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#14 in our series by John Lothrop Motley

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1567 ***

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MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, PG EDITION, VOLUME 14.

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

1567 [Part III., ALVA, CHAPTER 1.]

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The armed invasion of the Netherlands was the necessary consequence of
all which had gone before. That the inevitable result had been so long
deferred lay rather in the incomprehensible tardiness of Philip's
character than in the circumstances of the case. Never did a monarch
hold so steadfastly to a deadly purpose, or proceed so languidly and with
so much circumvolution to his goal. The mask of benignity, of possible
clemency, was now thrown off, but the delusion of his intended visit to

the provinces was still maintained. He assured the Regent that he should be governed by her advice, and as she had made all needful preparations to receive him in Zeland, that it would be in Zeland he should arrive.

The same two men among Philip's advisers were prominent as at an earlier day--the Prince of Eboli and the Duke of Alva. They still represented entirely opposite ideas, and in character, temper, and history, each was the reverse of the other. The policy of the Prince was pacific and temporizing; that of the Duke uncompromising and ferocious. Ruy Gomez was disposed to prevent, if possible, the armed mission of Alva, and he now openly counselled the King to fulfil his long-deferred promise, and to make his appearance in person before his rebellious subjects. The jealousy and hatred which existed between the Prince and the Duke--between the man of peace and the man of wrath--were constantly exploding, even in the presence of the King. The wrangling in the council was incessant. Determined, if possible; to prevent the elevation of his rival, the favorite was even for a moment disposed to ask for the command of the army himself. There was something ludicrous in the notion, that a man whose life had been pacific, and who trembled at the noise of arms, should seek to supersede the terrible Alva, of whom his eulogists asserted, with, Castilian exaggeration, that the very name of fear inspired him with horror. But there was a limit beyond which the influence of Anna de Mendoza and her husband did not extend. Philip was not to be driven to the Netherlands against his will, nor to be prevented from assigning the command of the army to the most appropriate man in Europe for his purpose.

It was determined at last that the Netherland heresy should be conquered by force of arms. The invasion resembled both a crusade against the infidel, and a treasure-hunting foray into the auriferous Indies, achievements by which Spanish chivalry had so often illustrated itself. The banner of the cross was to be replanted upon the conquered battlements of three hundred infidel cities, and a torrent of wealth, richer than ever flowed from Mexican or Peruvian mines, was to flow into the royal treasury from the perennial fountains of confiscation. Who so fit to be the Tancred and the Pizarro of this bicolored expedition as the Duke of Alva, the man who had been devoted from his earliest childhood, and from his father's grave, to hostility against unbelievers, and who had prophesied that treasure would flow in a stream, a yard deep, from the Netherlands as soon as the heretics began to meet with their deserts. An army of chosen troops was forthwith collected, by taking the four legions, or tercios, of Naples, Sicily, Sardinia, and Lombardy, and filling their places in Italy by fresh levies. About ten thousand picked and veteran soldiers were thus obtained, of which the Duke of Alva was appointed general-in-chief.

Ferdinando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva, was now in his sixtieth year. He was the most successful and experienced general of Spain, or of Europe. No man had studied more deeply, or practised more constantly, the military science. In the most important of all arts at that epoch he was the most consummate artist. In the only honorable profession of the age, he was the most thorough and the most pedantic professor. Since the days of Demetrius Poliorcetes, no man had besieged so many cities. Since

the days of Fabius Cunctator; no general had avoided so many battles, and no soldier, courageous as he was, ever attained to a more sublime indifference to calumny or depreciation. Having proved in his boyhood, at Fontarabia, and in his maturity: at Muhlberg, that he could exhibit heroism and headlong courage; when necessary, he could afford to look with contempt upon the witless gibes which his enemies had occasionally perpetrated at his expense. Conscious of holding his armies in his hand, by the power of an unrivalled discipline, and the magic of a name illustrated by a hundred triumphs, he, could bear with patience and benevolence the murmurs of his soldiers when their battles were denied them.

He was born in 1508, of a family which boasted, imperial descent. A Palaeologus, brother of a Byzantine emperor, had conquered the city of Toledo, and transmitted its appellation as a family name. The father of Ferdinando, Don Garcia, had been slain on the isle of Gerbes, in battle with the Moors, when his son was but four years of age. The child was brought up by his grandfather, Don Frederic, and trained from his tenderest infancy to arms. Hatred to the infidel, and a determination to avenge his father's blood; crying to him from a foreign grave, were the earliest of his instincts. As a youth he was distinguished for his prowess. His maiden sword was fleshed at Fontarabia, where, although but sixteen years of age, he was considered, by his constancy in hardship, by his brilliant and desperate courage, and by the example of military discipline which he afforded to the troops, to have contributed in no small degree to the success of the Spanish arms.

In 1530, he accompanied the Emperor in his campaign against the Turk. Charles, instinctively recognizing the merit of the youth who was destined to be the life-long companion of his toils and glories, distinguished him with his favor at the opening of his career. Young, brave, and enthusiastic, Ferdinand de Toledo at this period was as interesting a hero as ever illustrated the pages of Castilian romance. His mad ride from Hungary to Spain and back again, accomplished in seventeen days, for the sake of a brief visit to his newly-married wife, is not the least attractive episode in the history of an existence which was destined to be so dark and sanguinary. In 1535, he accompanied the Emperor on his memorable expedition to Tunis. In 1546 and 1547 he was generalissimo in the war against the Smalcaldian league. His most brilliant feat of arms--perhaps the most brilliant exploit of the Emperor's reign--was the passage of the Elbe and the battle of Muhlberg, accomplished in spite of Maximilian's bitter and violent reproaches, and the tremendous possibilities of a defeat. That battle had finished the war. The gigantic and magnanimous John Frederic, surprised at his devotions in the church, fled in dismay, leaving his boots behind him, which for their superhuman size, were ridiculously said afterwards to be treasured among the trophies of the Toledo house.

[Hist. du Due d'Albe, i. 274. Brantome, *Hom. Illust.*, etc. (ch. v.), says that one of the boots was "large enough to hold a camp bedstead," p. 11. I insert the anecdote only as a specimen of the manner in which similar absurdities, both of great and, of little consequence, are perpetuated by writers in every land and

age. The armor of the noble-hearted and unfortunate John Frederic may still be seen in Dresden. Its size indicates a man very much above the average height, while the external length of the iron shoe, on-the contrary, is less than eleven inches.]

The rout was total. "I came, I saw, and God conquered," said the Emperor, in pious parody of his immortal predecessor's epigram. Maximilian, with a thousand apologies for his previous insults, embraced the heroic Don Ferdinand over and over again, as, arrayed in a plain suit of blue armor, unadorned save with streaks of his enemies' blood, he returned from pursuit of the fugitives. So complete and so sudden was the victory, that it was found impossible to account for it, save on the ground of miraculous interposition. Like Joshua, in the vale of Ajalon, Don Ferdinand was supposed to have commanded the sun to stand still for a season, and to have been obeyed. Otherwise, how could the passage of the river, which was only concluded at six in the evening, and the complete overthrow of the Protestant forces, have all been accomplished within the narrow space of an April twilight? The reply of the Duke to Henry the Second of France, who questioned him subsequently upon the subject, is well known. "Your Majesty, I was too much occupied that evening with what was taking place on the earth beneath, to pay much heed to the evolutions of the heavenly bodies." Spared as he had been by his good fortune from taking any part in the Algerine expedition, or in witnessing the ignominious retreat from Innsbruck, he was obliged to submit to the intercalation of the disastrous siege of Metz in the long history of his successes. Doing the duty of a field-marshal and a sentinel, supporting his army by his firmness and his discipline when nothing else could have supported them, he was at last enabled, after half the hundred thousand men with whom Charles had begun the siege had been sacrificed, to induce his imperial master to raise the siege before the remaining fifty thousand had been frozen or starved to death.

The culminating career of Alva seemed to have closed in the mist which gathered around the setting star of the empire. Having accompanied Philip to England in 1554, on his matrimonial-expedition, he was destined in the following years, as viceroy and generalissimo of Italy, to be placed in a series of false positions. A great captain engaged in a little war, the champion of the cross in arms against the successor of St. Peter, he had extricated himself, at last, with his usual adroitness, but with very little glory. To him had been allotted the mortification, to another the triumph. The lustre of his own name seemed to sink in the ocean while that of a hated rival, with new spangled ore, suddenly "flamed in the forehead of the morning sky." While he had been paltering with a dotard, whom he was forbidden to crush, Egmont had struck down the chosen troops of France, and conquered her most illustrious commanders. Here was the unpardonable crime which could only be expiated by the blood of the victor. Unfortunately for his rival, the time was now approaching when the long-deferred revenge was to be satisfied.

