



WILLIAM OF ORANGE AND THE NETHERLANDS.

IN an easterly direction from England, and separated from it by the German Ocean, lies that part of the continent called by the general name of the Netherlands—a country of comparatively small extent, but exceedingly populous, and possessing a large number of towns and cities. It derives the name of Netherlands from its consisting of a low tract of level ground on the shore of the German Ocean, and, from general appearances, is believed to have been formed of an alluvial deposit from the waters of the Rhine, the Meuse, the Scheldt, and other rivers. In the first stage of its formation, the land was for the greater part a species of swamp, but by dint of great perseverance, it has in the course of ages been drained and embanked, so as to exclude the ocean, and prevent the rivers and canals from overflowing their boundaries.

The industriously-disposed people, a branch of the great German or Teutonic family, who have thus rendered their country habitable and productive, did not get leave to enjoy their conquests in peace. They had from an early period to defend themselves against warlike neighbours, who wished to appropriate their country; and in later times—the sixteenth century—after attaining great opulence by their skill in the arts and the general integrity of their character, they were exposed to a new calamity in the bigotry of their rulers. There now ensued a struggle for civil and religious liberty of great importance and interest; and to an account of its leading particulars we propose to devote the present paper.

Divided into a number of provinces, each governed by its own duke, count, or bishop, a succession of circumstances in the fifteenth century brought the whole of the Netherlands into the possession of the family of Burgundy. But in the year 1477, Charles, Duke of Burgundy, being killed in the battle of Nancy, the Netherlands were inherited by his daughter Mary, who, marrying Maximilian, son of Frederick III., emperor of Austria, died soon after, leaving an infant son, Philip. In 1494 this Philip, known by the name of Philip the Fair, assumed the government of the Netherlands. Shortly afterwards he married Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, the joint sovereigns of Spain; and in 1506 he died, leaving a young son, Charles. In this manner, handed by family inheritance from one to another, the Netherlands became a possession of the crown of Spain, although hundreds of miles distant from the Spanish territory. Charles, in whom this possession centered, was, on the death of Maximilian in 1519, elected emperor of Germany, and, under the title of Charles V., became one of the most powerful monarchs in Europe. His sway extended over Spain, Germany, Naples, the Netherlands, and several other minor states in Europe, besides all the colonies and conquests of Spain in Asia, Africa, and America. One might expect that the Netherlands, forming as they did but a very insignificant portion of this immense empire, would suffer from being under the same government with so many other states: but Charles V. had been born in the Netherlands; he liked its people, and was acquainted with their character; and therefore, while he governed the rest of his dominions with a strict and sometimes a despotic hand, he respected almost lovingly the ancient laws and the strong liberty-feeling of his people of the Netherlands. The only exception of any consequence was his persecution of those who had embraced the doctrines of the Reformation. As emperor of Germany, he had conceived himself bound to adopt vigorous measures to suppress the opinions promulgated by Luther; and when, in spite of his efforts, the heresy spread all round, and infected the Netherlands, he did his best for some time to root it out there also. The number of those who, in the Netherlands, suffered death for their religion during the reign of Charles V., is stated by the old historians at 50,000. Towards the end of his reign, however, he relaxed these severities.

In 1555, Charles V., worn out by the cares of his long reign, resigned his sovereignty, and retired to a monastery. His large empire was now divided into two. His brother Ferdinand was created emperor of Germany; and the rest of his dominions, including Spain and the Netherlands, were inherited by his son, Philip II.

Philip was born at Valladolid, in Spain, in the year 1521. Educated by the ablest ecclesiastics, he manifested from his early years a profound, cautious, dissimulating genius; a cold, proud,

mirthless disposition; and an intense bigotry on religious subjects. At the age of sixteen he married a princess of Portugal, who died soon after, leaving him a son, Don Carlos. In 1548, Charles V., desirous that his son should cultivate the good-will of his future subjects of the Netherlands, called him from Spain to Brussels; but during his residence there, and in other cities of the Netherlands, his conduct was so haughty, austere, and unbending, that the burghers began to dread the time when, instead of their own countryman Charles, they should have this foreigner for their king. In 1554, Philip, pursuing his father's scheme for adding England to the territories of the Spanish crown, went to London and married Mary, queen of England; but after a residence of fourteen months, he returned to the Netherlands, where his father formally resigned the government into his hands.

