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HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce--1609

By John Lothrop Motley

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History of the United Netherlands, 1608

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President Jeannin had long been prepared for this result. It was also by no means distasteful to him. A peace would not have accorded with the ulterior and secretly cherished schemes of his sovereign, and during his visit to Paris, he had succeeded in persuading Henry that a truce would be far the most advantageous solution of the question, so far as his interests were concerned.

For it had been precisely during that midsummer vacation of the President at Paris that Henry had completed his plot against the liberty of the republic, of which he professed himself the only friend. Another phase of Spanish marriage-making had excited his ever scheming and insidious brain. It had been proposed that the second son of the Spanish king should espouse one of Henry's daughters.

The papal Nuncius asked what benefit the King of Spain would receive for his share, in case of the marriage. The French king replied by plainly declaring to the Nuncius that the United States should abstain from and

renounce all navigation to and commerce with the Indies, and should permit public exercise of the Catholic religion. If they refused, would incontinently abandon them to their fate. More than this, he said, could not honestly be expected of him.

Surely this was enough. Honestly or dishonestly, what more could Spain expect of the republic's best ally, than that he should use all his efforts to bring her back into Spanish subjection, should deprive her of commerce with three-quarters of the world, and compel her to re-establish the religion which she believed, at that period, to be incompatible with her constitutional liberties? It is difficult to imagine a more profligate or heartless course than the one pursued at this juncture by Henry. Secretly, he was intriguing, upon the very soil of the Netherlands, to filch from them that splendid commerce which was the wonder of the age, which had been invented and created by Dutch navigators and men of science, which was the very foundation of their State, and without which they could not exist, in order that he might appropriate it to himself, and transfer the East India Company to France; while at Paris he was solemnly engaging himself in a partnership with their ancient and deadly enemy to rob them of their precious and nobly gained liberty. Was better proof ever afforded that God alone can protect us against those whom we trust? Who was most dangerous to the United Provinces during those memorable peace negotiations, Spain the avowed enemy, or France the friend?

The little republic had but her own sword, her own brain, and her own purse to rely upon. Elizabeth was dead, and James loved Spain better than he did the Netherlands, and quiet better than Spain. "I have told you often," said Caron, "and I say it once more, the Spaniard is lucky that he has such a peaceable king as this to deal with in England."

The details of the new marriage project were arranged at Paris between the Nuncius, the Spanish ambassador, Don Pedro de Toledo, the diplomatic agent of the archdukes, and Henry's ministers, precisely as if there had been no negotiations going on between the States and Spain. Yet the French king was supposed to be the nearest friend of the States, and was consulted by them on every occasion, while his most intimate and trusted counsellor, the ingenuous Jeannin, whose open brow was stamped with sincerity, was privy to all their most secret deliberations.

But the statesman thus dealing with the Hollanders under such a mask of friendly candour, knew perfectly well the reason why his Government preferred a truce to a peace. During a prolonged truce, the two royal children would grow old enough for the consummation of marriage, and the States--so it was hoped--would be corrupted and cajoled into renouncing their liberty. All the Netherlands would be then formed into a secundogeniture for Spain, and the first sovereign would be the husband of a French princess. Even as an object of ambition, the prize to be secured by so much procrastination and so much treachery was paltry.

When the Spanish commissioners came to the French and English ambassadors accordingly, complaining of the abrupt and peremptory tone of the States' reply, the suggestion of conferences for truce, in place of fruitless

peace negotiations, was made at once, and of course favourably received. It was soon afterwards laid before the States-General. To this end, in truth, Richardot and his colleagues had long been secretly tending. Moreover, the subject had been thoroughly but secretly discussed long before between Jeannin and Barneveld.

The French and English ambassadors, accordingly, on the 27th August, came before the States-General, and made a formal proposition for the opening of negotiations for a truce. They advised the adoption of this course in the strongest manner. "Let the truce be made with you," they said, "as with free States, over which the king and the archdukes have no pretensions, with the understanding that, during the time of the truce you are to have free commerce as well to the Indies as to Spain and the obedient Netherlands, and to every part of the Spanish dominions; that you are to retain all that you possess at present, and that such other conditions are to be added as you may find it reasonable to impose. During this period of leisure you will have time to put your affairs in order, to pay your debts, and to reform your Government, and if you remain united, the truce will change into an absolute peace."

Maurice was more indignant when the new scheme was brought to his notice than he had ever been before, and used more violent language in opposing a truce than he had been used to employ when striving against a peace. To be treated with, as with a free State, and to receive permission to trade with the outside world until the truce should expire, seemed to him a sorry result for the republic to accept.

The state-council declared, by way of answer to the foreign ambassadors, that the principal points and conditions which had been solemnly fixed, before the States had consented to begin the negotiations, had been disputed with infinite effrontery and shamelessness by the enemy. The pure and perfect sovereignty notoriously included religion and navigation to any part of the world; and the republic would never consent to any discussion of truce unless these points were confirmed beforehand with the Spanish king's signature and seal.

This resolution of the council--a body which stood much under the influence of the Nassaus--was adopted next day by the States-General, and duly communicated to the friendly ambassadors.

The foreign commissioners, when apprised of this decision, begged for six weeks' time; in order to be able to hear from Madrid.

Even the peace party was disgusted with this impertinence. Maurice boiled over with wrath. The ambassadors recommended compliance with the proposal. Their advice was discussed in the States-General, eighty members being present, besides Maurice and Lewis William. The stadholder made a violent and indignant speech.

He was justified in his vehemence. Nothing could exceed the perfidy of their great ally.

"I know that the King of France calculates thus"--wrote Aerssens at that

moment from Paris--"If the truce lasts seven years, my son will be old enough to accomplish the proposed marriage, and they will be obliged to fulfil their present offers. Otherwise; I would break the truce in the Netherlands, and my own peace with them, in order to take from the Spaniard by force what he led me to hope from alliance.' Thus it is," continued the States' envoy, "that his Majesty condescends to propose, to us a truce, which may have a double interpretation, according to the disposition of the strongest, and thus our commonwealth will be kept in perpetual disquiet, without knowing whether it is sovereign or not. Nor will it be sovereign unless it shall so please our neighbour, who by this means will always keep his foot upon our throat."

"To treat with the States as if they were free," said Henry to the Nuncius soon afterwards, "is not to make them free. This clause does no prejudice to the rights of the King of Spain, except for the time of the truce." Aerssens taxed the king with having said this. His Majesty flatly denied it. The republican envoy bluntly adduced the testimony of the ambassadors of Venice and of Wirtemberg. The king flew into a rage on seeing that his secrets had been divulged, and burst out with these words: "What you demand is not reasonable. You wish the king of Spain to renounce his rights in order to arrive at a truce. You wish to dictate the law to him. If you had just gained four battles over him, you could not demand more. I have always held you for sovereigns, because I am your friend, but if you would judge by equity and justice, you are not sovereigns. It is not reasonable that the king of Spain should quit the sovereignty for always, and you ought to be satisfied with having it so long as the treaty shall last."

Here was playing at sovereignty with a vengeance. Sovereignty was a rattle for the States to amuse themselves with, until the royal infants, French and Spanish, should be grown old enough to take the sovereignty for good. Truly this was indeed keeping the republic under the king's heel to be crushed at his pleasure, as Aerssens, with just bitterness, exclaimed.

Two days were passed at the Hague in vehement debate. The deputies of Zeeland withdrew. The deputies from Holland were divided, but, on the whole, it was agreed to listen to propositions of truce, provided the freedom of the United Provinces--not under conditions nor during a certain period, but simply and for all time--should be recognised beforehand.

It was further decided on the 14th September to wait until the end of the month for the answer from Spain.

After the 1st of October it was distinctly intimated to the Spanish commissioners that they must at once leave the country unless the king had then acknowledged the absolute independence of the provinces.

A suggestion which had been made by these diplomatists to prolong the actually existing armistice into a truce of seven years, a step which they professed themselves willing to take upon their own responsibility, had been scornfully rejected by the States. It was already carrying them

far enough away, they said, to take them away from a peace to a truce, which was something far less secure than a peace, but the continuance of this floating, uncertain armistice would be the most dangerous insecurity of all. This would be going from firm land to slippery ice, and from slippery ice into the water. By such a process, they would have neither war nor peace--neither liberty of government nor freedom of commerce--and they unanimously refused to listen to any such schemes.

During the fortnight which followed this provisional consent of the States, the prince redoubled his efforts to counteract the Barneveld party.

He was determined, so far as in him lay, that the United Netherlands should never fall back under the dominion of Spain. He had long maintained the impossibility of effecting their thorough independence except by continuing the war, and had only with reluctance acquiesced in the arguments of the French ambassadors in favour of peace negotiations. As to the truce, he vehemently assured those envoys that it was but a trap. How could the Netherlanders know who their friends might be when the truce should have expired, and under what unfavourable auspices they might not be compelled to resume hostilities?

As if he had been actually present at the council boards in Madrid and Valladolid, or had been reading the secret letters of Friar John to Spinola, he affirmed that the only object of Spain was to recruit her strength and improve her finances, now entirely exhausted. He believed, on the other hand, that the people of the provinces, after they should have once become accustomed to repose; would shrink from exchanging their lucrative pursuits for war, and would prefer to fall back under the yoke of Spain. During the truce they would object to the furnishing of necessary contributions for garrison expenses, and the result would be that the most important cities and strongholds, especially those on the frontier, which were mainly inhabited by Catholics, would become insecure. Being hostile to a Government which only controlled them by force, they would with difficulty be kept in check by diminished garrisons, unless they should obtain liberty of Catholic worship.

