the present occasion to wipe away all suspicion.²

The despatch inclosed a form of the oath, by which the party was to bind himself to "serve the king, and act for or against whomever his majesty might command, without restriction or limitation,"³ on pain of being dismissed from office.

William was not long in replying to a requisition, to obey which would leave him less freedom than might be claimed by the meanest peasant in the country. On the twenty-eighth of April, the same day on which he received the letter, he wrote to the regent, declining in the most positive terms to take the oath. Such an act, he said, would of itself imply that he had already violated the oath he had previously taken. Nor could he honorably take it, since it might bind him to do what would be contrary to the dictates of his own conscience, as well as to what he conceived to be the true interests of his majesty and the country.⁴ He was aware that

² "Ferez cesser les calumnies que dictes se semer contre vous, ensamble tous ces bruits que scavez courrir de vous, encoires que en mon endroit je les tiens faulx et que à tort ils se dyent; ne pouvant croire que en ung cœur noble et de telle extraction que vous

estes, successeur des Seigneurs," etc. Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. iii. p. 44.

³ "Servir et m'employer envers et contre tous, et comme me sera ordonné de sa part, sans limitation ou restriction." Ibid. ubi supra.

⁴ "Je seroys aulcunement obligé

such a demand on the regent's part was equivalent to a dismissal from office. He begged her, therefore, to send some one fully empowered to receive his commissions, since he was ready forthwith to surrender them. As for himself, he should withdraw from the Netherlands, and wait until his sovereign had time to become satisfied of his fidelity. But wherever he might be, he should ever be ready to devote both life and property to the service of the king and the common weal of the country.⁵

Whatever hesitation the prince of Orange may have before felt as to the course he was to take, it was clear the time had now come for decisive action. Though the steady advocate of political reform, his policy, as we have seen, had been to attempt this by constitutional methods, not by violence. But all his more moderate plans had been overthrown by the explosion of the iconoclasts. The outrages then perpetrated had both alienated the Catholics and disgusted the more moderate portion of the Protestants; while the divisions of the Protestants among themselves had so far paralyzed their action, that the whole strength of the party of reform had never been fairly exerted in the conflict. That conflict, unprepared as the nation was for it, had been most disastrous. Everywhere the arms of the regent had been victorious. It was evident the hour for resistance had not yet come.

et contrainct, le cas advenant, que on me viendroict à commander chose qui pourroit venir contre ma conscience ou au déservice de Sa Ma^{te} et du pays." Ibid., p. 46.

⁵ "Vous asseurant que, où que seray, n'espargneray jamais mon corps ni mon bien pour le service de Sa Ma^{te} et le bien commun de ces pays." Ibid., p. 47.

Yet for William to remain in his present position was hazardous in the extreme. Rumors had gone abroad that the duke of Alva would soon be in the Netherlands, at the head of a force sufficient to put down all opposition. "Beware of Alva," said his wife's kinsman, the landgrave of Hesse, to William; "I know him well."⁶ The prince of Orange also knew him well, — too well to trust him. He knew the hard, inexorable nature of the man who was now coming with an army at his back, and clothed with the twofold authority of judge and executioner. The first blow would, he knew, be aimed at the highest mark. To await Alva's coming would be to provoke his fate. Yet the prince felt all the dreariness of his situation. "I am alone," he wrote to the Landgrave William of Hesse, "with dangers menacing me on all sides, yet without one trusty friend to whom I can open my heart."⁷

Margaret seems to have been less prepared than might have been expected for the decision of Orange. Yet she determined not to let him depart from the country without an effort to retain him. She accordingly sent her secretary, Berty, to the prince at Antwerp, to enter into the matter more freely, and, if possible, prevail on him to review the grounds of his decision. William freely, and at some length, stated his reasons for declining the oath. "If I thus blindly surrender myself to the will of the king,

⁶ Ibid., p. 42.

⁷ "In ansehung das wir in dissen länden allein seindt, und in höchsten nöten und gefehrden leibs und lebens stecken, und keinen

vertrauwen freundt umb uns haben, deme wir unser gemüthe und hertz recht eröffnen dörffen." Ibid., p. 39.

I may be driven to do what is most repugnant to my principles, especially in the stern mode of dealing with the sectaries. I may be compelled to denounce some of my own family, even my wife, as Lutherans, and to deliver them into the hands of the executioner. Finally," said he, "the king may send some one in his royal name to rule over us, to whom it would be derogatory for me to submit." The name of "Alva" escaped, as if involuntarily, from his lips, — and he was silent.⁸

Berty endeavored to answer the objections of the prince, but the latter, interrupting him before he had touched on the duke of Alva, bluntly declared that the king would never be content while one of his great vassals was wedded to a heretic. It was his purpose, therefore, to leave the country at once, and retire to Germany; and with this remark he abruptly closed the conference.