Philip spent the first five years of his reign in the Netherlands, waiting the issue of a war in which he was engaged with France. During this period his Flemish and Dutch subjects began to have some experience of his government. They observed with alarm that the king hated the country, and distrusted its people. He would speak no other language than Spanish; his counsellors were Spaniards; he kept Spaniards alone about his person; and it was to Spaniards that all vacant posts were assigned. Besides, certain of his measures gave great dissatisfaction. He re-enacted the persecuting edicts against the Protestants, which his father in the end of his reign had suffered to fall into disuse; and the severities which ensued began to drive hundreds of the most useful citizens out of the country, as well as to injure trade, by deterring Protestant merchants from the Dutch and Flemish ports. Dark hints, too, were thrown out that he intended to establish an ecclesiastical court in the Netherlands similar to the Spanish Inquisition, and the spirit of Catholics as well as of Protestants revolted from the thought that this chamber of horrors should ever become one of the institutions of their free land. He had also increased the number of the bishops in the Netherlands from five to seventeen; and this was regarded as the mere appointment of twelve persons devoted to the Spanish interest, who would help, if necessary, to overawe the people. Lastly, he kept the provinces full of Spanish troops; and this was a direct violation of a fundamental law of the country. Against these measures the nobles and citizens complained bitterly, and from them drew sad anticipations of the future. Nor were they more satisfied with the address in which, through the bishop of Arras as his spokesman, he took farewell of them at a convention of the states held at Ghent previous to his departure for Spain. The oration recommended severity against heresy, and only promised the withdrawal of the foreign troops. The reply of the states was firm and bold, and the recollection of it must have rankled afterwards in the revengeful mind of Philip. "I would rather

be no king at all," he said to one of his ministers at the time, "than have heretics for my subjects." But suppressing his resentment in the meantime, he set sail for Spain in August 1559, leaving his half-sister, the Duchess of Parma, a natural daughter of Charles V., to act as his viceroy in the Netherlands.

The duchess was to be assisted in the government by a Council of State consisting of the six following persons: Antony de Granvelle, bishop of Arras, and afterwards a cardinal; the Count de Barlaimont, Viglius de Quichem, the Count Horn, the Count Egmont, and the Prince of Orange. Three of these, Granvelle, Barlaimont, and Viglius, were devoted to the Spanish interest, and were therefore very unpopular in the Netherlands; the others were men of tried patriotism, from whose presence in the council much good might be expected. Granvelle was a man of extraordinary political abilities, and the fit minister of such a king as the moody and scheming Philip; Barlaimont had also distinguished himself; and in all the country there was not so eminent a lawyer as Viglius. Counts Egmont and Horn were two of the most promising men in the Netherlands, and both of them had rendered services of no ordinary kind to Philip by their conduct in the war with France. Of the Prince of Orange, the principal personage in this struggle, and the true hero of the Netherlands, we must speak more particularly.

William of Nassau, Prince of Orange, sometimes called William I., was born at the castle of Dillembourg, in Germany, in 1533. He was the son of William, Count of Nassau, and the heir therefore of the large possessions of the house of Nassau in France and Germany, and in the Netherlands. At the age of eleven years he had succeeded, besides, to the French principedom of Orange, by the will of his cousin René of Nassau; so that before he arrived at manhood, he was one of the richest and most powerful noblemen in Europe. William was educated in the principles of the Reformation; but having entered, when quite a boy, into the employment of the Emperor Charles V., he changed the habits of a Protestant for those of a Roman Catholic; and accordingly, at the time at which we introduce him to our readers, he was conscientiously a Catholic, although by no means a bigoted, nor even perhaps what the Spaniards would have called a sound one. The Emperor Charles, who, like all such men, possessed a shrewd insight into character, and could pick out by a glance the men of mind and talent from among those who came within his notice, had from the first singled out the young Prince of Orange as a person from whom great things were to be expected. Accordingly, in the employment of Charles, Prince William had had ample opportunities of displaying the two kinds of ability then most in request, and which every public man of that age, except he were an ecclesiastic, was required to combine—diplomatic and military talent. While yet scarcely more than twenty years of age, he had risen to be the first

man in the emperor's regard. And this liking of Charles for him was not merely of that kind which an elderly and experienced man sometimes contracts for a fresh-hearted and enthusiastic youth; it was a real friendship on equal terms; for so highly did he value the prudence and wisdom of the young warrior and politician, that he confided to him the greatest state secrets; and was often heard to say that from the Prince of Orange he had received many very important political hints. It was on the arm of William of Orange that Charles had leant for support on the memorable day when, in the Assembly of the States at Brussels, he rose feebly from his seat, and declared his abdication of the sovereign power. And it is said that one of Charles's last advices to his son Philip was to cultivate the good-will of the people of the Netherlands, and especially to defer to the counsels of the Prince of Orange. When, therefore, in the year 1555, Philip began his rule in the Netherlands, there were few persons who were either better entitled or more truly disposed to act the part of faithful and loyal advisers than William of Nassau, then twenty-two years of age. But close as had been William's relation to the late emperor, there were stronger principles and feelings in his mind than gratitude to the son of the man he had loved. He had thought deeply on the question, how a nation should be governed, and had come to entertain opinions very hostile to arbitrary power; he had observed what appeared to him, even as a Catholic, gross blunders in the mode of treating religious differences; he had imbibed deeply the Dutch spirit of independence; and it was the most earnest wish of his heart to see the Netherlands prosperous and happy. Nor was he at all a visionary, or a man whose activity would be officious and troublesome; he was eminently a practical man, one who had a strong sense of what is expedient in existing circumstances; and his manner was so grave and quiet, that he obtained the name of William the Silent. Still, many things occurred during Philip's five years' residence in the Netherlands to make him speak out and remonstrate. He was one of those who had tried to persuade the king to use gentler and more popular measures, and the consequence was, that a decided aversion grew up in the dark and haughty mind of Philip to the Prince of Orange.

