

THE REVOLT OF THE NETHERLANDS - BOOK I.

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[2] A few French generals who were by and large ineffective; and many promises of gold which were undelivered.—D.W.

BOOK I.

EARLIER HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS UP TO THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Before we consider the immediate history of this great revolution, it will be advisable to go a few steps back into the ancient records of the country, and to trace the origin of that constitution which we find it possessed of at the time of this remarkable change.

The first appearance of this people in the history of the world is the moment of its fall; their conquerors first gave them a political existence. The extensive region which is bounded by Germany on the east, on the south by France, on the north and northwest by the North Sea, and which we comprehend under the general name of the Netherlands, was, at the time when the Romans invaded Gaul, divided amongst three principal nations, all originally of German descent, German institutions, and German spirit. The Rhine formed its boundaries. On the left of the river dwelt the Belgae, on its right the Frisii, and the Batavi on the island which its two arms then formed with the ocean. All these several nations were sooner or later reduced into subjection by the Romans, but the conquerors themselves give us the most glorious testimony to their valor. The Belgae, writes Caesar, were the only people amongst the Gauls who repulsed the invasion of the Teutones and Cimbri. The Batavi, Tacitus tells us, surpassed all the tribes on the Rhine in bravery. This fierce nation paid its tribute in soldiers, and was reserved by its conquerors, like arrow and sword, only for battle. The Romans themselves acknowledged the Batavian horsemen to be their best cavalry. Like the Swiss at this day, they formed for a long time the body-guard of the Roman Emperor; their wild courage terrified the Dacians, as they saw them, in full armor, swimming across the Danube. The Batavi accompanied Agricola in his expedition against Britain, and helped him to conquer that island. The Frieses were, of all, the last subdued, and the first to regain their liberty. The morasses among

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which they dwelt attracted the conquerors later, and enhanced the price of conquest. The Roman Drusus, who made war in these regions, had a canal cut from the Rhine into the Flevo, the present Zuyder Zee, through which the Roman fleet penetrated into the North Sea, and from thence, entering the mouths of the Ems and the Weser, found an easy passage into the interior of Germany.

Through four centuries we find Batavian troops in the Roman armies, but after the time of Honorius their name disappears from history. Presently we discover their island overrun by the Franks, who again lost themselves in the adjoining country of Belgium. The Frieses threw off the yoke of their distant and powerless rulers, and again appeared as a free, and even a conquering people, who governed themselves by their own customs and a remnant of Roman laws, and extended their limits beyond the left bank of the Rhine. Of all the provinces of the Netherlands, Friesland especially had suffered the least from the irruptions of strange tribes and foreign customs, and for centuries retained traces of its original institutions, of its national spirit and manners, which have not, even at the present day, entirely disappeared.

The epoch of the immigration of nations destroyed the original form of most of these tribes; other mixed races arose in their place, with other constitutions. In the general irruption the towns and encampments of the Romans disappeared, and with them the memorials of their wise government, which they had employed the natives to execute. The neglected dikes once more yielded to the violence of the streams and to the encroachments of the ocean. Those wonders of labor, and creations of human skill, the canals, dried up, the rivers changed their course, the continent and the sea confounded their olden limits, and the nature of the soil changed with its inhabitants. So, too, the connection of the two eras seems effaced, and with a new race a new history commences.

The monarchy of the Franks, which arose out of the ruins of Roman Gaul, had, in the sixth and seventh centuries, seized all the provinces of the Netherlands, and planted there the Christian faith. After an obstinate war Charles Martel subdued to the French crown Friesland, the last of all the free provinces, and by his victories paved a way for the gospel. Charlemagne united all these countries, and formed of them one division of the mighty empire which he had constructed out of Germany, France, and Lombardy. As under his descendants this vast dominion was again torn into fragments, so the Netherlands became at times German, at others French, or then again Lotheringian Provinces; and at last we find them under both the names of Friesland and Lower Lothringia.

With the Franks the feudal system, the offspring of the North, also came into these lands, and here, too, as in all other countries, it degenerated. The more powerful vassals gradually made themselves independent of the crown, and the royal governors usurped the countries they were appointed to govern. But the rebellions vassals could not maintain their usurpations without the aid of their own dependants,

whose assistance they were compelled to purchase by new concessions. At the same time the church became powerful through pious usurpations and donations, and its abbey lands and episcopal sees acquired an independent existence. Thus were the Netherlands in the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries split up into several small sovereignties, whose possessors did homage at one time to the German Emperor, at another to the kings of France. By purchase, marriages, legacies, and also by conquest, several of these provinces were often united under one suzerain, and thus in the fifteenth century we see the house of Burgundy in possession of the chief part of the Netherlands. With more or less right Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, had united as many as eleven provinces under his authority, and to these his son, Charles the Bold, added two others, acquired by force of arms. Thus imperceptibly a new state arose in Europe, which wanted nothing but the name to be the most flourishing kingdom in this quarter of the globe. These extensive possessions made the Dukes of Burgundy formidable neighbors to France, and tempted the restless spirit of Charles the Bold to devise a scheme of conquest, embracing the whole line of country from the Zuyder Zee and the mouth of the Rhine down to Alsace. The almost inexhaustible resources of this prince justify in some measure this bold project. A formidable army threatened to carry it into execution. Already Switzerland trembled for her liberty; but deceitful fortune abandoned him in three terrible battles, and the infatuated hero was lost in the melee of the living and the dead.

[A page who had seen him fall a few days after the battle conducted the victors to the spot, and saved his remains from an ignominious oblivion. His body was dragged from out of a pool, in which it was fast frozen, naked, and so disfigured with wounds that with great difficulty he was recognized, by the well-known deficiency of some of his teeth, and by remarkably long finger-nails. But that, notwithstanding the marks, there were still incredulous people who doubted his death, and looked for his reappearance, is proved by the missive in which Louis XI. called upon the Burgundian States to return to their allegiance to the Crown of France. "If," the passage runs, "Duke Charles should still be living, you shall be released from your oath to me." Comines, t. iii., Preuves des Memoires, 495, 497.]

The sole heiress of Charles the Bold, Maria, at once the richest princess and the unhappy Helen of that time, whose wooing brought misery on her inheritance, was now the centre of attraction to the whole known world. Among her suitors appeared two great princes, King Louis XI. of France, for his son, the young Dauphin, and Maximilian of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederic III. The successful suitor was to become the most powerful prince in Europe; and now, for the first time, this quarter of the globe began to fear for its balance of power. Louis, the more powerful of the two, was ready to back his suit by force of arms; but the people of the Netherlands, who disposed of the hand of their princess, passed by this dreaded neighbor, and decided in favor of

Maximilian, whose more remote territories and more limited power seemed less to threaten the liberty of their country. A deceitful, unfortunate policy, which, through a strange dispensation of heaven, only accelerated the melancholy fate which it was intended to prevent.

To Philip the Fair, the son of Maria and Maximilian, a Spanish bride brought as her portion that extensive kingdom which Ferdinand and Isabella had recently founded; and Charles of Austria, his son, was born lord of the kingdoms of Spain, of the two Sicilies, of the New World, and of the Netherlands. In the latter country the commonalty emancipated themselves much earlier than in other; feudal states, and quickly attained to an independent political existence. The favorable situation of the country on the North Sea and on great navigable rivers early awakened the spirit of commerce, which rapidly peopled the towns, encouraged industry and the arts, attracted foreigners, and diffused prosperity and affluence among them. However contemptuously the warlike policy of those times looked down upon every peaceful and useful occupation, the rulers of the country could not fail altogether to perceive the essential advantages they derived from such pursuits. The increasing population of their territories, the different imposts which they extorted from natives and foreigners under the various titles of tolls, customs, highway rates, escort money, bridge tolls, market fees, escheats, and so forth, were too valuable considerations to allow them to remain indifferent to the sources from which they were derived.. Their own rapacity made them promoters of trade, and, as often happens, barbarism itself rudely nursed it, until at last a healthier policy assumed its place. In the course of time they invited the Lombard merchants to settle among them, and accorded to the towns some valuable privileges and an independent jurisdiction, by which the latter acquired uncommon extraordinary credit and influence. The numerous wars which the counts and dukes carried on with one another, or with their neighbors, made them in some measure dependent on the good-will of the towns, who by their wealth obtained weight and consideration, and for the subsidies which they afforded failed not to extort important privileges in return. These privileges of the commonalties increased as the crusades with their expensive equipment augmented the necessities of the nobles; as a new road to Europe was opened for the productions of the East, and as wide-spreading luxury created new wants to their princes. Thus as early as the eleventh and twelfth centuries we find in these lands a mixed form of government, in which the prerogative of the sovereign is greatly limited by the privileges of the estates; that is to say, of the nobility, the clergy, and the municipalities.

These, under the name of States, assembled as often as the wants of the province required it. Without their consent no new laws were valid, no war could be carried on, and no taxes levied, no change made in the coinage, and no foreigner admitted to any office of government. All the provinces enjoyed these privileges in common; others were peculiar to the various districts. The supreme government was hereditary, but the son did not enter on the rights of his father before he had solemnly

sworn to maintain the existing constitution.

Necessity is the first lawgiver; all the wants which had to be met by this constitution were originally of a commercial nature. Thus the whole constitution was founded on commerce, and the laws of the nation were adapted to its pursuits. The last clause, which excluded foreigners from all offices of trust, was a natural consequence of the preceding articles. So complicated and artificial a relation between the sovereign and his people, which in many provinces was further modified according to the peculiar wants of each, and frequently of some single city, required for its maintenance the liveliest zeal for the liberties of the country, combined with an intimate acquaintance with them. From a foreigner neither could well be expected. This law, besides, was enforced reciprocally in each particular province; so that in Brabant no Fleming, in Zealand no Hollander, could hold office; and it continued in force even after all these provinces were united under one government.

Above all others, Brabant enjoyed the highest degree of freedom. Its privileges were esteemed so valuable that many mothers from the adjacent provinces removed thither about the time of their accouchment, in order to entitle their children to participate, by birth, in all the immunities of that favored country; just as, says Strada, one improves the plants of a rude climate by removing them to the soil of a milder.

After the House of Burgundy had united several provinces under its dominion, the separate provincial assemblies which, up to that time, had been independent tribunals, were made subject to a supreme court at Malines, which incorporated the various judicatures into one body, and decided in the last resort all civil and criminal appeals. The separate independence of the provinces was thus abolished, and the supreme power vested in the senate at Malines.

After the death of Charles the Bold the states did not neglect to avail themselves of the embarrassment of their duchess, who, threatened by France, was consequently in their power. Holland and Zealand compelled her to sign a great charter, which secured to them the most important sovereign rights. The people of Ghent carried their insolence to such a pitch that they arbitrarily dragged the favorites of Maria, who had the misfortune to displease them, before their own tribunals, and beheaded them before the eyes of that princess. During the short government of the Duchess Maria, from her father's death to her marriage, the commons obtained powers which few free states enjoyed. After her death her husband, Maximilian, illegally assumed the government as guardian of his son. Offended by this invasion of their rights, the estates refused to acknowledge his authority, and could only be brought to receive him as a viceroy for a stated period, and under conditions ratified by oath.

Maximilian, after he became Roman Emperor, fancied that he might safely venture to violate the constitution. He imposed extraordinary taxes on

the provinces, gave official appointments to Burgundians and Germans, and introduced foreign troops into the provinces. But the jealousy of these republicans kept pace with the power of their regent. As he entered Bruges with a large retinue of foreigners, the people flew to arms, made themselves masters of his person, and placed him in confinement in the castle. In spite of the intercession of the Imperial and Roman courts, he did not again obtain his freedom until security had been given to the people on all the disputed points.

The security of life and property arising from mild laws, and, an equal administration of justice, had encouraged activity and industry. In continual contest with the ocean and rapid rivers, which poured their violence on the neighboring lowlands, and whose force it was requisite to break by embankments and canals, this people had early learned to observe the natural objects around them; by industry and perseverance to defy an element of superior power; and like the Egyptian, instructed by his Nile, to exercise their inventive genius and acuteness in self-defence. The natural fertility of their soil, which favored agriculture and the breeding of cattle, tended at the same time to increase the population. Their happy position on the sea and the great navigable rivers of Germany and France, many of which debouched on their coasts; the numerous artificial canals which intersected the land in all directions, imparted life to navigation; and the facility of internal communication between the provinces, soon created and fostered a commercial spirit among these people.