On the whole, the Duke of Alva was inferior to no general of his age. As a disciplinarian he was foremost in Spain, perhaps in Europe. A spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood, and this was, perhaps, in the eye of humanity, his principal virtue. Time and myself are two,

was a frequent observation of Philip, and his favorite general considered the maxim as applicable to war as to politics. Such were his qualities as a military commander. As a statesman, he had neither experience nor talent. As a man his character was simple. He did not combine a great variety of vices, but those which he had were colossal, and he possessed no virtues. He was neither lustful nor intemperate, but his professed eulogists admitted his enormous avarice, while the world has agreed that such an amount of stealth and ferocity, of patient vindictiveness and universal bloodthirstiness, were never found in a savage beast of the forest, and but rarely in a human bosom. His history was now to show that his previous thrift of human life was not derived from any love of his kind. Personally he was stern and overbearing. As difficult of access as Philip himself, he was even more haughty to those who were admitted to his presence. He addressed every one with the depreciating second person plural. Possessing the right of being covered in the presence of the Spanish monarch, he had been with difficulty brought to renounce it before the German Emperor. He was of an illustrious family; but his territorial possessions were not extensive. His duchy was a small one, furnishing him with not more than fourteen thousand crowns of annual income, and with four hundred soldiers. He had, however, been a thrifty financier all his life, never having been without a handsome sum of ready money at interest. Ten years before his arrival in the Netherlands, he was supposed to have already increased his income to forty thousand a year by the proceeds of his investments at Antwerp. As already intimated, his military character was sometimes profoundly misunderstood. He was often considered rather a pedantic than a practical commander, more capable to discourse of battles than to gain them. Notwithstanding that his long life had been an, almost unbroken campaign, the ridiculous accusation of timidity was frequently made against him. A gentleman at the court of the Emperor Charles once addressed a letter to the Duke with the title of "General of his Majesty's armies in the Duchy of Milan in time of peace, and major-domo of the household in the time of war." It was said that the lesson did the Duke good, but that he rewarded very badly the nobleman who gave it, having subsequently caused his head to be taken off. In general, however, Alva manifested a philosophical contempt for the opinions expressed concerning his military fame, and was especially disdainful of criticism expressed by his own soldiers. "Recollect," said he, at a little later period, to Don John of Austria, "that the first foes with whom one has to contend are one's own troops; with their clamors for an engagement at this moment, and--their murmurs, about results at another; with their 'I thought that the battle should be fought;' or, 'it was my, opinion that the occasion ought not to be lost.' Your highness will have opportunity enough to display valor, and will never be weak enough to be conquered by the babble of soldiers."

In person he was tall, thin, erect, with a small head, a long visage, lean yellow cheek, dark twinkling eyes, a dust complexion, black bristling hair, and a long sable-silvered beard, descending in two waving streams upon his breast.

Such being the design, the machinery was well selected. The best man in Europe to lead the invading force was placed at the head of ten thousand

picked veterans. The privates in this exquisite little army, said the enthusiastic connoisseur Brantome, who travelled post into Lorraine expressly to see them on their march, all wore engraved or gilded armor, and were in every respect equipped like captains. They were the first who carried muskets, a weapon which very much astonished the Flemings when it first rattled in their ears. The musketeers, he observed, might have been mistaken, for princes, with such agreeable and graceful arrogance did they present themselves. Each was attended by his servant or esquire, who carried his piece for him, except in battle, and all were treated with extreme deference by the rest of the army, as if they had been officers. The four regiments of Lombardy, Sardinia, Sicily, and Naples, composed a total of not quite nine thousand of the best foot soldiers in Europe. They were commanded respectively by Don Sancho de Lodiono, Don Gonzalo de Bracamonte, Julien Romero, and Alfonso de Ulloa, all distinguished and experienced generals. The cavalry, amounting to about twelve hundred; was under the command of the natural son of the Duke, Don Ferdinando de Toledo, Prior of the Knights of St. John. Chiapin Vitelli, Marquis of Cetona, who had served the King in many a campaign, was appointed Marechal de camp, and Gabriel Cerbelloni was placed in command of the artillery. On the way the Duke received, as a present from the Duke of Savoy, the services of the distinguished engineer, Pacheco, or Paciotti, whose name was to be associated with the most celebrated citadel of the Netherlands; and whose dreadful fate was to be contemporaneous with the earliest successes of the liberal party.

With an army thus perfect, on a small scale, in all its departments, and furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes, as regularly enrolled, disciplined, and distributed as the cavalry or the artillery, the Duke embarked upon his momentous enterprise, on the 10th of May, at Carthage. Thirty-seven galleys, under command of Prince Andrea Doria, brought the principal part of the force to Genoa, the Duke being delayed a few days at Nice by an attack of fever. On the 2d of June, the army was mustered at Alexandria de Palla, and ordered to rendezvous again at San Ambrosio at the foot of the Alps. It was then directed to make its way over Mount Cenis and through Savoy; Burgundy, and Lorraine, by a regularly arranged triple movement. The second division was each night to encamp on the spot which had been occupied upon the previous night by the vanguard, and the rear was to place itself on the following night in the camp of the corps de bataille. Thus coiling itself along almost in a single line by slow and serpentine windings, with a deliberate, deadly, venomous purpose, this army, which was to be the instrument of Philip's long deferred vengeance, stole through narrow mountain pass and tangled forest. So close and intricate were many of the defiles through which the journey led them that, had one tithe of the treason which they came to punish, ever existed, save in the diseased imagination of their monarch, not one man would have been left to tell the tale. Egmont, had he really been the traitor and the conspirator he was assumed to be, might have easily organized the means of cutting off the troops before they could have effected their entrance into the country which they had doomed to destruction. His military experience, his qualifications for a daring stroke, his great popularity, and the intense hatred entertained for Alva, would have furnished him with a sufficient machinery for the purpose.

Twelve days' march carried the army through Burgundy, twelve more through Lorraine. During the whole of the journey they were closely accompanied by a force of cavalry and infantry, ordered upon this service by the King of France, who, for fear of exciting a fresh Huguenot demonstration, had refused the Spaniards a passage through his dominions. This reconnoitring army kept pace with them like their shadow, and watched all their movements. A force of six thousand Swiss, equally alarmed and uneasy at the progress of the troops, hovered likewise about their flanks, without, however, offering any impediment to their advance. Before the middle of August they had reached Thionville, on the Luxemburg frontier, having on the last day marched a distance of two leagues through a forest, which seemed expressly arranged to allow a small defensive force to embarrass and destroy an invading army. No opposition, however, was attempted, and the Spanish soldiers encamped at last within the territory of the Netherlands, having accomplished their adventurous journey in entire safety, and under perfect discipline.

The Duchess had in her secret letters to Philip continued to express her disapprobation of the enterprise thus committed to Alva, She had bitterly complained that now when the country had been pacified by her efforts, another should be sent to reap all the glory, or perhaps to undo all that she had so painfully and so successfully done. She stated to her brother, in most unequivocal language, that the name of Alva was odious enough to make the whole Spanish nation detested in the Netherlands. She could find no language sufficiently strong to express her surprise that the King should have decided upon a measure likely to be attended with such fatal consequences without consulting her on the subject, and in opposition to what had been her uniform advice. She also wrote personally to Alva, imploring, commanding, and threatening, but with equally ill success. The Duke knew too well who was sovereign of the Netherlands now; his master's sister or himself. As to the effects of his armed invasion upon the temper of the provinces, he was supremely indifferent. He came as a conqueror not as a mediator. "I have tamed people of iron in my day," said he, contemptuously, "shall I not easily crush these men of butter?"

At Thionville he was, however, officially waited upon by Berlaymont and Noircarmes, on the part of the Regent. He at this point, moreover, began to receive deputations from various cities, bidding him a hollow and trembling welcome, and deprecating his displeasure for any thing in the past which might seem offensive. To all such embassies he replied in vague and conventional language; saying, however, to his confidential attendants: I am here, so much is certain, whether I am welcome or not is to me a matter of little consequence. At Tirlemont, on the 22d August, he was met by Count Egmont, who had ridden forth from Brussels to show him a becoming respect, as the representative of his sovereign, The Count was accompanied by several other noblemen, and brought to the Duke a present of several beautiful horses. Alva received him, however, but coldly, for he was unable at first to adjust the mask to his countenance as adroitly as was necessary. Behold the greatest of all the heretics, he observed to his attendants, as soon as the nobleman's presence was announced, and in a voice loud enough for him to hear.

Even after they had exchanged salutations, he addressed several remarks to him in a half jesting, half biting tone, saying among other things, that his countship might have spared him the trouble of making this long journey in his old age. There were other observations in a similar strain which might have well aroused the suspicion of any man not determined, like Egmont, to continue blind and deaf. After a brief interval, however, Alva seems to have commanded himself. He passed his arm lovingly over that stately neck, which he had already devoted to the block, and the Count having resolved beforehand to place himself, if possible, upon amicable terms with the new Viceroy--the two rode along side by side in friendly conversation, followed by the regiment of infantry and three companies of light horse, which belonged to the Duke's immediate command. Alva, still attended by Egmont, rode soon afterwards through the Louvain gate into Brussels, where they separated for a season. Lodgings had been taken for the Duke at the house of a certain Madame de Jasse, in the neighborhood of Egmont's palace. Leaving here the principal portion of his attendants, the Captain-General, without alighting, forthwith proceeded to the palace to pay his respects to the Duchess of Parma.

For three days the Regent had been deliberating with her council as to the propriety of declining any visit from the man whose presence she justly considered a disgrace and an insult to herself. This being the reward of her eight years' devotion to her brother's commands; to be superseded by a subject, and one too who came to carry out a policy which she had urgently deprecated, it could hardly be expected of the Emperor's daughter that she should graciously submit to the indignity, and receive her successor with a smiling countenance. In consequence, however, of the submissive language with which the Duke had addressed her in his recent communications, offering with true Castilian but empty courtesy, to place his guards, his army, and himself at her feet, she had consented to receive his visit with or without his attendants.

