

have been the key to all the rest, charged Egmont with having conspired with William and the other banished lords to shake off the Spanish rule, and divide the government among themselves. With this view he had made war on the faithful Granvelle, had sought to concentrate the powers of the various councils into one, had resisted the Inquisition, had urged the meeting of the states-general, in short, had thwarted, as far as possible, in every particular, the intentions of the king. He was accused, moreover, of giving encouragement to the sectaries. He had not only refused his aid when asked to repress their violence, but had repeatedly licensed their meetings, and allowed them to celebrate their religious rites. Egmont was too staunch a Catholic to warrant his own faith being called into question. It was only in connection with the political movements of the country that he was supposed to have countenanced the party of religious reform. Lastly he was charged, not only with abetting the confederacy of the nobles, but with having, in conjunction with the prince of Orange and his associates, devised the original plan of it. It was proof of the good-will he bore the league, that he had retained in his service more than one member of his household after they had subscribed the Compromise. On these various grounds, Egmont was declared to be guilty of treason.¹³

The charges, which cover a great space, would seem at the first glance to be crudely put together, confounding things trivial, and even irrelevant to the

¹³ This tedious instrument is given *in extenso* by Foppens, Supplément à Strada, tom. i. pp. 44-63.

question, with others of real moment.¹⁴ Yet they must be admitted to have been so cunningly prepared as to leave an impression most unfavourable to the innocence of the prisoner. The attorney-general, sometimes audaciously perverting the answers of Egmont,¹⁵ at other times giving an exaggerated importance to his occasional admissions, succeeded in spreading his meshes so artfully, that it required no slight degree of coolness and circumspection, even in an innocent party, to escape from them.

The instrument was delivered to Egmont on the twenty-ninth of December. Five days only were allowed him to prepare his defence,—and that too without the aid of a friend to support, or of counsel to advise him. He at first resolutely declined to make a defence at all, declaring that he was amenable to no tribunal but that of the members of the order. Being informed, however, that if he persisted he would be condemned for contumacy, he consented, though with a formal protest against the proceeding as illegal, to enter on his defence.

He indignantly disclaimed the idea of any design to subvert the existing government. He admitted the charges in regard to his treatment of Granvelle,

¹⁴ Indeed, this seems to have been the opinion of the friends of the government. Councillor Belin writes to Granvelle, December 14. 1567: "They have arrested Hoorne and Egmont, but in their accusations have not confined themselves to individual charges, but have accumulated a confused mass of things." Raumer, *Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, vol. i. p. 182.

¹⁵ For example, see the thirty-eighth article, in which the attorney-general accuses Egmont of admitting, on his examination, that he had parted with one of his followers, suspected of heretical opinions, for a short time only, when, on the contrary, he had expressly stated that the dismissal was final, and that he had never seen the man since. *Supplément à Strada*, tom. i. p. 40.

and defended his conduct on the ground of expediency,—of its being demanded by the public interest. On the same ground he explained his course in reference to some of the other matters charged on him, and especially in relation to the sectaries,—too strong in numbers, he maintained, to be openly resisted. He positively denied the connection imputed to him with the confederates; declaring that, far from countenancing the league, he had always lamented its existence, and discouraged all within his reach from joining it. In reply to the charge of not having dismissed Backerzeele after it was known that he had joined the confederates, he excused himself by alleging the good services which his secretary had rendered the government, more especially in repressing the disorders of the iconoclasts. On the whole, his answers seem to have been given in good faith, and convey the impression—probably not far from the truth—of one who, while he did not approve of the policy of the crown, and thought, indeed, some of its measures impracticable, had no design to overturn the government.¹⁶

The attorney-general next prepared his accusation of Count Hoorne, consisting of sixty-three separate charges. They were of much the same import with those brought against Egmont. The bold, impatient temper of the admiral made him particularly open to the assault of his enemies. He was still more peremptory than his friend in his refusal to relinquish his

¹⁶ Egmont's defence, of which extracts, wretchedly garbled, are given by Foppens, has been printed *in extenso* by M. de Bavay, in his

useful compilation, *Procès du Comte d'Egmont* (Bruxelles, 1854), pp. 121–153.

rights as a knight of the Golden Fleece, and appear before the tribunal of Alva. When prevailed on to waive his scruples, his defence was couched in language so direct and manly as at once engages our confidence. "Unskilled as I am in this sort of business," he remarks, "and without the aid of counsel to guide me, if I have fallen into errors, they must be imputed, not to intention, but to the want of experience. . . . I can only beseech those who shall read my defence to believe that it has been made sincerely and in all truth, as becomes a gentleman of honorable descent."¹⁷

By the remonstrances of the prisoners and their friends, the duke was at length prevailed on to allow them counsel. Each of the two lords obtained the services of five of the most eminent jurists of the country; who, to their credit, seem not to have shrunk from a duty which, if not attended with actual danger, certainly did not lie in the road to preferment.¹⁸

The counsel of the two lords lost no time in preparing the defence of their clients, taking up each charge brought against them by the attorney-general, and minutely replying to it. Their defence was sub-

¹⁷ "Suppliant à tous ceux qui la verront, croire qu'il a répondu à tous les articles sincèrement et en toute vérité, comme un Gentilhomme bien né est tenu et obligé de faire." *Supplément à Strada*, tom. i. p. 209.

¹⁸ Foppens has devoted nearly all the first volume of his "*Supplément*" to pieces illustrative of the proceedings against Egmont and Hoorne. The articles of accusation are given at length. His countrymen are under obligations

to this compiler, who thus early brought before them so many documents of great importance to the national history. The obligations would have been greater, if the editor had done his work in a scholar-like way,—instead of heaping together a confused mass of materials, without method, often without dates, and with so little care, that the titles of the documents are not seldom at variance with the contents.

stantially the same with that which had been set up by the prisoners themselves, though more elaborate, and sustained by a greater array both of facts and arguments.¹⁹ Meanwhile the counsel did not remit their efforts to have the causes brought before the tribunal of the *Toison d'Or*. Unless this could be effected, they felt that all endeavours to establish the innocence of their clients would be unavailing.

Alva had early foreseen the embarrassment to which he would be exposed on this ground. He had accordingly requested Philip to stop all further solicitations by making known his own decision in the matter.²⁰ The king in reply assured the duke that men of authority and learning, to whom the subject had been committed, after a full examination, entirely confirmed the decision made before Alva's departure, that the case of treason did not come within the cognizance of the *Toison d'Or*.²¹ Letters patent accompanied this note, empowering the duke to try the cause.²² With these credentials Alva now strove to

¹⁹ At least such is the account which Foppens gives of the "Justification," as it is termed, of Hoorne, of which the Flemish editor has printed only the preamble and the conclusion, without so much as favouring us with the date of the instrument. (Supplément à Strada, tom. i. pp. 241-243.) M. de Bavay, on the other hand, has given the defence set up by Egmont's counsel *in extenso*. It covers seventy printed pages, being double the quantity occupied by Egmont's defence of himself. By comparing the two together, it is easy to see how closely the former, though with greater amplification, is fashioned on the latter. Procès

du Comte d'Egmont, pp. 153-223.

²⁰ Correepondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 582.

²¹ "Quoique, avant le départ du duc, il ait été reconnu, dans les délibérations qui ont eu lieu à Madrid en sa présence, que cette prétention n'était pas fondée, le Roi, vu la gravité de l'affaire, a ordonné que quelques personnes d'autorité et de lettres se réunissent de nouveau, pour examiner la question. — Il communique au duc les considérations qui ont été approuvées dans cette junte, et qui confirment l'opinion précédemment émise." Ibid., p. 612.

²² The letters patent were ante-

silence, if not to satisfy, the counsel of the prisoners; and, by a formal decree, all further applications for transferring the cause from his own jurisdiction to that of the Golden Fleece were peremptorily forbidden.

Yet all were not to be thus silenced. Egmont's countess still continued unwearied in her efforts to excite a sympathy in her lord's behalf in all those who would be likely to have any influence with the government. Early in 1568 she again wrote to Philip, complaining that she had not been allowed so much as to see her husband. She implored the king to take her and her children as sureties for Egmont, and permit him to be removed to one of his own houses. If that could not be, she begged that he might at least be allowed the air of the castle, lest, though innocent, his confinement might cost him his life. She alludes to her miserable condition, with her young and helpless family, and trusts in the king's goodness and justice that she shall not be forced to seek a subsistence in Germany, from which country she had been brought to Flanders by his father the emperor.²³—The letter, says a chronicler of the time, was not to be read by any one without sincere commiseration for the writer.²⁴

dated, as far back as April, 15, 1567, probably that they might not appear to have been got up for the nonce. Conf. *Ibid.*, p. 528.

²³ "J'espère en la bonté, clémence et justice de Votre Majesté qu'icelle ne voudra souffrir que je sorte vos pays, avec mes onze enfants, pour aller hors d'iceux chercher moyen de vivre, ayant été amenée par feu de bonne mémoire l'Empereur, votre père." *Ibid.*, tom. ii. p. 5.

²⁴ "Haud facile sine commiseratione legi à quoquam potest." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 387.

According to Alva's biographer, Ossorio, the appeal of the countess would *probably* have softened the heart of Philip, and inclined him to an "ill-timed clemency," had it not been for the remonstrance of Cardinal Espinosa, then predominant in the cabinet, who reminded the king that "clemency was a sin

The German princes, at the same time, continued their intercessions with the king for both the nobles; and the duke of Bavaria, and the duke and duchess of Lorraine, earnestly invoked his clemency in their behalf. Philip, wearied by this importunity, but not wavering in his purpose, again called on Alva to press the trial to a conclusion.²⁵

Towards the end of April, 1568, came that irruption across the borders by Hoogstraten and the other lords, described in the previous chapter. Alva, feeling probably that his own presence might be required to check the invaders, found an additional motive for bringing the trials to a decision.