It is a dismal proof of the inability of a leading mind, after half a century's war, to comprehend the true lesson of the war--that toleration of the Roman religion seemed to Maurice an entirely inadmissible idea. The prince could not rise to the height on which his illustrious father had stood; and those about him, who encouraged him in his hostility to Catholicism, denounced Barneveld and Arminius as no better than traitors and atheists. In the eyes of the extreme party, the mighty war had been waged, not to liberate human thought, but to enforce predestination; and heretics to Calvinism were as offensive in their eyes as Jews and Saracens had ever been to Torquemada.

The reasons were unanswerable for the refusal of the States to bind themselves to a foreign sovereign in regard to the interior administration of their commonwealth; but that diversity of religious worship should be considered incompatible with the health of the young republic--that the men who had so bravely fought the Spanish Inquisition

should now claim their own right of inquisition into the human conscience--this was almost enough to create despair as to the possibility of the world's progress. The seed of intellectual advancement is slow in ripening, and it is almost invariably the case that the generation which plants--often but half conscious of the mightiness of its work--is not the generation which reaps the harvest. But all mankind at last inherits what is sown in the blood and tears of a few. That Government, whether regal or democratic, should dare to thrust itself between man and his Maker--that the State, not with interfering in a thousand superfluous ways with the freedom of individual human action in the business of life, should combine with the Church to reduce human thought to slavery in regard to the sacred interests of eternity, was one day to be esteemed a blasphemous presumption in lands which deserved to call themselves free. But that hour had not yet come.

"If the garrisons should be weakened," said the prince, "nothing could be expected from the political fidelity of the town populations in question, unless they should be allowed the exercise of their own religion. But the States could hardly be disposed to grant this voluntarily, for fear of injuring the general insecurity and violating the laws of the commonwealth, built as it is upon a foundation which cannot suffer this diversity in the public exercise of religion. Already," continued Maurice, "there are the seeds of dissension in the provinces and in the cities, sure to ripen in the idleness and repose of peace to an open division. This would give the enemy a means of intriguing with and corrupting those who are already wickedly inclined."

Thus in the year 1608, the head of the Dutch republic, the son of William the Silent, seemed to express himself in favour of continuing a horrible war, not to maintain the political independence of his country, but to prevent Catholics from acquiring the right of publicly worshipping God according to the dictates of their conscience.

Yet it would be unjust to the prince, whose patriotism was as pure and unsullied as his sword, to confound his motives with his end. He was firmly convinced that liberty of religious worship, to be acquired during the truce, would inevitably cause the United Provinces to fall once more under the Spanish yoke. The French ambassador, with whom he conferred every day, never doubted his sincerity. Gelderland, Friesland, Overijssel, Groningen, and Utrecht, five provinces out of the united seven, the prince declared to be chiefly inhabited by Catholics. They had only entered the union, he said, because compelled by force. They could only be kept in the union by force, unless allowed freedom of religion. His inference from such a lamentable state of affairs was, not that the experiment of religious worship should be tried, but that the garrisons throughout the five provinces ought to be redoubled, and the war with Spain indefinitely waged. The President was likewise of opinion that "a revolt of these five provinces against the union might be at any moment expected, ill disposed as they were to recognise a sovereignty which abolished their religion." Being himself a Catholic, however, it was not unnatural that he should make a different deduction from that of the prince, and warmly recommend, not more garrisons, but more liberty of worship.

Thus the very men who were ready to dare all, and to sacrifice all in behalf of their country, really believed themselves providing for the imperishable security of the commonwealth by placing it on the narrow basis of religious intolerance.

Maurice, not satisfied with making these vehement arguments against the truce in his conferences with the envoys of the French and British sovereigns, employed the brief interval yet to elapse before definitely breaking off or resuming the conferences with the Spanish commissioners in making vigorous appeals to the country.

"The weal or woe of the United Provinces for all time," he said, "is depending on the present transactions." Weigh well the reasons we urge, and make use of those which seem to you convincing. You know that the foe, according to his old deceitful manner, laid down very specious conditions at the beginning, in order to induce my lords the States-General to treat.

"If the king and the archdukes sincerely mean to relinquish absolutely their pretensions to these provinces, they can certainly have no difficulty in finding honest and convenient words to express their intention. As they are seeking other phrases than the usual and straightforward ones, they give certain proof that they mean to keep back from us the substance. They are trying to cheat us with dark, dubious, loosely-screwed terms, which secure nothing and bind to nothing. If it be wise to trust the welfare of our State to ambiguous words, you can judge according to your own discretion.

"Recognition of our sovereignty is the foundation-stone of these negotiations.

"Let every man be assured that, with such mighty enemies, we can do nothing by halves. We cannot afford to retract, mutilate, or moderate our original determination. He who swerves from the straight road at the beginning is lost; he who stumbles at the first step is apt to fall down the whole staircase. If, on account of imaginable necessity, we postpone that most vital point, the assurance of our freedom, we shall very easily allow less important points to pass muster, and at last come tamely into the path of reconciliation. That was exactly the danger which our ancestors in similar negotiations always feared, and against which we too have always done our best to guard ourselves.

"Wherefore, if the preservation of our beloved fatherland is dear to you, I exhort you to maintain that great fundamental resolution, at all times and against all men, even if this should cause the departure of the enemy's commissioners. What can you expect from them but evil fruit?"

He then advised all the estates and magistracies which he was addressing to instruct their deputies, at the approaching session of the States-General, to hold on to the first article of the often-cited preliminary resolution without allowing one syllable to be altered. Otherwise nothing could save the commonwealth from dire and notorious confusion.

Above all, he entreated them to act in entire harmony and confidence with himself and his cousin, even as they had ever done with his illustrious father.

Certainly the prince fully deserved the confidence of the States, as well for his own signal services and chivalrous self-devotion, as for the unexampled sacrifices and achievements of William the Silent. His words had the true patriotic ring of his father's frequent and eloquent appeals; and I have not hesitated to give these extracts from his discourse, because comparatively few of such utterances of Maurice have been preserved, and because it gives a vivid impression of the condition of the republic and the state of parties at that momentous epoch. It was not merely the fate of the United Netherlands and the question of peace or war between the little republic and its hereditary enemy that were upon the issue. The peace of all Christendom, the most considerable material interests of civilization, and the highest political and moral principles that can influence human action, were involved in those negotiations.

There were not wanting many to impeach the purity of the stadholder's motives. As admiral or captain-general, he received high salaries, besides a tenth part of all prize-money gained at sea by the fleets, or of ransom and blackmail on land by the armies of the republic. His profession, his ambition, his delights, were those of a soldier. As a soldier in a great war, he was more necessary to his countrymen than he could expect to be as a statesman in time of peace. But nothing ever appeared in public or in private, which threw a reasonable suspicion upon his lofty patriotism. Peace he had always believed to be difficult of attainment. It had now been proved impossible. A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction, and he denounced it, as we have seen, in the language of energetic conviction. He never alluded to his pecuniary losses in case peace should be made. His disinterested patriotism was the frequent subject of comment in the most secret letters of the French ambassadors to the king. He had repeatedly refused enormous offers if he would forsake the cause of the republic. The King of France was ever ready to tempt him with bribes, such as had proved most efficacious with men as highly born and as highly placed as a cadet of the house of Orange-Nassau. But there is no record that Jeannin assailed him at this crisis with such temptations, although it has not been pretended that the prince was obdurate to the influence of Mammon when that deity could be openly approached.

That Maurice loved power, pelf, and war, can hardly be denied. That he had a mounting ambition; that he thought a monarchy founded upon the historical institutions and charters of the provinces might be better than the burgher-aristocracy which, under the lead of Barneveld, was establishing itself in the country; that he knew no candidate so eligible for such a throne as his father's son, all this is highly probable and scarcely surprising. But that such sentiments or aspirations caused him to swerve the ninth part of a hair from what he considered the direct path of duty; that he determined to fight out the great fight with Spain and Rome until the States were free in form, in name, and in fact; only that he might then usurp a sovereignty which would otherwise revert to

Philip of Spain or be snatched by Henry of Navarre--of all this there is no proof whatever.

The language of Lewis William to the provinces under his government was quite as vigorous as the appeals of Maurice.

During the brief interval remaining before the commissioners should comply with the demands of the States or take their departure, the press throughout the Netherlands was most active. Pamphlets fell thick as hail. The peace party and the war party contended with each other, over all the territory of the provinces, as vigorously as the troops of Fuentes or Bucquoy had ever battled with the columns of Bax and Meetkerke. The types of Blaauw and Plantin were as effective during the brief armistice, as pike and arquebus in the field, but unfortunately they were used by Netherlanders against each other. As a matter of course, each party impeached the motives as well as the actions of its antagonist. The adherents of the Advocate accused the stadholder of desiring the continuance of the war for personal aims. They averred that six thousand men for guarding the rivers would be necessary, in addition to the forty-five thousand men, now kept constantly on foot. They placed the requisite monthly expenses, if hostilities were resumed, at 800,000 florins, while they pointed to the 27,000,000 of debt over and above the 8,000,000 due to the British crown, as a burthen under which the republic could scarcely stagger much longer. Such figures seem modest enough, as the price of a war of independence.