The neighboring coasts, Denmark and Britain, were the first visited by their vessels. The English wool which they brought back employed thousands of industrious hands in Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp; and as early as the middle of the twelfth century cloths of Flanders were extensively worn in France and Germany. In the eleventh century we find ships of Friesland in the Belt, and even in the Levant. This enterprising people ventured, without a compass, to steer under the North Pole round to the most northerly point of Russia. From the Wendish towns the Netherlands received a share in the Levant trade, which, at that time, still passed from the Black Sea through the Russian territories to the Baltic. When, in the thirteenth century, this trade began to decline, the Crusades having opened a new road through the Mediterranean for Indian merchandise, and after the Italian towns had usurped this lucrative branch of commerce, and the great Hanseatic League had been formed in Germany, the Netherlands became the most important emporium between the north and south. As yet the use of the compass was not general, and the merchantmen sailed slowly and laboriously along the coasts. The ports on the Baltic were, during the winter months, for the most part frozen and inaccessible. Ships, therefore, which could not well accomplish within the year the long voyage from the Mediterranean to the Belt, gladly availed themselves of harbors which lay half-way between the two,

With an immense continent behind them with which navigable streams kept

up their communication, and towards the west and north open to the ocean by commodious harbors, this country appeared to be expressly formed for a place of resort for different nations, and for a centre of commerce. The principal towns of the Netherlands were established marts. Portuguese, Spaniards, Italians, French, Britons, Germans, Danes, and Swedes thronged to them with the produce of every country in the world. Competition insured cheapness; industry was stimulated as it found a ready market for its productions. With the necessary exchange of money arose the commerce in bills, which opened a new and fruitful source of wealth. The princes of the country, acquainted at last with their true interest, encouraged the merchant by important immunities, and neglected not to protect their commerce by advantageous treaties with foreign powers. When, in the fifteenth century, several provinces were united under one rule, they discontinued their private wars, which had proved so injurious, and their separate interests were now more intimately connected by a common government. Their commerce and affluence prospered in the lap of a long peace, which the formidable power of their princes extorted from the neighboring monarchs. The Burgundian flag was feared in every sea, the dignity of their sovereign gave support to their undertakings, and the enterprise of a private individual became the affair of a powerful state. Such vigorous protection soon placed them in a position even to renounce the Hanseatic League, and to pursue this daring enemy through every sea. The Hanseatic merchants, against whom the coasts of Spain were closed, were compelled at last, however reluctantly, to visit the Flemish fairs, and purchase their Spanish goods in the markets of the Netherlands.

Bruges, in Flanders, was, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the central point of the whole commerce of Europe, and the great market of all nations. In the year 1468 a hundred and fifty merchant vessels were counted entering the harbor of Sluys it one time. Besides the rich factories of the Hanseatic League, there were here fifteen trading companies, with their countinghouses, and many factories and merchants' families from every European country. Here was established the market of all northern products for the south, and of all southern and Levantine products for the north. These passed through the Sound, and up the Rhine, in Hanseatic vessels to Upper Germany, or were transported by landcarriage to Brunswick and Luneburg.

As in the common course of human affairs, so here also a licentious luxury followed prosperity. The seductive example of Philip the Good could not but accelerate its approach. The court of the Burgundian dukes was the most voluptuous and magnificent in Europe, Italy itself not excepted. The costly dress of the higher classes, which afterwards served as patterns to the Spaniards, and eventually, with other Burgundian customs, passed over to the court of Austria, soon descended to the lower orders, and the meanest citizen nursed his person in velvet and silk.

[Philip the Good was too profuse a prince to amass treasures;

nevertheless Charles the Bold found accumulated among his effects, a greater store of table services, jewels, carpets, and linen than three rich principedoms of that time together possessed, and over and above all a treasure of three hundred thousand dollars in ready money. The riches of this prince, and of the Burgundian people, lay exposed on the battle-fields of Granson, Murten and Nancy. Here a Swiss soldier drew from the finger of Charles the Bold, that celebrated diamond which was long esteemed the largest in Europe, which even now sparkles in the crown of France as the second in size, but which the unwitting finder sold for a florin. The Swiss exchanged the silver they found for tin, and the gold for copper, and tore into pieces the costly tents of cloth of gold. The value of the spoil of silver, gold, and jewels which was taken has been estimated at three millions. Charles and his army had advanced to the combat, not like foes who purpose battle, but like conquerors who adorn themselves after victory.]

Comines, an author who travelled through the Netherlands about the middle of the fifteenth century, tells us that pride had already attended their prosperity. The pomp and vanity of dress was carried by both sexes to extravagance. The luxury of the table had never reached so great a height among any other people. The immoral assemblage of both sexes at bathing-places, and such other places of reunion for pleasure and enjoyment, had banished all shame—and we are not here speaking of the usual luxuriousness of the higher ranks; the females of the common class abandoned themselves to such extravagances without limit or measure.

But how much more cheering to the philanthropist is this extravagance than the miserable frugality of want, and the barbarous virtues of ignorance, which at that time oppressed nearly the whole of Europe! The Burgundian era shines pleasingly forth from those dark ages, like a lovely spring day amid the showers of February. But this flourishing condition tempted the Flemish towns at last to their ruin; Ghent and Bruges, giddy with liberty and success, declared war against Philip the Good, the ruler of eleven provinces, which ended as unfortunately as it was presumptuously commenced. Ghent alone lost many thousand men in an engagement near Havre, and was compelled to appease the wrath of the victor by a contribution of four hundred thousand gold florins. All the municipal functionaries, and two thousand of the principal citizens, went, stripped to their shirts, barefooted, and with heads uncovered, a mile out of the town to meet the duke, and on their knees supplicated for pardon. On this occasion they were deprived of several valuable privileges, all irreparable loss for their future commerce. In the year 1482 they engaged in a war, with no better success, against Maximilian of Austria, with a view to, deprive him of the guardianship of his son, which, in contravention of his charter, he had unjustly assumed. In 1487 the town of Bruges placed the archduke himself in confinement, and put some of his most eminent ministers to death. To avenge his son the Emperor Frederic III. entered their territory with an army, and,

blockading for ten years the harbor of Sluys, put a stop to their entire trade. On this occasion Amsterdam and Antwerp, whose jealousy had long been roused by the flourishing condition of the Flemish towns, lent him the most important assistance. The Italians began to bring their own silk-stuffs to Antwerp for sale, and the Flemish cloth-workers likewise, who had settled in England, sent their goods thither; and thus the town of Bruges lost two important branches of trade. The Hanseatic League had long been offended at their overweening pride; and it now left them and removed its factory to Antwerp. In the year 1516 all the foreign merchants left the town except only a few Spaniards; but its prosperity faded as slowly as it had bloomed.

Antwerp received, in the sixteenth century, the trade which the luxuriousness of the Flemish towns had banished; and under the government of Charles V. Antwerp was the most stirring and splendid city in the Christian world. A stream like the Scheldt, whose broad mouth, in the immediate vicinity, shared with the North Sea the ebb and flow of the tide, and could carry vessels of the largest tonnage under the walls of Antwerp, made it the natural resort for all vessels which visited that coast. Its free fairs attracted men of business from all countries.

[Two such fairs lasted forty days, and all the goods sold there were duty free.]

The industry of the nation had, in the beginning of this century, reached its greatest height. The culture of grain, flax, the breeding of cattle, the chase, and fisheries, enriched the peasant; arts, manufactures, and trade gave wealth to the burghers. Flemish and Brabantine manufactures were long to be seen in Arabia, Persia, and India. Their ships covered the ocean, and in the Black Sea contended with the Genoese for supremacy. It was the distinctive characteristic of the seaman of the Netherlands that he made sail at all seasons of the year, and never laid up for the winter.

When the new route by the Cape of Good Hope was discovered, and the East India trade of Portugal undermined that of the Levant, the Netherlands did not feel the blow which was inflicted on the Italian republics. The Portuguese established their mart in Brabant, and the spices of Calicut were displayed for sale in the markets of Antwerp. Hither poured the West Indian merchandise, with which the indolent pride of Spain repaid the industry of the Netherlands. The East Indian market attracted the most celebrated commercial houses from Florence, Lucca, and Genoa; and the Fuggers and Welsers from Augsburg. Here the Hanse towns brought the wares of the north, and here the English company had a factory. Here art and nature seemed to expose to view all their riches; it was a splendid exhibition of the works of the Creator and of the creature.

Their renown soon diffused itself through the world. Even a company of

Turkish merchants, towards the end of this century, solicited permission to settle here, and to supply the products of the East by way of Greece. With the trade in goods they held also the exchange of money. Their bills passed current in the farthest parts of the globe. Antwerp, it is asserted, then transacted more extensive and more important business in a single month than Venice, at its most flourishing period, in two whole years.

In the year 1491 the Hanseatic League held its solemn meetings in this town, which had formerly assembled in Lubeck alone. In 1531 the exchange was erected, at that time the most splendid in all Europe, and which fulfilled its proud inscription. The town now reckoned one hundred thousand inhabitants. The tide of human beings, which incessantly poured into it, exceeds all belief. Between two hundred and two hundred and fifty ships were often seen loading at one time in its harbor; no day passed on which the boats entering inwards and outwards did not amount to more than five hundred; on market days the number amounted to eight or nine hundred. Daily more than two hundred carriages drove through its gates; above two thousand loaded wagons arrived every week from Germany, France, and Lorraine, without reckoning the farmers' carts and corn-vans, which were seldom less than ten thousand in number. Thirty thousand hands were employed by the English company alone. The market dues, tolls, and excise brought millions to the government annually. We can form some idea of the resources of the nation from the fact that the extraordinary taxes which they were obliged to pay to Charles V. towards his numerous wars were computed at forty millions of gold ducats.

For this affluence the Netherlands were as much indebted to their liberty as to the natural advantages of their country. Uncertain laws and the despotic sway of a rapacious prince would quickly have blighted all the blessings which propitious nature had so abundantly lavished on them. The inviolable sanctity of the laws can alone secure to the citizen the fruits of his industry, and inspire him with that happy confidence which is the soul of all activity.

The genius of this people, developed by the spirit of commerce, and by the intercourse with so many nations, shone in useful inventions; in the lap of abundance and liberty all the noble arts were carefully cultivated and carried to perfection. From Italy, to which Cosmo de Medici had lately restored its golden age, painting, architecture, and the arts of carving and of engraving on copper, were transplanted into the Netherlands, where, in a new soil, they flourished with fresh vigor. The Flemish school, a daughter of the Italian, soon vied with its mother for the prize; and, in common with it, gave laws to the whole of Europe in the fine arts. The manufactures and arts, on which the Netherlanders principally founded their prosperity, and still partly base it, require no particular enumeration. The weaving of tapestry, oil painting, the art of painting on glass, even pocketwatches and sun-dials were, as Guicciardini asserts, originally invented in the Netherlands. To them

we are indebted for the improvement of the compass, the points of which are still known by Flemish names. About the year 1430 the invention of typography is ascribed to Laurence Koster, of Haarlem; and whether or not he is entitled to this honorable distinction, certain it is that the Dutch were among the first to engraft this useful art among them; and fate ordained that a century later it should reward its country with liberty. The people of the Netherlands united with the most fertile genius for inventions a happy talent for improving the discoveries of others; there are probably few mechanical arts and manufactures which they did not either produce or at least carry to a higher degree of perfection.

Up to this time these provinces had formed the most enviable state in Europe. Not one of the Burgundian dukes had ventured to indulge a thought of overturning the constitution; it had remained sacred even to the daring spirit of Charles the Bold, while he was preparing fetters for foreign liberty. All these princes grew up with no higher hope than to be the heads of a republic, and none of their territories afforded them experience of a higher authority. Besides, these princes possessed nothing but what the Netherlands gave them; no armies but those which the nation sent into the field; no riches but what the estates granted to them. Now all was changed. The Netherlands had fallen to a master who had at his command other instruments and other resources, who could arm against them a foreign power.