On the sixth of May, the attorney-general presented a remonstrance against the dilatory proceedings of Egmont's counsel, declaring that, although so many months had elapsed, they had neglected to bring forward their witnesses in support of their defence. He prayed that a day might be named for the termination of the process.²⁶

In the latter part of May, news came of the battle won by Louis of Nassau in the north. That now became certain which had before been only probable,—that Alva must repair in person to the seat of war, and assume the command of the army. There could be no further delay. On the first of June, a decree was published declaring that the time allowed for the defence of the prisoners had expired, and that no evi-

when the outrage was against religion." (*Albæ Vita*, p. 282.) To one acquainted with the character of Philip the "probability" of the historian may seem somewhat less than probable.

²⁵ *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. ii. p. 18.

²⁶ *Supplément à Strada*, tom. i. p. 90.

dence could henceforth be admitted.²⁷ The counsel for the accused loudly protested against a decision which cut them off from all means of establishing the innocence of their clients. They had abundant testimony at hand, they said, and had only waited until the government should have produced theirs. This was plausible, as it was in the regular course for the prosecuting party to take precedence. But one can hardly doubt that the wary lawyers knew that too little was to be expected from a tribunal like the Council of Blood to wish to have the case brought to a decision. By delaying matters, some circumstance might occur,—perhaps some stronger expression of the public sentiment,—to work a favorable change in the mind of the king. Poor as it was, this was the only chance for safety; and every day that the decision was postponed was a day gained to their clients.

But no time was given for expostulation. On the day on which Alva's decree was published, the affair was submitted to the decision of the Council of Blood; and on the following morning, the second of June, that body—or rather Vargas and Del Rio, the only members who had a voice in the matter—pronounced both the prisoners guilty of treason, and doomed them to death. The sentence was approved by Alva.

On the evening of the fourth, Alva went in person to the meeting of the council. The sentences of the two lords, each under a sealed envelope, were pro-

²⁷ Ibid., p. 252. — By a decree passed on the eighteenth of May, Egmont had been already excluded from any further right to bring

evidence in his defence. The documents connected with this matter are given by Foppens, *Ibid.*, tom. i. pp. 90–103.

duced, and read aloud by the secretary. They were both of precisely the same import. After the usual preamble, they pronounced the Counts Egmont and Hoorne to have been proved parties to the abominable league and conspiracy of the prince of Orange and his associates; to have given aid and protection to the confederates; and to have committed sundry malepractices in their respective governments in regard to the sectaries, to the prejudice of the holy Catholic faith. On these grounds they were adjudged guilty of treason and rebellion, and were sentenced accordingly to be beheaded with the sword, their heads to be set upon poles, and there to continue during the pleasure of the duke; their possessions, fiefs, and rights, of every description, to be confiscated to the use of the crown.²⁸ These sentences were signed only with the name of Alva, and countersigned with that of the Secretary Pratz.²⁹

Such was the result of these famous trials, which, from the peculiar circumstances that attended them, especially their extraordinary duration and the illustrious characters and rank of the accused, became an object of general interest throughout Europe. In reviewing them, the first question that occurs is in

²⁸ Among the documents analyzed by Gachard is one exhibiting the revenues of the great lords of the Low Countries, whose estates were confiscated. No one except the prince of Orange had an income nearly so great as that of Egmont, amounting to 63,000 florins. He had a palace at Brussels, and other residences at Mechlin, Ghent, Bruges, Arras, and the Hague.

The revenues of Count Hoorne

amounted to about 8,500 florins. Count Culemborg, whose hotel was the place of rendezvous for the Gueux, had a yearly income exceeding 31,000 florins. William's revenues, far greater than either, rose above 152,000. *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. ii. p. 116.

²⁹ *Supplément à Strada*, tom. i. pp. 252-257.

regard to the validity of the grounds on which the causes were removed from the jurisdiction of the *Toison d'Or*. The decision of the "men of authority and learning," referred to by the king, is of little moment, considering the influences under which such a decision in the court of Madrid was necessarily given. The only authority of any weight in favor of this interpretation seems to have been that of the President Viglius; a man well versed in the law, with the statutes of the order before him, and, in short, with every facility at his command for forming an accurate judgment in the matter.

His opinion seems to have mainly rested on the fact that, in the year 1473, a knight of the order, charged with a capital crime, submitted to be tried by the ordinary courts of law. But, on the other hand, some years later, in 1490, four knights accused of treason, the precise crime alleged against Egmont and Hoorne, were arraigned and tried before the members of the *Toison*. A more conclusive argument against Viglius was afforded by the fact, that in 1531 a law was passed, under the Emperor Charles the Fifth, that no knight of the Golden Fleece could be arrested or tried, for any offence whatever, by any other body than the members of his own order. This statute was solemnly confirmed by Philip himself in 1550; and no law, surely, could be devised covering more effectually the whole ground in question. Yet Viglius had the effrontery to set this aside as of no force, being so clearly in contempt of all precedents and statutes. A subterfuge like this, which might justify the disregard of any law whatever, found no favor

with the members of the order. Arschoot and Barlaimont, in particular, the most devoted adherents of the crown, and among the few knights of the *Toison* then in Brussels, openly expressed their dissent. The authority of a jurist like Viglius was of great moment, however, to the duke, who did not fail to parade it.³⁰ But sorely was it to the disgrace of that timid and timeserving councillor, that he could thus lend himself, and in such a cause, to become the tool of arbitrary power. It may well lead us to give easier faith than we should otherwise have done to those charges of peculation and meanness which the regent, in the heat of party dissensions, so liberally heaped on him.³¹

But whatever may be thought of the rights possessed by the *Toison d'Or* in this matter, there can be no doubt as to the illegality of the court before which the cause was brought; — a court which had no warrant for its existence but the will of Alva; where the judges, contrary to the law of the land, were foreigners; where the presiding officer was not even necessarily present at the trial of the causes on which he alone was to pass sentence.

If so little regard was paid to the law in the com-

³⁰ In a letter dated January 6, 1568, Alva tells the king that Viglius, after examining into the affair, finds the evidence so clear on the point, that nothing more could be desired. *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. ii. p. 4.

³¹ For the facts connected with the constitution of the *Toison d'Or*, I am indebted to a Dutch work, now in course of publication in Amsterdam (*Algemeene Geschiedenis des Vaderlands, van de vroegste tijden tot op heden*, door Dr.

J. P. Arend.). This work, which is designed to cover the whole history of the Netherlands, may claim the merits of a thoroughness rare in this age of rapid book-making, and of a candor rare in any age. In my own ignorance of the Dutch, I must acknowledge my obligations to a friend for enabling me to read it. I must further add, that for the loan of the work I am indebted to the courtesy of B. Homer Dixon, Esq., Consul for the Netherlands in Boston.

position of this tribunal, scarcely more was shown to it in the forms of proceeding. On the present occasion it does not appear that any evidence was brought forward by the prisoners. And as we are in possession of only a small part of that which sustained the prosecution, it is not easy to form an opinion how far the parties were or were not guilty of the crime imputed to them; still less whether that crime, according to the laws of the land, amounted to treason.³² The gravest charge made, with any apparent foundation, was that of a secret understanding with the confederates. The avowed object of the confederates was, in certain contingencies, to resist the execution of a particular ordinance³³; but without any design to overturn the government. This, by our law, could hardly be construed into treason. But in the Netherlands, in the time of the Spanish rule, the law may have been more comprehensive in its import; nor is it likely that the word "treason" was limited in so

³² M. de Bavay has devoted seventy pages or more of his publication to affidavits of witnesses in behalf of the prosecution. (*Procès du Comte d'Egmont*, pp. 267-322.) But their testimony bears almost exclusively on the subject of Egmont's dealings with the sectaries, — scarcely warranting the Flemish editor's assertion in his preface, that he has been able to furnish "all the elements of the conviction of the accused by the duke of Alva."

M. de Bavay's work is one of the good fruits of that patriotic zeal which animates the Belgian scholars of our time for the illustration of their national history. It was given to the public only the last year,

after the present chapter had been written. In addition to what is contained in former publications, it furnishes us with complete copies of the defence of Egmont, as prepared both by himself and his counsel, and with the affidavits above noticed of witnesses on the part of the government. It has supplied me, therefore, with valuable materials, whether for the correction or the corroboration of my previous conclusions.

³³ The resistance, to which those who signed the Compromise were pledged, was to the Inquisition, in case of its attempt to arrest any member of their body. *Ante*, Vol. I. Book II.

explicit a manner as by the English statute-book under the Plantagenets.³⁴

We have information of a curious document of the time, that may throw light on the matter. Peter d'Arset, president of Artois, was one of the original members of the Council of Troubles, but had retired from office before the trial of the two lords. It may have been from the high judicial station he held in one of Egmont's provinces, that he was consulted in regard to that nobleman's process. After an examination of the papers, he returned an answer, written in Latin, at great length, and with a purity of style that shows him to have been a scholar. In this, he goes over the whole ground of the accusation, article by article, showing the insufficiency of proof on every charge, and by argument and legal reference fully establishing the innocence of the accused. The president's opinion, so independently given, we may readily believe, found too little favor with the duke of Alva to be cited as authority.³⁵

But even though it were true that the two lords, in that season of public excitement, had been seduced from their allegiance for a time, some charity might have been shown to men who had subsequently

³⁴ By the famous statute, in particular, of Edward the Third, the basis of all subsequent legislation on the subject. Some reflections, both on this law and the laws which subsequently modified it, made with the usual acuteness of their author, may be found in the fifteenth chapter of Hallam's Constitutional History of England.