Familiar with the gigantic budgets of our own day, we listen with something like wonder, now that two centuries and a half have passed, to the fierce denunciations by the war party of these figures as wilful fictions. Science has made in that interval such gigantic strides. The awful intellect of man may at last make war impossible for his physical strength. He can forge but cannot wield the hammer of Thor; nor has Science yet discovered the philosopher's stone. Without it, what exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy? After what has been witnessed in these latest days, the sieges and battles of that distant epoch seem like the fights of pigmies and cranes. Already an eighty years' war, such as once was waged, has become inconceivable. Let two more centuries pass away, and perhaps a three weeks' campaign may exhaust an empire.

Meantime the war of words continued. A proclamation with penalties was issued by the States against the epidemic plague of pamphlets or "blue-books," as those publications were called in Holland, but with little result. It was not deemed consistent with liberty by those republicans to put chains on the press because its utterances might occasionally be distasteful to magistrates. The writers, printers, and sellers of the "blue-books" remained unpunished and snapped their fingers at the placard.

We have seen the strenuous exertions of the Nassaus and their adherents by public appeals and private conversation to defeat all schemes of truce. The people were stirred by the eloquence of the two stadholders. They were stung to fury against Spain and against Barneveld by the

waspish effusions of the daily press. The magistrates remained calm, and took part by considerable majorities with Barneveld. That statesman, while exercising almost autocratic influence in the estates, became more and more odious to the humbler classes, to the Nassaus, and especially to the Calvinist clergy. He was denounced, as a papist, an atheist, a traitor, because striving for an honourable peace with the foe, and because admitting the possibility of more than one road to the kingdom of Heaven. To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime, in the eyes of his accusers, as to kneel to the host. Peter Titelmann, half a century earlier, dripping with the blood of a thousand martyrs, seemed hardly a more loathsome object to all Netherlanders than the Advocate now appeared to his political enemies, thus daring to preach religious toleration, and boasting of, humble ignorance as the safest creed. Alas! we must always have something to persecute, and individual man is never so convinced of his own wisdom as when dealing with subjects beyond human comprehension.

Unfortunately, however, while the great Advocate was clear in his conscience he had scarcely clean hands. He had very recently accepted a present of twenty thousand florins from the King of France. That this was a bribe by which his services were to be purchased for a cause not in harmony with his own convictions it would be unjust to say. We of a later generation, who have had the advantage of looking through the portfolio of President Jeannin, and of learning the secret intentions of that diplomatist and of his master, can fully understand however that there was more than sufficient cause at the time for suspecting the purity of the great Advocate's conduct. We are perfectly aware that the secret instructions of Henry gave his plenipotentiaries almost unlimited power to buy up as many influential personages in the Netherlands as could be purchased. So they would assist in making the king master of the United Provinces at the proper moment there was scarcely any price that he was not willing to pay.

Especially Prince Maurice, his cousin, and the Advocate of Holland, were to be secured by life pensions, property, offices, and dignities, all which Jeannin might offer to an almost unlimited amount, if by such means those great personages could possibly be induced to perform the king's work.

There is no record that the president ever held out such baits at this epoch to the prince. There could never be a doubt however in any one's mind that if the political chief of the Orange-Nassau house ever wished to make himself the instrument by which France should supplant Spain in the tyranny of the Netherlands, he might always name his own price. Jeannin never insulted him with any such trading propositions. As for Barneveld, he avowed long years afterwards that he had accepted the twenty thousand florins, and that the king had expressly exacted secrecy in regard to the transaction. He declared however that the money was a reward for public services rendered by him to the French Government ten years before, in the course of his mission to France at the time of the peace of Vervins. The reward had been promised in 1598, and the pledge was fulfilled in 1608. In accepting wages fairly earned, however, he protested that he had bound himself to no dishonourable service, and that

he had never exchanged a word with Jeannin or with any man in regard to securing for Henry the sovereignty of the Netherlands.

His friends moreover maintained in his defence that there were no laws in the Netherlands forbidding citizens to accept presents or pensions from foreign powers. Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation. Woe to the republic whose citizens require laws to prevent them from becoming stipendiaries of foreign potentates! If public virtue, the only foundation of republican institutions, be so far washed away that laws in this regard are necessary to save it from complete destruction, then already the republic is impossible. Many who bore illustrious names, and occupied the highest social positions at that day in France, England, and the obedient provinces, were as venal as cattle at a fair. Philip and Henry had bought them over and over again, whenever either was rich enough to purchase and strong enough to enforce the terms of sale. Bribes were taken with both hands in overflowing measure; the difficulty was only in obtaining the work for the wage.

But it would have been humiliating beyond expression had the new commonwealth, after passing through the fiery furnace of its great war, proved no purer than leading monarchies at a most corrupt epoch. It was no wonder therefore that men sought to wipe off the stain from the reputation of Barneveld, and it is at least a solace that there was no proof of his ever rendering, or ever having agreed to render, services inconsistent with his convictions as to the best interests of the commonwealth. It is sufficiently grave that he knew the colour of the king's money, and that in a momentous crisis of history he accepted a reward for former professional services, and that the broker in the transaction, President Jeannin, seriously charged him by Henry's orders to keep the matter secret. It would be still more dismal if Jeannin, in his private letters, had ever intimated to Villeroy or his master that he considered it a mercantile transaction, or if any effort had ever been made by the Advocate to help Henry to the Batavian throne. This however is not the case.

In truth, neither Maurice nor Barneveld was likely to assist the French king in his intrigues against the independence of their fatherland. Both had higher objects of ambition than to become the humble and well-paid servants of a foreign potentate. The stadholder doubtless dreamed of a crown which might have been his father's, and which his own illustrious services might be supposed to have earned for himself. If that tempting prize were more likely to be gained by a continuance of the war, it is none the less certain that he considered peace, and still more truce, as fatal to the independence of the provinces.

The Advocate, on the other hand, loved his country well. Perhaps he loved power even better. To govern the city magistracies of Holland, through them the provincial estates; and through them again the States-General of the whole commonwealth; as first citizen of a republic to wield the powers of a king; as statesman, diplomatist, and financier, to create a mighty empire out of those slender and but recently emancipated provinces of Spain, was a more flattering prospect for a man of large intellect, iron will, and infinite resources, than to sink into the

contemptible position of stipendiary to a foreign master. He foresaw change, growth, transformation in the existing condition of things. Those great corporations the East and West India Companies were already producing a new organism out of the political and commercial chaos which had been so long brooding over civilization. Visions of an imperial zone extending from the little Batavian island around the earth, a chain of forts and factories dotting the newly-discovered and yet undiscovered points of vantage, on island or promontory, in every sea; a watery, nebulous, yet most substantial empire--not fantastic, but practical--not picturesque and mediaeval, but modern and lucrative--a world-wide commonwealth with a half-submerged metropolis, which should rule the ocean with its own fleets and, like Venice and Florence, job its land wars with mercenary armies--all these dreams were not the cloudy pageant of a poet but the practical schemes of a great creative mind. They were destined to become reality. Had the geographical conditions been originally more favourable than they were, had Nature been less a stepmother to the metropolis of the rising Batavian realm, the creation might have been more durable. Barneveld, and the men who acted with him, comprehended their age, and with slender materials were prepared to do great things. They did not look very far perhaps into futurity, but they saw the vast changes already taking place, and felt the throb of forces actually at work.

The days were gone when the iron-clad man on horseback conquered a kingdom with his single hand. Doubtless there is more of poetry and romance in his deeds than in the achievements of the counting-house aristocracy, the hierarchy of joint-stock corporations that was taking the lead in the world's affairs. Enlarged views of the social compact and of human liberty, as compared with those which later generations ought to take, standing upon the graves, heaped up mountains high, of their predecessors, could hardly be expected of them. But they knew how to do the work before them. They had been able to smite a foreign and sacerdotal tyranny into the dust at the expense of more blood and more treasure, and with sacrifices continued through a longer cycle of years, than had ever been recorded by history.

Thus the Advocate believed that the chief fruits of the war--political independence, religious liberty, commercial expansion--could be now secured by diplomacy, and that a truce could be so handled as to become equivalent to a peace. He required no bribes therefore to labour for that which he believed to be for his own interests and for those of the country.

First citizen of Holland, perpetual chairman of a board of ambitious shopkeepers who purposed to dictate laws to the world from their counting-house table, with an unerring eye for the interests of the commonwealth and his own, with much vision, extraordinary eloquence, and a magnificent will, he is as good a sample of a great burgher--an imposing not a heroic figure--as the times had seen.

A vast stride had been taken in the world's progress. Even monopoly was freedom compared to the sloth and ignorance of an earlier epoch and of other lands, and although the days were still far distant when the earth

was to belong to mankind, yet the modern republic was leading, half unconsciously, to a period of wider liberty of government, commerce, and above all of thought.

Meantime, the period assigned for the departure of the Spanish commissioners, unless they brought a satisfactory communication from the king, was rapidly approaching.

On the 24th September Verreyken returned from Brussels, but it was soon known that he came empty handed. He informed the French and English ambassadors that the archdukes, on their own responsibility, now suggested the conclusion of a truce of seven years for Europe only. This was to be negotiated with the States-General as with free people, over whom no pretensions of authority were made, and the hope was expressed that the king would give his consent to this arrangement.