PERSECUTIONS COMMENCE.

Having thus introduced the Prince of Orange to the reader, we return to the history of the Netherlands, which were now under the local management of the Duchess of Parma. The administration of this female viceroy produced violent discontent. The persecutions of the Protestants were becoming so fierce that over and above the suffering inflicted on individuals, the commerce of the country was sensibly falling off. The establishment of a court like the Inquisition was still in contemplation; Spaniards were still appointed to places of trust in preference to

Flemings; and finally, the Spanish soldiers, who ought to have been removed long ago, were still burdening the country with their presence. The woes of the people were becoming intolerable; occasionally there were slight outbreaks of violence; and a low murmur of vehement feeling ran through the whole population, foreboding a general eruption. "Our poor fatherland," they said to each other; "God has afflicted it with two enemies, water and Spaniards: we have built dykes, and overcome the one, but how shall we get rid of the other? Why, if nothing better occur, we know one way at least, and we shall keep it in reserve—we can set the two enemies against each other. We can break down the dykes, inundate the country, and let the water and the Spaniards fight it out between them." Granvelle was the object of their special hatred: to him they attributed every unpopular measure. At length a confederacy of influential persons was formed to procure his recall; the Prince of Orange placed himself at the head of it; and, by persevering effort, it succeeded in its end, and Granvelle left the Netherlands early in 1564.

The recall of Granvelle did not restore tranquillity. Viglius and Barlaimont continued to act in the same spirit. Private communications from Spain directed the regent to follow their advice, and to disregard the counsels of the Orange party; and the obnoxious edicts against the Protestants were still put in force. About this time, too, the decrees of the famous Council of Trent, which had been convened in 1545 to take into consideration the state of the church, and the means of suppressing the Reformation, and which had closed its sittings in the end of 1563, were made public; and Philip, the most zealous Catholic of his time, issued immediate orders for their being enforced both in Spain and the Netherlands. In Spain the decrees were received as a matter of course; but at the announcement that they were to be executed in the Netherlands, the whole country burst out in a storm of indignation. In many places the decrees were not executed at all; and wherever the authorities did attempt to execute them, the people rose and compelled them to desist.

In this dilemma the regent resolved to send an ambassador to Spain to represent the state of affairs to Philip better than could be done in writing, and to receive his instructions how she should proceed. Count Egmont was the person chosen; because, in addition to his great merits as a subject of Philip, he was one of the most popular noblemen in the Netherlands. Setting out for Spain early in 1565, he was received by Philip in the most courteous manner, loaded with marks of kindness, and dismissed with a thorough conviction that the king intended to pursue a milder policy in the future government of the Low Countries. Philip, however, had but deceived him; and at the time when he was flattering him with hopes of concessions, he was despatching orders to the regent strictly to put in force the decrees of the

Council of Trent, and in all things to carry out the king's resolute purpose of extinguishing heresy in the Netherlands. In vain did the Prince of Orange and the Counts Horn and Egmont protest that a civil war would be the consequence; in vain did the people lament, threaten, and murmur: the decrees were republished, and the inquisitors began to select their victims. All that the three patriotic noblemen could do was to retire from the council, and wash their hands of the guilt which the government was incurring. There were others, however, who, impatient of the inflictions with which Philip's obstinacy was visiting the country, resolved on a bolder, and, as it appeared, less considerate mode of action. A political club or confederacy was organised among the nobility, for the express purpose of resisting the establishment of the Inquisition. They bound themselves by a solemn oath "to oppose the introduction of the Inquisition, whether it were attempted openly or secretly, or by whatever name it should be called;" and also to protect and defend each other from all the consequences which might result from their having formed this league.

Perplexed and alarmed, the regent implored the Prince of Orange and his two associates, Counts Egmont and Horn, to return to the council and give her their advice. They did so: and a speech of the Prince of Orange, in which he asserted strongly the utter folly of attempting to suppress opinion by force, and argued that "such is the nature of heresy, that if it rests it rusts, but whoever rubs it whets it," had the effect of inclining the regent to mitigate the ferocity of her former edicts. Meanwhile the confederates were becoming bolder and more numerous. Assembling in great numbers at Brussels, they walked in procession through the streets to the palace of the regent, where they were admitted to an interview. In reply to their petition, she said that she was very willing to send one or more persons to Spain to lay the complaints before the king. Obligated to be content with this answer, the confederates withdrew. Next day three hundred of them met at a grand entertainment given to them by one of their number. Among other things, it was debated what name they should assume. "Oh," said one of them, "did you not hear the Count de Barlaimont yesterday whisper to the regent, when he was standing by her side, that she need not be afraid 'of such a set of beggars?' Let us call ourselves *The Beggars*; we could not find a better name." The proposal was enthusiastically agreed to; and, amid deafening uproar, the whole company filled and shattered their glasses to the toast, Long live the Beggars! (*Gueux*.) In the full spirit of the freak, the host sent out for a beggar's wallet and a wooden bowl; and slinging the wallet across his back amidst clamours of applause, he drank from the bowl, and declared he would lose life and fortune for the great cause of the Beggars. The bowl went round, and all made the same enthusiastic declaration. From that day

the Gueux, or Beggars, became the name of the faction; and every one wore the wallet, or some other symbol of mendicancy.