³⁵ The original document is to be found in the archives of Brus-

sels, or was in the time of Vander-vynckt, who, having examined it carefully, gives a brief notice of it. (*Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. pp. 256, 257.) The name of its author should be cherished by the historian, as that of a magistrate who, in the face of a tyrannical government, had the courage to enter his protest against the judicial murders perpetrated under its sanction.

broken with their former friends, and displayed the utmost zeal in carrying out the measures of the government; a zeal in the case of Egmont, at least, which drew from the regent unqualified commendation.³⁶ Something more might have been conceded to the man who had won for his sovereign the most glorious trophies of his reign. But Philip's nature, unhappily, as I have had occasion to notice, was of that sort which is more sensible to injuries than to benefits.

Under the circumstances attending this trial, it may seem to have been a waste of time to inquire into the legality of the court which tried the cause, or the regularity of the forms of procedure. The real trial took place, not in Flanders, but in Castile. Who can doubt that, long before the duke of Alva began his march, the doom of the two nobles had been pronounced in the cabinet of Madrid?³⁷

³⁶ Among other passages, see one in a letter of Margaret to the king, dated March 23, 1567. "Ceulx de son conseil icy, qui s'employent tout fiddèlement et diligemment en son service, et entre aultres le comte d'Egmont dont je ne puis avoir synon bon contentement." *Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche*, p. 235.

³⁷ M. de Gerlache, in a long note to the second edition of his history, enters into a scrutiny of Egmont's conduct as severe as that by the attorney-general himself, — and

with much the same result. (*Hist. du Royaume des Pays-Bas*, tom. i. pp. 99-101.) "Can any one believe," he asks, "that if, instead of having the 'Demon of the South' for his master, it had been Charles the Fifth or Napoleon, Egmont would have been allowed to play the part he did with impunity so long?" This kind of Socratic argument, as far as it goes, proves only that Philip did no worse than Charles or Napoleon would have done. It by no means proves Egmont to have deserved his sentence.

CHAPTER V.

EXECUTION OF EGMONT AND HOORNE.

The Counts removed to Brussels. — Informed of the Sentence. — Procession to the Scaffold. — The Execution. — Character of Egmont. — Fate of his Family. — Sentiment of the People.

1568.

ON the second of June, 1568, a body of three thousand men was ordered to Ghent to escort the Counts Egmont and Hoorne to Brussels. No resistance was offered, although the presence of the Spaniards caused a great sensation among the inhabitants of the place, who too well foreboded the fate of their beloved lord.

The nobles, each accompanied by two officers, were put into separate chariots. They were guarded by twenty companies of pikemen and arquebusiers; and a detachment of lancers, among whom was a body of the duke's own horse, rode in the van, while another of equal strength protected the rear. Under this strong escort they moved slowly towards Brussels. One night they halted at Dendermonde, and towards evening, on the fourth of the month, entered the capital.¹ As the martial array defiled through its streets, there was no one, however stout-hearted he

¹ Relacion de la Justicia que se hizo de los Contes Agamont y Orne, MS.

might be, says an eyewitness, who could behold the funeral pomp of the procession, and listen to the strains of melancholy music, without a feeling of sickness at his heart.²

The prisoners were at once conducted to the *Brodhuys*, or "Bread-House," usually known as the *Maison du Roi*, — that venerable pile in the market-place of Brussels, still visited by every traveller for its curious architecture, and yet more as the last resting-place of the Flemish lords. Here they were lodged in separate rooms, small, dark, and uncomfortable, and scantily provided with furniture. Nearly the whole of the force which had escorted them to Brussels was established in the great square, to defeat any attempt at a rescue. But none was made; and the night passed away without disturbance, except what was occasioned by the sound of busy workmen employed in constructing a scaffold for the scene of execution on the following day.³

On the afternoon of the fourth, the duke of Alva had sent for Martin Rithovius, bishop of Ypres; and, communicating to him the sentence of the nobles, he requested the prelate to visit the prisoners, acquaint them with their fate, and prepare them for their execution on the following day. The bishop, an ex-

² "Marcharent dans la ville en bataille, et avecques une batterie de tambourins et de phiffes si pitieuse qu'il n'y avoit spectateur de si bon cœur qui ne palist et ne pleurast d'une si triste pompe funebre." Mondoucet, ap. Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. i. p. 363.

³ De Thou, Histoire Universelle tom. v. p. 450. — Guerres Civiles du Pays-Bas, p. 172. — Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 57. — Relacion de la Justicia que se hizo de los Contes Agamont y Orne, MS.

cellent man, and the personal friend of Egmont, was astounded by the tidings. He threw himself at Alva's feet, imploring mercy for the prisoners, and, if he could not spare their lives, beseeching him at least to grant them more time for preparation. But Alva sternly rebuked the prelate, saying that he had been summoned, not to thwart the execution of the law, but to console the prisoners, and enable them to die like Christians.⁴ The bishop, finding his entreaties useless, rose and addressed himself to his melancholy mission.

It was near midnight when he entered Egmont's apartment, where he found the poor nobleman, whose strength had been already reduced by confinement, and who was wearied by the fatigue of the journey, buried in slumber. It is said that the two lords, when summoned to Brussels, had indulged the vain hope that it was to inform them of the conclusion of their trial and their acquittal!⁵ However this may be, Egmont seems to have been but ill prepared for the dreadful tidings he received. He turned deadly pale, as he listened to the bishop, and exclaimed, with deep emotion: "It is a terrible sentence. Little did I imagine that any offence I had committed against God or the king could merit such a punishment. It is not death that I fear. Death is the common lot of all. But I shrink from dishonor. Yet I may hope

⁴ "Sur quoy le Duc lui repondit fort vivement et avec une espece de colere, qu'il ne l'avoit pas fait venir à Brusselle pour mettre quelque empechement à l'exécution de leur sentence, mais bien pour les consoler et les assister à mourir

chretienement." Supplément à Strada, tom. i. p. 259.

⁵ "Venian en alguna manera contentos de pensar que sus causas andaban al cabo, y que havian de salir presto y bien despachados este dia." Relacion de la Justicia, MS.

that my sufferings will so far expiate my offences, that my innocent family will not be involved in my ruin by the confiscation of my property. Thus much, at least, I think I may claim in consideration of my past services." Then, after a pause, he added, "Since my death is the will of God and his majesty, I will try to meet it with patience." ⁶ He asked the bishop if there were no hope. On being answered, "None whatever," he resolved to devote himself at once to preparing for the solemn change.

He rose from his couch, and hastily dressed himself. He then made his confession to the prelate, and desired that mass might be said, and the sacrament administered to him. This was done with great solemnity; and Egmont received the communion in the most devout manner, manifesting the greatest contrition for his sins. He next inquired of the bishop to what prayer he could best have recourse to sustain him in this trying hour. The prelate recommended to him that prayer which our Saviour had commended to his disciples. The advice pleased the count, who earnestly engaged in his devotions. But a host of tender recollections crowded on his mind; and the images of his wife and children drew his

⁶ "Voicy une sentence bien rigoureuse, je ne pense pas d'avoir tant offensé Sa Majesté, pour mériter un tel traitement; néanmoins je le prens en patience et prie le Seigneur, que ma mort soit une expiation de mes pechés, et que par là, ma chere Femme et mes Enfans n'encourent aucun blame, ny confiscation. Car mes services passez meritent bien qu'on me fasse cette grace. Puis qu'il plait à Dieu

et au Roy, j'accepte la mort avec patience." Supplément à Strada, tom. i. p. 259. — These remarks of Egmont are also given, with very little discrepancy, by Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 56.; in the Relacion de la Justicia que se hizo de los Contes Agamont y Orne, MS.; and in the relation of Mondoucet, ap. Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. i. p. 364.

thoughts in another direction, till the kind expostulations of the prelate again restored him to himself.

Egmont asked whether it would be well to say anything on the scaffold for the edification of the people. But the bishop discouraged him, saying that he would be imperfectly heard, and that the people, in their present excitement, would be apt to misinterpret what he said to their own prejudice.

Having attended to his spiritual concerns, Egmont called for writing materials, and wrote a letter to his wife, whom he had not seen during his long confinement; and to her he now bade a tender farewell. He then addressed another letter, written in French, in a few brief and touching sentences, to the king, — which fortunately has been preserved to us. “This morning,” he says, “I have been made acquainted with the sentence which it has pleased your majesty to pass upon me. And although it has never been my intent to do aught against the person or the service of your majesty, or against our true, ancient, and Catholic faith, yet I receive in patience what it has pleased God to send me.⁷ If during these troubles I have counselled or permitted aught which might seem otherwise, I have done so from a sincere regard for the service of God and your majesty, and from what I believed the necessity of the times. Wherefore I pray your majesty to pardon it, and for the sake of my past services to take pity on my poor wife,

⁷ “Et combien que jamais mon intention n’ait esté de riens traicter, ni faire contre la Personne, ni le service de Vostre Majesté, ne contre nostre vraye, ancienne, et catholic-

que Religion, si est-ce que je prens en patience, ce qu’il plaist à mon bon Dieu de m’envoyer.” Supplément à Strada, tom. i. p. 261.

my children, and my servants. In this trust, I commend myself to the mercy of God." The letter is dated Brussels, "on the point of death," June 5, 1568.⁸

Having time still left, the count made a fair copy of the two letters, and gave them to the bishop, entreating him to deliver them according to their destination. He accompanied that to Philip with a ring, to be given at the same time to the monarch.⁹ It was of great value; and as it had been the gift of Philip himself during the count's late visit to Madrid, it might soften the heart of the king by reminding him of happier days, when he had looked with an eye of favor on his unhappy vassal.