[The unnatural union of two such different nations as the Belgians and Spaniards could not possibly be prosperous. I cannot here refrain from quoting the comparison which Grotius, in energetic language, has drawn between the two. "With the neighboring nations," says he, "the people of the Netherlands could easily maintain a good understanding, for they were of a similar origin with themselves, and had grown up in the same manner. But the people of Spain and of the Netherlands differed in almost every respect from one another, and therefore, when they were brought together clashed the more violently. Both had for many centuries been distinguished in war, only the latter had, in luxurious repose, become disused to arms, while the former had been inured to war in the Italian and African campaigns; the desire of gain made the Belgians more inclined to peace, but not less sensitive of offence. No people were more free from the lust of conquest, but none defended its own more zealously. Hence the numerous towns, closely pressed together in a confined tract of country; densely crowded with a foreign and native population; fortified near the sea and the great rivers. Hence for eight centuries after the northern immigration foreign arms could not prevail against them. Spain, on the contrary, often changed its masters; and when at last it fell into the hands of the Goths, its character and its manners had suffered more or less from each new conqueror. The people thus formed at last out of these several admixtures is described as patient in labor, imperturbable in danger, equally eager for riches

and honor, proud of itself even to contempt of others, devout and grateful to strangers for any act of kindness, but also revengeful, and of such ungovernable passions in victory as so regard neither conscience nor honor in the case of an enemy. All this is foreign to the character of the Belgian, who is astute but not insidious, who, placed midway between France and Germany, combines in moderation the faults and good qualities of both. He is not easily to be imposed upon, nor is he to be insulted with impunity. In veneration for the Deity, too, he does not yield to the Spaniard; the arms of the Northmen could not make him apostatize from Christianity when he had once professed it. No opinion which the church condemns had, up to this time, empoisoned the purity of his faith. Nay, his pious extravagance went so far that it became requisite to curb by laws the rapacity of his clergy. In both people loyalty to their rulers is equally innate, with this difference, that the Belgian places the law above kings. Of all the Spaniards the Castilians require to be, governed with the most caution; but the liberties which they arrogate for themselves they do not willingly accord to others. Hence the difficult task to their common ruler, so to distribute his attention, and care between the two nations that neither the preference shown to the Castilian should offend the Belgian, nor the equal treatment of the Belgian affront the haughty spirit of the Castilian.”—Grotii Annal. Belg. L. 1. 4. 5. seq.]

Charles V. was an absolute monarch in his Spanish dominions; in the Netherlands he was no more than the first citizen. In the southern portion of his empire he might have learned contempt for the rights of individuals; here he was taught to respect them. The more he there tasted the pleasures of unlimited power, and the higher he raised his opinion of his own greatness, the more reluctant he must have felt to descend elsewhere to the ordinary level of humanity, and to tolerate any check upon his arbitrary authority. It requires, indeed, no ordinary degree of virtue to abstain from warring against the power which imposes a curb on our most cherished wishes.

The superior power of Charles awakened at the same time in the Netherlands that distrust which always accompanies inferiority. Never were they so alive to their constitutional rights, never so jealous of the royal prerogative, or more observant in their proceedings. Under, his reign we see the most violent outbreaks of republican spirit, and the pretensions of the people carried to an excess which nothing but the increasing encroachments of the royal power could in the least justify. A Sovereign will always regard the freedom of the citizen as an alienated fief, which he is bound to recover. To the citizen the authority of a sovereign is a torrent, which, by its inundation, threatens to sweep away his rights. The Belgians sought to protect themselves against the ocean by embankments, and against their princes by constitutional enactments. The whole history of the world is a perpetually recurring struggle between liberty and the lust of power and

possession; as the history of nature is nothing but the contest of the elements and organic bodies for space. The Netherlands soon found to their cost that they had become but a province of a great monarchy. So long as their former masters had no higher aim than to promote their prosperity, their condition resembled the tranquil happiness of a secluded family, whose head is its ruler. Charles V. introduced them upon the arena of the political world. They now formed a member of that gigantic body which the ambition of an individual employed as his instrument. They ceased to have their own good for their aim; the centre of their existence was transported to the soul of their ruler. As his whole government was but one tissue of plans and manoeuvres to advance his power, so it was, above all things, necessary that he should be completely master of the various limbs of his mighty empire in order to move them effectually and suddenly. It was impossible, therefore, for him to embarrass himself with the tiresome mechanism of their interior political organization, or to extend to their peculiar privileges the conscientious respect which their republican jealousy demanded. It was expedient for him to facilitate the exercise of their powers by concentration and unity. The tribunal at Malines had been under his predecessor an independent court of judicature; he subjected its decrees to the revision of a royal council, which he established in Brussels, and which was the mere organ of his will. He introduced foreigners into the most vital functions of their constitution, and confided to them the most important offices. These men, whose only support was the royal favor, would be but bad guardians of privileges which, moreover, were little known to them. The ever-increasing expenses of his warlike government compelled him as steadily to augment his resources. In disregard of their most sacred privileges he imposed new and strange taxes on the provinces. To preserve their olden consideration the estates were forced to grant what he had been so modest as not to extort; the whole history of the government of this monarch in the Netherlands is almost one continued list of imposts demanded, refused, and finally accorded. Contrary to the constitution, he introduced foreign troops into their territories, directed the recruiting of his armies in the provinces, and involved them in wars, which could not advance even if they did not injure their interest, and to which they had not given their consent. He punished the offences of a free state as a monarch; and the terrible chastisement of Ghent announced to the other provinces the great change which their constitution had already undergone.

The welfare of the country was so far secured as was necessary to the political schemes of its master; the intelligent policy of Charles would certainly not violate the salutary regimen of the body whose energies he found himself necessitated to exert. Fortunately, the opposite pursuits of selfish ambition, and of disinterested philanthropy, often bring about the same end; and the well-being of a state, which a Marcus Aurelius might propose to himself as a rational object of pursuit, is occasionally promoted by an Augustus or a Louis.

Charles V. was perfectly aware that commerce was the strength of the nation, and that the foundation of their commerce was liberty. He spared its liberty because he needed its strength. Of greater political wisdom, though not more just than his son, he adapted his principles to the exigencies of time and place, and recalled an ordinance in Antwerp and in Madrid which he would under other circumstances have enforced with all the terrors of his power. That which makes the reign of Charles V. particularly remarkable in regard to the Netherlands is the great religious revolution which occurred under it; and which, as the principal cause of the subsequent rebellion, demands a somewhat circumstantial notice. This it was that first brought arbitrary power into the innermost sanctuary of the constitution; taught it to give a dreadful specimen of its might; and, in a measure, legalized it, while it placed republican spirit on a dangerous eminence. And as the latter sank into anarchy and rebellion monarchical power rose to the height of despotism.

Nothing is more natural than the transition from civil liberty to religious freedom. Individuals, as well as communities, who, favored by a happy political constitution, have become acquainted with the rights of man, and accustomed to examine, if not also to create, the law which is to govern them; whose minds have been enlightened by activity, and feelings expanded by the enjoyments of life; whose natural courage has been exalted by internal security and prosperity; such men will not easily surrender themselves to the blind domination of a dull arbitrary creed, and will be the first to emancipate themselves from its yoke. Another circumstance, however, must have greatly tended to diffuse the new religion in these countries. Italy, it might be objected, the seat of the greatest intellectual culture, formerly the scene of the most violent political factions, where a burning climate kindles the blood with the wildest passions—Italy, among all the European countries, remained the freest from this change. But to a romantic people, whom a warm and lovely sky, a luxurious, ever young and ever smiling nature, and the multifarious witcheries of art, rendered keenly susceptible of sensuous enjoyment, that form of religion must naturally have been better adapted, which by its splendid pomp captivates the senses, by its mysterious enigmas opens an unbounded range to the fancy; and which, through the most picturesque forms, labors to insinuate important doctrines into the soul. On the contrary, to a people whom the ordinary employments of civil life have drawn down to an unpoetical reality, who live more in plain notions than in images, and who cultivate their common sense at the expense of their imagination—to such a people that creed will best recommend itself which dreads not investigation, which lays less stress on mysticism than on morals, and which is rather to be understood than to be dwelt upon in meditation. In few words, the Roman Catholic religion will, on the whole, be found more adapted to a nation of artists, the Protestant more fitted to a nation of merchants.

On this supposition the new doctrines which Luther diffused in Germany, and Calvin in Switzerland, must have found a congenial soil in the

Netherlands. The first seeds of it were sown in the Netherlands by the Protestant merchants, who assembled at Amsterdam and Antwerp. The German and Swiss troops, which Charles introduced into these countries, and the crowd of French, German, and English fugitives who, under the protection of the liberties of Flanders, sought to escape the sword of persecution which threatened them at home, promoted their diffusion. A great portion of the Belgian nobility studied at that time at Geneva, as the University of Louvain was not yet in repute, and that of Douai not yet founded. The new tenets publicly taught there were transplanted by the students to their various countries. In an isolated people these first germs might easily have been crushed; but in the market-towns of Holland and Brabant, the resort of so many different nations, their first growth would escape the notice of government, and be accelerated under the veil of obscurity. A difference in opinion might easily spring up and gain ground amongst those who already were divided in national character, in manners, customs, and laws. Moreover, in a country where industry was the most lauded virtue, mendicity the most abhorred vice, a slothful body of men, like that of the monks, must have been an object of long and deep aversion. Hence, the new religion, which opposed these orders, derived an immense advantage from having the popular opinion on its side. Occasional pamphlets, full of bitterness and satire, to which the newly-discovered art of printing secured a rapid circulation, and several bands of strolling orators, called *Rederiker*, who at that time made the circuit of the provinces, ridiculing in theatrical representations or songs the abuses of their times, contributed not a little to diminish respect for the Romish Church, and to prepare the people for the reception of the new dogmas.

The first conquests of this doctrine were astonishingly rapid. The number of those who in a short time avowed themselves its adherents, especially in the northern provinces, was prodigious; but among these the foreigners far outnumbered the natives. Charles V., who, in this hostile array of religious tenets, had taken the side which a despot could not fail to take, opposed to the increasing torrent of innovation the most effectual remedies. Unhappily for the reformed religion political justice was on the side of its persecutor. The dam which, for so many centuries, had repelled human understanding from truth was too suddenly torn away for the outbreking torrent not to overflow its appointed channel. The reviving spirit of liberty and of inquiry, which ought to have remained within the limits of religious questions, began also to examine into the rights of kings. While in the commencement iron fetters were justly broken off, a desire was eventually shown to rend asunder the most legitimate and most indispensable of ties. Even the Holy Scriptures, which were now circulated everywhere, while they imparted light and nurture to the sincere inquirer after truth, were the source also whence an eccentric fanaticism contrived to extort the virulent poison. The good cause had been compelled to choose the evil road of rebellion, and the result was what in such cases it ever will be so long as men remain men. The bad cause, too, which had nothing in common with the good but the employment of illegal means, emboldened by

this slight point of connection, appeared in the same company, and was mistaken for it. Luther had written against the invocation of saints; every audacious varlet who broke into the churches and cloisters, and plundered the altars, called himself Lutheran. Faction, rapine, fanaticism, licentiousness robed themselves in his colors; the most enormous offenders, when brought before the judges, avowed themselves his followers. The Reformation had drawn down the Roman prelate to a level with fallible humanity; an insane band, stimulated by hunger and want, sought to annihilate all distinction of ranks. It was natural that a doctrine, which to the state showed itself only in its most unfavorable aspect, should not have been able to reconcile a monarch who had already so many reasons to extirpate it; and it is no wonder, therefore, that he employed against it the arms it had itself forced upon him.

Charles must already have looked upon himself as absolute in the Netherlands since he did not think it necessary to extend to these countries the religious liberty which he had accorded to Germany. While, compelled by the effectual resistance of the German princes, he assured to the former country a free exercise of the new religion, in the latter he published the most cruel edicts for its repression. By these the reading of the Evangelists and Apostles; all open or secret meetings to which religion gave its name in ever so slight a degree; all conversations on the subject, at home or at the table, were forbidden under severe penalties. In every province special courts of judicature were established to watch over the execution of the edicts. Whoever held these erroneous opinions was to forfeit his office without regard to his rank. Whoever should be convicted of diffusing heretical doctrines, or even of simply attending the secret meetings of the Reformers, was to be condemned to death, and if a male, to be executed by the sword, if a female, buried alive. Backsliding heretics were to be committed to the flames. Not even the recantation of the offender could annul these appalling sentences. Whoever abjured his errors gained nothing by his apostacy but at farthest a milder kind of death.

The fiefs of the condemned were also confiscated, contrary to the privileges of the nation, which permitted the heir to redeem them for a trifling fine; and in defiance of an express and valuable privilege of the citizens of Holland, by which they were not to be tried out of their province, culprits were conveyed beyond the limits of the native judicature, and condemned by foreign tribunals. Thus did religion guide the hand of despotism to attack with its sacred weapon, and without danger or opposition, the liberties which were inviolable to the secular arm.

Charles V., emboldened by the fortunate progress of his arms in Germany, thought that he might now venture on everything, and seriously meditated the introduction of the Spanish Inquisition in the Netherlands. But the terror of its very name alone reduced commerce in Antwerp to a standstill. The principal foreign merchants prepared to quit the city.

All buying and selling ceased, the value of houses fell, the employment of artisans stopped. Money disappeared from the hands of the citizen. The ruin of that flourishing commercial city was inevitable had not Charles V. listened to the representations of the Duchess of Parma, and abandoned this perilous resolve. The tribunal, therefore, was ordered not to interfere with the foreign merchants, and the title of Inquisitor was changed unto the milder appellation of Spiritual Judge. But in the other provinces that tribunal proceeded to rage with the inhuman despotism which has ever been peculiar to it. It has been computed that during the reign of Charles V. fifty thousand persons perished by the hand of the executioner for religion alone.