The ambassadors naturally refused to carry the message to the States. To make themselves the mouthpieces of such childish suggestions was to bring themselves and their masters into contempt. There had been trifling enough, and even Jeannin saw that the storm of indignation about to burst forth would be irresistible. There was no need of any attempt on the part of the commissioners to prolong their stay if this was the result of the fifteen days' grace which had so reluctantly been conceded to them. To express a hope that the king might perhaps give his future approval to a proceeding for which his signed and sealed consent had been exacted as an indispensable preliminary, was carrying effrontery further than had yet been attempted in these amazing negotiations.

Prince Maurice once more addressed the cities of Holland, giving vent to his wrath in language with which there was now more sympathy than there had been before. "Verreyken has come back," he said, "not with a signature, but with a hope. The longer the enemy remains in the country the more he goes back from what he had originally promised. He is seeking for nothing more than, in this cheating way and in this pretence of waiting for the king's consent--which we have been expecting now for more than eighteen months--to continue the ruinous armistice. Thus he keeps the country in a perpetual uncertainty, the only possible consequence of which is our complete destruction. We adjure you therefore to send a resolution in conformity with our late address, in order that through these tricks and snares the fatherland may not fall into the clutch of the enemy, and thus into eternal and intolerable slavery. God save us all from such a fate!"

Neither Barneveld nor Jeannin attempted to struggle against the almost general indignation. The deputies of Zeeland withdrew from the assembly of the States-General, protesting that they would never appear there again so long as the Spanish commissioners remained in the country. The door was opened wide, and it was plain that those functionaries must take their departure. Pride would not allow them to ask permission of the States to remain, although they intimated to the ambassadors their intense desire to linger for ten or twelve days longer. This was obviously inadmissible, and on the 30th September they appeared before the Assembly to take leave.

There were but three of them, the Genoese, the Spaniard, and the Burgundian--Spinola, Mancicidor; and Richardot. Of the two Netherlanders, brother John was still in Spain, and Verreyken found it convenient that day to have a lame leg.

President Richardot, standing majestically before the States-General, with his robes wrapped around his tall, spare form, made a solemn farewell speech of mingled sorrow, pity, and the resentment of injured innocence. They had come to the Hague, he said, sent by the King of Spain and the archdukes to treat for a good and substantial peace, according to the honest intention of his Majesty and their Highnesses. To this end they had sincerely and faithfully dealt with the gentlemen deputed for that purpose by their High Mightinesses the States, doing everything they could think of to further the cause of peace. They lamented that the issue had not been such as they had hoped, notwithstanding that the king and archdukes had so far derogated from their reputation as to send their commissioners into the United Netherlands, it having been easy enough to arrange for negotiations on other soil. It had been their wish thus to prove to the world how straightforward were their intentions by not requiring the States to send deputies to them. They had accorded the first point in the negotiations, touching the free state of the country. Their High Mightinesses had taken offence upon the second, regarding the restoration of religion in the United Provinces. Thereupon the father commissary had gone to Spain, and had remained longer than was agreeable. Nevertheless, they had meantime treated of other points. Coming back at last to the point of religion, the States-General had taken a resolution, and had given them their dismissal, without being willing to hear a word more, or to make a single proposition of moderation or accommodation.

He could not refrain from saying that the commissioners had been treated roughly. Their High Mightinesses had fixed the time for their dismissal more precisely than one would do with a servant who was discharged for misconduct; for the lackey, if he asked for it, would be allowed at least a day longer to pack his trunk for the journey. They protested before God and the assembly of the States that the king and princes had meant most sincerely, and had dealt with all roundness and sincerity. They at least remained innocent of all the disasters and calamities to come from the war.

"As for myself," said Richardot, "I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet; yet I will venture the prediction to you, my lords the States-General, that you will bitterly rue it that you did not embrace the peace thus presented, and which you might have had. The blood which is destined to flow, now that you have scorned our plan of reconciliation, will be not on our heads but your own."

Barneveld replied by temperately but firmly repelling the charges brought against the States in this artful oration of the president. They had proceeded in the most straightforward manner, never permitting themselves to enter into negotiations except on the preliminary condition that their freedom should be once for all conceded and recognised. "You and you

only," he continued, "are to bear the blame that peace has not been concluded; you who have not been willing or not been able to keep your promises. One might, with better reason, hold you guilty of all the bloodshed; you whose edicts, bloodier and more savage than war itself, long ago forced these provinces into the inevitable necessity of waging war; you whose cruelty, but yesterday exercised on the crews of defenceless and innocent merchantmen and fishing-vessels, has been fully exhibited to the world."

Spinola's countenance betrayed much emotion as he listened to the exchange of bitter recriminations which took place on this farewell colloquy. It was obvious that the brave and accomplished soldier honestly lamented the failure of the attempt to end the war.

But the rupture was absolute. The marquis and the president dined that day with Prince Maurice, by whom they were afterwards courteously accompanied a part of the way on their journey to Brussels.

Thus ended the comedy which had lasted nearly two years. The dismal leave-taking, as the curtain fell, was not as entertaining to the public outside as the dramatic meeting between Maurice and Spinola had been at the opening scene near Ryswyk. There was no populace to throw up their hats for the departing guests. From the winter's night in which the subtle Franciscan had first stolen into the prince's cabinet down to this autumn evening, not a step of real progress could be recorded as the result of the intolerable quantity of speech-making and quill-driving. There were boat-loads of documents, protocols, and notes, drowsy and stagnant as the canals on which they were floated off towards their tombs in the various archives. Peace to the dust which we have not wantonly disturbed, believing it to be wholesome for the cause of human progress that the art of ruling the world by doing nothing, as practised some centuries since, should once and again be exhibited.

Not in vain do we listen to those long-bearded, venerable, very tedious old presidents, advocates, and friars of orders gray, in their high ruffs, taffety robes or gowns of frieze, as they squeak and gibber, for a fleeting moment, to a world which knew them not. It is something to learn that grave statesmen, kings, generals, and presidents could negotiate for two years long; and that the only result should be the distinction between a conjunction, a preposition, and an adverb. That the provinces should be held as free States, not for free States--that they should be free in similitude, not in substance--thus much and no more had been accomplished.

And now to all appearance every chance of negotiation was gone. The half-century war, after this brief breathing space, was to be renewed for another century or so, and more furiously than ever. So thought the public. So meant Prince Maurice. Richardot and Jeannin knew better.

The departure of the commissioners was recorded upon the register of the resolutions of Holland, with the ominous note: "God grant that they may not have sown, evil seed here; the effects of which will one day be visible in the ruin of this commonwealth."

Hardly were the backs of the commissioners turned, before the indefatigable Jeannin was ready with his scheme for repatching the rupture. He was at first anxious that the deputies of Zeeland should be summoned again, now that the country was rid of the Spaniards. Prince Maurice, however, was wrathful when the president began to talk once more of truce. The proposition, he said, was simply the expression of a wish to destroy the State. Holland and Zeeland would never agree to any such measure, and they would find means to compel the other provinces to follow their example. If there were but three or four cities in the whole country to reject the truce, he would, with their assistance alone, defend the freedom of the republic, or at least die an honourable death in its defence. This at least would be better than after a few months to become slaves of Spain. Such a result was the object of those who began this work, but he would resist it at the peril of his life.

A singular incident now seemed to justify the wrath of the stadholder, and to be likely to strengthen his party. Young Count John of Nassau happened to take possession of the apartments in Goswyn Meursken's hostelry at the Hague, just vacated by Richardot. In the drawer of a writing-table was found a document, evidently left there by the president. This paper was handed by Count John to his cousin, Frederic Henry, who at once delivered it to his brother Maurice. The prince produced it in the assembly of the States-General, members from each province were furnished with a copy of it within two or three hours, and it was soon afterwards printed, and published. The document, being nothing less than the original secret instructions of the archdukes to their commissioners, was naturally read with intense interest by the States-General, by the foreign envoys, and by the general public.

It appeared, from an inspection of the paper, that the commissioners had been told that, if they should find the French, English, and Danish ambassadors desirous of being present at the negotiations for the treaty, they were to exclude them from all direct participation in the proceedings. They were to do this however so sweetly and courteously that it would be impossible for those diplomats to take offence or to imagine themselves distrusted. On the contrary, the States-General were to be informed that their communication in private on the general subject with the ambassadors was approved by the archdukes, because they believed the sovereigns of France, England, and Denmark, their sincere and affectionate friends. The commissioners were instructed to domesticate themselves as much as possible with President Jeannin and to manifest the utmost confidence in his good intentions. They were to take the same course with the English envoys, but in more general terms, and were very discreetly to communicate to them whatever they already knew, and, on the other hand, carefully to conceal from them all that was still a secret.

They were distinctly told to make the point of the Catholic religion first and foremost in the negotiations; the arguments showing the indispensable necessity of securing its public exercise in the United Provinces being drawn up with considerable detail. They were to insist that the republic should absolutely renounce the trade with the East and West Indies, and should pledge itself to chastise such of its citizens as

might dare to undertake those voyages, as disturbers of the peace and enemies of the public repose, whether they went to the Indies in person or associated themselves with men of other nations for that purpose, under any pretext whatever. When these points, together with many matters of detail less difficult of adjustment, had been satisfactorily settled, the commissioners were to suggest measures of union for the common defence between the united and the obedient Provinces. This matter was to be broached very gently. "In the sweetest terms possible," it was to be hinted that the whole body of the Netherlanders could protect itself against every enemy, but if dismembered as it was about to be, neither the one portion nor the other would be safe. The commissioners were therefore to request the offer of some proposition from the States-General for the common defence. In case they remained silent, however, then the commissioners were to declare that the archdukes had no wish to speak of sovereignty over the United Provinces, however limited. "Having once given them that morsel to swallow," said their Highnesses, "we have nothing of the kind in our thoughts. But if they reflect, it is possible that they may see fit to take us for protectors."