Having completed all his arrangements, Egmont become impatient for the hour of his departure; and he expressed the hope that there would be no unnecessary delay.¹⁰ At ten in the morning the soldiers appeared who were to conduct him to the scaffold. They brought with them cords, as usual, to bind the prisoner's hands. But Egmont remonstrated, and showed that he had, himself, cut off the collar of his doublet and shirt, in order to facilitate the stroke of the executioner. This he did to convince them that he meditated no resistance; and on his promising

⁸ "Parquoy, je prie à Vostre Majesté me le pardonner, et avoir pitié de ma pauvre femme, enfans et serviteurs, vous souvenant de mes services passez. Et sur cest espoir m'en vois me recommander à la miséricorde de Dieu. De Bruxelles prest à mourir, ce 5 de Juing 1568." Ibid., ubi supra.

⁹ "Et luy donna une bague fort riche que le roy d'Espagne luy

avoit donné lors qu'il fut en Espagne," en signe d'amitié, pour la luy envoyer et faire tenir." Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. i. p. 361.

¹⁰ "En apres, le comte d'Aigremont commença à solliciter fort l'avancement de sa mort, disant que puis qu'il devoit mourir qu'on ne le devoit tenir si longuement en ce travail." Mondoucet, Ibid., p. 366.

that he would attempt none, they consented to his remaining with his hands unbound.

Egmont was dressed in a crimson damask robe, over which was a Spanish mantle fringed with gold. His breeches were of black silk; and his hat, of the same material, was garnished with white and sable plumes.¹¹ In his hand, which, as we have seen, remained free, he held a white handkerchief. On his way to the place of execution, he was accompanied by Julian de Romero, *maître de camp*, by the captain, Salinas, who had charge of the fortress of Ghent, and by the bishop of Ypres. As the procession moved slowly forward, the count repeated some portion of the fifty-first psalm, — "Have mercy on me, O God!" — in which the good prelate joined with him. In the centre of the square, on the spot where so much of the best blood of the Netherlands has been shed, stood the scaffold, covered with black cloth. On it were two velvet cushions with a small table, shrouded likewise in black, and supporting a silver crucifix. At the corners of the platform were two poles, pointed at the end with steel, intimating the purpose for which they were intended.¹²

In front of the scaffold was the provost of the court, mounted on horseback and bearing the red wand of office in his hand.¹³ The executioner re-

¹¹ "Il estoit vestu d'une juppe de damas cramoisy, et d'un manteau noir avec du passement d'or, les chausses de taffetas noir et le bas de chamois bronzé, son chapeau de taffetas noir couvert de force plumes blanches et noires." *Ibid.*, ubi suprâ.

¹² Ossorio, *Albæ Vita*, p. 287.

— *Guerres Civiles du Pays-Bas*, p. 177. — *Relacion de la Justicia*, MS.

¹³ This personage, whose name was Spel, met with no better fate than that of the victims whose execution he now superintended. Not long after this he was sentenced to the gallows by the duke, to the

mained, as usual, below the platform, screened from view, that he might not, by his presence before it was necessary, outrage the feelings of the prisoners.¹⁴ The troops, who had been under arms all night, were drawn up around in order of battle ; and strong bodies of arquebusiers were posted in the great avenues which led to the square. The space left open by the soldiery was speedily occupied by a crowd of eager spectators. Others thronged the roofs and windows of the buildings that surrounded the market-place, some of which, still standing at the present day, show, by their quaint and venerable architecture, that they must have looked down on the tragic scene we are now depicting.

It was indeed a gloomy day for Brussels, — so long the residence of the two nobles, where their forms were as familiar, and where they were held in as much love and honor as in any of their own provinces. All business was suspended. The shops were closed. The bells tolled in all the churches. An air of gloom, as of some impending calamity, settled on the city. "It seemed," says one residing there at the time, "as if the day of judgment were at hand!"¹⁵

great satisfaction of the people, as Strada tells us, for the manifold crimes he had committed. De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 387.

¹⁴ The executioner was said to have been formerly one of Egmont's servants. "El verdugo, que hasta aquel tiempo no se havia dejado ver, por que en la forma de morir se le tuvo este respeto, hizo su oficio con gran presteza, al qual havia hecho dar aquel maldito oficio el dicho Conde, y dicen aver sido lacayo suyo." Relacion de la Jus-

ticia, MS. — This *relacion* forms part of a curious compilation in MS., entitled "Cartas y Papeles varios," in the British Museum. The compiler is supposed to have been Pedro de Gante, secretary of the duke of Naxera, who amused himself with transcribing various curious "relations" of the time of Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second.

¹⁵ "Todas las boticas se cerraron, y doblaron por ellos todo el día las campanas de las Yglesias, que

As the procession slowly passed through the ranks of the soldiers, Egmont saluted the officers — some of them his ancient companions — with such a sweet and dignified composure in his manner as was long remembered by those who saw it. And few even of the Spaniards could refrain from tears, as they took their last look at the gallant noble who was to perish by so miserable an end.¹⁶

With a steady step he mounted the scaffold, and, as he crossed it, gave utterance to the vain wish, that, instead of meeting such a fate, he had been allowed to die in the service of his king and country.¹⁷ He quickly, however, turned to other thoughts, and, kneeling on one of the cushions, with the bishop beside him on the other, he was soon engaged earnestly in prayer. With his eyes raised towards Heaven with a look of unutterable sadness¹⁸, he prayed so fervently and loud as to be distinctly heard by the spectators. The prelate, much affected, put into his hands the silver crucifix, which Egmont repeatedly kissed; after which, having received absolution for the last time, he rose and made a sign to the bishop to retire. He then stripped off his mantle and robe; and again kneeling, he drew a silk cap, which he had brought for the purpose, over his eyes, and repeating the words, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," he calmly awaited the stroke of the executioner.

no parecia otra cosa si no dia de juicio." *Relacion de la Justicia*, MS.

¹⁶ "Lesquelz pleuroient et regrettoient de voir un si grand capitaine mourir ainsi." *Mondoucet*, ap. *Brantôme*, *Œuvres*, tom. i. p. 367.

¹⁷ "Il se pourmena quelque peu, souhaytant de pouvoir finir sa vie

au service de son Prince et du pais." *Meteren*, *Hist. des Pays-Bas*, fol. 58.

¹⁸ "Alzó los ojos al cielo por un poco espacio con un semblante tan doloroso, como se puede pensar le tenia en aquel transito un hombre tan discreto." *Relacion de la Justicia*, MS.

The low sounds of lamentation, which from time to time had been heard among the populace, were now hushed into silence¹⁹, as the minister of justice appearing on the platform, approached his victim, and with a single blow of the sword severed the head from the body. A cry of horror rose from the multitude, and some frantic with grief, broke through the ranks of the soldiers, and wildly dipped their handkerchiefs in the blood that streamed from the scaffold, treasuring them up, says the chronicler as precious memorials of love and incitements to vengeance.²⁰ — The head was then set on one of the poles at the end of the platform, while a mantle thrown over the mutilated trunk hid it from the public gaze.²¹

It was near noon, when orders were sent to lead forth the remaining prisoner to execution. It had been assigned to the curate of La Chapelle to acquaint Count Hoorne with his fate. That nobleman received the awful tidings with less patience than was shown by his friend. He gave way to a burst of indignation at the cruelty and injustice of the sentence. It was a poor requital, he said, for eight and twenty

¹⁹ "En gran silencio, con notable lastima, 'sin que por un buen espacio se sintiese rumor ninguno." Ibid.

²⁰ "Fuere, qui linteola, contemplo periculo, Egmontii cruore consperserint, servaverintque, seu monumentum amoris, seu vindictæ irritamentum." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 394.

²¹ Meteren, *Hist. des Pays-Bas*, fol. 58. — *Guerres Civiles du Pays-Bas*, p. 177. — *Relacion de la Justicia*, MS.

M. de Bavay has published a

letter from one of the bishop of Ypres's household, giving an account of the last hours of Egmont, and written immediately after his death. (*Procès du Comte d'Egmont*, pp. 232-234.) The statements in the letter entirely corroborate those made in the text. Indeed, they are so nearly identical with those given by Foppens in the *Supplément à Strada*, that we can hardly doubt that the writer of the one narrative had access to the other.

years of faithful services to his sovereign. Yet, he added, he was not sorry to be released from a life of such incessant fatigue.²² For some time he refused to confess, saying he had done enough in the way of confession.²³ When urged not to throw away the few precious moments that were left to him, he at length consented.

The count was dressed in a plain suit of black, and wore a Milanese cap upon his head. He was, at this time, about fifty years of age. He was tall, with handsome features, and altogether of a commanding presence.²⁴ His form was erect, and as he passed with a steady step through the files of soldiers, on his way to the place of execution, he frankly saluted those of his acquaintance whom he saw among the spectators. His look had in it less of sorrow than of indignation, like that of one conscious of enduring wrong. He was spared one pang, in his last hour, which had filled Egmont's cup with bitterness; though, like him, he had a wife, he was to leave no orphan family to mourn him.

As he trod the scaffold, the apparatus of death seemed to have no power to move him. He still repeated the declaration, that, "often as he had offended his Maker, he had never, to his knowledge, committed any offence against the king." When his eyes fell on

²² "Que avia servido á su magestad veinte y ocho años y no pensaba tener merecido tal payo, pero que se consolaba que con dar su cuerpo á la tierra, saldria de los continuos traujos en que havia vivido." *Relacion de la Justicia*, MS.

²³ "Se despita, maugreant et regrettant fort sa mort, et se trouva

quelque peu opiniastre en la confession, la regrettant fort, disant qu'il estoit assez confessé." *Mon-doucet*, ap. *Brantôme*, tom. i. p. 365.