While the nobles and influential persons were thus preparing to co-operate, in case of a collision with the Spanish government, a sudden and disastrous movement occurred among the lower classes. In times of general excitement, it frequently happens that malice or accident casts abroad among the people some wild and incredible rumour; such was the case on the present occasion. Intelligence spread with rapidity through the towns and cities of Flanders that the regent had given her permission for the public exercise of the Protestant form of worship; multitudes poured out into the fields after their preachers; congregations of many thousands assembled; and the local authorities found themselves powerless. A great proportion of these congregations were doubtless pious and peacefully-disposed Protestants; but taking advantage of the ferment, many idle and disorderly persons joined them, and by their efforts the general cause was disgraced. In Tournay, Ypres, Valenciennes, and other towns, the mob of real or assumed Protestants broke into the churches, and destroyed the altars and all the symbols of worship in the Roman Catholic ritual. Antwerp was for some time protected from similar outrages by the presence of the Prince of Orange; but when he was summoned by the regent to Brussels, the fury of the people broke out unrestrained. The great cathedral was the principal object of their dislike. Rushing to it in thousands, they shattered the painted windows with stones, tore down the images, and dashed them against the pavement; slit up the splendid pictures, and broke in pieces the large organ, then believed to be the finest in Europe. For many days the Iconoclasts, or Image-breakers, as they were called, continued their ravages in almost all the towns of Flanders and Brabant. The contagion was spreading likewise in Zealand and Holland, and more than 400 churches had been destroyed, when the Prince of Orange, Counts Egmont and Horn, and other patriotic noblemen, then at Brussels in consultation with the regent, both vexed at the outrages themselves, and fearful that the cause of liberty in the Netherlands might suffer from them, hastened into their respective provinces, and partly by force, partly by persuasion, succeeded in restoring order. It is deeply to be regretted that such excesses should have stained the sacred cause of liberty; but this was an age when little was known of religious toleration, the uppermost sect, whatever it was, making it almost a duty to oppress the others. For these outrages, we presume, the Protestants of the Netherlands in the present day are as sorry as are the Roman Catholics for the unjustifiable cruelties perpetrated in their name.

After the interview between the Gueux and the regent mentioned above, an ambassador had been sent to Philip in Spain to

detail grievances. Instead of deferring to his representations, Philip and his counsellors, one of whom was Granvelle, were resolutely preparing means to crush the confederacy, and break the proud spirit of the Netherlands. Secret orders were given for the collection of troops; the regent was to be instructed to amuse the patriots until the means of punishing them were ready; and in a short time, it was hoped, there would no longer be a patriot or a heretic in the Low Countries. It is easy to conceive with what rage and bitterness of heart Philip, while indulging these dreams, must have received intelligence of the terrible doings of the Iconoclasts. But, as cautious and dissimulating as he was obstinate and revengeful, he concealed his intentions in the meantime, announced them to the regent only in secret letters and despatches, and held out hopes in public to the patriots and the people of the Netherlands that he was soon to pay them a visit in person to inquire into the condition of affairs.

It has never been clearly ascertained by what means it was that the Prince of Orange contrived to obtain intelligence of Philip's most secret plans and purposes; but certain it is that nothing passed in the cabinet at Madrid which did not find its way to the ears of the prince. Philip's intentions with regard to the Netherlands became known to him by means of a letter to the regent from the Spanish ambassador at Paris, a copy of which he had procured. The prince had hitherto endeavoured to act as a loyal subject; but this letter made it plain that it was time to be making preparations for a decided rupture. His first step therefore was to hold a conference with four other noblemen; namely, his brother, Louis of Nassau, and the Counts Egmont, Horn, and Hoogstraten. He laid the letter before them, and the effect was as might have been expected on all of them, except Count Egmont; for, by some infatuation, this nobleman, mindful of the kindness he had experienced from Philip when visiting him as ambassador, persisted in believing that the king's designs were really conciliatory. In vain the prince argued with him; the count would not be convinced, and the conference was broken up. Meantime the people, warned by the prince of the approach of an army, began to emigrate in great numbers; and, after waiting to the last moment, William himself, in April 1567, withdrew with his family to his estates in Germany. Most earnestly did he try to persuade Count Egmont to accompany him; but his intreaties were to no purpose; and he left him with these words—"I tell you, Egmont, you are a bridge by which the Spaniards will come into this country; they will pass over you, and then break you down."

The man whom Philip had sent into the Netherlands at the head of the army as the fit instrument of his purposes of vengeance, was the Duke of Alva, a personage who united the most consummate military skill with the disposition of a ruffian, ready to undertake any enterprise, however base. Such was the man

who, at the age of sixty, in the month of August 1567, made his entry into the Netherlands by the province of Luxemburg, at the head of an army of fifteen thousand men. One of his first acts, after arriving at Brussels, was to seize the Counts Egmont and Horn, and send them prisoners to Ghent. This and other acts convinced the Duchess of Parma that she was no longer the real regent of the Netherlands; and accordingly, having asked and obtained leave to resign, she quitted the country early in 1568, Alva assuming the government instead.