The secretary, though mortified at his own failure, besought William to consent to an interview, before his departure, with Count Egmont, who, Berty trusted, might be more successful. To this William readily assented. This celebrated meeting took place at Willbroek, a village between Antwerp and Brussels. Besides the two lords there were only present Count Mansfeldt and the secretary.

After some discussion, in which each of the friends endeavored to win over the other to his own way of thinking, William expressed the hope that Egmont would save himself in time from the bloody tempest

⁸ Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 319.

that, he predicted, was soon to fall on the heads of the Flemish nobles.⁹ "I trust in the clemency of my sovereign," answered the count; "he cannot deal harshly with men who have restored order to the country." "This clemency you so extol," replied William, "will be your ruin. Much I fear that the Spaniards will make use of you as a bridge to effect their entrance into the country!"¹⁰ With this ominous prediction on his lips, he tenderly embraced the count, with tears in his eyes, bidding him a last farewell. And thus the two friends parted, like men who were never to meet again.

The different courses pursued by the two nobles were such as might be expected from the difference of both their characters and their circumstances. Egmont, ardent, hopeful, and confiding, easily surrendered himself to the illusions of his own fancy, as if events were to shape themselves according to his wishes. He had not the far-seeing eye of William, which seemed to penetrate into events as it did into characters. Nor had Egmont learned, like William, not to put his trust in princes. He was, doubtless, as sincerely attached to his country as the prince of Orange, and abhorred, like him, the system of persecution avowed by the government. But this persecution fell upon a party with whom he had little sympathy. William, on the other hand, was a mem-

⁹ "Orasse illum, subduceret sese, gravidamque cruore tempestatem ab Hispaniâ impendentem Belgarum Procerum capitibus ne opprimeretur." Ibid., p. 321.

¹⁰ "Perdet te, inquit Orangius,

hæc quam jactas clementia Regis, Egmonti; ac videor mihi providere animo, utinam falso, te pontem scilicet futurum, quo Hispani calcato, in Belgium transmittant." Ibid., ubi supra.

ber of that party. A blow aimed at them was aimed also at him. It is easy to see how different were the stakes of the two nobles in the coming contest, both in respect to their sympathies and their interests. Egmont was by birth a Fleming. His estates were in Flanders, and there, too, were his hopes of worldly fortune. Exile to him would have been beggary and ruin. But a large, if not the larger part of William's property, lay without the confines of the Netherlands. In withdrawing to Germany, he went to his native land. His kindred were still there. With them he had maintained a constant correspondence, and there he would be welcomed by troops of friends. It was a home, and no place of exile, that William was to find in Germany.

Shortly after this interview, the prince went to his estates at Breda, there to remain a few days before quitting the country.¹¹ From Breda he wrote to Egmont, expressing the hope that, when he had weighed them in his mind, he would be contented with the reasons assigned for his departure. The rest he would leave to God, who would order all for his own glory. "Be sure," he added, "you have no friend more warmly devoted to you than myself; for the love of you is too deeply rooted in my heart to be weakened either by time or distance."¹² It is pleasing

¹¹ The secretary Pratz, in a letter of the 14th of April, thus kindly notices William's departure: "The prince has gone, taking along with him half a dozen heretical doctors and a good number of other seditious rogues." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 526.

¹² "Tibi vero hoc persuade amicum me te habere neminem cui quidvis libere imperare potes. Amor enim tui eas egit radices in animo meo ut minui nullo temporis aut locorum intervallo possit." Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. iii. p. 70.

to see that party spirit had not, as in the case of more vulgar souls, the power to rend asunder the ties which had so long bound these great men to each other; to see them still turning back, with looks of accustomed kindness, when they were entering the paths that were to lead in such opposite directions.

William wrote also to the king, acquainting him with what he had done, and explaining the grounds of it; at the same time renewing the declaration that, wherever he might be, he trusted never to be found wanting to the obligations of a true and faithful vassal. Before leaving Breda, the prince received a letter from the politic regent, more amiable in its import than might have been expected. Perhaps it was not wholly policy that made her unwilling to part with him in anger. She expressed her readiness to do him any favor in her power. She had always felt for him, she said, the same affection as for her own son, and should ever continue to do so.¹³

On the last of April, William departed for Germany. He took with him all his household except his eldest son, the count of Buren, then a boy thirteen years old, who was pursuing his studies at the university of Louvain.¹⁴ Perhaps William trusted to

It is not easy to understand why William should have resorted to Latin in his correspondence with Egmont.