On his appearance in the court-yard, a scene of violent altercation and almost of bloodshed took place between his body-guard and the archers of the Regent's household, who were at last, with difficulty, persuaded to allow the mercenaries of the hated Captain-General to pass. Presenting himself at three o'clock in the afternoon, after these not very satisfactory preliminaries, in the bedchamber of the Duchess, where it was her habit to grant confidential audiences, he met, as might easily be supposed, with a chilling reception: The Duchess, standing motionless in the centre of the apartment, attended by Berlaymont, the Duke of Aerachot, and Count Egmont, acknowledged his salutations with calm severity. Neither she nor any one of her attendants advanced a step to meet him. The Duke took off his hat, but she, calmly recognizing his right as a Spanish grandee, insisted upon his remaining covered. A stiff and formal conversation of half an hour's duration then ensued, all parties remaining upon their feet. The Duke, although respectful; found it difficult to conceal his indignation and his haughty sense of approaching triumph. Margaret was cold, stately, and forbidding, disguising her rage and her mortification under a veil of imperial pride. Alva, in a letter to Philip, describing the interview, assured his

Majesty that he had treated the Duchess with as much deference as he could have shown to the Queen, but it is probable, from other contemporaneous accounts, that an ill-disguised and even angry arrogance was at times very visible in his demeanor. The state council had advised the Duchess against receiving him until he had duly exhibited his powers. This ceremony had been waived, but upon being questioned by the Duchess at this interview as to their nature and extent, he is reported to have coolly answered that he really did not exactly remember, but that he would look them over, and send her information at his earliest convenience.

The next day, however, his commission was duly exhibited.

In this document, which bore date 31st January, 1567, Philip appointed him to be Captain-General "in correspondence with his Majesty's dear sister of Parma, who was occupied with other matters belonging to the government," begged the Duchess to co-operate with him and to command obedience for him, and ordered all the cities of the Netherlands to receive such garrisons as he should direct.

At the official interview between Alva and Madame de Parma, at which these powers were produced, the necessary preliminary arrangements were made regarding the Spanish troops, which were now to be immediately quartered in the principal cities. The Duke, however, informed the Regent that as these matters were not within her province, he should take the liberty of arranging them with the authorities, without troubling her in the matter, and would inform her of the result of his measures at their next interview, which was to take place on the 26th August.

Circular letters signed by Philip, which Alva had brought with him, were now despatched to the different municipal bodies of the country. In these the cities were severally commanded to accept the garrisons, and to provide for the armies whose active services the King hoped would not be required, but which he had sent beforehand to prepare a peaceful entrance for himself. He enjoined the most absolute obedience to the Duke of Alva until his own arrival, which was to be almost immediate. These letters were dated at Madrid on the 28th February, and were now accompanied by a brief official circular, signed by Margaret of Parma, in which she announced the arrival of her dear cousin of Alva, and demanded unconditional submission to his authority.

Having thus complied with these demands of external and conventional propriety, the indignant Duchess unbosomed herself, in her private Italian letters to her brother, of the rage which had been hitherto partially suppressed. She reiterated her profound regret that Philip had not yet accepted the resignation which she had so recently and so earnestly offered. She disclaimed all jealousy of the supreme powers now conferred upon Alva, but thought that his Majesty might have allowed her to leave the country before the Duke arrived with an authority which was so extraordinary, as well as so humiliating to herself. Her honor might thus have been saved. She was pained to perceive that she was like to furnish a perpetual example to all others, who considering the manner in which she had been treated by the King, would henceforth have but little

inducement to do their duty. At no time, on no occasion, could any person ever render him such services as hers had been. For nine years she had enjoyed not a moment of repose. If the King had shown her but little gratitude, she was consoled by the thought that she had satisfied her God, herself, and the world. She had compromised her health, perhaps her life, and now that she had pacified the country, now that the King was more absolute, more powerful than ever before, another was sent to enjoy the fruit of her labors and her sufferings.

The Duchess made no secret of her indignation at being thus superseded and as she considered the matter, outraged. She openly avowed her displeasure. She was at times almost beside herself with rage. There was universal sympathy with her emotions, for all hated the Duke, and shuddered at the arrival of the Spaniards. The day of doom for all the crimes which had ever been committed in the course of ages, seemed now to have dawned upon the Netherlands. The sword which had so long been hanging over them, seemed now about to descend. Throughout the provinces, there was but one feeling of cold and hopeless dismay. Those who still saw a possibility of effecting their escape from the fated land, swarmed across the frontier. All foreign merchants deserted the great marts. The cities became as still as if the plague-banner had been unfurled on every house-top.

Meantime the Captain-General proceeded methodically with his work. He distributed his troops through Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, and other principal cities. As a measure of necessity and mark of the last humiliation, he required the municipalities to transfer their keys to his keeping. The magistrates of Ghent humbly remonstrated against the indignity, and Egmont was imprudent enough to make himself the mouth-piece of their remonstrance, which, it is needless to add, was unsuccessful. Meantime his own day of reckoning had arrived.

As already observed, the advent of Alva at the head of a foreign army was the natural consequence of all which had gone before. The delusion of the royal visit was still maintained, and the affectation of a possible clemency still displayed, while the monarch sat quietly in his cabinet without a remote intention of leaving Spain, and while the messengers of his accumulated and long-concealed wrath were already descending upon their prey. It was the deliberate intention of Philip, when the Duke was despatched to the Netherlands, that all the leaders of the anti-inquisition party, and all who had, at any time or in any way, implicated themselves in opposition to the government, or in censure of its proceedings, should be put to death. It was determined that the provinces should be subjugated to the absolute domination of the council of Spain, a small body of foreigners sitting at the other end of Europe, a junta in which Netherlanders were to have no voice and exercise no influence. The despotic government of the Spanish and Italian possessions was to be extended to these Flemish territories, which were thus to be converted into the helpless dependencies of a foreign and an absolute crown. There was to be a re-organization of the inquisition, upon the same footing claimed for it before the outbreak of the troubles, together with a re-enactment and vigorous enforcement of the famous edicts against heresy.

Such was the scheme recommended by Granvelle and Espinosa, and to be executed by Alva. As part and parcel of this plan, it was also arranged at secret meetings at the house of Espinosa, before the departure of the Duke, that all the seigniors against whom the Duchess Margaret had made so many complaints, especially the Prince of Orange, with the Counts Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraaten, should be immediately arrested and brought to chastisement. The Marquis Berghen and the Baron Montigny, being already in Spain, could be dealt with at pleasure. It was also decided that the gentlemen implicated in the confederacy or compromise, should at once be proceeded against for high treason, without any regard to the promise of pardon granted by the Duchess.

The general features of the great project having been thus mapped out, a few indispensable preliminaries were at once executed. In order that Egmont, Horn, and other distinguished victims might not take alarm, and thus escape the doom deliberately arranged for them, royal assurances were despatched to the Netherlands, cheering their despondency and dispelling their doubts. With his own hand Philip wrote the letter, full of affection and confidence, to Egmont, to which allusion has already been made. He wrote it after Alva had left Madrid upon his mission of vengeance. The same stealthy measures were pursued with regard to others. The Prince of Orange was not capable of falling into the royal trap, however cautiously baited. Unfortunately he could not communicate his wisdom to his friends.

It is difficult to comprehend so very sanguine a temperament as that to which Egmont owed his destruction. It was not the Prince of Orange alone who had prophesied his doom. Warnings had come to the Count from every quarter, and they were now frequently repeated. Certainly he was not without anxiety, but he had made his decision; determined to believe in the royal word, and in the royal gratitude for his services rendered, not only against Montmorency and De Thermes, but against the heretics of Flanders. He was, however, much changed. He had grown prematurely old. At forty-six years his hair was white, and he never slept without pistols under his pillow. Nevertheless he affected, and sometimes felt, a light-heartedness which surprised all around him. The Portuguese gentleman Robles, Seigneur de Billy, who had returned early in the summer from Spain; whither he had been sent upon a confidential mission by Madame de Parma, is said to have made repeated communications to Egmont as to the dangerous position in which he stood. Immediately after his arrival in Brussels he had visited the Count, then confined to his house by an injury caused by the fall of his horse. "Take care to get well very fast," said De Billy, "for there are very bad stories told about you in Spain." Egmont laughed heartily at the observation, as if, nothing could well be more absurd than such a warning. His friend--for De Billy is said to have felt a real attachment to the Count--persisted in his prophecies, telling him that "birds in the field sang much more sweetly than those in cages," and that he would do well to abandon the country before the arrival of Alva.

These warnings were repeated almost daily by the same gentleman, and by others, who were more and more astonished at Egmont's infatuation.

Nevertheless, he had disregarded their admonitions, and had gone forth to meet the Duke at Tirllemont. Even then he might have seen, in the coldness of his first reception, and in the disrespectful manner of the Spanish soldiers, who not only did not at first salute him, but who murmured audibly that he was a Lutheran and traitor, that he was not so great a favorite with the government at Madrid as he desired to be.