Now that a grand struggle was to ensue in the Netherlands, we trust our readers clearly understand what it was about. On the one hand was a nation of quiet, orderly people, industrious in a high degree, prosperous in their commerce, and disposed to remain peaceful subjects of a foreign monarch: all they asked was to be let alone, and to be allowed to worship God in the way they preferred. On the other hand was a sovereign, who, unthankful for the blessing of reigning over such a happy and well-disposed nation, and stimulated by passion and bigotry, resolved on compelling them all to be Catholics.

CRUELITIES OF ALVA.

Alva was a suitable instrument to work out Philip's designs. Supported by a powerful army, he was unscrupulous in his persecution. Blood was shed like water; the scaffolds were crowded with victims; the prisons filled with men in all the agonies of suspense. He appointed a court, called the Court of Tumults, to investigate with rigour into past offences. The Inquisition also pursued its diabolical vocation without opposition or disguise, covering the land with its black and baleful shadow. Heretics hid their heads, glad if present conformity would save them from the tortures which others were enduring for actions which they had thought forgotten. Above 18,000 persons in all are said to have suffered death by Alva's orders. And thousands more fled from the country, dispersing themselves through France and Germany; many of them also finding an asylum in England, into which, being kindly received by Queen Elizabeth, they carried those arts and habits which had raised the Flemings high among commercial nations, and which at once incorporated themselves with the genial civilisation of England. The Prince of Orange was declared a rebel; and his eldest son, the Count de Buren, then a student at the university of Louvain, was seized and sent a prisoner into Spain. But perhaps the most signal act of cruelty in the beginning of Alva's regency was the execution of the Counts Egmont and Horn. After an imprisonment of nine months, these unfortunate noblemen were brought to a mock trial, and beheaded at Brussels. So popular were they, and so universal was the sympathy for their fate, that even the presence of the executioner, and of the spies who surrounded the scaffold, could not prevent the citizens

of Brussels from dipping their handkerchiefs in the blood, and treasuring them up as relics.

The Prince of Orange, residing on his family estates of Nassau in Germany, was attentively observing all that was going on in the Netherlands, and making diligent preparations for an attempt in their behalf. He entered into communication with Elizabeth, queen of England, with the leaders of the Huguenots in France, and with the various Protestant princes of Germany; and from all of these he received either actual assistance in men and money, or the promise of future support. To meet the expenses of the expedition he was fitting out, he sold his plate and furniture, and incurred debts on his estates. Having at length assembled a considerable force, he divided it into four armies, each of which was to march into the Netherlands by a different route. Before setting out, however, he thought it necessary to publish a manifesto to the world, in justification of a step so serious as engaging in hostilities with the forces of one whom he had hitherto acknowledged, and still wished to acknowledge, as his sovereign. In this manifesto, also, he made it known that he had changed his religious views: although hitherto a Catholic, he was now convinced that the doctrines of the Protestants were more agreeable to Scripture.

The issue of this first attempt was unfortunate. In several engagements with the enemy, the different bands of patriots were successful. In one of them, Count Adolphus, a brother of the Prince of Orange, was killed in the moment of victory; but at last Alva himself hurrying down to the frontier, the provisions of the prince's army beginning to fail, and winter drawing near, they were compelled to retire. The prince and his brother Count Louis led the remains of their army into France, to assist the Huguenots in the meantime, until there should be a better opening into the Netherlands. Alva, prouder of this success than he had been of any of his former victories, returned to Flanders, and caused medals to be struck and monuments to be raised in commemoration of it, and, what was most offensive to all the people, a brass statue of himself, in a heroic attitude, to be erected at Antwerp. Delivered now from the fear of any interruption from the Prince of Orange, he resumed his exactions and his cruelties; and for four years he and the Inquisition carried on the work of persecution and blood. To detail the history of these four years of tyranny is impossible; we can but sketch the line of the principal events, and show how the minds of the people were ripened for the final struggle.

The Duke of Alva was greatly in want of money to pay his troops, maintain the fortifications of the various towns, and carry on his government; and Alva was not the man to respect, even if the times had been less disturbed than they were, the ancient right which the people of the Netherlands claimed of taxing themselves through their Assembly of States. Accordingly, with