¹³ "Ayant tousjours porté en vostre endroit l'affection que je pourrois faire pour ung mien fils, ou parent bien proche. Et vous vous pavez de ce confier, toutes les fois que les occasions se présenteront, que feray le mesme." Cor-

respondance de Guillaume le Taciturne, tom. ii. p. 371.

¹⁴ William's only daughter was maid of honour to the regent, who made no objection to her accompanying her father, saying that, on the young lady's return, she would find no diminution of the love that had been always shown to her. Ibid., ubi supra.

the immunities of Brabant, or to the tender age of the youth, for his protection. If so, he grievously miscalculated. The boy would serve as too important a hostage for his father, and Philip caused him to be transferred to Madrid; where, under the monarch's eye, he was educated in religious as well as in political sentiments very little in harmony with those of the prince of Orange. Fortunately, the younger brother, Maurice, who inherited the genius of his father, and was to carry down his great name to another generation, was allowed to receive his training under the paternal roof.¹⁵

Besides his family, William was accompanied by a host of friends and followers, some of them persons of high consideration, who preferred banishment with him to encountering the troubles that awaited them at home. Thus attended, he fixed his residence at Dillemburg, in Nassau, the seat of his ancestors, and the place of his own birth. He there occupied himself with studying the Lutheran doctrine under an experienced teacher of that persuasion¹⁶; and, while he kept a watchful eye on the events passing in his unhappy country, he endeavored to make himself

¹⁵ According to Strada, some thought that William knew well what he was about when he left his son behind him at Louvain; and that he would have had no objection that the boy should be removed to Madrid,—considering that, if things went badly with himself, it would be well for the heir of the house to have a hold on the monarch's favor. This is rather a cool way of proceeding

for a parent, it must be admitted. Yet it is not very dissimilar from that pursued by William's own father, who, a staunch Lutheran himself, allowed his son to form part of the imperial household, and to be there nurtured in the Roman Catholic faith. See Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom i. p. 373.

¹⁶ Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. iii. p. 100.

acquainted with the principles of that glorious Reformation, of which, in connection with political freedom, he was one day to become the champion.

The departure of the prince of Orange caused general consternation in the Netherlands. All who were in any way compromised by the late disturbances watched more anxiously than ever the signs of the coming tempest, as they felt they had lost the pilot who alone could enable them to weather it. Thousands prepared to imitate his example by quitting the country before it was too late. Among those who fled were the Counts Culemborg, Berg, Hoogstraten, Louis of Nassau, and others of inferior note, who passed into Germany, where they gathered into a little circle round the prince, waiting, like him, for happier days.

Some of the great lords, who had held out against the regent, now left alone, intimated their willingness to comply with her demands. "Count Hoorne," she writes to Philip, "has offered his services to me, and declares his readiness to take the oath. If he has spoken too freely, he says, it was not from any disaffection to the government, but from a momentary feeling of pique and irritation. I would not drive him to desperation, and from regard to his kindred I have consented that he should take his seat in the council again."¹⁷ The haughty tone of the duchess shows that she felt herself now so strongly seated as

¹⁷ "Pour ne le jeter d'avantage en désespoir et perdition, aussy en contemplation de ses parens et alliez, je n'ai peu excuser

luy dire qu'il seroit doncques ainsy qu'il avoit fait, et qu'il revinst au conseil." Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, p. 238.

to be nearly indifferent whether the person she dealt with were friend or foe.¹⁸

Egmont, at this time, was endeavoring to make amends for the past by such extraordinary demonstrations of loyalty as should efface all remembrance of it. He rode through the land at the head of his troops, breaking up the consistories, arresting the rioters, and everywhere reëstablishing the Catholic worship. He loudly declared that those who would remain his friends must give unequivocal proofs of loyalty to the crown and the Roman Catholic faith. Some of those with whom he had been most intimate, disgusted with this course, and distrusting, perhaps, such a deposit for their correspondence, sent back the letters they had received from him, and demanded their own in return.¹⁹

At Brussels Egmont entered into all the gayeties of the court, displaying his usual magnificence in costly fêtes and banquets, which the duchess of Parma sometimes honored with her presence. The count's name appears among those which she mentions to Philip as of persons well affected to the government. "It is impossible," she says, "not to be satisfied with his conduct."²⁰ Thus elated by the favor of the regent—next in importance to that of royalty itself—the ill-fated nobleman cherished the fond hope that the past would now be completely ef-

¹⁸ William was generous enough to commend Hoorne for this step, expressing the hope that it might induce such a spirit of harmony in the royal council as would promote the interests of both king and country. See the letter, written

in Latin, dated from Breda, April 14., in *Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, tom. iii. p. 71.