²⁴ "Il étoit agé environ cinquante ans, et étoit d'une grande et belle taille, et d'une phisionomie revenante." *Supplément à Strada*, tom. i. p. 264.

the bloody shroud that enveloped the remains of Egmont, he inquired if it were the body of his friend. Being answered in the affirmative, he made some remark in Castilian, not understood. He then prayed for a few moments, but in so low a tone, that the words were not caught by the by-standers, and, rising, he asked pardon of those around if he had ever offended any of them, and earnestly besought their prayers. Then, without further delay, he knelt down, and, repeating the words "*In manus tuas, Domine,*" he submitted himself to his fate.²⁵

His bloody head was set up opposite to that of his fellow-sufferer. For three hours these ghastly trophies remained exposed to the gaze of the multitude. They were then taken down, and, with the bodies, placed in leaden coffins, which were straightway removed,—that containing the remains of Egmont to the convent of Santa Clara, and that of Hoorne to the ancient church of St. Gudule. To these places, especially to Santa Clara, the people now flocked, as to the shrine of a martyr. They threw themselves on the coffin, kissing it and bedewing it with their tears, as if it had contained the relics of some murdered saint²⁶; while many of them, taking little heed of the presence of informers, breathed vows of vengeance; some even

²⁵ "The death of this man," says Strada, "would have been immoderately mourned, had not all tears been exhausted by sorrow for Egmont." De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 396.

For the account of Hoorne's last moments, see Relacion de la Justicia, MS.; Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 58.; Supplément à Strada, tom. i. pp. 265, 266.; Mondoucet, ap. Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. i. p.

367.; De Thou, Hist. Universelle, tom. i. p. 451.; Ossorio Albæ Vita, p. 287.

²⁶ "Plusieurs allèrent à l'église Sainte Claire où gisoit son corp, baisant le cercueil avec grande effusion de larmes, comme si ce fust esté les saints ossemens et reliques de quelque saint." Mondoucet, ap. Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. i. p. 367.

swearing not to trim either hair or beard till these vows were executed.²⁷ The government seems to have thought it prudent to take no notice of this burst of popular feeling. But a funeral hatchment, blazoned with the arms of Egmont, which, as usual after the master's death, had been fixed by his domestics on the gates of his mansion, was ordered to be instantly removed; no doubt, as tending to keep alive the popular excitement.²⁸ The bodies were not allowed to remain long in their temporary places of deposit, but were transported to the family residences of the two lords in the country, and laid in the vaults of their ancestors.²⁹

Thus by the hand of the common executioner perished these two unfortunate noblemen, who, by their rank, possessions, and personal characters were the most illustrious victims that could have been selected in the Netherlands. Both had early enjoyed the favor of Charles the Fifth, and both had been intrusted by Philip with some of the highest offices in the state. Philip de Montmorency, Count Hoorne, the elder of the two, came of the ancient house of Montmorency in France. Besides filling the high post of Admiral of the Low Countries, he was made governor of the provinces of Gueldres and Zutphen,

²⁷ Arend, *Algemeene Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, D. ii. St. v. bl. 66.—Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 395.

²⁸ "Les gens du comte d'Aigremont plantèrent ses armes et enseignes de deuil à sa porte du palais; mais le duc d'Albe en estant adverty, les en fit bien oster bientost et emporter dehors." Mondoucet, ap. Brantôme, *Œuvres*, tom. i. p. 367.

²⁹ Mondoucet, the French ambassador at the court of Brussels, was among the spectators who witnessed the execution of the two nobles. He sent home to his master a full account of the tragic scene, the most minute, and perhaps the most trustworthy, that we have of it. It luckily fell into Brantôme's hands, who has incorporated it into his notice of Egmont.

was a councillor of state, and was created by the emperor a knight of the Golden Fleece. His fortune was greatly inferior to that of Count Egmont; yet its confiscation afforded a supply by no means unwelcome to the needy exchequer of the duke of Alva.

However nearly on a footing they might be in many respects, Hoorne was altogether eclipsed by his friend in military renown. Lamoral, Count Egmont, inherited through his mother, the most beautiful woman of her time³⁰, the title of prince of Gavre,— a place on the Scheldt, not far from Ghent. He preferred, however, the more modest title of count of Egmont, which came to him by the father's side, from ancestors who had reigned over the duchy of Gueldres. The uncommon promise which he early gave served, with his high position, to recommend him to the notice of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, who, in 1544, honored by his presence Egmont's nuptials with Sabina, countess-palatine of Bavaria. In 1546, when scarcely twenty-four years of age, he was admitted to the order of the Golden Fleece,— and, by a singular coincidence, on the same day on which that dignity was bestowed on the man destined to become his mortal foe, the duke of Alva.³¹ Philip, on his accession, raised him to the dignity of a councillor of state, and made him governor of the important provinces of Artois and Flanders.

But every other title to distinction faded away before that derived from those two victories, which left

³⁰ "La comtesse d'Aiguemont, qui emporta en cette assemblée le bruit d'être la plus belle de toutes les Flamandes." Correspondance

de Marguerite d'Autriche, p. 364.

³¹ Gerlache, Hist. du Royaume des Pays-Bas, tom. i. p. 96.

the deepest stain on the French arms that they had received since the defeat at Pavia. "I have seen," said the French ambassador, who witnessed the execution of Egmont, "I have seen the head of that man fall who twice caused France to tremble."³²

Yet the fame won by his success was probably unfortunate for Egmont. For this, the fruit of impetuous valor and of a brilliant *coup-de-main*, was very different from the success of a long campaign, implying genius and great military science in the commander. Yet the *éclat* it gave was enough to turn the head of a man less presumptuous than Egmont. It placed him at once on the most conspicuous eminence in the country; compelling him, in some sort, to take a position above his capacity to maintain. When the troubles broke out, Egmont was found side by side with Orange, in the van of the malecontents. He was urged to this rather by generous sensibility to the wrongs of his countrymen, than by any settled principle of action. Thus acting from impulse, he did not, like William, calculate the consequences of his conduct. When those consequences came, he was not prepared to meet them; he was like some unskilful necromancer, who has neither the wit to lay the storm which he has raised, nor the hardihood to brave it. He was acted on by contrary influences. In opposition to the popular movement came his strong feeling of loyalty, and his stronger devotion to the Roman Catholic faith. His personal vanity coöperated with these; for Egmont was too much of

³² "Qu'il avoit vu tomber la tête de celui qui avoit fait trembler deux fois la France." Supplément à Strada, tom. i. p. 266.

a courtier willingly to dispense with the smiles of royalty. Thus the opposite forces by which he was impelled served to neutralize each other. Instead of moving on a decided line of conduct, like his friend, William of Orange, he appeared weak and vacillating. He hesitated where he should have acted. And as the storm thickened, he even retraced his steps, and threw himself on the mercy of the monarch whom he had offended. William better understood the character of his master, — and that of the minister who was to execute his decrees.³³

Still, with all his deficiencies, there was much both in the personal qualities of Egmont and in his exploits to challenge admiration. "I knew him," says Brantôme, "both in France and in Spain, and never did I meet with a nobleman of higher breeding, or more gracious in his manners."³⁴ With an address winning, a heart so generous, and with so brilliant a repu-

³³ Morillon, in a letter to Granvelle, dated August 3. 1567, a few weeks only before Egmont's arrest, gives a graphic sketch of that nobleman, which, although by no friendly hand, seems to be not wholly without truth. "Ce seigneur, y est-il dit, est haut et présument de soy, jusques à vouloir embrasser le fait de la république et le redressement d'icelle et de la religion, que ne sont pas de son gibier, et est plus propre pour conduire une chassé ou volerie, et, pour dire tout, une bataille, s'il fut esté si bien advisé que de se cognoistre et se mesurer de son pied; mais les flatteries perdent ces gens, et on leur fait accroire qu'ilz sont plus saiges qu'ilz ne sont, et ilz le croient et se bouttent sy avant, que après ilz ne se peuvent ravoïr, et il est force qu'ilz facent le sault." Archives de la

Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. i. p. lxix.

³⁴ "Je diray de lui que c'estoit le seigneur de la plus belle façon et de la meilleure grace que j'aye veu jamais, fust ce parmy les grandz, parmy ses pairs, parmy les gens de guerre, et parmy les dames, l'ayant veu en France et en Espagne, et parlé à luy." Brantôme, Œuvres, tom. i. p. 369.

An old lady of the French court, who in her early days had visited Flanders, assured Brantôme that she had often seen Egmont, then a mere youth, and that at that time he was excessively shy and awkward, so much so, indeed, that it was a common jest with both the men and women of the court. Such was the rude stock from which at a later day was to spring the flower of chivalry!

tation, it is not wonderful that Egmont should have been the pride of his court and the idol of his countrymen. In their idolatry they could not comprehend that Alva's persecution should not have been prompted by a keener feeling than a sense of public duty or obedience to his sovereign. They industriously sought in the earlier history of the rival chiefs the motives for personal pique. On Alva's first visit to the Netherlands, Egmont, then a young man, was said to have won of him a considerable sum at play. The ill-will thus raised in Alva's mind was heightened by Egmont's superiority over him at a shooting-match, which the people, regarding as a sort of national triumph, hailed with an exultation that greatly increased the mortification of the duke.³⁵ But what filled up the measure of his jealousy was his rival's military renown; for the Fabian policy which directed Alva's campaigns, however it established his claims to the reputation of a great commander, was by no means favorable to those brilliant feats of arms which have such attraction for the multitude. So intense, indeed, was the feeling of hatred, it was said, in Alva's bosom, that, on the day of his rival's execution, he posted himself behind a lattice of the very building in which Egmont had been confined, that he might feast his eyes with the sight of his mortal agony.³⁶

³⁵ "Postea in publicâ lætitiâ dum uterque explodendo ad signum sclopo ex provocatione contenderent, superatus esset Albanus, ingenti Belgarum plausu ad nationis suæ decus referentium victoriam ex Duce Hispano." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 391.