After the first few moments, however, Alva's manner had changed, while Chiappin Vitelli, Gabriel de Serbelloni, and other principal officers, received the Count with great courtesy, even upon his first appearance. The grand prior, Ferdinando de Toledo, natural son of the Duke, and already a distinguished soldier, seems to have felt a warm and unaffected friendship for Egmont, whose brilliant exploits in the field had excited his youthful admiration, and of whose destruction he was, nevertheless, compelled to be the unwilling instrument. For a few days, accordingly, after the arrival of the new Governor-General all seemed to be going smoothly. The grand prior and Egmont became exceedingly intimate, passing their time together in banquets, masquerades, and play, as joyously as if the merry days which had succeeded the treaty of Cateau Cambrais were returned. The Duke, too, manifested the most friendly dispositions, taking care to send him large presents of Spanish and Italian fruits, received frequently by the government couriers.

Lapped in this fatal security, Egmont not only forgot his fears, but unfortunately succeeded in inspiring Count Horn with a portion of his confidence. That gentleman had still remained in his solitary mansion at Weert, notwithstanding the artful means which had been used to lure him from that "desert." It is singular that the very same person who, according to a well-informed Catholic contemporary, had been most eager to warn Egmont of his danger, had also been the foremost instrument for effecting the capture of the Admiral. The Seigneur de Billy, on the day after his arrival from Madrid, had written to Horn, telling him that the King was highly pleased with his services and character. De Billy also stated that he had been commissioned by Philip to express distinctly the royal gratitude for the Count's conduct, adding that his Majesty was about to visit the Netherlands in August, and would probably be preceded or accompanied by Baron Montigny.

Alva and his son Don Ferdinando had soon afterwards addressed letters from Gerverbiller (dated 26th and 27th July) to Count Horn, filled with expressions of friendship and confidence. The Admiral, who had sent one of his gentlemen to greet the Duke, now responded from Weert that he was very sensible of the kindness manifested towards him, but that for reasons which his secretary Alonzo de la Loo would more fully communicate, he must for the present beg to be excused from a personal visit to Brussels. The secretary was received by Alva with extreme courtesy. The Duke expressed infinite pain that the King had not yet rewarded Count Horn's services according to their merit, said that a year before he had told his brother Montigny how very much he was the Admiral's friend, and begged La Loo to tell his master that he should not doubt the royal generosity and gratitude. The governor added, that if he could see the Count in person he could tell him things which would please him, and which would prove that he had not been forgotten by his friends.

La Loo had afterward a long conversation with the Duke's secretary Albornoz, who assured him that his master had the greatest affection for Count Horn, and that since his affairs were so much embarrassed, he might easily be provided with the post of governor at Milan, or viceroy of Naples, about to become vacant. The secretary added, that the Duke was much hurt at receiving no visits from many distinguished nobles whose faithful friend and servant he was, and that Count Horn ought to visit Brussels, if not to treat of great affairs, at least to visit the Captain-General as a friend. "After all this," said honest Alonzo, "I am going immediately to Weert, to urge his lordship to yield to the Duke's desires."

This scientific manoeuvring, joined to the urgent representations of Egmont, at last produced its effect. The Admiral left his retirement at Weert to fall into the pit which his enemies had been so skilfully preparing at Brussels. On the night of the 8th September, Egmont received another most significant and mysterious warning. A Spaniard, apparently an officer of rank, came secretly into his house, and urged him solemnly to effect his escape before the morrow. The Countess, who related the story afterwards, always believed, without being certain, that the mysterious visitor was Julian Romero, marechal de camp. Egmont, however, continued as blindly confident as before.

On the following day, September 9th, the grand prior, Don Ferdinando, gave a magnificent dinner, to which Egmont and Horn, together with Noircarmes, the Viscount of Ghent, and many other noblemen were invited. The banquet was enlivened by the music of Alva's own military band, which the Duke sent to entertain the company. At three o'clock he sent a message begging the gentlemen, after their dinner should be concluded, to favor him with their company at his house (the maison de Jassey), as he wished to consult them concerning the plan of the citadel, which he proposed erecting at Antwerp.

At this moment, the grand prior who was seated next to Egmont, whispered in his ear; "Leave this place, Signor Count, instantly; take the fleetest horse in your stable and make your escape without a moment's delay." Egmont, much troubled, and remembering the manifold prophecies and admonitions which he had passed by unheeded, rose from the table and went into the next room. He was followed by Noircarmes and two other gentlemen, who had observed his agitation, and were curious as to its cause. The Count repeated to them the mysterious words just whispered to him by the grand prior, adding that he was determined to take the advice without a moment's delay. "Ha! Count," exclaimed Noircarmes, "do not put lightly such implicit confidence in this stranger who is counselling you to your destruction. What will the Duke of Alva and all the Spaniards say of such a precipitate flight? Will they not say that your Excellency has fled from the consciousness of guilt? Will not your escape be construed into a confession of high treason."

If these words were really spoken by Noircarmes; and that they were so, we have the testimony of a Walloon gentleman in constant communication with Egmont's friends and with the whole Catholic party, they furnish another proof of the malignant and cruel character of the man. The

advice fixed forever the fate of the vacillating Egmont. He had risen from table determined to take the advice of a noble-minded Spaniard, who had adventured his life to save his friend. He now returned in obedience to the counsel of a fellow-countryman, a Flemish noble, to treat the well-meant warning with indifference, and to seat himself again at the last banquet which he was ever to grace with his presence.

At four o'clock, the dinner being finished, Horn and Egmont, accompanied by the other gentlemen, proceeded to the "Jassy" house, then occupied by Alva, to take part in the deliberations proposed. They were received by the Duke with great courtesy. The engineer, Pietro Urbino, soon appeared and laid upon the table a large parchment containing the plan and elevation of the citadel to be erected at Antwerp. A warm discussion upon the subject soon arose, Egmont, Horn, Noircarmes and others, together with the engineers Urbino and Pacheco, all taking part in the debate. After a short time, the Duke of Alva left the apartment, on pretext of a sudden indisposition, leaving the company still warmly engaged in their argument. The council lasted till near seven in the evening. As it broke up, Don Sancho d'Avila, captain of the Duke's guard, requested Egmont to remain for a moment after the rest, as he had a communication to make to him. After an insignificant remark or two, the Spanish officer, as soon as the two were alone, requested Egmont to surrender his sword. The Count, agitated, and notwithstanding every thing which had gone before, still taken by surprise, scarcely knew what reply to make. Don Sancho repeated that he had been commissioned to arrest him, and again demanded his sword. At the same moment the doors of the adjacent apartment were opened, and Egmont saw himself surrounded by a company of Spanish musqueteers and halberdmen. Finding himself thus entrapped, he gave up his sword, saying bitterly, as he did so, that it had at least rendered some service to the King in times which were past. He was then conducted to a chamber, in the upper story of the house, where his temporary prison had been arranged. The windows were barricaded, the daylight excluded, the whole apartment hung with black. Here he remained fourteen days (from the 9th to 23d September). During this period, he was allowed no communication with his friends. His room was lighted day and night with candles, and he was served in strict silence by Spanish attendants, and guarded by Spanish soldiers. The captain of the watch drew his curtain every midnight, and aroused him from sleep that he might be identified by the relieving officer.

Count Horn was arrested upon the same occasion by Captain Salinas, as he was proceeding through the court-yard of the house, after the breaking up of the council. He was confined in another chamber of the mansion, and met with a precisely similar treatment to that experienced by Egmont. Upon the 23d September, both were removed under a strong guard to the castle of Ghent.

On this same day, two other important arrests, included and arranged in the same program, had been successfully accomplished. Bakkerzeel, private and confidential secretary of Egmont, and Antony Van Straalen, the rich and influential burgomaster of Antwerp, were taken almost simultaneously. At the request of Alva, the burgomaster had been invited by the Duchess of Parma to repair on business to Brussels. He seemed to

have feared an ambuscade, for as he got into his coach to set forth upon the journey, he was so muffled in a multiplicity of clothing, that he was scarcely to be recognized. He was no sooner, however, in the open country and upon a spot remote from human habitations, than he was suddenly beset by a band of forty soldiers under command of Don Alberic Lodron and Don Sancho de Lodrono. These officers had been watching his movements for many days. The capture of Bakkerzeel was accomplished with equal adroitness at about the same hour.

Alva, while he sat at the council board with Egmont and Horn, was secretly informed that those important personages, Bakkerzeel and Straalen, with the private secretary of the Admiral, Alonzo de la Loo, in addition, had been thus successfully arrested. He could with difficulty conceal his satisfaction, and left the apartment immediately that the trap might be sprung upon the two principal victims of his treachery. He had himself arranged all the details of these two important arrests, while his natural son, the Prior Don Ferdinando, had been compelled to superintend the proceedings. The plot had been an excellent plot, and was accomplished as successfully as it had been sagaciously conceived. None but Spaniards had been employed in any part of the affair. Officers of high rank in his Majesty's army had performed the part of spies and policemen with much adroitness, nor was it to be expected that the duty would seem a disgrace, when the Prior of the Knights of Saint John was superintendent of the operations, when the Captain-General of the Netherlands had arranged the whole plan, and when all, from subaltern to viceroy, had received minute instructions as to the contemplated treachery from the great chief of the Spanish police, who sat on the throne of Castile and Aragon.