When we glance at the violent proceedings of this monarch we are quite at a loss to comprehend what it was that kept the rebellion within bounds during his reign, which broke out with so much violence under his successor. A closer investigation will clear up this seeming anomaly. Charles's dreaded supremacy in Europe had raised the commerce of the Netherlands to a height which it had never before attained. The majesty of his name opened all harbors, cleared all seas for their vessels, and obtained for them the most favorable commercial treaties with foreign powers. Through him, in particular, they destroyed the dominion of the Hanse towns in the Baltic. Through him, also, the New World, Spain, Italy, Germany, which now shared with them a common ruler, were, in a measure, to be considered as provinces of their own country, and opened new channels for their commerce. He had, moreover, united the remaining six provinces with the hereditary states of Burgundy, and thus given to them an extent and political importance which placed them by the side of the first kingdoms of Europe.

[He had, too, at one time the intention of raising it to a kingdom; but the essential points of difference between the provinces, which extended from constitution and manners to measures and weights, soon made him abandon this design. More important was the service which he designed them in the Burgundian treaty, which settled its relation to the German empire. According to this treaty the seventeen provinces were to contribute to the common wants of the German empire twice as much as an electoral prince; in case of a Turkish war three times as much; in return for which, however, they were to enjoy the powerful protection of this empire, and not to be injured in any of their various privileges. The revolution, which under Charles' son altered the political constitution of the provinces, again annulled this compact, which, on account of the trifling advantage that it conferred, deserves no further notice.]

By all this he flattered the national pride of this people. Moreover, by the incorporation of Gueldres, Utrecht, Friesland, and Groningen with these provinces, he put an end to the private wars which had so long disturbed their commerce; an unbroken internal peace now allowed them to enjoy the full fruits of their industry. Charles was therefore a benefactor of this people. At the same time, the splendor of his

victories dazzled their eyes; the glory of their sovereign, which was reflected upon them also, had bribed their republican vigilance; while the awe-inspiring halo of invincibility which encircled the conqueror of Germany, France, Italy, and Africa terrified the factious. And then, who knows not on how much may venture the man, be he a private individual or a prince, who has succeeded in enchaining the admiration of his fellow-creatures! His repeated personal visits to these lands, which he, according to his own confession, visited as often as ten different times, kept the disaffected within bounds; the constant exercise of severe and prompt justice maintained the awe of the royal power. Finally, Charles was born in the Netherlands, and loved the nation in whose lap he had grown up. Their manners pleased him, the simplicity of their character and social intercourse formed for him a pleasing recreation from the severe Spanish gravity. He spoke their language, and followed their customs in his private life. The burdensome ceremonies which form the unnatural barriers between king and people were banished from Brussels. No jealous foreigner debarred natives from access to their prince; their way to him was through their own countrymen, to whom he entrusted his person. He spoke much and courteously with them; his deportment was engaging, his discourse obliging. These simple artifices won for him their love, and while his armies trod down their cornfields, while his rapacious imposts diminished their property, while his governors oppressed, his executioners slaughtered, he secured their hearts by a friendly demeanor.

Gladly would Charles have seen this affection of the nation for himself descend upon his son. On this account he sent for him in his youth from Spain, and showed him in Brussels to his future subjects. On the solemn day of his abdication he recommended to him these lands as the richest jewel in his crown, and earnestly exhorted him to respect their laws and privileges.

Philip II. was in all the direct opposite of his father. As ambitious as Charles, but with less knowledge of men and of the rights of man, he had formed to himself a notion of royal authority which regarded men as simply the servile instruments of despotic will, and was outraged by every symptom of liberty. Born in Spain, and educated under the iron discipline of the monks, he demanded of others the same gloomy formality and reserve as marked his own character. The cheerful merriment of his Flemish subjects was as uncongenial to his disposition and temper as their privileges were offensive to his imperious will. He spoke no other language but the Spanish, endured none but Spaniards about his person, and obstinately adhered to all their customs. In vain did the loyal ingenuity of the Flemish towns through which he passed vie with each other in solemnizing his arrival with costly festivities.

[The town of Antwerp alone expended on an occasion of this kind two hundred and sixty thousand gold florins.]

Philip's eye remained dark; all the profusion of magnificence, all the loud and hearty effusions of the sincerest joy could not win from him one approving smile.

Charles entirely missed his aim by presenting his son to the Flemings. They might eventually have endured his yoke with less impatience if he had never set his foot in their land. But his look forewarned them what they had to expect; his entry into Brussels lost him all hearts. The Emperor's gracious affability with his people only served to throw a darker shade on the haughty gravity of his son. They read in his countenance the destructive purpose against their liberties which, even then, he already revolved in his breast. Forewarned to find in him a tyrant they were forearmed to resist him.

The throne of the Netherlands was the first which Charles V. abdicated. Before a solemn convention in Brussels he absolved the States-General of their oath, and transferred their allegiance to King Philip, his son. "If my death," addressing the latter, as he concluded, "had placed you in possession of these countries, even in that case so valuable a bequest would have given me great claims on your gratitude. But now that of my free will I transfer them to you, now that I die in order to hasten your enjoyment of them, I only require of you to pay to the people the increased obligation which the voluntary surrender of my dignity lays upon you. Other princes esteem it a peculiar felicity to bequeath to their children the crown which death is already ravishing from them. This happiness I am anxious to enjoy during my life. I wish to be a spectator of your reign. Few will follow my example, as few have preceded me in it. But this my deed will be praised if your future life should justify my expectations, if you continue to be guided by that wisdom which you have hitherto evinced, if you remain inviolably attached to the pure faith which is the main pillar of your throne. One thing more I have to add: may Heaven grant you also a son, to whom you may transmit your power by choice, and not by necessity."

After the Emperor had concluded his address Philip kneeled down before him, kissed his hand, and received his paternal blessing. His eyes for the last time were moistened with a tear. All present wept. It was an hour never to be forgotten.

This affecting farce was soon followed by another. Philip received the homage of the assembled states. He took the oath administered in the following words: "I, Philip, by the grace of God, Prince of Spain, of the two Sicilies, etc., do vow and swear that I will be a good and just lord in these countries, counties, and duchies, etc.; that I will well and truly hold, and cause to be held, the privileges and liberties of all the nobles, towns, commons, and subjects which have been conferred upon them by my predecessors, and also the customs, usages and rights which they now have and enjoy, jointly and severally, and, moreover, that I will do all that by law and right pertains to a good and just prince and lord, so help me God and all His Saints."

The alarm which the arbitrary government of the Emperor had inspired, and the distrust of his son, are already visible in the formula of this oath, which was drawn up in far more guarded and explicit terms than that which had been administered to Charles V. himself and all the Dukes in Burgundy. Philip, for instance, was compelled to swear to the maintenance of their customs and usages, what before his time had never been required. In the oath which the states took to him no other obedience was promised than such as should be consistent with the privileges of the country. His officers then were only to reckon on submission and support so long as they legally discharged the duties entrusted to them. Lastly, in this oath of allegiance, Philip is simply styled the natural, the hereditary prince, and not, as the Emperor had desired, sovereign or lord; proof enough how little confidence was placed in the justice and liberality of the new sovereign.

PHILIP II., RULER OF THE NETHERLANDS.

Philip II. received the lordship of the Netherlands in the brightest period of their prosperity. He was the first of their princes who united them all under his authority. They now consisted of seventeen provinces; the duchies of Brabant, Limburg, Luxembourg, and Gueldres, the seven counties of Artois, Hainault, Flanders, Namur, Zutphen, Holland, and Zealand, the margravate of Antwerp, and the five lordships of Friesland, Mechlin (Malines), Utrecht, Overijssel, and Groningen, which, collectively, formed a great and powerful state able to contend with monarchies. Higher than it then stood their commerce could not rise. The sources of their wealth were above the earth's surface, but they were more valuable and inexhaustible and richer than all the mines in America. These seventeen provinces which, taken together, scarcely comprised the fifth part of Italy, and do not extend beyond three hundred Flemish miles, yielded an annual revenue to their lord, not much inferior to that which Britain formerly paid to its kings before the latter had annexed so many of the ecclesiastical domains to their crown. Three hundred and fifty cities, alive with industry and pleasure, many of them fortified by their natural position and secure without bulwarks or walls; six thousand three hundred market towns of a larger size; smaller villages, farms, and castles innumerable, imparted to this territory the aspect of one unbroken flourishing landscape. The nation had now reached the meridian of its splendor; industry and abundance had exalted the genius of the citizen, enlightened his ideas, ennobled his affections; every flower of the intellect had opened with the flourishing condition of the country. A happy temperament under a severe climate cooled the ardor of their blood, and moderated the rage of their passions; equanimity, moderation, and enduring patience, the gifts of a northern clime; integrity, justice, and faith, the necessary virtues of their profession; and the delightful fruits of liberty, truth, benevolence, and a patriotic pride were blended in their character, with a slight admixture of human frailties. No people on earth was more easily governed by a prudent prince, and none with more

difficulty by a charlatan or a tyrant. Nowhere was the popular voice so infallible a test of good government as here. True statesmanship could be tried in no nobler school, and a sickly artificial policy had none worse to fear.

A state constituted like this could act and endure with gigantic energy whenever pressing emergencies called forth its powers and a skilful and provident administration elicited its resources. Charles V. bequeathed to his successor an authority in these provinces little inferior to that of a limited monarchy. The prerogative of the crown had gained a visible ascendancy over the republican spirit, and that complicated machine could now be set in motion, almost as certainly and rapidly as the most absolutely governed nation. The numerous nobility, formerly so powerful, cheerfully accompanied their sovereign in his wars, or, on the civil changes of the state, courted the approving smile of royalty. The crafty policy of the crown had created a new and imaginary good, of which it was the exclusive dispenser. New passions and new ideas of happiness supplanted at last the rude simplicity of republican virtue. Pride gave place to vanity, true liberty to titles of Honor, a needy independence to a luxurious servitude. To oppress or to plunder their native land as the absolute satraps of an absolute lord was a more powerful allurement for the avarice and ambition of the great, than in the general assembly of the state to share with the monarch a hundredth part of the supreme power. A large portion, moreover, of the nobility were deeply sunk in poverty and debt. Charles V. had crippled all the most dangerous vassals of the crown by expensive embassies to foreign courts, under the specious pretext of honorary distinctions. Thus, William of Orange was despatched to Germany with the imperial crown, and Count Egmont to conclude the marriage contract between Philip and Queen Mary. Both also afterwards accompanied the Duke of Alva to France to negotiate the peace between the two crowns, and the new alliance of their sovereign with Madame Elizabeth. The expenses of these journeys amounted to three hundred thousand florins, towards which the king did not contribute a single penny. When the Prince of Orange was appointed generalissimo in the place of the Duke of Savoy he was obliged to defray all the necessary expenses of his office. When foreign ambassadors or princes came to Brussels it was made incumbent on the nobles to maintain the honor of their king, who himself always dined alone, and never kept open table. Spanish policy had devised a still more ingenious contrivance gradually to impoverish the richest families of the land. Every year one of the Castilian nobles made his appearance in Brussels, where he displayed a lavish magnificence. In Brussels it was accounted an indelible disgrace to be distanced by a stranger in such munificence. All vied to surpass him, and exhausted their fortunes in this costly emulation, while the Spaniard made a timely retreat to his native country, and by the frugality of four years repaired the extravagance of one year. It was the foible of the Netherlandish nobility to contest with every stranger the credit of superior wealth, and of this weakness the government studiously availed itself. Certainly these arts did not in the sequel produce the exact result that had been calculated on; for

these pecuniary burdens only made the nobility the more disposed for innovation, since he who has lost all can only be a gainer in the general ruin.

The Roman Church had ever been a main support of the royal power, and it was only natural that it should be so. Its golden time was the bondage of the human intellect, and, like royalty, it had gained by the ignorance and weakness of men. Civil oppression made religion more necessary and more dear; submission to tyrannical power prepares the mind for a blind, convenient faith, and the hierarchy repaid with usury the services of despotism. In the provinces the bishops and prelates were zealous supporters of royalty, and ever ready to sacrifice the welfare of the citizen to the temporal advancement of the church and the political interests of the sovereign.

Numerous and brave garrisons also held the cities in awe, which were at the same time divided by religious squabbles and factions, and consequently deprived of their strongest support—union among themselves. How little, therefore, did it require to insure this preponderance of Philip's power, and how fatal must have been the folly by which it was lost.