³⁶ Schiller, in his account of the execution of the two nobles, tells us that it was from a window of the Hotel de Ville, the fine old building on the opposite side of the market-place, that Alva watched the last struggles of his victims. The *cicerone*, on the other hand,

The friends of Alva give a very different view of his conduct. According to them, an illness under which he labored, at the close of Egmont's trial, was occasioned by his distress of mind at the task imposed on him by the king. He had written more than once to the court of Castile, to request some mitigation of Egmont's sentence, but was answered, that "this would have been easy to grant, if the offence had been against the king; but against the faith, it was impossible."³⁷ It was even said that the duke was so much moved, that he was seen to shed tears as big as peas on the day of the execution!³⁸

I must confess, I have never seen any account that would warrant a belief in the report that Alva witnessed in person the execution of his prisoners. Nor, on the other hand, have I met with any letter of his deprecating the severity of their sentence, or advising a mitigation of their punishment. This, indeed, would be directly opposed to his policy, openly avowed. The reader may, perhaps, recall the homely simile by which he recommended to the queen-mother, at Bayonne, to strike at the great nobles in preference to the commoners. "One salmon," he said, "was worth ten thousand frogs."³⁹ Soon after Egmont's arrest, some

who shows the credulous traveller the *memorabilia* of the city, points out the very chamber in the Maison du Roi in which the Duke secreted himself. — *Valeat quantum.*

³⁷ "Qu'il avoit procuré de tout son pouvoir la mitigation, mais que l'on avoit répondu que, si il n'y eut esté aultre offence que celle qui touchoit S. M., le pardon fut esté facile, mais qu'elle ne pouvoit remettre l'offense faicte si grande à

Dieu." Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, Supplément, p. 81.

³⁸ "J'entendz d'aucuns que son Exc. at jecté des larmes aussi grosses que poix au temps que l'on estoit sur ces exécutions." Ibid., ubi supra.

They must have been as big as crocodiles' tears.

³⁹ Ante, vol. i. Book II.

of the burghers of Brussels waited on him to ask why it had been made. The duke bluntly told them, "When he had got together his troops, he would let them know."⁴⁰ Everything shows that, in his method of proceeding in regard to the two lords, he had acted on a preconcerted plan, in the arrangement of which he had taken his full part. In a letter to Philip, written soon after the execution, he speaks with complacency of having carried out the royal views in respect to the great offenders.⁴¹ In another, he notices the sensation caused by the death of Egmont; and "the greater the sensation," he adds, "the greater will be the benefit to be derived it."⁴²—There is little in all this of compunction for the act, or of compassion for its victims.

The truth seems to be, that Alva was a man of an arrogant nature, an inflexible will, and of the most narrow and limited views. His doctrine of implicit obedience went as far as that of Philip himself. In enforcing it, he disdained the milder methods of argument or conciliation. It was on force, brute force alone, that he relied. He was bred a soldier, early accustomed to the stern discipline of the camp. The only law he recognized was martial law; his only argument, the sword. No agent could have been

⁴⁰ "Je suis occupé à réunir mes troupes, Espagnoles, Italiennes, et Allemandes; quand je serai prêt, vous recevrez ma réponse." Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. iii. p. xx.

⁴¹ "Il lui rend compte de ce qu'il a fait pour l'exécution des ordres que le Roi lui donna à son départ, et qui consistaient à arrê-

ter et à châtier exemplairement les principaux du pays qui s'étaient rendus coupables durant les troubles." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. ii. p. 29.

⁴² "C'a été une chose de grand effet en ce pays, que l'exécution d'Egmont; et plus grand a été l'effet, plus l'exemple qu'on a voulu faire sera fructueux." Ibid., p. 28.

fitter to execute the designs of a despotic prince. His hard, impassible nature was not to be influenced by those affections which sometimes turn the most obdurate from their purpose. As little did he know of fear; nor could danger deter him from carrying out his work. The hatred he excited in the Netherlands was such, that, as he was warned, it was not safe for him to go out after dark. Placards were posted up in Brussels menacing his life if he persisted in the prosecution of Egmont.⁴³ He held such menaces as light as he did the entreaties of the countess, or the arguments of her counsel. Far from being moved by personal considerations, no power could turn him from that narrow path which he professed to regard as the path of duty. He went surely, though it might be slowly, towards the mark, crushing by his iron will every obstacle that lay in his track. We shudder at the contemplation of such a character, relieved by scarcely a single touch of humanity. Yet we must admit there is something which challenges our admiration in the stern, uncompromising manner, without fear or favor, with which a man of this indomitable temper carries his plans into execution.

It would not be fair to omit, in this connection, some passages from Alva's correspondence, which suggest the idea that he was not wholly insensible to feelings of compassion,—when they did not interfere with the performance of his task. In a letter to the king, dated the ninth of June, four days only after the death of the two nobles, the duke says: "Your

⁴³ Ossorio, *Albæ Vita*, p. 278.

majesty will understand the regret I feel at seeing these poor lords brought to such an end, and myself obliged to bring them to it.⁴⁴ But I have not shrunk from doing what is for your majesty's service. Indeed, they and their accomplices have been the cause of very great present evil, and one which will endanger the souls of many for years to come. The Countess Egmont's condition fills me with the greatest pity, burdened as she is with a family of eleven children, none old enough to take care of themselves;—and she too a lady of so distinguished rank, sister of the count-palatine, and of so virtuous, truly Catholic, and exemplary life.⁴⁵ There is no man in the country who does not grieve for her! I cannot but commend her," he concludes, "as I do now, very humbly, to the good grace of your majesty, beseeching you to call to mind that if the count, her husband, came to trouble at the close of his days, he formerly rendered great service to the state."⁴⁶ The reflection, it must be owned, came somewhat late.

In another letter to Philip, though of the same date, Alva recommends the king to summon the countess and her children to Spain; where her daughters might take the veil, and her sons be properly educated. "I

⁴⁴ "V. M. peut considérer le regret que ça m'a esté de voir ces pauvres seigneurs venus à tels termes, et qu'il ayt fallut que moy en fusse l'exécuteur." Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, p. 252.

⁴⁵ "Madame d'Egmont me faict grand pitié et compassion, pour la voir chargée de onze enfans et nuls adressez, et elle, dame sy principale, comme elle est, sœur du comte

palatin, et de si bonne, vertueuse, catholique et exemplaire vie, qu'il n'y a homme qui ne la regrette." Ibid., ubi supra.

⁴⁶ The duke wrote no less than three letters to the king, of this same date, June 9. The *precis* of two is given by Gachard, and the third is published entire by Reiffenberg. The countess and her misfortunes form the burden of two of them.

do not believe," he adds, "that there is so unfortunate a family in the whole world. I am not sure that the countess has the means of procuring a supper this very evening!"⁴⁷

Philip, in answer to these letters, showed that he was not disposed to shrink from his own share of responsibility for the proceedings of his general. The duke, he said, had only done what justice and his duty demanded.⁴⁸ He could have wished that the state of things had warranted a different result; nor could he help feeling deeply that measures like those to which he had been forced should have been necessary in his reign. "But," continued the king, "no man has a right to shrink from his duty."⁴⁹—I am well pleased," he concludes, "to learn that the two lords made so good and Catholic an end. As to what you recommend in regard to the countess of Egmont and her eleven children, I shall give all proper heed to it."⁵⁰

The condition of the countess might well have moved the hardest heart to pity. Denied all access to her husband, she had been unable to afford him that consolation which he so much needed during his long and dreary confinement. Yet she had not been idle; and, as we have seen, she was unwearied in her

⁴⁷ "Il ne croit pas qu'il y ait aujourd'hui sur la terre une maison aussi malheureuse; il ne sait même si la comtesse aura de quoi souper ce soir." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. ii. p. 28.

⁴⁸ "Je treuve ce debvoir de justice estre faict comme il convient et vostre considération très-bonne." Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, p. 255.

⁴⁹ "Mais personne ne peult dé-laisser de se acquitter en ce en quoy il est obligé." Ibid., ubi supra.

⁵⁰ "Quant à la dame d'Egmont et ses unze enfans, et ce que me y représentez, en me les recom-mandant, je y auray tout bon regard." Ibid., ubi supra.

efforts to excite a sympathy in his behalf. Neither did she rely only on the aid which this world can give; and few nights passed during her lord's imprisonment in which she and her daughters might not be seen making their pious pilgrimages, barefooted, to the different churches of Brussels, to invoke the blessing of Heaven on their labors. She had been supported through this trying time by a reliance on the success of her endeavors, in which she was confirmed by the encouragement she received from the highest quarters. It is not necessary to give credit to the report of a brutal jest attributed to the duke of Alva, who, on the day preceding the execution, was said to have told the countess "to be of good cheer; for her husband would leave the prison on the morrow!"⁵¹ There is more reason to believe that the Emperor Maximilian, shortly before the close of the trial, sent a gentleman with a kind letter to the countess, testifying the interest he took in her affairs, and assuring her she had nothing to fear on account of her husband.⁵² On the very morning of Egmont's execution, she was herself, we are told, paying a visit of condolence to the countess of Aremburg, whose husband had lately fallen in the battle of Heyligerlee; and at her friend's house the poor lady is said to have received the first tidings of the fate of her lord.⁵³

⁵¹ Arend, (*Algemeene Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, D. ii. St. v. bl. 66.) who gets the story, to which he attaches no credit himself, from a contemporary, Hooft.

⁵² *Supplément à Strada*, tom i. 252.

⁵³ "Laquelle, ainsi qu'elle estoit

en sa chambre et sur ces propos, on luy vint annoncer qu'on alloit trancher la teste à son mary." Brantôme, *Œuvres*, tom. i. p. 368.