The scheme was to be managed with great discreetness and delicacy, and accomplished by hook or by crook, if the means could be found. "You need not be scrupulous as to the form or law of protection, provided the name of protector can be obtained," continued the archdukes.

At least the greatest pains were to be taken that the two sections of the Netherlands might remain friends. "We are in great danger unless we rely upon each other," it was urged. "But touch this chord very gently, lest the French and English hearing of it suspect some design to injure them. At least we may each mutually agree to chastise such of our respective subjects as may venture to make any alliance with the enemies of the other."

It was much disputed whether these instructions had been left purposely or by accident in the table-drawer. Jeannin could not make up his mind whether it was a trick or not, and the vociferous lamentations of Richardot upon his misfortunes made little impression upon his mind. He had small confidence in any austerity of principle on the part of his former fellow-leaguer that would prevent him from leaving the document by stealth, and then protesting that he had been foully wronged by its coming to light. On the whole, he was inclined to think, however, that the paper had been stolen from him.

Barneveld, after much inquiry, was convinced that it had been left in the drawer by accident.

Richardot himself manifested rage and dismay when he found that a paper, left by chance in his lodgings, had been published by the States. Such a proceeding was a violation, he exclaimed, of the laws of hospitality. With equal justice, he declared it to be an offence against the religious respect due to ambassadors, whose persons and property were sacred in foreign countries. "Decency required the States," he said, "to send the document back to him, instead of showing it as a trophy, and he was ready

to die of shame and vexation at the unlucky incident."

Few honourable men will disagree with him in these complaints, although many contemporaries obstinately refused to believe that the crafty and experienced diplomatist could have so carelessly left about his most important archives. He was generally thought by those who had most dealt with him, to prefer, on principle, a crooked path to a straight one.

"'Tis a mischievous old monkey," said Villeroy on another occasion, "that likes always to turn its tail instead of going directly to the purpose."

The archduke, however, was very indulgent to his plenipotentiary. "My good master," said the president, "so soon as he learned the loss of that accursed paper, benignantly consoled, instead of chastising me; and, after having looked over the draught, was glad that the accident had happened; for thus his sincerity had been proved, and those who sought profit by the trick had been confounded." On the other hand, what good could it do to the cause of peace, that these wonderful instructions should be published throughout the republic? They might almost seem a fiction, invented by the war party to inspire a general disgust for any further negotiation. Every loyal Netherlander would necessarily be qualmish at the word peace, now that the whole design of the Spanish party was disclosed.

The public exercise of the Roman religion was now known to be the indispensable condition--first, last, and always--to any possible peace. Every citizen of the republic was to be whipped out of the East and West Indies, should he dare to show his face in those regions. The States-General, while swallowing the crumb of sovereignty vouchsafed by the archdukes, were to accept them as protectors, in order not to fall a prey to the enemies whom they imagined to be their friends.

What could be more hopeless than such negotiations? What more dreary than the perpetual efforts of two lines to approach each other which were mathematically incapable of meeting? That the young republic, conscious of her daily growing strength, should now seek refuge from her nobly won independence in the protectorate of Albert, who was himself the vassal of Philip, was an idea almost inconceivable to the Dutch mind. Yet so impossible was it for the archdukes to put themselves into human relations with this new and popular Government, that in the inmost recesses of their breasts they actually believed themselves, when making the offer, to be performing a noble act of Christian charity.

The efforts of Jeannin and of the English ambassador were now unremitting, and thoroughly seconded by Barneveld. Maurice was almost at daggers drawn, not only with the Advocate but with the foreign envoys. Sir Ralph Winwood, who had, in virtue of the old treaty arrangements with England, a seat in the state-council at the Hague, and who was a man of a somewhat rough and insolent deportment, took occasion at a session of that body, when the prince was present, to urge the necessity of at once resuming the ruptured negotiations. The King of Great Britain; he said, only recommended a course which he was himself always ready to pursue. Hostilities which were necessary, and no others, were just. Such, and such only, could be favoured by God or by pious kings. But wars were not necessary which could be honourably avoided. A truce was not to be

despised, by which religious liberty and commerce were secured, and it was not the part of wisdom to plunge into all the horrors of immediate war in order to escape distant and problematical dangers; that might arise when the truce should come to an end. If a truce were now made, the kings of both France and England would be guarantees for its faithful observance. They would take care that no wrong or affront was offered to the States-General.

Maurice replied, with a sneer, to these sententious commonplaces derived at second-hand from King James that great kings were often very indifferent to injuries sustained by their friends. Moreover, there was an eminent sovereign, he continued, who was even very patient under affronts directly offered to himself. It was not very long since a horrible plot had been discovered to murder the King of England, with his wife, his children, and all the great personages of the realm. That this great crime had been attempted under the immediate instigation of the King of Spain was notorious to the whole world, and certainly no secret to King James. Yet his Britannic Majesty had made haste to exonerate the great criminal from all complicity in the crime; and had ever since been fawning upon the Catholic king, and hankering for a family alliance with him. Conduct like this the prince denounced in plain terms as cringing and cowardly, and expressed the opinion that guarantees of Dutch independence from such a monarch could hardly be thought very valuable.

These were terrible words for the representative of James to have hurled in his face in full council by the foremost personage of the republic. Winwood fell into a furious passion, and of course there was a violent scene, with much subsequent protesting and protocolling.

The British king insisted that the prince should make public amends for the insult, and Maurice firmly refused to do anything of the kind. The matter was subsequently arranged by some amicable concessions made by the prince in a private letter to James, but there remained for the time a abate of alienation between England and the republic, at which the French sincerely rejoiced. The incident, however, sufficiently shows the point of exasperation which the prince had reached, for, although choleric, he was a reasonable man, and it was only because the whole course of the negotiations had offended his sense of honour and of right that he had at last been driven quite beyond self-control.

On the 13th of October, the envoys of France, England, Denmark, and of the Elector Palatine, the Elector of Brandenburg, and other German princes, came before the States-General.

Jeannin, in the name of all these foreign ministers, made a speech warmly recommending the truce.

He repelled the insinuation that the measure proposed had been brought about by the artifices of the enemy, and was therefore odious. On the contrary, it was originated by himself and the other good friends of the republic.

In his opinion, the terms of the suggested truce contained sufficient

guarantees for the liberty of the provinces, not only during the truce, but for ever.

No stronger recognition of their independence could be expected than the one given. It was entirely without example, argued the president, that in similar changes brought about by force of arms, sovereigns after having been despoiled of their states have been compelled to abandon their rights shamefully by a public confession, unless they had absolutely fallen into the hands of their enemies and were completely at their mercy. "Yet the princes who made this great concession," continued Jeannin, "are not lying vanquished at your feet, nor reduced by dire necessity to yield what they have yielded."

He reminded the assembly that the Swiss enjoyed at that moment their liberty in virtue of a simple truce, without ever having obtained from their former sovereign a declaration such as was now offered to the United Provinces.

The president argued, moreover, with much force and acuteness that it was beneath the dignity of the States, and inconsistent with their consciousness of strength, to lay so much stress on the phraseology by which their liberty was recognised. That freedom had been won by the sword, and would be maintained against all the world by the sword.

"In truth," said the orator, "you do wrong to your liberty by calling it so often in doubt, and in claiming with so much contentious anxiety from your enemies a title-deed for your independence. You hold it by your own public decree. In virtue of that decree, confirmed by the success of your arms, you have enjoyed it long. Nor could anything obtained from your enemies be of use to you if those same arms with which you gained your liberty could not still preserve it for you."

Therefore, in the opinion of the president, this persistence in demanding a more explicit and unlimited recognition of independence was only a pretext for continuing the war, ingeniously used by those who hated peace.

Addressing himself more particularly to the celebrated circular letter of Prince Maurice against the truce, the president maintained that the liberty of the republic was as much acknowledged in the proposed articles as if the words "for ever" had been added. "To acknowledge liberty is an act which, by its very nature, admits of no conditions," he observed, with considerable force.

The president proceeded to say that in the original negotiations the qualifications obtained had seemed to him enough. As there was an ardent desire, however, on the part of many for a more explicit phraseology, as something necessary to the public safety, he had thought it worth attempting.

"We all rejoiced when you obtained it," continued Jeannin, "but not when they agreed to renounce the names, titles, and arms of the United Provinces; for that seemed to us shameful for them beyond all example.

That princes should make concessions so entirely unworthy of their grandeur, excited at once our suspicion, for we could not imagine the cause of an offer so specious. We have since found out the reason."

The archdukes being unable, accordingly, to obtain for the truce those specious conditions which Spain had originally pretended to yield, it was the opinion of the old diplomatist that the king should be permitted to wear the paste substitutes about which so many idle words had been wasted.

It would be better, he thought, for the States to be contented with what was precious and substantial, and not to lose the occasion of making a good treaty of truce, which was sure to be converted with time into an absolute peace.