But Philip's authority in these provinces, however great, did not surpass the influence which the Spanish monarchy at that time enjoyed throughout Europe. No state ventured to enter the arena of contest with it. France, its most dangerous neighbor, weakened by a destructive war, and still more by internal factions, which boldly raised their heads during the feeble government of a child, was advancing rapidly to that unhappy condition which, for nearly half a century, made it a theatre of the most enormous crimes and the most fearful calamities. In England Elizabeth could with difficulty protect her still tottering throne against the furious storms of faction, and her new church establishment against the insidious arts of the Romanists. That country still awaited her mighty call before it could emerge from a humble obscurity, and had not yet been awakened by the faulty policy of her rival to that vigor and energy with which it finally overthrew him. The imperial family of Germany was united with that of Spain by the double ties of blood and political interest; and the victorious progress of Soliman drew its attention more to the east than to the west of Europe. Gratitude and fear secured to Philip the Italian princes, and his creatures ruled the Conclave. The monarchies of the North still lay in barbarous darkness and obscurity, or only just began to acquire form and strength, and were as yet unrecognized in the political system of Europe. The most skilful generals, numerous armies accustomed to victory, a formidable marine, and the golden tribute from the West Indies, which now first began to come in regularly and certainly—what terrible instruments were these in the firm and steady hand of a talented prince Under such auspicious stars did King Philip commence his reign.

Before we see him act we must first look hastily into the deep recesses of his soul, and we shall there find a key to his political life. Joy and benevolence were wholly wanting in the composition of his character. His temperament, and the gloomy years of his early childhood, denied him the former; the latter could not be imparted to him by men who had renounced the sweetest and most powerful of the social ties. Two ideas, his own self and what was above that self, engrossed his narrow and contracted mind. Egotism and religion were the contents and the title-page of the history of his whole life. He was a king and a Christian, and was bad in both characters; he never was a man among men, because he never condescended but only ascended. His belief was dark and cruel; for his divinity was a being of terror, from whom he had nothing to hope but everything to fear. To the ordinary man the divinity appears as a comforter, as a Saviour; before his mind it was set up as an image of fear, a painful, humiliating check to his human omnipotence. His veneration for this being was so much the more profound and deeply rooted the less it extended to other objects. He trembled servilely before God because God was the only being before whom he had to tremble. Charles V. was zealous for religion because religion promoted his objects. Philip was so because he had real faith in it. The former let loose the fire and the sword upon thousands for the sake of a dogma, while he himself, in the person of the pope, his captive, derided the very doctrine for which he had sacrificed so much human blood. It was only with repugnance and scruples of conscience that Philip resolved on the most just war against the pope, and resigned all the fruits of his victory as a penitent malefactor surrenders his booty. The Emperor was cruel from calculation, his son from impulse. The first possessed a strong and enlightened spirit, and was, perhaps, so much the worse as a man; the second was narrow-minded and weak, but the more upright.

Both, however, as it appears to me, might have been better men than they actually were, and still, on the whole, have acted on the very same principles. What we lay to the charge of personal character of an individual is very often the infirmity, the necessary imperfection of universal human nature. A monarchy so great and so powerful was too great a trial for human pride, and too mighty a charge for human power. To combine universal happiness with the highest liberty of the individual is the sole prerogative of infinite intelligence, which diffuses itself omnipresently over all. But what resource has man when placed in the position of omnipotence? Man can only aid his circumscribed powers by classification; like the naturalist, he establishes certain marks and rules by which to facilitate his own feeble survey of the whole, to which all individualities must conform. All this is accomplished for him by religion. She finds hope and fear planted in every human breast; by making herself mistress of these emotions, and directing their affections to a single object, she virtually transforms millions of independent beings into one uniform abstract. The endless diversity of the human will no longer embarrasses its ruler—now there exists one universal good, one universal evil, which he can bring forward or withdraw at pleasure, and which works in

unison with himself even when absent. Now a boundary is established before which liberty must halt; a venerable, hallowed line, towards which all the various conflicting inclinations of the will must finally converge. The common aim of despotism and of priestcraft is uniformity, and uniformity is a necessary expedient of human poverty and imperfection. Philip became a greater despot than his father because his mind was more contracted, or, in other words, he was forced to adhere the more scrupulously to general rules the less capable he was of descending to special and individual exceptions. What conclusion could we draw from these principles but that Philip II. could not possibly have any higher object of his solicitude than uniformity, both in religion and in laws, because without these he could not reign?

And yet he would have shown more mildness and forbearance in his government if he had entered upon it earlier. In the judgment which is usually formed of this prince one circumstance does not appear to be sufficiently considered in the history of his mind and heart, which, however, in all fairness, ought to be duly weighed. Philip counted nearly thirty years when he ascended the Spanish throne, and the early maturity of his understanding had anticipated the period of his majority. A mind like his, conscious of its powers, and only too early acquainted with his high expectations, could not brook the yoke of childish subjection in which he stood; the superior genius of the father, and the absolute authority of the autocrat, must have weighed heavily on the self-satisfied pride of such a son. The share which the former allowed him in the government of the empire was just important enough to disengage his mind from petty passions and to confirm the austere gravity of his character, but also meagre enough to kindle a fiercer longing for unlimited power. When he actually became possessed of uncontrolled authority it had lost the charm of novelty. The sweet intoxication of a young monarch in the sudden and early possession of supreme power; that joyous tumult of emotions which opens the soul to every softer sentiment, and to which humanity has owed so many of the most valuable and the most prized of its institutions; this pleasing moment had for him long passed by, or had never existed. His character was already hardened when fortune put him to this severe test, and his settled principles withstood the collision of occasional emotion. He had had time, during fifteen years, to prepare himself for the change; and instead of youthful dallying with the external symbols of his new station, or of losing the morning of his government in the intoxication of an idle vanity, he remained composed and serious enough to enter at once on the full possession of his power so as to revenge himself through the most extensive employment of it for its having been so long withheld from him.

THE TRIBUNAL OF THE INQUISITION

Philip II. no sooner saw himself, through the peace of Chateau-Cambray, in undisturbed enjoyment of his immense territory than he turned his whole attention to the great work of purifying religion, and verified

the fears of his Netherlandish subjects. The ordinances which his father had caused to be promulgated against heretics were renewed in all their rigor, and terrible tribunals, to whom nothing but the name of inquisition was wanting, were appointed to watch over their execution. But his plan appeared to him scarcely more than half-fulfilled so long as he could not transplant into these countries the Spanish Inquisition in its perfect form—a design in which the Emperor had already suffered shipwreck.

The Spanish Inquisition is an institution of a new and peculiar kind, which finds no prototype in the whole course of time, and admits of comparison with no ecclesiastical or civil tribunal. Inquisition had existed from the time when reason meddled with what is holy, and from the very commencement of scepticism and innovation; but it was in the middle of the thirteenth century, after some examples of apostasy had alarmed the hierarchy, that Innocent III. first erected for it a peculiar tribunal, and separated, in an unnatural manner, ecclesiastical superintendence and instruction from its judicial and retributive office. In order to be the more sure that no human sensibilities or natural tenderness should thwart the stern severity of its statutes, he took it out of the hands of the bishops and secular clergy, who, by the ties of civil life, were still too much attached to humanity for his purpose, and consigned it to those of the monks, a half-denaturalized race of beings who had abjured the sacred feelings, of nature, and were the servile tools of the Roman See. The Inquisition was received in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France; a Franciscan monk sat as judge in the terrible court, which passed sentence on the Templars. A few states succeeded either in totally excluding or else in subjecting it to civil authority. The Netherlands had remained free from it until the government of Charles V.; their bishops exercised the spiritual censorship, and in extraordinary cases reference was made to foreign courts of inquisition; by the French provinces to that of Paris, by the Germans to that of Cologne.

But the Inquisition which we are here speaking of came from the west of Europe, and was of a different origin and form. The last Moorish throne in Granada had fallen in the fifteenth century, and the false faith of the Saracens had finally succumbed before the fortunes of Christianity. But the gospel was still new, and but imperfectly established in this youngest of Christian kingdoms, and in the confused mixture of heterogeneous laws and manners the religions had become mixed. It is true the sword of persecution had driven many thousand families to Africa, but a far larger portion, detained by the love of climate and home, purchased remission from this dreadful necessity by a show of conversion, and continued at Christian altars to serve Mohammed and Moses. So long as prayers were offered towards Mecca, Granada was not subdued; so long as the new Christian, in the retirement of his house, became again a Jew or a Moslem, he was as little secured to the throne as to the Romish See. It was no longer deemed sufficient to compel a perverse people to adopt the exterior forms of a new faith, or to wed it

to the victorious church by the weak bands of ceremonials; the object now was to extirpate the roots of an old religion, and to subdue an obstinate bias which, by the slow operation of centuries, had been implanted in their manners, their language, and their laws, and by the enduring influence of a paternal soil and sky was still maintained in its full extent and vigor.

If the church wished to triumph completely over the opposing worship, and to secure her new conquest beyond all chance of relapse, it was indispensable that she should undermine the foundation itself on which the old religion was built. It was necessary to break to pieces the entire form of moral character to which it was so closely and intimately attached. It was requisite to loosen its secret roots from the hold they had taken in the innermost depths of the soul; to extinguish all traces of it, both in domestic life and in the civil world; to cause all recollection of it to perish; and, if possible, to destroy the very susceptibility for its impressions. Country and family, conscience and honor, the sacred feelings of society and of nature, are ever the first and immediate ties to which religion attaches itself; from these it derives while it imparts strength. This connection was now to be dissolved; the old religion was violently to be dissevered from the holy feelings of nature, even at the expense of the sanctity itself of these emotions. Thus arose that Inquisition which, to distinguish it from the more humane tribunals of the same name, we usually call the Spanish. Its founder was Cardinal Ximenes, a Dominican monk. Torquemada was the first who ascended its bloody throne, who established its statutes, and forever cursed his order with this bequest. Sworn to the degradation of the understanding and the murder of intellect, the instruments it employed were terror and infamy. Every evil passion was in its pay; its snare was set in every joy of life. Solitude itself was not safe from it; the fear of its omnipresence fettered the freedom of the soul in its inmost and deepest recesses. It prostrated all the instincts of human nature before it yielded all the ties which otherwise man held most sacred. A heretic forfeited all claims upon his race; the most trivial infidelity to his mother church divested him of the rights of his nature. A modest doubt in the infallibility of the pope met with the punishment of parricide and the infamy of sodomy; its sentences resembled the frightful corruption of the plague, which turns the most healthy body into rapid putrefaction. Even the inanimate things belonging to a heretic were accursed. No destiny could snatch the victim of the Inquisition from its sentence. Its decrees were carried in force on corpses and on pictures, and the grave itself was no asylum from its tremendous arm. The presumptuous arrogance of its decrees could only be surpassed by the inhumanity which executed them. By coupling the ludicrous with the terrible, and by amusing the eye with the strangeness of its processions, it weakened compassion by the gratification of another feeling; it drowned sympathy in derision and contempt. The delinquent was conducted with solemn pomp to the place of execution, a blood-red flag was displayed before him, the universal clang of all the bells accompanied the procession. First came the

priests, in the robes of the Mass and singing a sacred hymn; next followed the condemned sinner, clothed in a yellow vest, covered with figures of black devils. On his head he wore a paper cap, surmounted by a human figure, around which played lambent flames of fire, and ghastly demons flitted. The image of the crucified Saviour was carried before, but turned away from the eternally condemned sinner, for whom salvation was no longer available. His mortal body belonged to the material fire, his immortal soul to the flames of hell. A gag closed his mouth, and prevented him from alleviating his pain by lamentations, from awakening compassion by his affecting tale, and from divulging the secrets of the holy tribunal. He was followed by the clergy in festive robes, by the magistrates, and the nobility; the fathers who had been his judges closed the awful procession. It seemed like a solemn funeral procession, but on looking for the corpse on its way to the grave, behold! it was a living body whose groans are now to afford such shuddering entertainment to the people. The executions were generally held on the high festivals, for which a number of such unfortunate sufferers were reserved in the prisons of the holy house, in order to enhance the rejoicing by the multitude of the victims, and on these occasions the king himself was usually present. He sat with uncovered head, on a lower chair than that of the Grand Inquisitor, to whom, on such occasions, he yielded precedence; who, then, would not tremble before a tribunal at which majesty must humble itself?

The great revolution in the church accomplished by Luther and Calvin renewed the causes to which this tribunal owed its first origin; and that which, at its commencement, was invented to clear the petty kingdom of Granada from the feeble remnant of Saracens and Jews was now required for the whole of Christendom. All the Inquisitions in Portugal, Italy, Germany, and France adopted the form of the Spanish; it followed Europeans to the Indies, and established in Goa a fearful tribunal, whose inhuman proceedings make us shudder even at the bare recital. Wherever it planted its foot devastation followed; but in no part of the world did it rage so violently as in Spain. The victims are forgotten whom it immolated; the human race renews itself, and the lands, too, flourish again which it has devastated and depopulated by its fury; but centuries will elapse before its traces disappear from the Spanish character. A generous and enlightened nation has been stopped by it on its road to perfection; it has banished genius from a region where it was indigenous, and a stillness like that which hangs over the grave has been left in the mind of a people who, beyond most others of our world, were framed for happiness and enjoyment.