No sooner were these gentlemen in custody than the secretary Albornoz was dispatched to the house of Count Horn, and to that of Bakkerzeel, where all papers were immediately seized, inventoried, and placed in the hands of the Duke. Thus, if amid the most secret communications of Egmont and Horn or their correspondents, a single treasonable thought should be lurking, it was to go hard but it might be twisted into a cord strong enough to strangle them all.

The Duke wrote a triumphant letter to his Majesty that very night. He apologized that these important captures had been deferred so long but, stated that he had thought it desirable to secure all these leading personages at a single stroke. He then narrated the masterly manner in which the operations had been conducted. Certainly, when it is remembered that the Duke had only reached Brussels upon the 23d August, and that the two Counts were securely lodged in prison on the 9th of September, it seemed a superfluous modesty upon his part thus to excuse himself for an apparent delay. At any rate, in the eyes of the world and of posterity, his zeal to carry out the bloody commands of his master was sufficiently swift.

The consternation was universal throughout the provinces when the arrests became known. Egmont's great popularity and distinguished services placed him so high above the mass of citizens, and his attachment to the Catholic religion was moreover so well known, as to make it obvious that

no man could now be safe, when men like him were in the power of Alva and his myrmidons. The animosity to the Spaniards increased hourly. The Duchess affected indignation at the arrest of the two nobles, although it nowhere appears that she attempted a word in their defence, or lifted, at any subsequent moment, a finger to save them. She was not anxious to wash her hands of the blood of two innocent men; she was only offended that they had been arrested without her permission. The Duke had, it is true, sent Berlaymont and Mansfeld to give her information of the fact, as soon as the capture had been made, with the plausible excuse that he preferred to save her from all the responsibility and all the unpopularity of the measure. Nothing, however, could appease her wrath at this and every other indication of the contempt in which he appeared to hold the sister of his sovereign. She complained of his conduct daily to every one who was admitted to her presence. Herself oppressed by a sense of personal indignity, she seemed for a moment to identify herself with the cause of the oppressed provinces. She seemed to imagine herself the champion of their liberties, and the Netherlanders, for a moments seemed to participate in the delusion. Because she was indignant at the insolence of the Duke of Alva to her self, the honest citizens began to give her credit for a sympathy with their own wrongs. She expressed herself determined to move about from one city to another, until the answer to her demand for dismissal should arrive. She allowed her immediate attendants to abuse the Spaniards in good set terms upon every occasion. Even her private chaplain permitted himself, in preaching before her in the palace chapel, to denounce the whole nation as a race of traitors and ravishers, and for this offence was only reprimanded, much against her will, by the Duchess, and ordered to retire for a season to his convent. She did not attempt to disguise her dissatisfaction at every step which had been taken by the Duke. In all this there was much petulance, but very little dignity, while there was neither a spark of real sympathy for the oppressed millions, nor a throb of genuine womanly emotion for the impending fate of the two nobles. Her principal grief was that she had pacified the provinces, and that another had now arrived to reap the glory; but it was difficult, while the unburied bones of many heretics were still hanging, by her decree, on the rafters of their own dismantled churches, for her successfully to enact the part of a benignant and merciful Regent. But it is very true that the horrors of the Duke's administration have been propitious to the fame of Margaret, and perhaps more so to that of Cardinal Granvelle. The faint and struggling rays of humanity which occasionally illumined the course of their government, were destined to be extinguished in a chaos so profound and dark, that these last beams of light seemed clearer and more bountiful by the contrast.

The Count of Hoogstraaten, who was on his way to Brussels, had, by good fortune, injured his hand through the accidental discharge of a pistol. Detained by this casualty at Cologne, he was informed, before his arrival at the capital, of the arrest of his two distinguished friends, and accepted the hint to betake himself at once to a place of Safety.

The loyalty of the elder Mansfeld was beyond dispute even by Alva. His son Charles had, however, been imprudent, and, as we have seen, had even affixed his name to the earliest copies of the Compromise. He had

retired, it is true, from all connexion with the confederates, but his father knew well that the young Count's signature upon that famous document would prove his death-warrant, were he found in the country. He therefore had sent him into Germany before the arrival of the Duke.

The King's satisfaction was unbounded when he learned this important achievement of Alva, and he wrote immediately to express his approbation in the most extravagant terms. Cardinal Granvelle, on the contrary, affected astonishment at a course which he had secretly counselled. He assured his Majesty that he had never believed Egmont to entertain sentiments opposed to the Catholic religion, nor to the interests of the Crown, up to the period of his own departure from the Netherlands. He was persuaded, he said, that the Count had been abused by others, although, to be sure, the Cardinal had learned with regret what Egmont had written on the occasion of the baptism of Count Hoogstraaten's child. As to the other persons arrested, he said that no one regretted their fate. The Cardinal added, that he was supposed to be himself the instigator of these captures, but that he was not disturbed by that, or by other imputations of a similar nature.

In conversation with those about him, he frequently expressed regret that the Prince of Orange had been too crafty to be caught in the same net in which his more simple companions were so inextricably entangled. Indeed, on the first arrival of the news, that men of high rank had been arrested in Brussels, the Cardinal eagerly inquired if the Taciturn had been taken, for by that term he always characterized the Prince. Receiving a negative reply, he expressed extreme disappointment, adding, that if Orange had escaped, they had taken nobody; and that his capture would have been more valuable than that of every man in the Netherlands.

Peter Titelmann, too, the famous inquisitor, who, retired from active life, was then living upon Philip's bounty, and encouraged by friendly letters from that monarch, expressed the same opinion. Having been informed that Egmont and Horn had been captured, he eagerly inquired if "wise William" had also been taken. He was, of course, answered in the negative. "Then will our joy be but brief," he observed. "Woe unto us for the wrath to come from Germany."

On the 12th of July, of this year, Philip wrote to Granvelle to inquire the particulars of a letter which the Prince of Orange, according to a previous communication of the Cardinal, had written to Egmont on the occasion of the baptism of Count Hoogstraaten's child. On the 17th of August, the Cardinal replied, by setting the King right as to the error which he had committed. The letter, as he had already stated, was not written by Orange, but by Egmont, and he expressed his astonishment that Madame de Parma had not yet sent it to his Majesty. The Duchess must have seen it, because her confessor had shown it to the person who was Granvelle's informant. In this letter, the Cardinal continued, the statement had been made by Egmont to the Prince of Orange that their plots were discovered, that the King was making armaments, that they were unable to resist him, and that therefore it had become necessary to dissemble and to accommodate themselves as well as possible to the present situation, while waiting for other circumstances under which to

accomplish their designs. Granvelle advised, moreover, that Straalen, who had been privy to the letter, and perhaps the amanuensis, should be forthwith arrested.

The Cardinal was determined not to let the matter sleep, notwithstanding his protestation of a kindly feeling towards the imprisoned Count. Against the statement that he knew of a letter which amounted to a full confession of treason, out of Egmont's own mouth--a fact which, if proved, and perhaps, if even insinuated, would be sufficient with Philip to deprive Egmont of twenty thousand lives--against these constant recommendations to his suspicious and sanguinary master, to ferret out this document, if it were possible, it must be confessed that the churchman's vague and hypocritical expressions on the side of mercy were very little worth.

Certainly these seeds of suspicion did not fall upon a barren soil. Philip immediately communicated the information thus received to the Duke of Alva, charging him on repeated occasions to find out what was written, either by Egmont or by Straalen, at Egmont's instigation, stating that such a letter was written at the time of the Hoogstraaten baptism, that it would probably illustrate the opinions of Egmont at that period, and that the letter itself, which the confessor of Madame de Parma had once had in his hands, ought, if possible, to be procured. Thus the very language used by Granvelle to Philip was immediately repeated by the monarch to his representative in the Netherlands, at the moment when all Egmont's papers were in his possession, and when Egmont's private secretary was undergoing the torture, in order that secrets might be wrenched from him which had never entered his brain. The fact that no such letter was found, that the Duchess had never alluded to any such document, and that neither a careful scrutiny of papers, nor the application of the rack, could elicit any satisfactory information on the subject, leads to the conclusion that no such treasonable paper had ever existed, save in the imagination of the Cardinal. At any rate, it is no more than just to hesitate before affixing a damning character to a document, in the absence of any direct proof that there ever was such a document at all. The confessor of Madame de Parma told another person, who told the Cardinal, that either Count Egmont, or Burgomaster Straalen, by command of Count Egmont, wrote to the Prince of Orange thus and so. What evidence was this upon which to found a charge of high treason against a man whom Granvelle affected to characterize as otherwise neither opposed to the Catholic religion, nor to the true service of the King? What vulpine kind of mercy was it on the part of the Cardinal, while making such deadly insinuations, to recommend the imprisoned victim to clemency?

The unfortunate envoys, Marquis Bergen and Baron Montigny, had remained in Spain under close observation. Of those doomed victims who, in spite of friendly remonstrances and of ominous warnings, had thus ventured into the lion's den, no retreating footmarks were ever to be seen. Their fate, now that Alva had at last been despatched to the Netherlands, seemed to be sealed, and the Marquis Bergen, accepting the augury in its most evil sense, immediately afterwards had sickened unto death. Whether it were the sickness of hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair, or

whether it were a still more potent and unequivocal poison which came to the relief of the unfortunate nobleman, will perhaps never be ascertained with certainty. The secrets of those terrible prison-houses of Spain, where even the eldest begotten son, and the wedded wife of the monarch, were soon afterwards believed to have been the victims of his dark revenge, can never perhaps be accurately known, until the grave gives up its dead, and the buried crimes of centuries are revealed.