¹⁹ Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 322.

²⁰ *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche*, p. 235.

faced from the memory of his master, — a master who might forget a benefit, but who was never known to forgive an injury.

The great towns throughout the land had now generally intimated their willingness to submit to the requisitions of Margaret, and many of them had admitted garrisons within their walls. Antwerp only, of the cities of Brabant, remained intractable. At length it yielded to the general impulse, and a deputation was sent to the regent to sue for her forgiveness, and to promise that the leaders in the late disturbances should be banished from the city. This was a real triumph to the royal party, considering the motley character of the population, in which there was so large an infusion of Calvinism. But Margaret, far from showing her satisfaction, coolly answered, that they must first receive a garrison; then she would intercede for them with the king, and would herself consent to take up her residence in the city. In this the inhabitants, now well humbled, affected willingly to acquiesce; and soon after Count Mansfeldt, at the head of sixteen companies of foot, marched into Antwerp in battle array, and there quartered his soldiers as in a conquered capital.

A day was fixed for the regent's entry, which was to be made with all becoming pomp. Detachments of troops were stationed in the principal avenues, and on the thirtieth of April Margaret rode into Antwerp, escorted by twelve hundred Walloons, and accompanied by the knights of the Golden Fleece, the great lords, and the provincial magistrates. As the glittering procession passed through the files of the

soldiery, along the principal streets, it was greeted with the huzzas of the fickle populace. Thus cheered on her way, the regent proceeded first to the cathedral, where *Te Deum* was chanted, and on her knees she returned thanks to the Almighty, that this great city had been restored without battle or bloodshed to the king and the true faith.²¹ As her eyes wandered over the desecrated altars and the walls despoiled of their ornaments, their rich sculpture and paintings, by the rude hand of violence, Margaret could not restrain her tears. Her first care was to recover, as far as possible, the stolen property, and repair the injuries to the building; the next, to punish the authors of these atrocities; and the execution in the market-place of four of the ringleaders proclaimed to the people of Antwerp that the reign of anarchy was over.

Margaret next caused the churches of the reformed party to be levelled with the ground. Those of the Romish faith, after being purified, and the marks of violence, as far as practicable, effaced, were restored to their ancient occupants. The Protestant schools were everywhere closed. The children who had been baptized with Protestant rites were now re-baptized after the Catholic.²² In fine, the reformed worship was interdicted throughout the city, and that of the Romish church, with its splendid ritual, was established in its place.

On occupying Antwerp, Margaret had allowed all

²¹ "Egit ipsa privatim magnæ Virgini grates, quod ejus ope tantam urbem sine prælio ac sanguine, Religioni Regique reddidisset."

Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 328.

²² Brandt, *Reformation in the Low Countries*, tom. i. p. 254.

who were not implicated in the late riots to leave the city with their effects. Great numbers now availed themselves of this permission, and the streets presented the melancholy spectacle of husbands parting from their wives, parents from their children, or, it might be, taking their families along with them to some kinder land, where they would be allowed to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

But even this glimmering of a tolerant spirit, — if so it can be called, — which Margaret exhibited at the outset, soon faded away before the dark spirit of the Inquisition. On the twenty-fourth of May, she published an edict, written in the characters of blood which distinguished the worst times of Charles and of Philip. By this edict, all who had publicly preached, or who had performed the religious exercises after the Protestant manner, all who had furnished the places of meeting, or had harbored or aided the preachers, all printers of heretical tracts, or artists who with their pencil had brought ridicule on the Church of Rome, — all, in short, who were guilty of these or similar iniquities, were to be punished with death and confiscation of property. Lighter offences were to be dealt with according to the measure of their guilt. The edict containing these humane provisions is of considerable length, and goes into a large specification of offences, from which few, if any, of the reformed could have been entirely exempt.²³ When this ordinance of the regent was

²³ Gachard has transferred to his notes the whole of this sanguinary document. See *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. i. pp. 550, 551.

known at Madrid, it caused great dissatisfaction. The king pronounced it "indecorous, illegal, and altogether repugnant to the true spirit of Christianity"²⁴; and he ordered Margaret forthwith to revoke the edict. It was accordingly repealed on the twenty-third of July following. The reader who may be disposed to join heartily in the malediction may not be prepared to learn that the cause of the royal indignation was not that the edict was too severe, but that it was too lenient! It nowhere denounced the right of private worship. A man might still be a heretic at heart and at his own fireside, so long as he did not obtrude it on the public. This did not suit the Inquisition, whose jealous eye penetrated into the houses and the hearts of men, dragging forth their secret thoughts into open day, and punishing these like overt acts. Margaret had something yet to learn in the school of persecution.²⁵

While at Antwerp, the regent received an embassy from the elector of Saxony, the landgrave of Hesse, and other Protestant princes of Germany, interceding for the oppressed Lutherans, and praying that she

²⁴ "La peine et le mécontentement qu'il a éprouvés, de ce que l'on a fait une chose si illicite, si indécente, et si contraire à la religion chrétienne." Ibid., ubi supra.