The first Inquisitor in Brabant was appointed by Charles V. in the year 1522. Some priests were associated with him as coadjutors; but he himself was a layman. After the death of Adrian VI., his successor, Clement VII., appointed three Inquisitors for all the Netherlands; and Paul III. again reduced them to two, which number continued until the commencement of the troubles. In the year 1530, with the aid and approbation of the states, the edicts against heretics were promulgated,

which formed the foundation of all that followed, and in which, also, express mention is made of the Inquisition. In the year 1550, in consequence of the rapid increase of sects, Charles V. was under the necessity of reviving and enforcing these edicts, and it was on this occasion that the town of Antwerp opposed the establishment of the Inquisition, and obtained an exemption from its jurisdiction. But the spirit of the Inquisition in the Netherlands, in accordance with the genius of the country, was more humane than in Spain, and as yet had never been administered by a foreigner, much less by a Dominican. The edicts which were known to everybody served it as the rule of its decisions. On this very account it was less obnoxious; because, however severe its sentence, it did not appear a tool of arbitrary power, and it did not, like the Spanish Inquisition, veil itself in secrecy.

Philip, however, was desirous of introducing the latter tribunal into the Netherlands, since it appeared to him the instrument best adapted to destroy the spirit of this people, and to prepare them for a despotic government. He began, therefore, by increasing the rigor of the religious ordinances of his father; by gradually extending the power of the inquisitors; by making the proceedings more arbitrary, and more independent of the civil jurisdiction. The tribunal soon wanted little more than the name and the Dominicans to resemble in every point the Spanish Inquisition. Bare suspicion was enough to snatch a citizen from the bosom of public tranquillity, and from his domestic circle; and the weakest evidence was a sufficient justification for the use of the rack. Whoever fell into its abyss returned no more to the world. All the benefits of the laws ceased for him; the maternal care of justice no longer noticed him; beyond the pale of his former world malice and stupidity judged him according to laws which were never intended for man. The delinquent never knew his accuser, and very seldom his crime, —a flagitious, devilish artifice which constrained the unhappy victim to guess at his error, and in the delirium of the rack, or in the weariness of a long living interment, to acknowledge transgressions which, perhaps, had never been committed, or at least had never come to the knowledge of his judges. The goods of the condemned were confiscated, and the informer encouraged by letters of grace and rewards. No privilege, no civil jurisdiction was valid against the holy power; the secular arm lost forever all whom that power had once touched. Its only share in the judicial duties of the latter was to execute its sentences with humble submissiveness. The consequences of such an institution were, of necessity, unnatural and horrible; the whole temporal happiness, the life itself, of an innocent man was at the mercy of any worthless fellow. Every secret enemy, every envious person, had now the perilous temptation of an unseen and unfailing revenge. The security of property, the sincerity of intercourse were gone; all the ties of interest were dissolved; all of blood and of affection were irreparably broken. An infectious distrust envenomed social life; the dreaded presence of a spy terrified the eye from seeing, and choked the voice in the midst of utterance. No one believed in the existence of an honest man, or passed for one himself. Good

name, the ties of country, brotherhood, even oaths, and all that man holds sacred, were fallen in estimation. Such was the destiny to which a great and flourishing commercial town was subjected, where one hundred thousand industrious men had been brought together by the single tie of mutual confidence,—every one indispensable to his neighbor, yet every one distrusted and distrustful,—all attracted by the spirit of gain, and repelled from each other by fear,—all the props of society torn away, where social union was the basis of all life and all existence.

OTHER ENCROACHMENTS ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NETHERLANDS.

No wonder if so unnatural a tribunal, which had proved intolerable even to the more submissive spirit of the Spaniard, drove a free state to rebellion. But the terror which it inspired was increased by the Spanish troops, which, even after the restoration of peace, were kept in the country, and, in violation of the constitution, garrisoned border towns. Charles V. had been forgiven for this introduction of foreign troops so long as the necessity of it was evident, and his good intentions were less distrusted. But now men saw in these troops only the alarming preparations of oppression and the instruments of a detested hierarchy. Moreover, a considerable body of cavalry, composed of natives, and fully adequate for the protection of the country, made these foreigners superfluous. The licentiousness and rapacity, too, of the Spaniards, whose pay was long in arrear, and who indemnified themselves at the expense of the citizens, completed the exasperation of the people, and drove the lower orders to despair. Subsequently, when the general murmur induced the government to move them from the frontiers and transport them into the islands of Zealand, where ships were prepared for their deportation, their excesses were carried to such a pitch that the inhabitants left off working at the embankments, and preferred to abandon their native country to the fury of the sea rather than to submit any longer to the wanton brutality of these lawless bands.

Philip, indeed, would have wished to retain these Spaniards in the country, in order by their presence to give weight to his edicts, and to support the innovations which he had resolved to make in the constitution of the Netherlands. He regarded them as a guarantee for the submission of the nation and as a chain by which he held it captive. Accordingly, he left no expedient untried to evade the persevering importunity of the states, who demanded the withdrawal of these troops; and for this end he exhausted all the resources of chicanery and persuasion. At one time he pretended to dread a sudden invasion by France, although, torn by furious factions, that country could scarce support itself against a domestic enemy; at another time they were, he said, to receive his son, Don Carlos, on the frontiers; whom, however, he never intended should leave Castile. Their maintenance should not be a burden to the nation; he himself would disburse all their expenses from his private purse. In order to detain them with the more

appearance of reason he purposely kept back from them their arrears of pay; for otherwise he would assuredly have preferred them to the troops of the country, whose demands he fully satisfied. To lull the fears of the nation, and to appease the general discontent, he offered the chief command of these troops to the two favorites of the people, the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont. Both, however, declined his offer, with the noble-minded declaration that they could never make up their minds to serve contrary to the laws of the country. The more desire the king showed to have his Spaniards in the country the more obstinately the states insisted on their removal. In the following Diet at Ghent he was compelled, in the very midst of his courtiers, to listen to republican truth. "Why are foreign hands needed for our defence?" demanded the Syndic of Ghent. "Is it that the rest of the world should consider us too stupid, or too cowardly, to protect ourselves? Why have we made peace if the burdens of war are still to oppress us? In war necessity enforced endurance; in peace our patience is exhausted by its burdens. Or shall we be able to keep in order these licentious bands which thine own presence could not restrain? Here, Cambray and Antwerp cry for redress; there, Thionville and Marienburg lie waste; and, surely, thou hast not bestowed upon us peace that our cities should become deserts, as they necessarily must if thou freest them not from these destroyers? Perhaps then art anxious to guard against surprise from our neighbors? This precaution is wise; but the report of their preparations will long outrun their hostilities. Why incur a heavy expense to engage foreigners who will not care for a country which they must leave to-morrow? Hast thou not still at thy command the same brave Netherlanders to whom thy father entrusted the republic in far more troubled times? Why shouldst thou now doubt their loyalty, which, to thy ancestors, they have preserved for so many centuries inviolate? Will not they be sufficient to sustain the war long enough to give time to thy confederates to join their banners, or to thyself to send succor from the neighboring country?" This language was too new to the king, and its truth too obvious for him to be able at once to reply to it. "I, also, am a foreigner," he at length exclaimed, "and they would like, I suppose, to expel me from the country!" At the same time he descended from the throne, and left the assembly; but the speaker was pardoned for his boldness. Two days afterwards he sent a message to the states that if he had been apprised earlier that these troops were a burden to them he would have immediately made preparation to remove them with himself to Spain. Now it was too late, for they would not depart unpaid; but he pledged them his most sacred promise that they should not be oppressed with this burden more than four months. Nevertheless, the troops remained in this country eighteen months instead of four; and would not, perhaps, even then have left it so soon if the exigencies of the state had not made their presence indispensable in another part of the world.

The illegal appointment of foreigners to the most important offices of the country afforded further occasion of complaint against the government. Of all the privileges of the provinces none was so obnoxious to the Spaniards as that which excluded strangers from office,

and none they had so zealously sought to abrogate. Italy, the two Indies, and all the provinces of this vast Empire, were indeed open to their rapacity and ambition; but from the richest of them all an inexorable fundamental law excluded them. They artfully persuaded their sovereign that his power in these countries would never be firmly established so long as he could not employ foreigners as his instruments. The Bishop of Arras, a Burgundian by birth, had already been illegally forced upon the Flemings; and now the Count of Fria, a Castilian, was to receive a seat and voice in the council of state. But this attempt met with a bolder resistance than the king's flatterers had led him to expect, and his despotic omnipotence was this time wrecked by the politic measures of William of Orange and the firmness of the states.

WILLIAM OF ORANGE AND COUNT EGMONT.

By such measures, did Philip usher in his government of the Netherlands, and such were the grievances of the nation when he was preparing to leave them. He had long been impatient to quit a country where he was a stranger, where there was so much that opposed his secret wishes, and where his despotic mind found such undaunted monitors to remind him of the laws of freedom. The peace with France at last rendered a longer stay unnecessary; the armaments of Soliman required his presence in the south, and the Spaniards also began to miss their long-absent king. The choice of a supreme Stadtholder for the Netherlands was the principal matter which still detained him. Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, had filled this place since the resignation of Mary, Queen of Hungary, which, however, so long as the king himself was present, conferred more honor than real influence. His absence would make it the most important office in the monarchy, and the most splendid aim for the ambition of a subject. It had now become vacant through the departure of the duke, whom the peace of Chateau-Cambray had restored to his dominions. The almost unlimited power with which the supreme Statholder would be entrusted, the capacity and experience which so extensive and delicate an appointment required, but, especially, the daring designs which the government had in contemplation against the freedom of the country, the execution of which would devolve on him, necessarily embarrassed the choice. The law, which excluded all foreigners from office, made an exception in the case of the supreme Stadtholder. As he could not be at the same time a native of all the provinces, it was allowable for him not to belong to any one of them; for the jealousy of the man of Brabant would concede no greater right to a Fleming, whose home was half a mile from his frontier, than to a Sicilian, who lived in another soil and under a different sky. But here the interests of the crown itself seemed to favor the appointment of a native. A Brabanter, for instance, who enjoyed the full confidence of his countrymen if he were a traitor would have half accomplished his treason before a foreign governor could have overcome the mistrust with which his most insignificant measures would be watched. If the government should succeed in carrying through its designs in one province, the opposition of the rest would then be a

temerity, which it would be justified in punishing in the severest manner. In the common whole which the provinces now formed their individual constitutions were, in a measure, destroyed; the obedience of one would be a law for all, and the privilege, which one knew not how to preserve, was lost for the rest.

Among the Flemish nobles who could lay claim to the Chief Stadtholdership, the expectations and wishes of the nation were divided between Count Egmont and the Prince of Orange, who were alike qualified for this high dignity by illustrious birth and personal merits, and by an equal share in the affections of the people. Their high rank placed them both near to the throne, and if the choice of the monarch was to rest on the worthiest it must necessarily fall upon one of these two. As, in the course of our history, we shall often have occasion to mention both names, the reader cannot be too early made acquainted with their characters.

William I., Prince of Orange, was descended from the princely German house of Nassau, which had already flourished eight centuries, had long disputed the preeminence with Austria, and had given one Emperor to Germany. Besides several extensive domains in the Netherlands, which made him a citizen of this republic and a vassal of the Spanish monarchy, he possessed also in France the independent principedom of Orange. William was born in the year 1533, at Dillenburg, in the country of Nassau, of a Countess Stolberg. His father, the Count of Nassau, of the same name, had embraced the Protestant religion, and caused his son also to be educated in it; but Charles V., who early formed an attachment for the boy, took him when quite young to his court, and had him brought up in the Romish church. This monarch, who already in the child discovered the future greatness of the man, kept him nine years about his person, thought him worthy of his personal instruction in the affairs of government, and honored him with a confidence beyond his years. He alone was permitted to remain in the Emperor's presence when he gave audience to foreign ambassadors—a proof that, even as a boy, he had already begun to merit the surname of the Silent. The Emperor was not ashamed even to confess openly, on one occasion, that this young man had often made suggestions which would have escaped his own sagacity. What expectations might not be formed of the intellect of a man who was disciplined in such a school.