Under all the circumstances, one cannot insist strongly on the probability of the anecdote.

The blow fell the heavier, that she was so ill prepared for it. On the same day she found herself, not only a widow, but a beggar, — with a family of orphan children in vain looking up to her for the common necessities of life.⁵⁴ In her extremity, she resolved to apply to the king himself. She found an apology for it in the necessity of transmitting to Philip her husband's letter to him, which, it seems, had been intrusted to her care.⁵⁵ She apologizes for not sooner sending this last and most humble petition of her deceased lord, by the extreme wretchedness of her situation, abandoned, as she is, by all, far from kindred and country.⁵⁶ She trusts in his majesty's benignity and compassion⁵⁷ to aid her sons by receiving them into his service when they shall be of sufficient age. This will oblige her, during the remainder of her sad days, and her children after her, to pray God for the long and happy life of his majesty.⁵⁸—It must have given another pang to the heart of the widowed countess, to have been thus forced to solicit aid from the very hand that had smitten her. But it was the mother pleading for her children.

⁵⁴ One of her daughters, in a fit of derangement brought on by excessive grief for her father's fate, attempted to make way with herself by throwing herself from a window. *Relacion de la Justicia*, MS.

⁵⁵ This was the duplicate, no doubt, of the letter given to the bishop of Ypres, to whom Egmont may have intrusted a copy, with the idea that it would be more certain to reach the hands of the king than the one sent to his wife.

⁵⁶ "La misère où elle se trouve,

étant devenue veuve avec onze enfans, abandonnée de tous, hors de son pays et loin de ses parents, l'a empêchée d'envoyer plus tôt au Roi la dernière et très-humble requête de son défunt mari." *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. ii. p. 31.

⁵⁷ "De la bénignité et pitié du Roi." *Ibid.*, ubi suprà.

⁵⁸ "Ce que m'obligerat, la reste de mes tristes jours, et toute ma postérité, à prier Dieu pour la longue et heureuse vie de V. M." *Ibid.*, ubi suprà.

Yet Philip, notwithstanding his assurances to the duke of Alva, showed no alacrity in relieving the wants of the countess. On the first of September the duke again wrote, to urge the necessity of her case, declaring that, if it had not been for a "small sum that he had himself sent, she and the children would have perished of hunger!"⁵⁹

The misfortunes of this noble lady excited commiseration not only at home, but in other countries of Europe, and especially in Germany, the land of her birth.⁶⁰ Her brother, the elector of Bavaria, wrote to Philip, to urge the restitution of her husband's estates to his family. Other German princes preferred the same request, which was moreover formally made by the emperor, through his ambassador at Madrid. Philip coolly replied, that "the time for this had not yet come."⁶¹ A moderate pension, meanwhile, was annually paid by Alva to the countess of Egmont, who survived her husband ten years,—not long enough to see her children established in possession of their patrimony.⁶² Shortly before her death, her eldest son, then grown to man's estate, chafing

⁵⁹ "S'il ne leur avait pas donné quelque argent, ils mourraient de faim." Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁰ It seems strange that Göthe, in his tragedy of "Egmont," should have endeavored to excite what may be truly called a meretricious interest in the breasts of his audience, by bringing an imaginary mistress, named Clara, on the stage, instead of the noble-hearted wife, so much better qualified to share the fortunes of her husband and give dignity to his sufferings. Independently of other considerations, this departure from historic

truth cannot be defended on any true principle of dramatic effect."

⁶¹ Raumer, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, vol. i. p. 183.

⁶² After an annual grant, which rose from eight to twelve thousand livres, the duke settled on her a pension of two thousand gulden, which continued to the year of his death, in 1778. (Arend, *Algemeene Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, D. ii. St. v. bl. 66.) The gulden, or guilder, at the present day, is equivalent to about one shilling and ninepence sterling, or thirty-nine cents.

under the sense of injustice to himself and his family, took part in the war against the Spaniards. Philip, who may perhaps have felt some compunction for the ungenerous requital he had made for the father's services, not only forgave this act of disloyalty in the son, but three years later allowed the young man to resume his allegiance, and placed him in full possession of the honors and estates of his ancestors.⁶³

Alva, as we have seen, in his letters to Philip, had dwelt on the important effects of Egmont's execution. He did not exaggerate these effects. But he sorely mistook the nature of them. Abroad, the elector of Bavaria at once threw his whole weight into the scale of Orange and the party of reform.⁶⁴ Others of the German princes followed his example; and Maximilian's ambassador at Madrid informed Philip that the execution of the two nobles, by the indignation it had caused throughout Germany, had wonderfully served the designs of the prince of Orange.⁶⁵

At home the effects were not less striking. The death of these two illustrious men, following so close upon the preceding executions, spread a deep gloom over the country. Men became possessed with the idea that the reign of blood was to be perpetual.⁶⁶

⁶³ Philip, Count Egmont, lived to enjoy his ancestral honors till 1590, when he was slain at Ivry, fighting against Henry the Fourth and the Protestants of France. He died without issue, and was succeeded by his brother Lamoral, a careless prodigal, who with the name seems to have inherited few of the virtues of his illustrious father. Arend, *Algemeene Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, D. ii. St. v. bl. 66.

⁶⁴ Vandervynckt, *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. p. 259.

⁶⁵ "La mort des comtes d'Egmont et de Hornes, et ce qui s'est passé avec l'électeur de Trèves, servent merveilleusement ses desseins." *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. ii. p. 37.

⁶⁶ "Les exécutions faites ont imprimé dans les esprits une terreur si grande, qu'on croit qu'il s'agit de gouverner par le sang à perpétuité." *Ibid.*, p. 29.

All confidence was destroyed, even that confidence which naturally exists between parent and child, between brother and brother.⁶⁷ The foreign merchant caught somewhat of this general distrust, and refused to send his commodities to a country where they were exposed to confiscation.⁶⁸ Yet among the inhabitants indignation was greater than even fear or sorrow⁶⁹; and the Flemings who had taken part in the prosecution of Egmont trembled before the wrath of an avenging people.⁷⁰ Such were the effects produced by the execution of men whom the nation revered as martyrs in the cause of freedom. Alva notices these consequences in his letters to the king. But though he could discern the signs of the times, he little dreamed of the extent of the troubles they portended.

⁶⁷ "Il n'y a plus de confiance du frère au frère, et du père au fils." Ibid., ubi supra.

⁶⁸ Ibid., ubi supra.

⁶⁹ "Funestum Egmontii finem doluere Belgæ odio majore, quàm luctu." Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 394.

⁷⁰ The Flemish councillor, Hessels, who it may be remembered, had particular charge of the provincial prosecutions, incurred still greater odium by the report of his being employed to draft the sentences of the two lords. He subsequently withdrew from the bloody tribunal, and returned to his native province, where he became vice-president of the council of Flanders. This new accession of dignity only made him a more conspicuous mark for the public hatred. In 1577, in a popular insurrection which overturned the government of Ghent, Hessels was dragged from his house, and thrown into prison. After lying there a year, a party of ruffians broke in-

to the place, forced him into a carriage, and, taking him a short distance from town, executed the summary justice of *Lynch law* on their victim by hanging him to a tree. Some of the party, after the murder, were audacious enough to return to Ghent, with locks of the gray hair of the wretched man displayed in triumph on their bonnets.

Some years later, when the former authorities were re-established, the bones of Hessels were removed from their unhallowed burial-place, and laid with great solemnity and funeral pomp in the church of St. Michael. Prose and verse were exhausted in his praise. His memory was revered as that of a martyr. Miracles were performed at his tomb; and the popular credulity went so far, that it was currently reported in Ghent that Philip had solicited the pope for his canonization! See the curious particulars in Vandervynckt, *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. pp. 451-456.

"The people of this country," he writes, "are of so easy a temper, that, when your majesty shall think fit to grant them a general pardon, your clemency, I trust, will make them as prompt to render you their obedience as they are now reluctant to do it."⁷¹—The haughty soldier, in his contempt for the peaceful habits of a burgher population, comprehended as little as his master the true character of the men of the Netherlands.

⁷¹ "Este es un pueblo tan fácil, que espero que con ver la clemencia de V. M., haciendose el pardon general, se ganarán los ánimos á

que de buena gana lleven la obediencia que digo, que ahora sufren de malo." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. ii. p. 29.



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CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER VI.

SECRET EXECUTION OF MONTIGNY.

Bergen and Montigny. — Their Situation in Spain. — Death of Bergen. — Arrest of Montigny. — Plot for his Escape. — His Process. — Removal to Simancas. — Closer Confinement. — Midnight Execution.

1567 — 1570.

BEFORE bidding a long adieu to the Netherlands, it will be well to lay before the reader an account of a transaction which has proved a fruitful theme of speculation to the historian, but which, until the present time, has been shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

It may be remembered that, in the year 1566, two noble Flemings, the marquis of Bergen and the baron of Montigny, were sent on a mission to the court of Madrid, to lay before the king the critical state of affairs, imperatively demanding some change in the policy of the government. The two lords went on the mission; but they never returned. Many conjectures were made respecting their fate; and historians have concluded that Bergen possibly,¹ and certainly Montigny, came to their end by violence.²

¹ "Le bruit public qui subsiste encore, divulgue qu'il est mort empoisonné." Vandervynckt, *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. p. 235.

— The author himself does not indorse the vulgar rumor.

² Meteren tells us that Montigny was killed by poison, which his page,

But, in the want of evidence, it was only conjecture, while the greatest discrepancy has prevailed in regard to details. It is not till very recently that the veil has been withdrawn through the access that has been given to the Archives of Simancas, that dread repository, in which the secrets of the Castilian kings have been buried for ages. Independently of the interest attaching to the circumstances of the present narrative, it is of great importance for the light it throws on the dark, unscrupulous policy of Philip the Second. It has, moreover, the merit of resting on the most authentic grounds the correspondence of the king and his ministers.