It was very soon after the departure of Alva's fleet from Carthagena, that the Marquis Bergen felt his end approaching. He sent for the Prince of Eboli, with whom he had always maintained intimate relations, and whom he believed to be his disinterested friend. Relying upon his faithful breast, and trusting to receive from his eyes alone the pious drops of sympathy which he required, the dying noble poured out his long and last complaint. He charged him to tell the man whom he would no longer call his king, that he had ever been true and loyal, that the bitterness of having been constantly suspected, when he was conscious of entire fidelity, was a sharper sorrow than could be lightly believed, and that he hoped the time would come when his own truth and the artifices of his enemies would be brought to light. He closed his parting message by predicting that after he had been long laid in the grave, the impeachments against his character would be, at last, although too late, retracted.

So spake the unhappy envoy, and his friend replied with words of consolation. It is probable that he even ventured, in the King's name, to grant him the liberty of returning to his home; the only remedy, as his physicians had repeatedly stated, which could possibly be applied to his disease. But the devilish hypocrisy of Philip, and the abject perfidy of Eboli, at this juncture, almost surpass belief. The Prince came to press the hand and to close the eyes of the dying man whom he called his friend, having first carefully studied a billet of most minute and secret instructions from his master as to the deportment he was to observe upon this solemn occasion and afterwards. This paper, written in Philip's own hand, had been delivered to Eboli on the very day of his visit to Bergen, and bore the superscription that it was not to be read nor opened till the messenger who brought it had left his presence. It directed the Prince, if it should be evident Marquis was past recovery, to promise him, in the King's name, the permission of returning to the Netherlands. Should, however, a possibility of his surviving appear, Eboli was only to hold out a hope that such permission might eventually be obtained. In case of the death of Bergen, the Prince was immediately to confer with the Grand Inquisitor and with the Count of Feria, upon the measures to be taken for his obsequies. It might seem advisable, in that event to exhibit the regret which the King and his ministers felt for his death, and the great esteem in which they held the nobles of the Netherlands. At the same time, Eboli was further instructed to confer with the same personages as to the most efficient means for preventing the escape of Baron Montigny; to keep a vigilant eye upon his movements, and to give general directions to governors and to postmasters to intercept his flight, should it be attempted. Finally, in case of Bergen's death, the Prince was directed to despatch a special messenger, apparently on his own responsibility, and as if in the absence and

without the knowledge of the King, to inform the Duchess of Parma of the event, and to urge her immediately to take possession of the city of Bergen-op-Zoom, and of all other property belonging to the Marquis, until it should be ascertained whether it were not possible to convict him, after death, of treason, and to confiscate his estates accordingly.

Such were the instructions of Philip to Eboli, and precisely in accordance with the program, was the horrible comedy enacted at the death-bed of the envoy. Three days after his parting interview with his disinterested friend, the Marquis was a corpse.--Before his limbs were cold, a messenger was on his way to Brussels, instructing the Regent to sequester his property, and to arrest, upon suspicion of heresy, the youthful kinsman and niece, who, by the will of the Marquis, were to be united in marriage and to share his estate. The whole drama, beginning with the death scene, was enacted according to order: Before the arrival of Alva in the Netherlands, the property of the Marquis was in the hands of the Government, awaiting the confiscation,--which was but for a brief season delayed, while on the other hand, Baron Montigny, Bergen's companion in doom, who was not, however, so easily to be carried off by homesickness, was closely confined in the alcazar of Segovia, never to leave a Spanish prison alive. There is something pathetic in the delusion in which Montigny and his brother, the Count Horn, both indulged, each believing that the other was out of harm's way, the one by his absence from the Netherlands, the other by his absence from Spain, while both, involved in the same meshes, were rapidly and surely approaching their fate.

In the same despatch of the 9th September, in which the Duke communicated to Philip the capture of Egmont and Horn, he announced to him his determination to establish a new court for the trial of crimes committed during the recent period of troubles. This wonderful tribunal was accordingly created with the least possible delay. It was called the Council of Troubles, but it soon acquired the terrible name, by which it will be forever known in history, of the 'Blood-Council'. It superseded all other institutions. Every court, from those of the municipal magistracies up to the supreme councils of the provinces, were forbidden to take cognizance in future of any cause growing out of the late troubles. The council of state, although it was not formally disbanded, fell into complete desuetude, its members being occasionally summoned into Alva's private chambers in an irregular manner, while its principal functions were usurped by the Blood-Council. Not only citizens of every province, but the municipal bodies and even the sovereign provincial estates themselves, were compelled to plead, like humble individuals, before this new and extraordinary tribunal. It is unnecessary to allude to the absolute violation which was thus committed of all charters, laws and privileges, because the very creation of the council was a bold and brutal proclamation that those laws and privileges were at an end. The constitution or maternal principle of this suddenly erected court was of a twofold nature. It defined and it punished the crime of treason. The definitions, couched in eighteen articles, declared it to be treason to have delivered or signed any petition against the new bishops, the Inquisition, or the Edicts; to have tolerated public preaching under any circumstances; to have omitted resistance to the image-breaking, to the

field-preaching, or to the presentation of the Request by the nobles, and "either through sympathy or surprise" to have asserted that the King did not possess the right to deprive all the provinces of their liberties, or to have maintained that this present tribunal was bound to respect in any manner any laws or any charters. In these brief and simple, but comprehensive terms, was the crime of high treason defined. The punishment was still more briefly, simply, and comprehensively stated, for it was instant death in all cases. So well too did this new and terrible engine perform its work, that in less than three months from the time of its erection, eighteen hundred human beings had suffered death by its summary proceedings; some of the highest, the noblest, and the most virtuous in the land among the number; nor had it then manifested the slightest indication of faltering in its dread career.

Yet, strange to say, this tremendous court, thus established upon the ruins of all the ancient institutions of the country, had not been provided with even a nominal authority from any source whatever. The King had granted it no letters patent or charter, nor had even the Duke of Alba thought it worth while to grant any commissions either in his own name or as Captain-General, to any of the members composing the board. The Blood-Council was merely an informal club, of which the Duke was perpetual president, while the other members were all appointed by himself.

Of these subordinate councillors, two had the right of voting, subject, however, in all cases to his final decision, while the rest of the number did not vote at all. It had not, therefore, in any sense, the character of a judicial, legislative, or executive tribunal, but was purely a board of advice by which the bloody labors of the duke were occasionally lightened as to detail, while not a feather's weight of power or of responsibility was removed from his shoulders. He reserved for himself the final decision upon all causes which should come before the council, and stated his motives for so doing with grim simplicity. "Two reasons," he wrote to the King, "have determined me thus to limit the power of the tribunal; the first that, not knowing its members, I might be easily deceived by them; the second, that the men of law only condemn for crimes which are proved; whereas your Majesty knows that affairs of state are governed by very different rules from the laws which they have here."

It being, therefore, the object of the Duke to compose a body of men who would be of assistance to him in condemning for crimes which could not be proved, and in slipping over statutes which were not to be recognized, it must be confessed that he was not unfortunate in the appointments which he made to the office of councillors. In this task of appointment he had the assistance of the experienced Viglius. That learned jurisconsult, with characteristic lubricity, had evaded the dangerous honor for himself, but he nominated a number of persons from whom the Duke selected his list. The sacerdotal robes which he had so recently and so "craftily" assumed, furnished his own excuse, and in his letters to his faithful Hopper he repeatedly congratulated himself upon his success in keeping himself at a distance from so bloody and perilous a post.

It is impossible to look at the conduct of the distinguished Frisian at

this important juncture without contempt. Bent only upon saving himself, his property, and his reputation, he did not hesitate to bend before the "most illustrious Duke," as he always denominated him, with fulsome and fawning homage. While he declined to dip his own fingers in the innocent blood which was about to flow in torrents, he did not object to officiate at the initiatory preliminaries of the great Netherland holocaust. His decent and dainty demeanor seems even more offensive than the jocularity of the real murderers. Conscious that no man knew the laws and customs of the Netherlands better than himself, he had the humble effrontery to observe that it was necessary for him at that moment silently to submit his own unskilfulness to the superior judgment and knowledge of others. Having at last been relieved from the stone of Sisyphus, which, as he plaintively expressed himself, he had been rolling for twenty years; having, by the arrival of Tisnacq, obtained his discharge as President of the state council, he was yet not unwilling to retain the emoluments and the rank of President of the privy council, although both offices had become sinecures since the erection of the Council of Blood. Although his life had been spent in administrative and judicial employments, he did not blush upon a matter of constitutional law to defer to the authority of such jurisconsults as the Duke of Alva and his two Spanish bloodhounds, Vargas and Del Rio. He did not like, he observed, in his confidential correspondence, to gainsay the Duke, when maintaining, that in cases of treason, the privileges of Brabant were powerless, although he mildly doubted whether the Brabantines would agree with the doctrine. He often thought, he said, of remedies for restoring the prosperity of the provinces, but in action he only assisted the Duke, to the best of his abilities, in arranging the Blood-Council. He wished well to his country, but he was more anxious for the favor of Alva. "I rejoice," said he, in one of his letters, "that the most illustrious Duke has written to the King in praise of my obsequiousness; when I am censured here for so reverently cherishing him, it is a consolation that my services to the King and to the governor are not unappreciated there." Indeed the Duke of Alva, who had originally suspected the President's character, seemed at last overcome by his indefatigable and cringing homage. He wrote to the King, in whose good graces the learned Doctor was most anxious at that portentous period to maintain himself, that the President was very serviceable and diligent, and that he deserved to receive a crumb of comfort from the royal hand. Philip, in consequence, wrote in one of his letters a few lines of vague compliment, which could be shown to Viglius, according to Alva's suggestion. It is, however, not a little characteristic of the Spanish court and of the Spanish monarch, that, on the very day before, he had sent to the Captain-General a few documents of very different import. In order, as he said, that the Duke might be ignorant of nothing which related to the Netherlands, he forwarded to him copies of the letters written by Margaret of Parma from Brussels, three years before. These letters, as it will be recollected, contained an account of the secret investigations which the Duchess had made as to the private character and opinions of Viglius--at the very moment when he apparently stood highest in her confidence--and charged him with heresy, swindling, and theft. Thus the painstaking and time-serving President, with all his learning and experience, was successively the dupe of Margaret and of Alva, whom he so obsequiously courted, and always of Philip, whom he so feared and worshipped.