"It is certain," he said, "that the princes with whom you are treating will never go to law with you to get an exposition of the article in question. After the truce has expired, they will go to war with you if you like, but they will not trouble themselves to declare whether they are fighting you as rebels or as enemies, nor will it very much signify. If their arms are successful, they will give you no explanations. If you are the conquerors, they will receive none. The fortune of war will be the supreme judge to decide the dispute; not the words of a treaty. Those words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak and the vanquished, although they may be so perfectly clear that no man could doubt them; never to the prejudice of those who have proved the validity of their rights by the strength of their arms."

This honest, straightforward cynicism, coming from the lips of one of the most experienced diplomatists of Europe, was difficult to gainsay. Speaking as one having authority, the president told the States-General in full assembly, that there was no law in Christendom, as between nations, but the good old fist-law, the code of brute force.

Two centuries and a half have rolled by since that oration was pronounced, and the world has made immense progress in science during that period. But there is still room for improvement in this regard in the law of nations. Certainly there is now a little more reluctance to come so nakedly before the world. But has the cause of modesty or humanity gained very much by the decorous fig-leaves of modern diplomacy?

The president alluded also to the ungrounded fears that bribery and corruption would be able to effect much, during the truce, towards the reduction of the provinces under their repudiated sovereign. After all, it was difficult to buy up a whole people. In a commonwealth, where the People was sovereign, and the persons of the magistrates ever changing, those little comfortable commercial operations could not be managed so easily as in civilized realms like France and England. The old Leaguer thought with pensive regret, no doubt, of the hard, but still profitable bargains by which the Guises and Mayennes and Mercoeurs, and a few hundred of their noble adherents, had been brought over to the cause of the king. He sighed at the more recent memories of the Marquis de Rosny's embassy in England, and his largess scattered broadcast among the

great English lords. It would be of little use he foresaw--although the instructions of Henry were in his portfolio, giving him almost unlimited powers to buy up everybody in the Netherlands that could be bought--to attempt that kind of traffic on a large scale in the Netherlands.

Those republicans were greedy enough about the navigation to the East and West Indies, and were very litigious about the claim of Spain to put up railings around the Ocean as her private lake, but they were less keen than were their more polished contemporaries for the trade in human souls.

"When we consider," said Jeannin, "the constitution of your State, and that to corrupt a few people among you does no good at all, because the frequent change of magistracies takes away the means of gaining over many of them at the same time, capable by a long duration of their power to conduct an intrigue against the commonwealth, this fear must appear wholly vain."

And then the old Leaguer, who had always refused bribes himself, although he had negotiated much bribery of others, warmed into sincere eloquence as he spoke of the simple virtues on which the little republic, as should be the case with all republics, was founded. He did homage to the Dutch love of liberty.

"Remember," he said, "the love of liberty which is engraved in the hearts of all your inhabitants, and that there are few persons now living who were born in the days of the ancient subjection, or who have not been nourished and brought up for so long a time in liberty that they have a horror for the very name of servitude. You will then feel that there is not one man in your commonwealth who would wish or dare to open his mouth to bring you back to subjection, without being in danger of instant punishment as a traitor to his country."

He again reminded his hearers that the Swiss had concluded a long and perilous war with their ancient masters by a simple truce, during which they had established so good a government that they were never more attacked. Honest republican principles, and readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties, had combined with geographical advantages to secure the national independence of Switzerland.

Jeannin paid full tribute to the maritime supremacy of the republic.

"You may have as much good fortune," he said, "as the Swiss, if you are wise. You have the ocean at your side, great navigable rivers enclosing you in every direction, a multitude of ships, with sailors, pilots, and seafaring men of every description, who are the very best soldiers in battles at sea to be found in Christendom. With these you will preserve your military vigour and your habits of navigation, the long voyages to which you are accustomed continuing as usual. And such is the kind of soldiers you require. As for auxiliaries, should you need them you know where to find them."

The president implored the States-General accordingly to pay no attention

to the writings which were circulated among the people to prejudice them against the truce.

This was aimed directly at the stadholder, who had been making so many direct personal appeals to the people, and who was now the more incensed, recognising the taunt of the president as an arrow taken from Barneveld's quiver. There had long ceased to be any communication between the Prince and the Advocate, and Maurice made no secret of his bitter animosity both to Barneveld and to Jeannin.

He hesitated on no occasion to denounce the Advocate as travelling straight on the road to Spain, and although he was not aware of the twenty thousand florins recently presented by the French king, he had accustomed himself, with the enormous exaggeration of party spirit, to look upon the first statesman of his country and of Europe as a traitor to the republic and a tool of the archdukes. As we look back upon those passionate days, we cannot but be appalled at the depths to which theological hatred could descend.

On the very morning after the session of the assembly in which Jeannin had been making his great speech, and denouncing the practice of secret and incendiary publication, three remarkable letters were found on the doorstep of a house in the Hague. One was addressed to the States-General, another to the Mates of Holland, and a third to the burgomaster of Amsterdam. In all these documents, the Advocate was denounced as an infamous traitor, who was secretly intriguing to bring about a truce for the purpose of handing over the commonwealth to the enemy. A shameful death, it was added, would be his fitting reward.

These letters were read in the Assembly of the States-General, and created great wrath among the friends of Barneveld. Even Maurice expressed indignation, and favoured a search for the anonymous author, in order that he might be severely punished.

It seems strange enough that anonymous letters picked up in the street should have been deemed a worthy theme of discussion before their High Mightinesses the States-General. Moreover, it was raining pamphlets and libels against Barneveld and his supporters every day, and the stories which grave burghers and pious elders went about telling to each other, and to everybody who would listen to them, about the Advocate's depravity, were wonderful to hear.

At the end of September, just before the Spanish commissioners left the Hague, a sledge of the kind used in the Dutch cities as drays stopped before Barneveld's front-door one fine morning, and deposited several large baskets, filled with money, sent by the envoys for defraying certain expenses of forage, hire of servants, and the like, incurred by them during their sojourn at the Hague, and disbursed by the States. The sledge, with its contents, was at once sent by order of the Advocate, under guidance of Commissary John Spronsen, to the Receiver-General of the republic.

Yet men wagged their beards dismally as they whispered this fresh proof

of Barneveld's venality. As if Spinola and his colleagues were such blunderers in bribing as to send bushel baskets full of Spanish dollars on a sledge, in broad daylight, to the house of a great statesman whom they meant to purchase, expecting doubtless a receipt in full to be brought back by the drayman! Well might the Advocate say at a later moment, in the bitterness of his spirit, that his enemies, not satisfied with piercing his heart with their false, injurious and honour-filching libels and stories, were determined to break it. "He begged God Almighty," he said, "to be merciful to him, and to judge righteously between him and them."

Party spirit has rarely run higher in any commonwealth than in Holland during these memorable debates concerning a truce. Yet the leaders both of the war party and the truce party were doubtless pure, determined patriots, seeking their country's good with all their souls and strength.

Maurice answered the discourse of Jeannin by a second and very elaborate letter. In this circular, addressed to the magistracies of Holland, he urged his countrymen once more with arguments already employed by him, and in more strenuous language than ever, to beware of a truce even more than of a peace, and warned them not to swerve by a hair's breadth from the formula in regard to the sovereignty agreed upon at the very beginning of the negotiations. To this document was appended a paper of considerations, drawn up by Maurice and Lewis William, in refutation, point by point, of all the arguments of President Jeannin in his late discourse.

It is not necessary to do more than allude to these documents, which were marked by the close reasoning and fiery spirit which characterized all the appeals of the prince and his cousin at this period, because the time had now come which comes to all controversies when argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins.

Meantime, Barneveld, stung almost to madness by the poisonous though ephemeral libels which buzzed so perpetually about him, had at last resolved to retire from the public service. He had been so steadily denounced as being burthensome to his superiors in birth by the power which he had acquired, and to have shot up so far above the heads of his equals; that he felt disposed to withdraw from a field where his presence was becoming odious.

His enemies, of course, considered this determination a trick by which he merely wished to prove to the country how indispensable he was, and to gain a fresh lease of his almost unlimited power by the alarm which his proposed abdication would produce. Certainly, however, if it were a trick, and he were not indispensable, it was easy enough to prove it and to punish him by taking him at his word.

On the morning after the anonymous letters had been found in the street he came into the House of Assembly and made a short speech. He spoke simply of his thirty-one years of service, during which he believed himself to have done his best for the good of the fatherland and for the welfare of the house of Nassau. He had been ready thus to go on

to the end, but he saw himself environed by enemies, and felt that his usefulness had been destroyed. He wished, therefore, in the interest of the country, not from any fear for himself, to withdraw from the storm, and for a time at least to remain in retirement. The displeasure and hatred of the great were nothing new to him, he said. He had never shrunk from peril when he could serve his fatherland; for against all calumnies and all accidents he had worn the armour of a quiet conscience. But he now saw that the truce, in itself an unpleasant affair, was made still more odious by the hatred felt towards him. He begged the provinces, therefore, to select another servant less hated than himself to provide for the public welfare.

Having said these few words with the dignity which was natural to him he calmly walked out of the Assembly House.