²⁵ Viglius was not too enlightened to enter his protest against the right to freedom of conscience, which, in a letter to his friend Hopper, he says may lead every one to set up his own gods—"lares aut lemures"—according to his fancy. Yet the president was wise enough to see that suf-

ficient had been done at present in breaking up the preachings. "Time and Philip's presence must do the rest." (Epistolæ ad Hopperum, p. 433.) "Those," he says in another letter, "who have set the king against the edict have greatly deceived him. They are having their ovation before they have gained the victory. They think they can dispose of Flemish affairs as they like at Toledo, when hardly a Spaniard dares to show his head in Brussels." Ibid., p. 428.

would not consent to their being so grievously vexed by the Catholic government. Margaret, who was as little pleased with the plain terms in which this remonstrance was conveyed as with the object of it, coldly replied, that the late conduct of the Flemish Protestants doubtless entitled them to all this sympathy from the German princes; but she advised the latter to busy themselves with their own affairs, and leave the king of Spain to manage his as he thought best.²⁶

Of all the provinces, Holland was the only one which still made resistance to the will of the regent. And here, as we have already seen, was gathered a military array of some strength. The head-quarters were at Brederode's town of Viana. But that chief had left his followers for the present, and had been secretly introduced into Amsterdam, where, as before noticed, he was busy in rousing a spirit of resistance in the citizens, already well prepared for it by their Protestant preachers. The magistrates, sorely annoyed, would gladly have rid themselves of Brederode's presence, but he had too strong a hold on the people. Yet, as hour after hour brought fresh tidings of the disasters of his party, the chief himself became aware that all hopes of successful resistance must be deferred to another day. Quitting the city by night, he contrived, with the aid of his friends, to make his escape into Germany. Some months he passed in Westphalia, occupied with raising forces for a meditated invasion of the Netherlands, when, in the sum-

²⁶ Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. iii. pp. 80—93. — Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 329.

mer of 1568, he was carried off by a fever, brought on, it is said, by his careless, intemperate way of life.²⁷

Brederode was a person of a free and fearless temper,—with the defects, and the merits too, that attach to that sort of character. The friendship with which he seems to have been regarded by some of the most estimable persons of his party—Louis of Nassau, especially—speaks well for his heart. The reckless audacity of the man is shown in his correspondence; and the free manner in which he deals with persons and events makes his letters no less interesting than important for the light they throw on these troubled times. Yet it cannot be denied that, after all, Brederode is indebted much more to the circumstances of his situation than to his own character for the space he occupies in the pages of history.²⁸

Thus left without a leader, the little army which Brederode had gathered under his banner soon fell to pieces. Detachments, scattering over the country, committed various depredations, plundering the religious houses and engaging in encounters with the royal troops under Megen and Aremberg, in which the insurgents fared the worst. Thus broken on all sides, those who did not fall into the enemy's hands, or on the field, were too glad to make their escape

²⁷ Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 332.

²⁸ Groen's inestimable collection contains several of Brederode's letters, which may remind one in their tone of the dashing cavalier of the time of Charles the First. They come from the heart, mingling

the spirit of daring enterprise with the careless gayety of the *bon vivant*, and throw far more light than the stiff, statesmanlike correspondence of the period on the character, not merely of the writer, but of the disjointed times in which he lived.

into Germany. One vessel, containing a great number of fugitives, was wrecked, and all on board were made prisoners. Among them were two brothers, of the name of Battenberg; they were of a noble family, and prominent members of the league. They were at once, with their principal followers, thrown into prison, to await their doom from the bloody tribunal of Alva.