With his assistance, the list of blood-councillors was quickly completed. No one who was offered the office refused it. Noircarmes and Berlaymont accepted with very great eagerness. Several presidents and councillors of the different provincial tribunals were appointed, but all the Netherlanders were men of straw. Two Spaniards, Del Rio and Vargas, were the only members who could vote; while their decisions, as already stated, were subject to reversal by Alva. Del Rio was a man without character or talent, a mere tool in the hands of his superiors, but Juan de Vargas was a terrible reality.

No better man could have been found in Europe for the post to which he was thus elevated. To shed human blood was, in his opinion, the only important business and the only exhilarating pastime of life. His youth had been stained with other crimes. He had been obliged to retire from Spain, because of his violation of an orphan child to whom he was guardian, but, in his manhood, he found no pleasure but in murder. He executed Alva's bloody work with an industry which was almost superhuman, and with a merriment which would have shamed a demon. His execrable jests ring through the blood and smoke and death-cries of those days of perpetual sacrifice. He was proud to be the double of the iron-hearted Duke, and acted so uniformly in accordance with his views, that the right of revision remained but nominal. There could be no possibility of collision where the subaltern was only anxious to surpass an incomparable superior. The figure of Vargas rises upon us through the mist of three centuries with terrible distinctness. Even his barbarous grammar has not been forgotten, and his crimes against syntax and against humanity have acquired the same immortality. "Heretici fraxerunt templa, boni nihili faxerunt contra, ergo debent omnes patibulare," was the comprehensive but barbarous formula of a man who murdered the Latin language as ruthlessly as he slaughtered his contemporaries.

Among the ciphers who composed the rest of the board, the Flemish Councillor Hessels was the one whom the Duke most respected. He was not without talent or learning, but the Duke only valued him for his cruelty. Being allowed to take but little share in the deliberations, Hessels was accustomed to doze away his afternoon hours at the council table, and when awakened from his nap in order that he might express an opinion on the case then before the court, was wont to rub his eyes and to call out "Ad patibulum, ad patibulum," ("to the gallows with him, to the gallows with him,") with great fervor, but in entire ignorance of the culprit's name or the merits of the case. His wife, naturally disturbed that her husband's waking and sleeping hours were alike absorbed with this hangman's work, more than once ominously expressed her hope to him, that he, whose head and heart were thus engrossed with the gibbet, might not one day come to hang upon it himself; a gloomy prophecy which the Future most terribly fulfilled.

The Council of Blood, thus constituted, held its first session on the 20th September, at the lodgings of Alva. Springing completely grown and armed to the teeth from the head of its inventor, the new tribunal--at the very outset in possession of all its vigor--forthwith began to manifest a terrible activity in accomplishing the objects of its

existence. The councillors having been sworn to "eternal secrecy as to any thing which should be transacted at the board, and having likewise made oath to denounce any one of their number who should violate the pledge," the court was considered as organized. Alva worked therein seven hours daily. It may be believed that the subordinates were not spared, and that their office proved no sinecure. Their labors, however, were not encumbered by antiquated forms. As this supreme and only tribunal for all the Netherlands had no commission or authority save the will of the Captain-General, so it was also thought a matter of supererogation to establish a set of rules and orders such as might be useful in less independent courts. The forms of proceeding were brief and artless. There was a rude organization by which a crowd of commissioners, acting as inferior officers of the council, were spread over the provinces, whose business was to collect information concerning all persons who might be incriminated for participation in the recent troubles. The greatest crime, however, was to be rich, and one which could be expiated by no virtues, however signal. Alva was bent upon proving himself as accomplished a financier as he was indisputably a consummate commander, and he had promised his master an annual income of 500,000 ducats from the confiscations which were to accompany the executions.

It was necessary that the blood torrent should flow at once through the Netherlands, in order that the promised golden river, a yard deep, according to his vaunt, should begin to irrigate the thirsty soil of Spain. It is obvious, from the fundamental laws which were made to define treason at the same moment in which they established the council, that any man might be at any instant summoned to the court. Every man, whether innocent or guilty, whether Papist or Protestant, felt his head shaking on his shoulders. If he were wealthy, there seemed no remedy but flight, which was now almost impossible, from the heavy penalties affixed by the new edict upon all carriers, shipmasters, and wagoners, who should aid in the escape of heretics.

A certain number of these commissioners were particularly instructed to collect information as to the treason of Orange, Louis Nassau, Brederode, Egmont, Horn, Culemborg, Vanden Berg, Bergen, and Montigny. Upon such information the proceedings against those distinguished seigniors were to be summarily instituted. Particular councillors of the Court of Blood were charged with the arrangement of these important suits, but the commissioners were to report in the first instance to the Duke himself, who afterwards returned the paper into the hands of his subordinates.

With regard to the inferior and miscellaneous cases which were daily brought in incredible profusion before the tribunal, the same preliminaries were observed, by way of aping the proceedings in courts of justice. Alva sent the cart-loads of information which were daily brought to him, but which neither he nor any other man had time to read, to be disposed of by the board of councillors. It was the duty of the different subalterns, who, as already stated, had no right of voting, to prepare reports upon the cases. Nothing could be more summary. Information was lodged against a man, or against a hundred men, in one document. The Duke sent the papers to the council, and the inferior

councillors reported at once to Vargas. If the report concluded with a recommendation of death to the man, or the hundred men in question, Vargas instantly approved it, and execution was done upon the man, or the hundred men, within forty-eight hours. If the report had any other conclusion, it was immediately sent back for revision, and the reporters were overwhelmed with reproaches by the President.

Such being the method of operation, it may be supposed that the councillors were not allowed to slacken in their terrible industry. The register of every city, village, and hamlet throughout the Netherlands showed the daily lists of men, women, and children thus sacrificed at the shrine of the demon who had obtained the mastery over this unhappy land. It was not often that an individual was of sufficient importance to be tried--if trial it could be called--by himself. It was found more expeditious to send them in batches to the furnace. Thus, for example, on the 4th of January, eighty-four inhabitants of Valenciennes were condemned; on another day, ninety-five miscellaneous individuals, from different places in Flanders; on another, forty-six inhabitants of Malines; on another, thirty-five persons from different localities, and so on.

The evening of Shrovetide, a favorite holiday in the Netherlands, afforded an occasion for arresting and carrying off a vast number of doomed individuals at a single swoop. It was correctly supposed that the burghers, filled with wine and wassail, to which perhaps the persecution under which they lived lent an additional and horrible stimulus, might be easily taken from their beds in great numbers, and be delivered over at once to the council. The plot was ingenious, the net was spread accordingly. Many of the doomed were, however, luckily warned of the terrible termination which was impending over their festival, and bestowed themselves in safety for a season. A prize of about five hundred prisoners was all which rewarded the sagacity of the enterprise. It is needless to add that they were all immediately executed. It is a wearisome and odious task to ransack the mouldy records of three centuries ago, in order to reproduce the obscure names of the thousands who were thus sacrificed.. The dead have buried their dead, and are forgotten. It is likewise hardly necessary to state that the proceedings before the council were all 'ex parte', and that an information was almost inevitably followed by a death-warrant. It sometimes happened even that the zeal of the councillors outstripped the industry of the commissioners. The sentences were occasionally in advance of the docket. Thus upon one occasion a man's case was called for trial, but before the investigation was commenced it was discovered that he had been already executed. A cursory examination of the papers proved, moreover, as usual, that the culprit had committed no crime. "No matter for that," said Vargas, jocosely, "if he has died innocent, it will be all the better for him when he takes his trial in the other world."

But, however the councillors might indulge in these gentle jests among themselves, it was obvious that innocence was in reality impossible, according to the rules which had been laid down regarding treason. The practice was in accordance with the precept, and persons were daily executed with senseless pretexts, which was worse than executions with no

pretexes at all. Thus Peter de Witt of Amsterdam was beheaded, because at one of the tumults in that city he had persuaded a rioter not to fire upon a magistrate. This was taken as sufficient proof that he was a man in authority among the rebels, and he was accordingly put to death. Madame Juriaen, who, in 1566, had struck with her slipper a little wooden image of the Virgin, together with her maid-servant, who had witnessed without denouncing the crime, were both drowned by the hangman in a hogshead placed on the scaffold.