William was twenty-three years old when Charles abdicated the government, and had already received from the latter two public marks of the highest esteem. The Emperor had entrusted to him, in preference to all the nobles of his court, the honorable office of conveying to his brother Ferdinand the imperial crown. When the Duke of Savoy, who commanded the imperial army in the Netherlands, was called away to Italy by the exigency of his domestic affairs, the Emperor appointed him commander-in-chief against the united representations of his military council, who declared it altogether hazardous to oppose so young a tyro in arms to the experienced generals of France. Absent, and

unrecommended by any, he was preferred by the monarch to the laurel-crowned band of his heroes, and the result gave him no cause to repent of his choice.

The marked favor which the prince had enjoyed with the father was in itself a sufficient ground for his exclusion from the confidence of the son. Philip, it appears, had laid it down for himself as a rule to avenge the wrongs of the Spanish nobility for the preference which Charles V. had on all important occasions shown to his Flemish nobles. Still stronger, however, were the secret motives which alienated him from the prince. William of Orange was one of those lean and pale men who, according to Caesar's words, "sleep not at night, and think too much," and before whom the most fearless spirits quail.

The calm tranquillity of a never-varying countenance concealed a busy, ardent soul, which never ruffled even the veil behind which it worked, and was alike inaccessible to artifice and love; a versatile, formidable, indefatigable mind, soft, and ductile enough to be instantaneously moulded into all forms; guarded enough to lose itself in none; and strong enough to endure every vicissitude of fortune. A greater master in reading and in winning men's hearts never existed than William. Not that, after the fashion of courts, his lips avowed a servility to which his proud heart gave the lie; but because he was neither too sparing nor too lavish of the marks of his esteem, and through a skilful economy of the favors which mostly bind men, he increased his real stock in them. The fruits of his meditation were as perfect as they were slowly formed; his resolves were as steadily and indomitably accomplished as they were long in maturing. No obstacles could defeat the plan which he had once adopted as the best; no accidents frustrated it, for they all had been foreseen before they actually occurred. High as his feelings were raised above terror and joy, they were, nevertheless, subject in the same degree to fear; but his fear was earlier than the danger, and he was calm in tumult because he had trembled in repose. William lavished his gold with a profuse hand, but he was a niggard of his movements. The hours of repast were the sole hours of relaxation, but these were exclusively devoted to his heart, his family, and his friends; this the modest deduction he allowed himself from the cares of his country. Here his brow was cleared with wine, seasoned by temperance and a cheerful disposition; and no serious cares were permitted to enter this recess of enjoyment. His household was magnificent; the splendor of a numerous retinue, the number and respectability of those who surrounded his person, made his habitation resemble the court of a sovereign prince. A sumptuous hospitality, that master-spell of demagogues, was the goddess of his palace. Foreign princes and ambassadors found here a fitting reception and entertainment, which surpassed all that luxurious Belgium could elsewhere offer. A humble submissiveness to the government bought off the blame and suspicion which this munificence might have thrown on his intentions. But this liberality secured for him the affections of the people, whom nothing gratified so much as to see the riches of their

country displayed before admiring foreigners, and the high pinnacle of fortune on which he stood enhanced the value of the courtesy to which he condescended. No one, probably, was better fitted by nature for the leader of a conspiracy than William the Silent. A comprehensive and intuitive glance into the past, the present, and the future; the talent for improving every favorable opportunity; a commanding influence over the minds of men, vast schemes which only when viewed from a distance show form and symmetry; and bold calculations which were wound up in the long chain of futurity; all these faculties he possessed, and kept, moreover, under the control of that free and enlightened virtue which moves with firm step even on the very edge of the abyss.

A man like this might at other times have remained unfathomed by his whole generation; but not so by the distrustful spirit of the age in which he lived. Philip II. saw quickly and deeply into a character which, among good ones, most resembled his own. If he had not seen through him so clearly his distrust of a man, in whom were united nearly all the qualities which he prized highest and could best appreciate, would be quite inexplicable. But William had another and still more important point of contact with Philip II. He had learned his policy from the same master, and had become, it was to be feared, a more apt scholar. Not by making Machiavelli's 'Prince' his study, but by having enjoyed the living instruction of a monarch who reduced the book to practice, had he become versed in the perilous arts by which thrones rise and fall. In him Philip had to deal with an antagonist who was armed against his policy, and who in a good cause could also command the resources of a bad one. And it was exactly this last circumstance which accounts for his having hated this man so implacably above all others of his day, and his having had so supernatural a dread of him.

The suspicion which already attached to the prince was increased by the doubts which were entertained of his religious bias. So long as the Emperor, his benefactor, lived, William believed in the pope; but it was feared, with good ground, that the predilection for the reformed religion, which had been imparted into his young heart, had never entirely left it. Whatever church he may at certain periods of his life have preferred each might console itself with the reflection that none other possessed him more entirely. In later years he went over to Calvinism with almost as little scruple as in his early childhood he deserted the Lutheran profession for the Romish. He defended the rights of the Protestants rather than their opinions against Spanish oppression; not their faith, but their wrongs, had made him their brother.

These general grounds for suspicion appeared to be justified by a discovery of his real intentions which accident had made. William had remained in France as hostage for the peace of Chateau-Cambray, in concluding which he had borne a part; and here, through the imprudence of Henry II., who imagined he spoke with a confidant of the King of Spain, he became acquainted with a secret plot which the French and

Spanish courts had formed against Protestants of both kingdoms. The prince hastened to communicate this important discovery to his friends in Brussels, whom it so nearly concerned, and the letters which he exchanged on the subject fell, unfortunately, into the hands of the King of Spain. Philip was less surprised at this decisive disclosure of William's sentiments than incensed at the disappointment of his scheme; and the Spanish nobles, who had never forgiven the prince that moment, when in the last act of his life the greatest of Emperors leaned upon his shoulders, did not neglect this favorable opportunity of finally ruining, in the good opinion of their king, the betrayer of a state secret.

Of a lineage no less noble than that of William was Lamoral, Count Egmont and Prince of Gavre, a descendant of the Dukes of Gueldres, whose martial courage had wearied out the arms of Austria. His family was highly distinguished in the annals of the country; one of his ancestors, had, under Maximilian, already filled the office of Stadtholder over Holland. Egmont's marriage with the Duchess Sabina of Bavaria reflected additional lustre on the splendor of his birth, and made him powerful through the greatness of this alliance. Charles V. had, in the year 1516, conferred on him at Utrecht the order of the Golden Fleece; the wars of this Emperor were the school of his military genius, and the battle of St. Quentin and Gravelines made him the hero of his age. Every blessing of peace, for which a commercial people feel most grateful, brought to mind the remembrance of the victory by which it was accelerated, and Flemish pride, like a fond mother, exulted over the illustrious son of their country, who had filled all Europe with admiration. Nine children who grew up under the eyes of their fellow-citizens, multiplied and drew closer the ties between him and his fatherland, and the people's grateful affection for the father was kept alive by the sight of those who were dearest to him. Every appearance of Egmont in public was a triumphal procession; every eye which was fastened upon him recounted his history; his deeds lived in the plaudits of his companions-in-arms; at the games of chivalry mothers pointed him out to their children. Affability, a noble and courteous demeanor, the amiable virtues of chivalry, adorned and graced his merits. His liberal soul shone forth on his open brow; his frank-heartedness managed his secrets no better than his benevolence did his estate, and a thought was no sooner his than it was the property of all. His religion was gentle and humane, but not very enlightened, because it derived its light from the heart and not from, his understanding. Egmont possessed more of conscience than of fixed principles; his head had not given him a code of its own, but had merely learnt it by rote; the mere name of any action, therefore, was often with him sufficient for its condemnation. In his judgment men were wholly bad or wholly good, and had not something bad or something good; in this system of morals there was no middle term between vice and virtue; and consequently a single good trait often decided his opinion of men. Egmont united all the eminent qualities which form the hero; he was a better soldier than the Prince of Orange, but far inferior to him as a statesman; the latter saw the

world as it really was; Egmont viewed it in the magic mirror of an imagination that embellished all that it reflected. Men, whom fortune has surprised with a reward for which they can find no adequate ground in their actions, are, for the most part, very apt to forget the necessary connection between cause and effect, and to insert in the natural consequences of things a higher miraculous power to which, as Caesar to his fortune, they at last insanely trust. Such a character was Egmont. Intoxicated with the idea of his own merits, which the love and gratitude of his fellow-citizens had exaggerated, he staggered on in this sweet reverie as in a delightful world of dreams. He feared not, because he trusted to the deceitful pledge which destiny had given him of her favor, in the general love of the people; and he believed in its justice because he himself was prosperous. Even the most terrible experience of Spanish perfidy could not afterwards eradicate this confidence from his soul, and on the scaffold itself his latest feeling was hope. A tender fear for his family kept his patriotic courage fettered by lower duties. Because he trembled for property and life he could not venture much for the republic. William of Orange broke with the throne because its arbitrary power was offensive to his pride; Egmont was vain, and therefore valued the favors of the monarch. The former was a citizen of the world; Egmont had never been more than a Fleming.

Philip II. still stood indebted to the hero of St. Quentin, and the supreme stadtholdership of the Netherlands appeared the only appropriate reward for such great services. Birth and high station, the voice of the nation and personal abilities, spoke as loudly for Egmont as for Orange; and if the latter was to be passed by it seemed that the former alone could supplant him.

Two such competitors, so equal in merit, might have embarrassed Philip in his choice if he had ever seriously thought of selecting either of them for the appointment. But the pre-eminent qualities by which they supported their claim to this office were the very cause of their rejection; and it was precisely the ardent desire of the nation for their election to it that irrevocably annulled their title to the appointment. Philip's purpose would not be answered by a stadtholder in the Netherlands who could command the good-will and the energies of the people. Egmont's descent from the Duke of Gueldres made him an hereditary foe of the house of Spain, and it seemed impolitic to place the supreme power in the hands of a man to whom the idea might occur of revenging on the son of the oppressor the oppression of his ancestor. The slight put on their favorites could give no just offence either to the nation or to themselves, for it might be pretended that the king passed over both because he would not show a preference to either.

The disappointment of his hopes of gaining the regency did not deprive the Prince of Orange of all expectation of establishing more firmly his influence in the Netherlands. Among the other candidates for this office was also Christina, Duchess of Lorraine, and aunt of the king,

who, as mediatrix of the peace of Chateau-Cambray, had rendered important service to the crown. William aimed at the hand of her daughter, and he hoped to promote his suit by actively interposing his good offices for the mother; but he did not reflect that through this very intercession he ruined her cause. The Duchess Christina was rejected, not so much for the reason alleged, namely, the dependence of her territories on France made her an object of suspicion to the Spanish court, as because she was acceptable to the people of the Netherlands and the Prince of Orange.

MARGARET OF PARMA REGENT OF THE NETHERLANDS.

While the general expectation was on the stretch as to whom the future destinies of the provinces would be committed, there appeared on the frontiers of the country the Duchess Margaret of Parma, having been summoned by the king from Italy to assume the government.

Margaret was a natural daughter of Charles V. and of a noble Flemish lady named Vangeest, and born in 1522.

Out of regard for the honor of her mother's house she was at first educated in obscurity; but her mother, who possessed more vanity than honor, was not very anxious to preserve the secret of her origin, and a princely education betrayed the daughter of the Emperor. While yet a child she was entrusted to the Regent Margaret, her great-aunt, to be brought up at Brussels under her eye. This guardian she lost in her eighth year, and the care of her education devolved on Queen Mary of Hungary, the successor of Margaret in the regency. Her father had already affianced her, while yet in her fourth year, to a Prince of Ferrara; but this alliance being subsequently dissolved, she was betrothed to Alexander de Medicis, the new Duke of Florence, which marriage was, after the victorious return of the Emperor from Africa, actually consummated in Naples. In the first year of this unfortunate union, a violent death removed from her a husband who could not love her, and for the third time her hand was disposed of to serve the policy of her father. Octavius Farnese, a prince of thirteen years of age and nephew of Paul III., obtained, with her person, the Duchies of Parma and Piacenza as her portion. Thus, by a strange destiny, Margaret at the age of maturity was contracted to a boy, as in the years of infancy she had been sold to a man. Her disposition, which was anything but feminine, made this last alliance still more unnatural, for her taste and inclinations were masculine, and the whole tenor of her life belied her sex. After the example of her instructress, the Queen of Hungary, and her great-aunt, the Duchess Mary of Burgundy, who met her death in this favorite sport, she was passionately fond of hunting, and had acquired in this pursuit such bodily vigor that few men were better able to undergo its hardships and fatigues.

Her gait itself was so devoid of grace that one was far more tempted to take her for a disguised man than for a masculine woman; and Nature,

whom she had derided by thus transgressing the limits of her sex, revenged itself finally upon her by a disease peculiar to men—the gout.