Deprived of all support from without, the city of Amsterdam offered no further resistance, but threw open its gates to the regent, and consented to accept her terms. These were the same that had been imposed on all the other refractory towns. The immunities of the city were declared to be forfeited, a garrison was marched into the place, and preparations were made for building a fortress, to guard against future commotions. Those who chose—with the customary exceptions—were allowed to leave the city. Great numbers availed themselves of the permission. The neighbouring dikes were crowded with fugitives from the territory around, as well as from the city, anxiously waiting for vessels to transport them to Embden, the chief asylum of the exiles. There they stood, men, women, and children, a melancholy throng, without food, almost without raiment or any of the common necessities of life, exciting the commiseration of even their Catholic adversaries.²⁹

The example of Amsterdam was speedily followed by Delft, Haarlem, Rotterdam, Leyden, and the re-

²⁹ Brandt, *Reformation in the Low Countries*, vol. i. p. 255. — Meteren, *Hist. des Pays-Bas*, fol.

50. — Vander Haer, *De Initiis Tumultuum*, p. 327. — Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 533.

maining towns of Holland, which now seemed to vie with one another in demonstrations of loyalty to the government. The triumph of the regent was complete. Her arms had been everywhere successful, and her authority was fully recognised throughout the whole extent of the Netherlands. Doubtful friends and open foes, Catholics and Reformers, were alike prostrate at her feet.³⁰ With the hour of triumph came also the hour of vengeance. And we can hardly doubt that the remembrance of past humiliation gave a sharper edge to the sword of justice. Fortresses, to overawe the inhabitants, were raised in the principal towns³¹; and the expense of their construction, as well as of maintaining their garrison, was defrayed by fines laid on the refractory cities.³² The regent's troops rode over the country, and wherever the reformed were gathered to hear the word, they were charged by the troopers, who trampled them under their horses' hoofs, shooting them down without mercy, or dragging them off by scores to execution. No town was so small that fifty at least did not perish in this way, while the number of the victims sometimes rose to two or even three hundred.³³

³⁰ Margaret's success draws forth an animated tribute from the president of Mechlin. "De manera que los negocios de los payes bajos por la gracia de Dios y la prudencia de esta virtuosa Dama y Princesa con la asistencia de los buenos consejeros y servidores del Rey en buenos terminos y en efecto remedidos, las villas reveldes y alteradas amazadas, los gueuses reducidos ó huidos; los ministros y predicantes echados fuera ó presos; y la autoridad de su Magestad establecida

otra vez." Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes, MS.

³¹ This was fulfilling the prophecy of the prince of Orange, who in his letter to Hoorne tells him, "In a short time we shall refuse neither bridle nor saddle. For myself," he adds, "I have not the strength to endure either." Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. iii. p. 72.

³² Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 333.

³³ See Meteren, (Hist. des Pays-

Everywhere along the road-side the traveller beheld the ghastly spectacle of bodies swinging from gibbets, or met with troops of miserable exiles flying from their native land.³⁴ Confiscation followed, as usual, in the train of persecution. At Tournay, the property of a hundred of the richest merchants was seized and appropriated by the government. Even the populace, like those animals who fall upon and devour one of their own number when wounded, now joined in the cry against the Reformers. They worked with the same alacrity as the soldiers in pulling down the Protestant churches ; and from the beams, in some instances, formed the very gallows from which their unhappy victims were suspended.³⁵ Such is the picture, well charged with horrors, left to us by Protestant writers. We may be quite sure that it lost nothing of its darker coloring under their hands.

So strong was now the tide of emigration, that it threatened to depopulate some of the fairest provinces of the country. The regent, who at first rejoiced in this as the best means of ridding the land of its enemies, became alarmed, as she saw it was drawing off so large a portion of the industrious population. They fled to France, to Germany, and very many to England, where the wise Elizabeth provided them with homes, knowing well that, though poor, they

Bas, fol. 49.) who must have drawn somewhat on his fancy for these wholesale executions, which, if taken literally, would have gone nigh to depopulate the Netherlands.

³⁴ "Thus the gallowses were filled with carcasses, and Germany

with exiles." Brandt, Reformation in the Low Countries, tom. i. p. 257.

³⁵ "Ex trabibus decidentium templorum, infelicia conformarent patibula, ex quibus ipsi templorum fabricultoresquependèrent." Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 333.

brought with them a skill in the mechanic arts which would do more than gold and silver for the prosperity of her kingdom.

Margaret would have stayed this tide of emigration by promises of grace, if not by a general amnesty for the past. But though she had power to punish, Philip had not given her the power to pardon. And indeed promises of grace would have availed little with men flying from the dread presence of Alva.³⁶ It was the fear of him which gave wings to their flight, as Margaret herself plainly intimated in a letter to the duke, in which she deprecated his coming with an army, when nothing more was needed than a vigilant police.³⁷

In truth, Margaret was greatly disgusted by the intended mission of the duke of Alva, of which she had been advised by the king some months before. She knew well the imperious temper of the man, and that, however high-sounding might be her own titles, the power would be lodged in his hands. She felt this to be a poor requital for her past services,—a personal indignity, no less than an injury to the state. She gave free vent to her feelings on the subject in more than one letter to her brother.