The personal friends of Barneveld and the whole truce party were in consternation. Even the enemies of the Advocate shrank appalled at the prospect of losing the services of the foremost statesman of the commonwealth at this critical juncture. There was a brief and animated discussion as soon as his back was turned. Its result was the appointment of a committee of five to wait upon Barneveld and solemnly to request him to reconsider his decision. Their efforts were successful. After a satisfactory interview with the committee he resumed his functions with greater authority than ever. Of course there were not wanting many to whisper that the whole proceeding had been a comedy, and that Barneveld would have been more embarrassed than he had ever been in his life had his resignation been seriously accepted. But this is easy to say, and is always said, whenever a statesman who feels himself aggrieved, yet knows himself useful, lays down his office. The Advocate had been the mark of unceasing and infamous calumnies. He had incurred the deadly hatred of the highest placed, the most powerful, and the most popular man in the commonwealth. He had more than once been obliged to listen to opprobrious language from the prince, and it was even whispered that he had been threatened with personal violence. That Maurice was perpetually denouncing him in public and private, as a traitor, a papist, a Spanish partisan, was notorious. He had just been held up to the States of the union and of his own province by unknown voices as a criminal worthy of death. Was it to be wondered at that a man of sixty, who had passed his youth, manhood, and old age in the service of the republic, and was recognised by all as the ablest, the most experienced, the most indefatigable of her statesmen, should be seriously desirous of abandoning an office which might well seem to him rather a pillory than a post of honour?

"As for neighbour Barneveld," said recorder Aerssens, little dreaming of the foul witness he was to bear against that neighbour at a terrible moment to come, "I do what I can and wish to help him with my blood. He is more courageous than I. I should have sunk long ago, had I been obliged to stand against such tempests. The Lord God will, I hope, help him and direct his understanding for the good of all Christendom, and for his own honour. If he can steer this ship into a safe harbour we ought to raise a golden statue of him. I should like to contribute my mite to it. He deserves twice much honour, despite all his enemies, of whom he

has many rather from envy than from reason. May the Lord keep him in health, or it will go hardly with us all."

Thus spoke some of his grateful countrymen when the Advocate was contending at a momentous crisis with storms threatening to overwhelm the republic. Alas! where is the golden statue?

He believed that the truce was the most advantageous measure that the country could adopt. He believed this with quite as much sincerity as Maurice held to his conviction that war was the only policy. In the secret letter of the French ambassador there is not a trace of suspicion as to his fidelity to the commonwealth, not the shadow of proof of the ridiculous accusation that he wished to reduce the provinces to the dominion of Spain. Jeannin, who had no motive for concealment in his confidential correspondence with his sovereign, always rendered unequivocal homage to the purity and patriotism of the Advocate and the Prince.

He returned to the States-General and to the discharge of his functions as Advocate-General of Holland. His policy for the time was destined to be triumphant, his influence more extensive than ever. But the end of these calumnies and anonymous charges was not yet.

Meantime the opposition to the truce was confined to the States of Zeeland and two cities of Holland. Those cities were very important ones, Amsterdam and Delft, but they were already wavering in their opposition. Zeeland stoutly maintained that the treaty of Utrecht forbade a decision of the question of peace and war except by a unanimous vote of the whole confederacy. The other five provinces and the friends of the truce began with great vehemence to declare that the question at issue was now changed. It was no longer to be decided whether there should be truce or war with Spain, but whether a single member of the confederacy could dictate its law to the other six States. Zeeland, on her part, talked loudly of seceding from the union, and setting up for an independent, sovereign commonwealth. She would hardly have been a very powerful one, with her half-dozen cities, one prelate, one nobleman, her hundred thousand burghers at most, bustling and warlike as they were, and her few thousand mariners, although the most terrible fighting men that had ever sailed on blue water. She was destined ere long to abandon her doughty resolution of leaving her sister provinces to their fate.

Maurice had not slackened in his opposition to the truce, despite the renewed vigour with which Barneveld pressed the measure since his return to the public councils. The prince was firmly convinced that the kings of France and England would assist the republic in the war with Spain so soon as it should be renewed. His policy had been therefore to force the hand of those sovereigns, especially that of Henry, and to induce him to send more stringent instructions to Jeannin than those with which he believed him to be furnished. He had accordingly despatched a secret emissary to the French king, supplied with confidential and explicit instructions. This agent was a Captain Lambert. Whether it was "Pretty Lambert," "Dandy Lambert"--the vice-admiral who had so much distinguished himself at the great victory of Gibraltar--does not distinctly appear.

If it were so, that hard-hitting mariner would seem to have gone into action with the French Government as energetically as he had done eighteen months before, when, as master of the Tiger, he laid himself aboard the Spanish admiral and helped send the St. Augustine to the bottom. He seemed indisposed to mince matters in diplomacy. He intimated to the king and his ministers that Jeannin and his colleagues were pushing the truce at the Hague much further and faster than his Majesty could possibly approve, and that they were obviously exceeding their instructions. Jeannin, who was formerly so much honoured and cherished throughout the republic, was now looked upon askance because of his intimacy with Barneveld and his partisans. He assured the king that nearly all the cities of Holland, and the whole of Zeeland, were entirely agreed with Maurice, who would rather die than consent to the proposed truce. The other provinces, added Lambert, would be obliged, will ye nill ye, to receive the law from Holland and Zeeland. Maurice, without assistance from France or any other power, would give Spain and the archdukes as much exercise as they could take for the next fifty years before he would give up, and had declared that he would rather die sword in hand than basely betray his country by consenting to such a truce. As for Barneveld, he was already discovering the blunders which he had made, and was trying to curry favour with Maurice. Barneveld and both the Aprasens were traitors to the State, had become the objects of general hatred and contempt, and were in great danger of losing their lives, or at least of being expelled from office.

Here was altogether too much zeal on the part of Pretty Lambert; a quality which, not for the first time, was thus proved to be less useful in diplomatic conferences than in a sea-fight. Maurice was obliged to disavow his envoy, and to declare that his secret instructions had never authorized him to hold such language. But the mischief was done. The combustion in the French cabinet was terrible. The Dutch admiral had thrown hot shot into the powder-magazine of his friends, and had done no more good by such tactics than might be supposed. Such diplomacy was denounced as a mere mixture of "indiscretion and impudence." Henry was very wroth, and forthwith indited an imperious letter to his cousin Maurice.

"Lambert's talk to me by your orders," said the king, "has not less astonished than scandalized me. I now learn the new resolution which you have taken, and I observe that you have begun to entertain suspicions as to my will and my counsels on account of the proposition of truce."

Henry's standing orders to Jeannin, as we know, were to offer Maurice a pension of almost unlimited amount, together with ample rewards to all such of his adherents as could be purchased, provided they would bring about the incorporation of the United Provinces into France. He was therefore full of indignation that the purity of his intentions and the sincerity of his wish for the independence of the republic could be called in question.

"People have dared to maliciously invent," he continued, "that I am the enemy of the repose and the liberty of the United Provinces, and that I was afraid lest they should acquire the freedom which had been offered

them by their enemies, because I derived a profit from their war, and intended in time to deprive them of their liberty. Yet these falsehoods and jealousies have not been contradicted by you nor by anyone else, although you know that the proofs of my sincerity and good faith have been entirely without reproach or example. You knew what was said, written, and published everywhere, and I confess that when I knew this malice, and that you had not taken offence at it, I was much amazed and very malcontent."

Queen Elizabeth, in her most waspish moods, had not often lectured the States-General more roundly than Henry now lectured his cousin Maurice.

The king once more alluded to the secret emissary's violent talk, which had so much excited his indignation.

"If by weakness and want of means," he said, "you are forced to abandon to your enemies one portion of your country in order to defend the other--as Lambert tells me you are resolved to do, rather than agree to the truce without recognition of your sovereignty for ever--I pray you to consider how many accidents and reproaches may befall you. Do you suppose that any ally of the States, or of your family, would risk his reputation and his realms in such a game, which would seem to be rather begun in passion and despair than required by reason or necessity?"

Here certainly was plain speaking enough, and Maurice could no longer expect the king for his partner, should he decide to risk once more the bloody hazard of the die.

But Henry was determined to leave no shade of doubt on the subject.

"Lambert tells me," he said, "that you would rather perish with arms in your hands than fall shamefully into inevitable ruin by accepting truce. I have been and am of a contrary opinion. Perhaps I am mistaken, not knowing as well as you do the constitution of your country and the wishes of your people. But I know the general affairs of Christendom better than you do, and I can therefore judge more soundly on the whole matter than you can, and I know that the truce, established and guaranteed as proposed, will bring you more happiness than you can derive from war."

Thus the king, in the sweeping, slashing way with which he could handle an argument as well as a sword, strode forward in conscious strength, cutting down right and left all opposition to his will. He was determined, once for all, to show the stadholder and his adherents that the friendship of a great king was not to be had by a little republic on easy terms, nor every day. Above all, the Prince of Nassau was not to send a loud-talking, free and easy Dutch sea-captain to dictate terms to the King of France and Navarre. "Lambert tells me"--and Maurice might well wish that Pretty Lambert had been sunk in the bay of Gibraltar, Tiger and all, before he had been sent on this diplomatic errand, "Lambert tells me," continued his Majesty, "that you and the States-General would rather that I should remain neutral, and let you make war in your own fashion, than that I should do anything more to push on this truce. My cousin, it would be very easy for me, and perhaps more

advantageous for me and my kingdom than you think, if I could give you this satisfaction, whatever might be the result. If I chose to follow this counsel, I am, thanks be to God, in such condition, that I have no neighbour who is not as much in need of me as I can be of him, and who is not glad to seek for and to preserve my friendship. If they should all conspire against me moreover, I can by myself, and with no assistance but heaven's, which never failed me yet, wrestle with them altogether, and fling them all, as some of my royal predecessors have done. Know then, that I do not favour war nor truce for the United Provinces because of any need I may have of the one or the other for the defence of my own sceptre. The counsels and the succours, which you have so largely received from me, were given because of my consideration for the good of the States, and of yourself in particular, whom I have always favoured and cherished, as I have done others of your house on many occasions."