Both envoys were men of the highest consideration. The marquis of Bergen, by his rank and fortune, was in the first class of the Flemish aristocracy.³ Montigny was of the ancient house of the Montmorencys, being a younger brother of the unfortunate Count Hoorne. At the time of Charles the Fifth's abdication he had the honor of being selected by the emperor as one of those Flemish nobles who were to escort him to his monastic residence in Spain. He occupied several important posts, — among others, that of governor of Tournay, — and, like Bergen, was a knight of the Golden Fleece. In the political disturbances of the time, although not placed in the front of disaffec-

who afterwards confessed the crime, put in his broth. (*Hist. des Pays-Bas*, fol. 60.) Vandervynckt, after noticing various rumors, dismisses them with the remark, "On n'a pu savoir au juste ce qu'il était devenu." *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. p. 237.

³ His revenues seem to have been larger than those of any other Flemish lord, except Egmont and Orange, amounting to something more than fifty thousand florins annually. *Correspondance de Philippe II*, tom. ii. p. 115.

tion, the two lords had taken part with the discontented faction, had joined in the war upon Granvelle, and had very generally disapproved of the policy of the crown. They had, especially, raised their voices against the system of religious persecution, with a manly independence which had secured for them — it seems undeservedly — the reputation of being the advocates of religious reform. This was particularly the case with Bergen, who, to one that asked how heretics should be dealt with, replied, "If they were willing to be converted, I would not trouble them. If they refused, still I would not take their lives, as they might hereafter be converted." This saying, duly reported to the ears of Philip, was doubtless treasured up against the man who had the courage to utter it.⁴

The purpose of their embassy was to urge on the king the necessity of a more liberal and lenient policy, to which Margaret, who had not yet broken with the nobles, was herself inclined. It was not strange that the two lords should have felt the utmost reluctance to undertake a mission which was to bring them so directly within the power of the monarch whom they knew they had offended, and who, as they also knew, was not apt to forgive an offence. True Egmont had gone on a similar mission to Madrid, and returned uninjured to Brussels. But it was at an earlier period, when the aspect of things was not so dangerous. His time had not yet come.

⁴ Ibid., Rapport, p. xxxvii.

It was reported to Philip's secretary, Erasso, by that mischievous bigot, Fray Lorenzo Villavicencio;

not, as may be supposed, to do honor to the author of it, but to ruin him.

It was not till after much delay that the other nobles, with the regent, prevailed on Bergen and Montigny to accept the trust, by urging on them its absolute importance for assuring the tranquillity of the country. Even then, an injury which confined the marquis some weeks to his house furnished him with a plausible excuse for not performing his engagement, of which he would gladly have availed himself. But his scruples again vanished before the arguments and entreaties of his friends; and he consented to follow, as he could not accompany, Montigny.

The latter reached Madrid towards the middle of June, 1566, was graciously received by the king, and was admitted to repeated audiences, at which he did not fail to urge the remedial measures countenanced by Margaret. Philip appeared to listen with complacency; but declined giving an answer till the arrival of the other ambassador, who, having already set out on his journey, was attacked, on his way through France, by a fever. There Bergen halted, and again thought of abandoning the expedition. His good genius seemed ever willing to interpose to save him. But his evil genius, in the shape of Philip, who wrote to him, in the most condescending terms, to hasten his journey, beckoned him to Madrid.⁵

Besides the two envoys there was another person of consequence from the Low Countries at that time in the capital, — Simon Renard, once Charles's minister at the English court, the inexorable foe of Granvelle. He had been persuaded by Philip to

⁵ Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 439.

come to Spain, although to do so, he knew, was to put himself on trial for his manifold offences against the government. He was arrested; proceedings were commenced against him; and he was released only by an illness which terminated in his death. There seems to have been a mysterious fascination possessed by Philip, that he could thus draw within his reach the very men whom every motive of self-preservation should have kept at an immeasurable distance.

The arrival of the marquis did not expedite the business of the mission. Unfortunately, about that period news came to Madrid of the outbreak of the iconoclasts, exciting not merely in Spain, but throughout Christendom, feelings of horror and indignation. There was no longer a question as to a more temperate policy. The only thought now was of vengeance. It was in vain that the Flemish envoys interposed to mitigate the king's anger, and turn him from those violent measures which must bring ruin on the country. Their remonstrances were unheeded. They found access to his person by no means so easy a thing as before. They felt that somewhat of the odium of the late transactions attached to them. Even the courtiers, with the ready instinct that detects a sovereign's frown, grew cold in their deportment. The situation of the envoys became every day more uncomfortable. Their mission was obviously at an end, and all they now asked was leave to return to the Netherlands.

But the king had no mind to grant it. He had been long since advised by Granvelle, and others in

whom he trusted, that both the nobles had taken a decided part in fostering the troubles of the country.⁶ To that country they were never to return. Philip told them he had need of their presence for some time longer, to advise with him on the critical state of affairs in Flanders. So thin a veil could not impose on them, and they were filled with the most serious apprehensions. They wrote to Margaret, begging her to request the king to dismiss them; otherwise they should have good cause to complain both of her and of the nobles, who had sent them on a mission from which they would gladly have been excused.⁷ But Margaret had already written to her brother to keep them in Spain until the troubles in Flanders should be ended.⁸ On the reception of the letter of her envoys, however, she replied that she had already written to the king to request leave for them to return.⁹ I have found no record of such a letter.

In the spring of 1567, the duke of Alva was sent to take command of the Netherlands. Such an appointment, at such a crisis, plainly intimated the course to be pursued, and the host of evils it would soon bring on the devoted country. The conviction of this was

⁶ See the letters of the royal *contador*, Alonzo del Canto, from Brussels. (*Ibid.*, tom. i. pp. 411. 425.) Granvelle, in a letter from Rome, chimes in with the same tune,—though, as usual with the prelate, in a more covert manner. “Le choix de Berghes et Montigny n’est pas mauvais, si le but de leur mission est d’informer le Roi de l’état des choses : car ils sont ceux qui en ont le mieux connaissance, et qui peut-être y ont pris le plus de part.” *Ibid.*, p. 417.

⁷ “Autrement, certes, Madame, aurions juste occasion de nous do-

loir et de V. A. et des seigneurs de par delà, pour nous avoir commandé de venir ici, pour recevoir honte et desplaisir, estantz forcés journellement de véoir et oyr choses qui nous desplaisent jusques à l’âme, et de veoir aussy le peu que S. M. se sert de nous.” *Ibid.*, p. 498.

⁸ This letter is dated November 18. 1566. (*Ibid.*, p. 486.) The letter of the two lords was written on the last day of the December following.

⁹ Her letter is dated March 5. 1567. *Ibid.*, p. 516.

too much for Bergen, heightened as his distress was by his separation, at such a moment, from all that was most dear to him on earth. He fell ill of a fever, and grew rapidly worse, till at length it was reported to Philip that there was no chance for his recovery unless he were allowed to return to his native land.¹⁰

This placed the king in a perplexing dilemma. He was not disposed to let the marquis escape from his hands even by the way of a natural death. He was still less inclined to assent to his return to Flanders. In this emergency he directed Ruy Gomez, the prince of Eboli, to visit the sick nobleman, who was his personal friend. In case Gomez found the marquis so ill that his recovery was next to impossible, he was to give him the king's permission to return home. If, however, there seemed a prospect of his recovery, he was only to hold out the hope of such a permission.¹¹ In case of the sick man's death, Gomez was to take care to have his obsequies performed in such a manner as to show the sorrow of the king and his ministers at his loss, and their respect for the lords of the Low Countries!¹² He was moreover, in that event, to take means to have the marquis's property in the Netherlands sequestered, as, should rebellion be proved against him, it would be forfeited to the crown.—This curious, and, as it must be allowed, highly confidential epistle, was written with the king's

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 535.

¹¹ "De lui dire (mais seulement après qu'il se sera assuré qu'une guérison est à peu près impossible) que le Roi lui permet de retourner aux Pays-Bas: si, au contraire, il lui paraissait que le marquis pût se rétablir, il se contenterait de lui

faire espérer cette permission."

Ibid., ubi supra.

¹² "Il sera bien, en cette occasion, de montrer le regret que le Roi et ses ministres ont de sa mort, et le cas qu'ils font des seigneurs des Pays-Bas!" Ibid., p. 536.

own hand. The address ran, "Ruy Gomez—to his hands. Not to be opened nor read in the presence of the bearer."

Which part of the royal instruction the minister thought best to follow for the cure of the patient,—whether he gave him an unconditional permission to return, or only held out the hope that he would do so,—we are not informed. It matters little, however. The marquis, it is probable, had already learned not to put his trust in princes. At all events, the promises of the king did as little for the patient as the prescriptions of the doctor. On the twenty-first of May he died,—justifying the melancholy presentiment with which he had entered on his mission.

Montigny was the only victim that now remained to Philip; and he caused him to be guarded with redoubled vigilance. He directed Ruy Gomez to keep an eye on all his movements, and to write to the governors of Navarre, Catalonia, and other frontier places, to take precautions to intercept the Flemish lord, in case of his attempting to fly the country.¹³ Montigny was in fact a prisoner, with Madrid for the limits of his prison. Yet, after this, the regent could write to him from Brussels, that she was pleased to learn from her brother that he was soon to give him his *congé*.¹⁴—If the king said this, he had a bitter meaning in his words, beyond what the duchess apprehended.

It was not long, however, that Montigny was

¹³ Ibid., ubi supra.

¹⁴ "Elle espère le voir sous peu, puisque le Roi lui a fait dire que

son intention était de lui donner bientôt son congé." Ibid., p. 558.
—The letter is dated July 13.