Death, even, did not in all cases place a criminal beyond the reach of the executioner. Egbert Meynartsoon, a man of high official rank, had been condemned, together with two colleagues, on an accusation of collecting money in a Lutheran church. He died in prison of dropsy. The sheriff was indignant with the physician, because, in spite of cordials and strengthening prescriptions, the culprit had slipped through his fingers before he had felt those of the hangman. He consoled himself by placing the body on a chair, and having the dead man beheaded in company with his colleagues.

Thus the whole country became a charnel-house; the deathbell tolled hourly in every village; not a family but was called to mourn for its dearest relatives, while the survivors stalked listlessly about, the ghosts of their former selves, among the wrecks of their former homes. The spirit of the nation, within a few months after the arrival of Alva, seemed hopelessly broken. The blood of its best and bravest had already stained the scaffold; the men to whom it had been accustomed to look for guidance and protection, were dead, in prison, or in exile. Submission had ceased to be of any avail, flight was impossible, and the spirit of vengeance had alighted at every fireside. The mourners went daily about the streets, for there was hardly a house which had not been made desolate. The scaffolds, the gallows, the funeral piles, which had been sufficient in ordinary times, furnished now an entirely inadequate machinery for the incessant executions. Columns and stakes in every street, the door-posts of private houses, the fences in the fields were laden with human carcasses, strangled, burned, beheaded. The orchards in the country bore on many a tree the hideous fruit of human bodies.

Thus the Netherlands were crushed, and but for the stringency of the tyranny which had now closed their gates, would have been depopulated. The grass began to grow in the streets of those cities which had recently nourished so many artisans. In all those great manufacturing and industrial marts, where the tide of human life had throbbed so vigorously, there now reigned the silence and the darkness of midnight. It was at this time that the learned Viglius wrote to his friend Hopper, that all venerated the prudence and gentleness of the Duke of Alva. Such were among the first-fruits of that prudence and that gentleness.

The Duchess of Parma had been kept in a continued state of irritation. She had not ceased for many months to demand her release from the odious position of a cipher in a land where she had so lately been sovereign, and she had at last obtained it. Philip transmitted his acceptance of her resignation by the same courier who brought Alva's commission to be governor-general in her place. The letters to the Duchess were full of

conventional compliments for her past services, accompanied, however, with a less barren and more acceptable acknowledgment, in the shape of a life income of 14,000 ducats instead of the 8000 hitherto enjoyed by her Highness.

In addition to this liberal allowance, of which she was never to be deprived, except upon receiving full payment of 140,000 ducats, she was presented with 25,000 florins by the estates of Brabant, and with 30,000 by those of Flanders.

With these substantial tokens of the success of her nine years' fatigue and intolerable anxiety, she at last took her departure from the Netherlands, having communicated the dissolution of her connexion with the provinces by a farewell letter to the Estates dated 9th December, 1567. Within a few weeks afterwards, escorted by the Duke of Alva across the frontier of Brabant; attended by a considerable deputation of Flemish nobility into Germany, and accompanied to her journey's end at Parma by the Count and Countess of Mansfeld, she finally closed her eventful career in the Netherlands.

The horrors of the succeeding administration proved beneficial to her reputation. Upon the dark ground of succeeding years the lines which recorded her history seemed written with letters of light. Yet her conduct in the Netherlands offers but few points for approbation, and many for indignant censure. That she was not entirely destitute of feminine softness and sentiments of bounty, her parting despatch to her brother proved. In that letter she recommended to him a course of clemency and forgiveness, and reminded him that the nearer kings approach to God in station, the more they should endeavor to imitate him in his attributes of benignity. But the language of this farewell was more tender than had been the spirit of her government. One looks in vain, too, through the general atmosphere of kindness which pervades the epistle; for a special recommendation of those distinguished and doomed seigniors, whose attachment to her person and whose chivalrous and conscientious endeavors to fulfil her own orders, had placed them upon the edge of that precipice from which they were shortly to be hurled. The men who had restrained her from covering herself with disgrace by a precipitate retreat from the post of danger, and who had imperilled their lives by obedience to her express instructions, had been long languishing in solitary confinement, never to be terminated except by a traitor's death--yet we search in vain for a kind word in their behalf.

Meantime the second civil war in France had broken out. The hollow truce by which the Guise party and the Huguenots had partly pretended to deceive each other was hastened to its end; among other causes, by the march of Alva, to the Netherlands. The Huguenots had taken alarm, for they recognized the fellowship which united their foes in all countries against the Reformation, and Conde and Coligny knew too well that the same influence which had brought Alva to Brussels would soon create an exterminating army against their followers. Hostilities were resumed with more bitterness than ever. The battle of St. Denis--fierce, fatal, but indecisive--was fought. The octogenarian hero, Montmorency, fighting like a foot soldier, refusing to yield his sword, and replying to the

respectful solicitations of his nearest enemy by dashing his teeth down his throat with the butt-end of his pistol, the hero of so many battles, whose defeat at St. Quintin had been the fatal point in his career, had died at last in his armor, bravely but not gloriously, in conflict with his own countrymen, led by his own heroic nephew. The military control of the Catholic party was completely in the hand of the Guises; the Chancellor de l'Hopital had abandoned the court after a last and futile effort to reconcile contending factions, which no human power could unite; the Huguenots had possessed themselves of Rochelle and of other strong places, and, under the guidance of adroit statesmen and accomplished generals, were pressing the Most Christian monarch hard in the very heart of his kingdom.

As early as the middle of October, while still in Antwerp, Alva had received several secret agents of the French monarch, then closely beleaguered in his capital. Cardinal Lorraine offered to place several strong places of France in the hands of the Spaniard, and Alva had written to Philip that he was disposed to accept the offer, and to render the service. The places thus held would be a guarantee for his expenses, he said, while in case King Charles and his brother should die, "their possession would enable Philip to assert his own claim to the French crown in right of his wife, the Salic law being merely a pleasantry."

The Queen Dowager, adopting now a very different tone from that which characterized her conversation at the Bayonne interview, wrote to Alva, that, if for want of 2000 Spanish musketeers, which she requested him to furnish, she should be obliged to succumb, she chose to disculpate herself in advance before God and Christian princes for the peace which she should be obliged to make. The Duke wrote to her in reply, that it was much better to have a kingdom ruined in preserving it for God and the king by war, than to have it kept entire without war, to the profit of the devil and of his followers. He was also reported on another occasion to have reminded her of the Spanish proverb--that the head of one salmon is worth those of a hundred frogs. The hint, if it were really given, was certainly destined to be acted upon.

The Duke not only furnished Catherine with advice, but with the musketeers which she had solicited. Two thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, under the Count of AreMBERG, attended by a choice band of the Catholic nobility of the Netherlands, had joined the royal camp at Paris before the end of the year, to take their part in the brief hostilities by which the second treacherous peace was to be preceded.

Meantime, Alva was not unmindful of the business which had served as a pretext in the arrest of the two Counts. The fortifications of the principal cities were pushed on with great rapidity. The memorable citadel of Antwerp in particular had already been commenced in October under the superintendence of the celebrated engineers, Pacheco and Gabriel de Cerbelloni. In a few months it was completed, at a cost of one million four hundred thousand florins, of which sum the citizens, in spite of their remonstrances, were compelled to contribute more than one quarter. The sum of four hundred thousand florins was forced from the burghers by a tax upon all hereditary property within the municipality.

Two thousand workmen were employed daily in the construction of this important fortress, which was erected, as its position most plainly manifested, not to protect, but to control the commercial capital of the provinces. It stood at the edge of the city, only separated from its walls by an open esplanade. It was the most perfect pentagon in Europe, having one of its sides resting on the Scheld, two turned towards the city, and two towards the open country. Five bastions, with walls of hammered stone, connected by curtains of turf and masonry, surrounded by walls measuring a league in circumference, and by an outer moat fed by the Scheld, enclosed a spacious enceinte, where a little church with many small lodging-houses, shaded by trees and shrubbery, nestled among the bristling artillery, as if to mimic the appearance of a peaceful and pastoral village. To four of the five bastions, the Captain-General, with characteristic ostentation, gave his own names and titles. One was called the Duke, the second Ferdinando, a third Toledo, a fourth Alva, while the fifth was baptized with the name of the ill-fated engineer, Pacheco. The Watergate was decorated with the escutcheon of Alva, surrounded by his Golden Fleece collar, with its pendant lamb of God; a symbol of blasphemous irony, which still remains upon the fortress, to recal the image of the tyrant and murderer. Each bastion was honeycombed with casemates and subterranean storehouses, and capable of containing within its bowels a vast supply of provisions, munitions, and soldiers. Such was the celebrated citadel built to tame the turbulent spirit of Antwerp, at the cost of those whom it was to terrify and to insult.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Conde and Coligny

Furnished, in addition, with a force of two thousand prostitutes

He came as a conqueror not as a mediator

Hope deferred, suddenly changing to despair

Meantime the second civil war in France had broken out

Spendthrift of time, he was an economist of blood

The greatest crime, however, was to be rich

Time and myself are two

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