In a letter of the fifth of April she says: "You have shown no regard for my wishes or my reputation. By your extraordinary restrictions on my au-

³⁶ "Le bruit de l'arrivée prochaine du duc, à la tête d'une armée, fait fuir de toutes parts des gens, qui se retirent en France, en Angleterre, au pays de Clèves, en

Allemagne et ailleurs." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 546.

³⁷ Ibid., ubi supra.

thority, you have prevented my settling the affairs of the country entirely to my mind. Yet, seeing things in so good a state, you are willing to give all the credit to another, and leave me only the fatigue and danger.³⁸ But I am resolved, instead of wasting the remainder of my days, as I have already done my health, in this way, to retire and dedicate myself to a tranquil life in the service of God." In another letter, dated four weeks later, on the third of May, after complaining that the king withdraws his confidence more and more from her, she asks leave to withdraw, as the country is restored to order, and the royal authority more assured than in the time of Charles the Fifth.³⁹

In this assurance respecting the public tranquillity, Margaret was no doubt sincere; as are also the historians who have continued to take the same view of the matter, down to the present time, and who consider the troubles of the country to have been so far composed by the regent, that, but for the coming of Alva, there would have been no revolution in the Netherlands. Indeed, there might have seemed to be good ground for such a conclusion. The revolt had been crushed. Resistance had everywhere ceased. The authority of the regent was recognised through-

³⁸ "Par les restrictions extraordinaires que V. M. a mises à mon autorité, elle m'a enlevé tout pouvoir, et m'a privé des moyens d'achever l'entier rétablissement des affaires de ce pays: à présent qu'elle voit ces affaires en un bon état, elle en veut donner l'honneur à d'autres,

tandis que, moi seule, j'ai eu les fatigues et les dangers." Ibid., p. 523.

³⁹ "Où l'autorité du Roi est plus assurée qu'elle ne l'était au temps de l'Empereur." Ibid., p. 532.

out the land. The league, which had raised so bold a front against the government, had crumbled away. Its members had fallen in battle, or lay waiting their sentence in dungeons, or were wandering as miserable exiles in distant lands. The name of *Gueux*, and the insignia of the bowl and the beggar's scrip, which they had assumed in derision, were now theirs by right. It was too true for a jest.

The party of reform had disappeared, as if by magic. Its worship was everywhere proscribed. On its ruins the Catholic religion had risen in greater splendor than ever. Its temples were restored, its services celebrated with more than customary pomp. The more austere and uncompromising of the Reformers had fled the country. Those who remained purchased impunity by a compulsory attendance on mass; or the wealthier sort, by the aid of good cheer or more substantial largesses, bribed the priest to silence.⁴⁰ At no time since the beginning of the Reformation had the clergy been treated with greater deference, or enjoyed a greater share of authority in the land. The dark hour of revolution seemed, indeed, to have passed away.

Yet a Fleming of that day might well doubt whether the prince of Orange were a man likely to resign his fair heritage and the land so dear to his heart without striking one blow in their defence. One who knew the wide spread of the principles of reform, and the sturdy character of the reformer, might distrust the permanence of a quiet which had

⁴⁰ Brandt, Reformation in the Low Countries, tom. i. p. 258.

been brought about by so much violence. He might rather think that, beneath the soil he was treading, the elements were still at work, which, at no distant time perhaps, would burst forth with redoubled violence, and spread ruin over the land!



JUNTA DE ANDALUCÍA

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

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

ALVA SENT TO THE NETHERLANDS.

Alva's Appointment.—His remarkable March.—He arrives at Brussels.—Margaret disgusted.—Policy of the Duke.—Arrest of Egmont and Hoorne.

1567.

WHILE Margaret was thus successful in bringing the country to a state of at least temporary tranquillity, measures were taken at the court of Madrid for shifting the government of the Netherlands into other hands, and for materially changing its policy.

We have seen how actively the rumors had been circulated, throughout the last year, of Philip's intended visit to the country. These rumors had received abundant warrant from his own letters, addressed to the regent and to his ministers at the different European courts. Nor did the king confine himself to professions. He applied to the French government to allow a free passage for his army through its territories. He caused a survey to be made of that part of Savoy through which his troops would

probably march, and a map of the proposed route to be prepared. He ordered fresh levies from Germany to meet him on the Flemish frontier. And finally, he talked of calling the cortes together, to provide for the regency during his absence.