The king concluded his lecture by saying, that after his ambassadors had fulfilled their promise, and had spoken the last word of their master at the Hague, he should leave Maurice and the States to do as they liked.

"But I desire," he said, "that you and the States should not do that wrong to yourselves or to me as to doubt the integrity of my counsels nor the actions of my ambassadors: I am an honest man and a prince of my word, and not ignorant of the things of this world. Neither the States nor you, with your adherents, can permit my honour to be compromised without tarnishing your own, and without being branded for ingratitude. I say not this in order to reproach you for the past nor to make you despair of the future, but to defend the truth. I expect, therefore, that you will not fall into this fault, knowing you as I do. I pay more heed to what you said in your letter than in all Lambert's fine talk, and you will find out that nobody wishes your prosperity and that of the States more sincerely than I do, or can be more useful to you than I can."

[I have abbreviated this remarkable letter, but of course the text of the passages cited is literally given. J.L.M.]

There could be but little doubt in the mind of Prince Maurice, after this letter had been well pondered, that Barneveld had won the game, and that the peace party had triumphed.

To resume the war, with the French king not merely neutral but angry and covertly hostile, and with the sovereign of Great Britain an almost open enemy in the garb of an ally, might well seem a desperate course.

And Maurice, although strongly opposed to the truce, and confident in his opinions at this crisis, was not a desperado.

He saw at once the necessity of dismounting from the high horse upon which, it must be confessed, he had been inclined for more rough-riding of late than the situation warranted. Peace was unattainable, war was impossible, truce was inevitable; Barneveld was master of the field.

The prince acquiesced in the result which the letter from the French king

so plainly indicated. He was, however, more incensed than ever against Barneveld; for he felt himself not only checkmated but humiliated by the Advocate, and believed him a traitor, who was selling the republic to Spain. It was long since the two had exchanged a word.

Maurice now declared, on more than one occasion, that it was useless for him any longer to attempt opposition to the policy of truce. The States must travel on the road which they had chosen, but it should not be under his guidance, and he renounced all responsibility for the issue.

Dreading disunion, however, more than ought else that could befall the republic, he now did his best to bring about the return of Zeeland to the federal councils. He was successful. The deputies from that province reappeared in the States-General on the 11th November. They were still earnest, however, in their opposition to the truce, and warmly maintained, in obedience to instructions, that the Union of Utrecht forbade the conclusion of a treaty except by unanimous consent of the Seven Provinces. They were very fierce in their remonstrances, and again talked loudly of secession.

After consultation with Barneveld, the French envoys now thought it their duty to take the recalcitrant Zeelanders in hand; Maurice having, as it were, withdrawn from the contest.

On the 18th November, accordingly, Jeannin once more came very solemnly before the States-General, accompanied by his diplomatic colleagues.

He showed the impossibility of any arrangement, except by the submission of Zeeland to a vote of the majority. "It is certain," he said, "that six provinces will never be willing to be conquered by a single one, nor permit her to assert that, according to a fundamental law of the commonwealth, her dissent can prevent the others from forming a definite conclusion.

"It is not for us," continued the president, "who are strangers in your republic, to interpret your laws, but common sense teaches us that, if such a law exist, it could only have been made in order to forbid a surrender.

"If any one wishes to expound it otherwise, to him we would reply, in the words of an ancient Roman, who said of a law which seemed to him pernicious, that at least the tablet upon which it was inscribed, if it could not be destroyed, should be hidden out of sight. Thus at least the citizens might escape observing it, when it was plain that it would cause detriment to the republic, and they might then put in its place the most ancient of all laws, 'salus populi suprema lex.'"

The president, having suggested this ingenious expedient of the antique Roman for getting rid of a constitutional provision by hiding the statute-book, proceeded to give very practical reasons for setting up the supreme law of the people's safety on this occasion. And, certainly, that magnificent common-place, which has saved and ruined so many States, the most effective weapon in the political arsenal, whether wielded by

tyrants or champions of freedom, was not unreasonably recommended at this crisis to the States in their contest with the refractory Zeelanders.

It was easy to talk big, but after all it would be difficult for that doughty little sandbank, notwithstanding the indomitable energy which it had so often shown by land and sea, to do battle by itself with the whole Spanish empire. Nor was it quite consistent with republican principles that the other six provinces should be plunged once more into war, when they had agreed to accept peace and independence instead, only that Zeeland should have its way.

The orator went on to show the absurdity, in his opinion, of permitting one province to continue the war, when all seven united had not the means to do it without the assistance of their allies. He pointed out, too, the immense blunders that would be made, should it be thought that the Kings of France and England were so much interested in saving the provinces from perdition as to feel obliged in any event to render them assistance.

"Beware of committing an irreparable fault," he said, "on so insecure a foundation. You are deceiving yourselves: And, in order that there may be no doubt on the subject, we declare to you by express command that if your adversaries refuse the truce, according to the articles presented to you by us, it is the intention of our kings to assist you with armies and subsidies, not only as during the past, but more powerfully than before. If, on the contrary, the rupture comes from your side, and you despise the advice they are giving you, you have no succour to expect from them. The refusal of conditions so honourable and advantageous to your commonwealth will render the war a useless one, and they are determined to do nothing to bring the reproach upon themselves."

The president then intimated; not without adroitness, that the republic was placing herself in a proud position by accepting the truce, and that Spain was abasing herself by giving her consent to it. The world was surprised that the States should hesitate at all.

There was much more of scholastic dissertation in the president's address, but enough has been given to show its very peremptory character.

If the war was to go on it was to be waged mainly by Zeeland alone. This was now plain beyond all peradventure. The other provinces had resolved to accept the proposed treaty. The cities of Delft and Amsterdam, which had stood out so long among the estates of Holland, soon renounced their opposition. Prince Maurice, with praiseworthy patriotism, reconciled himself with the inevitable, and now that the great majority had spoken, began to use his influence with the factious minority.

On the day after Jeannin's speech he made a visit to the French ambassadors. After there had been some little discussion among them, Barneveld made his appearance. His visit seemed an accidental one, but it had been previously arranged with the envoys.

The general conversation went on a little longer, when the Advocate, frankly turning to the Prince, spoke of the pain which he felt at the

schism between them. He defended himself with honest warmth against the rumours circulated, in which he was accused of being a Spanish partisan. His whole life had been spent in fighting Spain, and he was now more determined than ever in his hostility to that monarchy. He sincerely believed that by the truce now proposed all the solid advantages of the war would be secured, and that such a result was a triumphant one for the republic. He was also most desirous of being restored to the friendship and good opinion of the house of Nassau; having proved during his whole life his sincere attachment to their interests--a sentiment never more lively in his breast than at that moment.

This advance was graciously met by the stadholder, and the two distinguished personages were, for the time at least, reconciled.

It was further debated as to the number of troops that it be advisable for the States to maintain during the truce and Barneveld expressed his decided opinion that thirty thousand men, at least, would be required. This opinion gave the prince at least as much pleasure as did the personal devotion expressed by the Advocate, and he now stated his intention of working with the peace party.

The great result was now certain. Delft and Amsterdam withdrew from their opposition to the treaty, so that Holland was unanimous before the year closed; Zeeland, yielding to the influence of Maurice, likewise gave in her adhesion to the truce.

The details of the mode in which the final arrangement was made are not especially interesting. The discussion was fairly at an end. The subject had been picked to the bones. It was agreed that the French ambassadors should go over the frontier, and hold a preliminary interview with the Spanish commissioners at Antwerp.

The armistice was to be continued by brief and repeated renewals, until it should be superseded by the truce of years:

Meantime, Archduke Albert sent his father confessor, Inigo Brizuela, to Spain, in order to make the treaty posed by Jeannin palatable to the king?

The priest was to set forth to Philip, as only a ghostly confessor could do with full effect, that he need not trouble himself about the recognition by the proposed treaty of the independence of the United Provinces. Ambiguous words had been purposely made use of in this regard, he was to explain, so that not only the foreign ambassadors were of opinion that the rights of Spain were not curtailed, but the emptiness of the imaginary recognition of Dutch freedom had been proved by the sharp criticism of the States.

It is true that Richardot, in the name of the archduke, had three months before promised the consent of the king, as having already been obtained. But Richardot knew very well when he made the statement that it was false. The archduke, in subsequent correspondence with the ambassadors in December, repeated the pledge. Yet, not only had the king not given

that consent, but he had expressly refused it by a courier sent in November.

Philip, now convinced by Brother Inigo that while agreeing to treat with the States-General as with a free commonwealth, over which he pretended to no authority, he really meant that he was dealing with vassals over whom his authority was to be resumed when it suited his convenience, at last gave his consent to the, proposed treaty. The royal decision was, however, kept for a time concealed, in order that the States might become more malleable.

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A truce he honestly considered a pitfall of destruction
Alas! we must always have something to persecute
Argument is exhausted and either action or compromise begins
Beware of a truce even more than of a peace
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Humble ignorance as the safest creed
Man is never so convinced of his own wisdom
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Readiness at any moment to defend dearly won liberties
Such an excuse was as bad as the accusation
The art of ruling the world by doing nothing
To doubt the infallibility of Calvin was as heinous a crime
What exchequer can accept chronic warfare and escape bankruptcy
Words are always interpreted to the disadvantage of the weak

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