a soldier-like impatience of indirect taxation, he determined to accumulate a vast sum of money by a very summary process. He imposed three taxes: the first an immediate tax of one per cent. on all property, personal or real; the second an annual tax of twenty per cent. on all heritable property; and the third a tax of ten per cent. on every sale or transfer of goods. Crushed and broken-spirited by all that they had already endured, the burghers stood utterly aghast at this new infliction. Persecution for religion's sake was hard to bear, and the Inquisition was very obnoxious, still it was but a portion of the population that actually suffered personally in such cases; but here was a visitation which came home to every Fleming and every Dutchman, and seemed but a prelude of utter ruin. Three such taxes as these of Governor Alva were never heard of within the memory of man. Utterly amazed and bewildered at first, the burghers at length tried to argue, and singled out the third of the taxes as the special subject of their representations. A tax of ten per cent. on sales of goods would amount in many cases, they said, to the value of the commodities themselves; since the same commodities were often transferred from one person to another, and from him to a third, a fourth, a fifth, a sixth, before they came into the hands of the consumer. In vain did the states make these remonstrances; in vain did Viglius, the president of the council, second them; in vain even did the states offer to pay a large sum in lieu of the proposed taxes. Alva was inexorable. At length the general convention of the states, after procuring a few paltry concessions, was obliged to yield to the imposition of the taxes: on this condition, however, that all the states, without exception, should give in their adherence. This was a condition, as it proved, of singular importance; for, gifted with greater boldness and resolution than the other provinces, Utrecht refused to comply with the governor's demands; and, by nobly persevering in its resistance, not only raised a more determined spirit in the other provinces, but delayed the collection of the taxes so long, that in the meantime Alva received instructions from Spain to desist from measures calculated to produce such dangerous results. Alva's conduct, however, had already produced its effects; and the people of the Netherlands had come to detest the very name of Spain.

The Prince of Orange, who, after a short period of military service on the side of the Protestants in France, had returned to his estates in Germany, was earnestly intent on the condition of affairs in the Netherlands. All that could be done, however, was to harass the Spaniards as much as possible in the meantime, and enter into negotiations with the Protestant powers of other countries, with a view to obtain the means necessary for a bolder conflict. Both these courses of action were adopted by William; and it is a remarkable characteristic of his whole life, that even when he is least heard of, he was busy in secret.

While others were marching hither and thither, and performing heroic actions, they were but doing the errands on which he had sent them: it was he who, whether living in retirement in his castle in Nassau, or advancing into the Netherlands by the German frontier, or hovering in his ship on the coasts of Holland and Zealand, was really at the centre of affairs, directing all the movements that were going on, arranging everything, foreseeing everything, taking charge of everything. Of William's military actions—his battles by sea and land—we hear much; but his real greatness consisted in his prudence, his decision, his fertility in stratagem, his statesmanlike width of view, his vast knowledge of men and of the state of Europe at the time; and these are qualities which make less noise in history. This peculiarity in the life of the Prince of Orange makes the name of William *The Taciturn*, which his contemporaries gave him, on account of the sparing use he made of speech, doubly significant. The mode of harassing Alva which the prince resolved upon at the period at which we have now arrived, was that of stationing a fleet of cruisers along the coasts of Zealand and Holland, for the purpose not only of capturing Spanish vessels, but also of seizing on advantageous positions along the shore. Nor was it difficult to obtain such a fleet. The unheard-of severities of Alva's regency had driven numbers of merchants with their ships into the ports of England. For some time the politic Elizabeth permitted them safe harbour and free commerce; but at last, to prevent an open rupture with Philip, she forbade their reception. Compelled thus to make the sea their home, the Dutch and Flemish merchants banded together, and placed themselves under the direction of the Prince of Orange, who commissioned them in the service of the Netherlands, authorising them to capture all Spanish vessels for their own profit, except a fifth part of the prize-money, which William was to receive and apply for the good of the Netherlands. As another means of collecting a sufficient sum of money for future necessities, William came to an understanding with the itinerant Protestant preachers, who, even during the fiercest paroxysms of Alva's cruelty and the zeal of the new Inquisition, continued to walk through the country in disguise, teaching and consoling the people. These preachers William converted into civil functionaries, employing them to ask and receive contributions from the Protestant part of the community, now larger in many localities than the Catholic. Thus was William providing, as well as he could, that prime necessary in all enterprises—money.

Alva, enraged at the news he had received of the great damage done to the Spanish shipping by the Dutch and Flemish vessels that swarmed on the coasts of Holland and Zealand, and doubly enraged when he heard that men had actually landed from several of these vessels, and taken a fort on the island of Bommel, issued an immediate order for the collection of the taxes he had

previously imposed, money being now more necessary than ever. The people, however, protested that they were reduced to beggary already, and had no means of satisfying his demands; and he had just erected seventeen gibbets in front of seventeen of the principal houses in Brussels, with the intention of hanging seventeen of the principal burgesses thereon, in order to terrify the rest into submission, when, after all was ready, and the very nooses had been made on the ends of the ropes, the news came into the town that the Dutch and Flemish vessels, under the bold and savage Count de la Marck, had made a descent on the island of Voorn and taken the town of Brille, which was reckoned one of the keys of the Netherlands. Alva was amazed: he had not time even to hang the seventeen burgesses. A council was held, and the Count de Bossut despatched with a body of Spanish troops to the island of Voorn. Bossut laid siege to Brille, and was in hopes of being able to reduce it with his artillery, when one of the townsmen swimming along a canal till he came to a sluice which the Spaniards had overlooked, broke it, and let in such a deluge of water as overflowed the artillery, drowned a number of the Spaniards, and forced the rest to take to their ships, all wet and dripping as they were. This victory roused a determined spirit of resolution among the inhabitants of Holland and Zealand. The town of Flushing set the example; the towns of Dort, Gouda, Haarlem, and Leyden followed. In a short time all the towns of the two maritime provinces, except Amsterdam and Middleburg, had risen up and expelled their garrisons. In the provinces of Utrecht, Friesland, and Overyssel, similar risings took place. In this general movement the Protestants, unable to resist the opportunity of revenging their own past sufferings, were guilty of some atrocities, particularly against the monks.