Yet whoever else might be imposed on, there was one potentate in Europe whose clear vision was not to be blinded by the professions of Philip, nor by all this bustle of preparation. This was the old pontiff, Pius the Fifth, who had always distrusted the king's sincerity. Pius had beheld with keen anguish the spread of heresy in the Low Countries. Like a true son of the Inquisition as he was, he would gladly have seen its fires kindled in every city of this apostate land. He had observed with vexation the apathy manifested by Philip. And he at length resolved to despatch a special embassy to Spain, to stimulate the monarch, if possible, to more decided action.

The person employed was the bishop of Ascoli, and the good father delivered his rebuke in such blunt terms as caused a sensation at the court of Madrid. In a letter to his ambassador at Rome, Philip complained that the pope should have thus held him up to Christendom as one slack in the performance of his duty. The envoy had delivered himself in so strange a manner, Philip added, that, but for the respect and love he bore his holiness, he might have been led to take precisely the opposite course to the one he intended.¹

¹ "Ledit évêque, dans la première audience qu'il lui a donnée, a usé d'ailleurs de termes si étranges, qu'il l'a mis en colère, et que, s'il

eût eu moins d'amour et de respect pour S. S., cela eût pu le faire revenir sur les résolutions qu'il a

Yet notwithstanding this show of indignation, had it not been for the outbreak of the iconoclasts, it is not improbable that the king might still have continued to procrastinate, relying on his favorite maxim, that "Time and himself were a match for any other two."² But the event which caused such a sensation throughout Christendom roused every feeling of indignation in the royal bosom,—and this from the insult offered to the crown as well as to the Church. Contrary to his wont, the king expressed himself with so much warmth on the subject, and so openly, that the most sceptical began at last to believe that the long talked of visit was at hand. The only doubt was as to the manner in which it should be made; whether the king should march at the head of an army, or attended only by so much of a retinue as was demanded by his royal state.

prises." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 488.

The tart remonstrance of Philip had its effect. Granvelle soon after wrote to the king, that his holiness was greatly disturbed by the manner in which his majesty had taken his rebuke. The pope, Granvelle added, was a person of the best intentions, but with very little knowledge of the world, and easily kept in check by those who show their teeth to him;—"reprimese quando se le muestran los dientes." Ibid., tom. ii. p. lviii.

² "Que lui et le temps en valaient deux autres." Vandervynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. ii. p. 199.

The hesitation of the king drew on him a sharp rebuke from the audacious Fray Lorenzo Villavicencio, who showed as little ceremony in dealing with Philip as with

his ministers. "If your majesty," he says, "consulting only your own ease, refuses to make this visit to Flanders, which so nearly concerns the honor of God, his blessed Mother, and all the saints, as well as the weal of Christendom, what is it but to declare that you are ready to accept the regal dignity which God has given you, and yet leave to him all the care and trouble that belong to that dignity? God would take this as ill of your majesty, as you would take it of those of your vassals whom you had raised to offices of trust and honor, and who took the offices, but left you to do the work for them! To offend God is a rash act, that must destroy both soul and body." Gachard, Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. ii., Rapport, p. xlviij.

The question was warmly discussed in the council. Ruy Gomez, the courtly favorite of Philip, was for the latter alternative. A civil war he deprecated, as bringing ruin even to the victor.³ Clemency was the best attribute of a sovereign, and the people of Flanders were a generous race, more likely to be overcome by kindness than by arms.⁴ In these liberal and humane views the prince of Eboli was supported by the politic secretary, Antonio Perez, and by the duke of Feria, formerly ambassador to London, a man who to polished manners united a most insinuating eloquence.

But very different opinions, as might be expected, were advanced by the Duke of Alva. The system of indulgence, he said, had been that followed by the regent, and its fruits were visible. The weeds of heresy were not to be extirpated by a gentle hand; and his majesty should deal with his rebellious vassals as Charles the Fifth had dealt with their rebel fathers at Ghent.⁵ These stern views received support from the Cardinal Espinosa, who held the office of president of the council, as well as of grand inquisitor, and who doubtless thought the insult offered to the Inquisition not the least of the offences to be charged on the Reformers.

Each of the great leaders recommended the measures most congenial with his own character, and which, had they been adopted, would probably have

³ "Ne extingui quidem posse sine ruinâ victoris." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 338.

Better expressed by the old Castilian proverb, "El vencido vencido, y el vencedor perdido."

⁴ "At illos non armis sed beneficiis expugnari." Strada, *de Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 339.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 340.