These unusual qualities were crowned by a monkish superstition which was infused into her mind by Ignatius Loyola, her confessor and teacher. Among the charitable works and penances with which she mortified her vanity, one of the most remarkable was that, during Passion-Week she yearly washed, with her own hands, the feet of a number of poor men (who were most strictly forbidden to cleanse themselves beforehand), waited on them at table like a servant, and sent them away with rich presents.

Nothing more is requisite than this last feature in her character to account for the preference which the king gave her over all her rivals; but his choice was at the same time justified by excellent reasons of state. Margaret was born and also educated in the Netherlands. She had spent her early youth among the people, and had acquired much of their national manners. Two regents (Duchess Margaret and Queen Mary of Hungary), under whose eyes she had grown up, had gradually initiated her into the maxims by which this peculiar people might be most easily governed; and they would also serve her as models. She did not want either in talents; and possessed, moreover, a particular turn for business, which she had acquired from her instructors, and had afterwards carried to greater perfection in the Italian school. The Netherlands had been for a number of years accustomed to female government; and Philip hoped, perhaps, that the sharp iron of tyranny which he was about to use against them would cut more gently if wielded by the hands of a woman. Some regard for his father, who at the time was still living, and was much attached to Margaret, may have in a measure, as it is asserted, influenced this choice; as it is also probable that the king wished to oblige the Duke of Parma, through this mark of attention to his wife, and thus to compensate for denying a request which he was just then compelled to refuse him. As the territories of the duchess were surrounded by Philip's Italian states, and at all times exposed to his arms, he could, with the less danger, entrust the supreme power into her hands. For his full security her son, Alexander Farnese, was to remain at his court as a pledge for her loyalty. All these reasons were alone sufficiently weighty to turn the king's decision in her favor; but they became irresistible when supported by the Bishop of Arras and the Duke of Alva. The latter, as it appears, because he hated or envied all the other competitors, the former, because even then, in all probability, he anticipated from the wavering disposition of this princess abundant gratification for his ambition.

Philip received the new regent on the frontiers with a splendid cortege, and conducted her with magnificent pomp to Ghent, where the States General had been convoked. As he did not intend to return soon to the Netherlands, he desired, before he left them, to gratify the nation for once by holding a solemn Diet, and thus giving a solemn sanction and the force of law to his previous regulations. For the last time he showed

himself to his Netherlandish people, whose destinies were from henceforth to be dispensed from a mysterious distance. To enhance the splendor of this solemn day, Philip invested eleven knights with the Order of the Golden Fleece, his sister being seated on a chair near himself, while he showed her to the nation as their future ruler. All the grievances of the people, touching the edicts, the Inquisition, the detention of the Spanish troops, the taxes, and the illegal introduction of foreigners into the offices and administration of the country were brought forward in this Diet, and were hotly discussed by both parties; some of them were skilfully evaded, or apparently removed, others arbitrarily repelled. As the king was unacquainted with the language of the country, he addressed the nation through the mouth of the Bishop of Arras, recounted to them with vain-glorious ostentation all the benefits of his government, assured them of his favor for the future, and once more recommended to the estates in the most earnest manner the preservation of the Catholic faith and the extirpation of heresy. The Spanish troops, he promised, should in a few months evacuate the Netherlands, if only they would allow him time to recover from the numerous burdens of the last war, in order that he might be enabled to collect the means for paying the arrears of these troops; the fundamental laws of the nation should remain inviolate, the imposts should not be grievously burdensome, and the Inquisition should administer its duties with justice and moderation. In the choice of a supreme Stadtholder, he added, he had especially consulted the wishes of the nation, and had decided for a native of the country, who had been brought up in their manners and customs, and was attached to them by a love to her native land. He exhorted them, therefore, to show their gratitude by honoring his choice, and obeying his sister, the duchess, as himself. Should, he concluded, unexpected obstacles oppose his return, he would send in his place his son, Prince Charles, who should reside in Brussels.

A few members of this assembly, more courageous than the rest, once more ventured on a final effort for liberty of conscience. Every people, they argued, ought to be treated according to their natural character, as every individual must in accordance to his bodily constitution. Thus, for example, the south may be considered happy under a certain degree of constraint which would press intolerably on the north. Never, they added, would the Flemings consent to a yoke under which, perhaps, the Spaniards bowed with patience, and rather than submit to it would they undergo any extremity if it was sought to force such a yoke upon them. This remonstrance was supported by some of the king's counsellors, who strongly urged the policy of mitigating the rigor of religious edicts. But Philip remained inexorable. Better not reign at all, was his answer, than reign over heretics!

According to an arrangement already made by Charles V., three councils or chambers were added to the regent, to assist her in the administration of state affairs. As long as Philip was himself present in the Netherlands these courts had lost much of their power, and the

functions of the first of them, the state council, were almost entirely suspended. Now that he quitted the reins of government, they recovered their former importance. In the state council, which was to deliberate upon war and peace, and security against external foes, sat the Bishop of Arras, the Prince of Orange, Count Egmont, the President of the Privy Council, Viglius Van Zuichem Van Aytta, and the Count of Barlaimont, President of the Chamber of Finance. All knights of the Golden Fleece, all privy counsellors and counsellors of finance, as also the members of the great senate at Malines, which had been subjected by Charles V. to the Privy Council in Brussels, had a seat and vote in the Council of State, if expressly invited by the regent. The management of the royal revenues and crown lands was vested in the Chamber of Finance, and the Privy Council was occupied with the administration of justice, and the civil regulation of the country, and issued all letters of grace and pardon. The governments of the provinces which had fallen vacant were either filled up afresh or the former governors were confirmed. Count Egmont received Flanders and Artois; the Prince of Orange, Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and West Friesland; the Count of Aremberg, East Friesland, Overijssel, and Groningen; the Count of Mansfeld, Luxemburg; Barlaimont, Namur; the Marquis of Bergen, Hainault, Chateau-Cambray, and Valenciennes; the Baron of Montigny, Tournay and its dependencies. Other provinces were given to some who have less claim to our attention. Philip of Montmorency, Count of Hoorn, who had been succeeded by the Count of Megen in the government of Gueldres and Zittphen, was confirmed as admiral of the Belgian navy. Every governor of a province was at the same time a knight of the Golden Fleece and member of the Council of State. Each had, in the province over which he presided, the command of the military force which protected it, the superintendence of the civil administration and the judicature; the governor of Flanders alone excepted, who was not allowed to interfere with the administration of justice. Brabant alone was placed under the immediate jurisdiction of the regent, who, according to custom, chose Brussels for her constant residence. The induction of the Prince of Orange into his governments was, properly speaking, an infraction of the constitution, since he was a foreigner; but several estates which he either himself possessed in the provinces, or managed as guardian of his son, his long residence in the country, and above all the unlimited confidence the nation reposed in him, gave him substantial claims in default of a real title of citizenship.

The military force of the Low Countries consisted, in its full complement, of three thousand horse. At present it did not much exceed two thousand, and was divided into fourteen squadrons, over which, besides the governors of the provinces, the Duke of Arschot, the Counts of Hoogstraten, Bossu, Roeux, and Brederode held the chief command. This cavalry, which was scattered through all the seventeen provinces, was only to be called out on sudden emergencies. Insufficient as it was for any great undertaking, it was, nevertheless, fully adequate for the maintenance of internal order. Its courage had been approved in former wars, and the fame of its valor was diffused through the whole of

Europe. In addition to this cavalry it was also proposed to levy a body of infantry, but hitherto the states had refused their consent to it. Of foreign troops there were still some German regiments in the service, which were waiting for their pay. The four thousand Spaniards, respecting whom so many complaints had been made, were under two Spanish generals, Mendoza and Romero, and were in garrison in the frontier towns.

Among the Belgian nobles whom the king especially distinguished in these new appointments, the names of Count Egmont and William of Orange stand conspicuous. However inveterate his hatred was of both, and particularly of the latter, Philip nevertheless gave them these public marks of his favor, because his scheme of vengeance was not yet fully ripe, and the people were enthusiastic in their devotion to them. The estates of both were declared exempt from taxes, the most lucrative governments were entrusted to them, and by offering them the command of the Spaniards whom he left behind in the country the king flattered them with a confidence which he was very far from really reposing in them. But at the very time when he obliged the prince with these public marks of his esteem he privately inflicted the most cruel injury on him. Apprehensive lest an alliance with the powerful house of Lorraine might encourage this suspected vassal to bolder measures, he thwarted the negotiation for a marriage between him and a princess of that family, and crushed his hopes on the very eve of their accomplishment,—an injury which the prince never forgave. Nay, his hatred to the prince on one occasion even got completely the better of his natural dissimulation, and seduced him into a step in which we entirely lose sight of Philip II. When he was about to embark at Flushing, and the nobles of the country attended him to the shore, he so far forgot himself as roughly to accost the prince, and openly to accuse him of being the author of the Flemish troubles. The prince answered temperately that what had happened had been done by the provinces of their own suggestion and on legitimate grounds. No, said Philip, seizing his hated, and shaking it violently, not the provinces, but You! You! You! The prince stood mute with astonishment, and without waiting for the king's embarkation, wished him a safe journey, and went back to the town.

Thus the enmity which William had long harbored in his breast against the oppressor of a free people was now rendered irreconcilable by private hatred; and this double incentive accelerated the great enterprise which tore from the Spanish crown seven of its brightest jewels.

Philip had greatly deviated from his true character in taking so gracious a leave of the Netherlands. The legal form of a diet, his promise to remove the Spaniards from the frontiers, the consideration of the popular wishes, which had led him to fill the most important offices of the country with the favorites of the people, and, finally, the sacrifice which he made to the constitution in withdrawing the Count of

Feria from the council of state, were marks of condescension of which his magnanimity was never again guilty. But in fact he never stood in greater need of the good-will of the states, that with their aid he might, if possible, clear off the great burden of debt which was still attached to the Netherlands from the former war. He hoped, therefore, by propitiating them through smaller sacrifices to win approval of more important usurpations. He marked his departure with grace, for he knew in what hands he left them. The frightful scenes of death which he intended for this unhappy people were not to stain the splendor of majesty which, like the Godhead, marks its course only with beneficence; that terrible distinction was reserved for his representatives. The establishment of the council of state was, however, intended rather to flatter the vanity of the Belgian nobility than to impart to them any real influence. The historian Strada (who drew his information with regard to the regent from her own papers) has preserved a few articles of the secret instructions which the Spanish ministry gave her. Amongst other things it is there stated if she observed that the councils were divided by factions, or, what would be far worse, prepared by private conferences before the session, and in league with one another, then she was to prorogue all the chambers and dispose arbitrarily of the disputed articles in a more select council or committee. In this select committee, which was called the Consulta, sat the Archbishop of Arras, the President Viglius, and the Count of Barlaimont. She was to act in the same manner if emergent cases required a prompt decision. Had this arrangement not been the work of an arbitrary despotism it would perhaps have been justified by sound policy, and republican liberty itself might have tolerated it. In great assemblies where many private interests and passions co-operate, where a numerous audience presents so great a temptation to the vanity of the orator, and parties often assail one another with unmannerly warmth, a decree can seldom be passed with that sobriety and mature deliberation which, if the members are properly selected, a smaller body readily admits of. In a numerous body of men, too, there is, we must suppose, a greater number of limited than of enlightened intellects, who through their equal right of vote frequently turn the majority on the side of ignorance. A second maxim which the regent was especially to observe, was to select the very members of council who had voted against any decree to carry it into execution. By this means not only would the people be kept in ignorance of the originators of such a law, but the private quarrels also of the members would be restrained, and a greater freedom insured in voting in compliance with the wishes of the court.

In spite of all these precautions Philip would never have been able to leave the Netherlands with a quiet mind so long as he knew that the chief power in the council of state, and the obedience of the provinces, were in the hands of the suspected nobles. In order, therefore, to appease his fears from this quarter, and also at the same time to assure himself of the fidelity of the regent, he subjected her, and through her all the affairs of the judicature, to the higher control of the Bishop of Arras. In this single individual he possessed an adequate

counterpoise to the most dreaded cabal. To him, as to an infallible oracle of majesty, the duchess was referred, and in him there watched a stern supervisor of her administration. Among all his contemporaries Granvella was the only one whom Philip II. appears to have excepted from his universal distrust; as long as he knew that this man was in Brussels he could sleep calmly in Segovia. He left the Netherlands in September, 1559, was saved from a storm which sank his fleet, and landed at Laredo in Biscay, and in his gloomy joy thanked the Deity who had preserved him by a detestable vow. In the hands of a priest and of a woman was placed the dangerous helm of the Netherlands; and the dastardly tyrant escaped in his oratory at Madrid the supplications, the complaints, and the curses of the people.