The scheme of an insurrection in the maritime provinces having turned out according to his wishes, the Prince of Orange now advanced into the Netherlands by the French frontier, having succeeded, by negotiation with Protestant powers, and by the expenditure of money, in assembling an army of about 20,000 men, consisting of Germans, French, English, and Scotch. With the strength of this army he now began to grapple with Alva in the very seat of his power—the southern provinces of Flanders, Brabant, and Antwerp. He first took the town of Mons, an important position near the French frontier; and ere long he had reduced several other important towns. This was the only mode of action by which he could make any impression; for, in all cases of attempts to deliver a conquered country, the only mode of procedure is to root out the foreign garrisons of towns one by one; and a general victory in the open field is only valuable as conducing to that end, by either inducing the towns to surrender in despair, or making the process of besieging them less tedious. But at this time, after so much success, various

circumstances conspired both to diminish and dispirit his army. The most discouraging blow of all was the massacre of St Bartholomew, in which, on the night of the 24th of August 1572, more than 60,000 of the Protestants of France perished. By this event, all hope of assistance from France was destroyed; and, after several fruitless engagements with Alva's army, William was obliged to disband his forces, and to retire from active military operation.

The condition of the Netherlands was now as follows:—Alva was nominally their governor; but in the late struggle, no fewer than sixty or seventy towns, principally in Holland, Zealand, and Flanders, had thrown off the yoke, and now bade defiance to the Spanish government. Unless these towns were recovered, Philip could no longer be said to be king of the Netherlands. Alva's exertions were therefore devoted to the recovery of these towns; and his officers were almost all employed in sieges. Mons, Tergoes, Mechlin, Zutphen, and Naerden, were successively reduced; and so dreadful were the enormities perpetrated by the Spanish soldiers, that the citizens, after the surrender of other towns, resolved to exhaust every means of resistance rather than submit. The town of Haarlem distinguished itself by the desperate bravery with which for seven months it stood out against a large army under Alva's son. At length, trusting to a truce with the Spaniard, the famished citizens agreed to surrender. The siege, some accounts say, had cost the Spaniards 10,000 men; and now they took a fearful vengeance. Hundreds of the most respectable citizens were executed; and when the four executioners were tired of their bloody work, they tied their victims two by two together, and flung them into the lake of Haarlem. As showing how deep a hold the great struggle of the sixteenth century has taken of the popular memory, and how many local associations there are connected with it, we may quote the following account of a curious Haarlem custom, the origin of which is traced to the siege of the city in 1572:—"In walking through the streets of Haarlem, we saw a rather curious memorial of these disastrous times. At the sides of the doors of various houses hung a small neatly-framed board, on which was spread a piece of fine lace-work of an oval form, resembling the top of a lady's cap with a border: the object, indeed, on a casual inspection, might have been taken for a lady's cap hung out to dry. Beneath it, to show the transparency of the lace, there was placed a piece of pink paper or silk. On asking the meaning of these exhibitions, I was informed that they originated in a circumstance which occurred at the siege of Haarlem. Before surrendering the town, a deputation of aged matrons waited on the Spanish general to know in what manner the women who were at the time in childbirth should be protected from molestation in case of the introduction of the soldiery; and he requested that at the door of each house containing a female

so situated an appropriate token should be hung out, and promised that that house should not be troubled. This, according to the tradition, was attended to; and till the present day, every house in which there is a female in this condition is distinguished in the manner I have mentioned. The lace is hung out several weeks previous to the expected birth, and hangs several weeks afterwards, a small alteration being made as soon as the sex of the child is known. I was further assured, that during the time which is allowed for these exhibitions, the house is exempted from all legal execution, and that the husband cannot be taken to serve as a soldier.*

While Alva was thus engaged in retrieving the revolted districts, his king at Madrid was growing dissatisfied with his conduct. He began to think that he had made an error in sending such a man into the Netherlands, who could scarcely make a discrimination in his cruelties between Protestants and Catholics; and he looked about for a general to succeed him. He found such a person in Don Luis Zanega y Requesens, commander of the order of Malta, a true Catholic, but a man of calm and temperate mind. Requesens accordingly made his entry into Brussels on the 17th of November 1573; and the stern old Alva returned to Spain, to be ill-treated by a master whom he had served too faithfully.

WAR CONTINUED—SIEGE OF LEYDEN.

In the civil government of the country, Requesens pursued quite a different line of policy from his predecessor. He began his rule by breaking down the brass statue which Alva had erected of himself at Antwerp, dissolving the Council of Tumults, abandoning the obnoxious taxes, and publishing an amnesty for past offences committed by the inhabitants of the revolted districts. But while thus changing the whole tone of the government, he was obliged to continue all those military operations which Alva had begun, for the purpose of compelling the rebel cities of Holland and Zeeland to reacknowledge the sovereignty of Philip. The first object of his attention was the town of Middleburg in Zeeland, which had been kept in a state of close siege by the patriots for about a year and a half, and the loss of which would be a severe blow to the Spanish cause. He caused a large fleet to be collected, and appointing two able admirals to the command of it, he went on board one of the ships himself, and sailed down the Scheldt for the relief of the town. The Prince of Orange, then in Holland, immediately hastened to the critical spot; and by his directions, the fleet of the patriots under Boissot, admiral of Holland, met the Spanish one, and engaging with it on the 29th of January 1574, gained a complete victory, sinking the ship of one of the Spanish admirals, and obliging

* Chambers's Tour in Holland and Belgium.

the other to swim for his life. Requesens himself stood on the dyke of Sacherlo, and witnessed the disaster. After this the town of Middleburg surrendered to the Prince of Orange; and the cause of the patriots in the maritime provinces appeared more hopeful than ever. In the meantime, two of the prince's brothers, Count Louis and Count Henry of Nassau, who had for some time been residing in Germany, advanced at the head of an army in the direction of the Maas, with the intention of exciting the inland provinces to assume a position similar to that which Holland and Zealand were so nobly maintaining. The issue of this attempt was fatal. Requesens had despatched a strong force to oppose them; and on the 14th of April a battle was fought between the two armies near the village of Mooch: the royalists were victorious, and the two brave princes were killed. This defeat, and the death of two men so eminent and so popular, were indeed a heavy blow to the patriots; but its consequences were far less severe than they might have been. The Spanish troops, who had a long arrear of pay due them, became mutinous and unmanageable after the victory, and threatened to pillage Antwerp. Requesens contrived at length to appease them for the time by raising a hundred thousand florins from the citizens, pledging his own jewels, and melting down his plate to raise more, and granting the mutineers a free pardon. But the interval had been of use to the patriots; for a large fleet having been equipped by Requesens, and having been removed, during the mutiny, from Antwerp, where it was lying, a little way down the Scheldt, to be out of the reach of the soldiers, Boissot, the Zealand admiral, boldly sailed up the river, took forty of the ships, and shattered and sunk many more. At length, however, the mutineers returned to their duty; and Requesens, having vainly tried in the first place to end the war by a proclamation of the king's pardon to all his Catholic subjects in the Netherlands, collected his whole force for the siege of the large and populous city of Leyden.

The story of this siege is one of the most spirit-stirring in the annals of heroism. Leyden stands in a low situation in the midst of a labyrinth of rivulets and canals. That branch of the Rhine which still retains its ancient name passes through the middle of it; and from this stream such an infinity of canals are derived, that it is difficult to say whether the water or the land possesses the greater space. By these canals the ground on which the city stands is divided into a great number of small islands, united together by bridges. For five months all other operations were suspended; all the energy of Requesens, on the one hand, was directed towards getting possession of this city; and all the energy of the Prince of Orange, on the other hand, towards assisting the citizens, and preventing it from being taken. The issue depended entirely, however, on the bravery and resolution of the citizens of Leyden themselves. Pent up

within their walls, they had to resist the attacks and stratagems of the besiegers; and all that the Prince of Orange could do, was to occupy the surrounding country, harass the besiegers as much as possible, and enable the citizens to hold out, by conveying to them supplies of provisions and men.

Nobly, nay, up to the highest heroic pitch of human nature, did the citizens behave. They had to endure a siege in its most dreary form, that of blockade. Instead of attempting to storm the town, Valdez, the Spanish general, resolved to reduce it by the slow but sure process of starvation. For this purpose he completely surrounded the town by a circle of forts, more than sixty in number; and the inhabitants thus saw themselves walled completely in from all the rest of the earth, with its growing crops and its well-filled granaries, and restricted entirely to whatever quantity of provisions there chanced to be on the small spot of ground which they walked up and down in. They had no means even of communicating with the Prince of Orange and their other friends outside, except by carrier-pigeons, which were trained for the purpose. One attempt was made by the citizens to break through the line of blockade, for the sake of keeping possession of a piece of pasture-ground for their cattle; but it was unsuccessful; and they began now to work day and night at repairing their fortifications, so as to resist the Spanish batteries when they should begin to play. Like fire pent up, the patriotism of the inhabitants burned more fiercely and brightly; every man became a hero, every woman an orator, and words of flashing genius were spoken, and deeds of wild bravery done, such as would have been impossible except among 20,000 human beings living in the same city, and all roused at once to the same unnatural state of emotion. The two leading spirits were John Van der Does, the commander, better known by his Latinised name of Dousa, as one of the best writers of Latin verse at that time, when so many able men devoted themselves to this kind of literary exercise; and Peter Van der Werf, the burgomaster. Under the management of these two men, every precaution was adopted that was necessary for the defence of the city. The resolution come to was, that the last man among them should die of want rather than admit the Spaniards into the town. Coolly, and with a foresight thoroughly Dutch, Dousa and Van der Werf set about making an inventory of all that was eatable in the town; corn, cattle, nay, even horses and dogs; calculating how long the stock could last at the rate of so much a day to every man and woman in the city; adopting means to get the whole placed under the management of a dispensing committee; and deciding what should be the allowance per head at first, so as to prevent their stock from being eaten up too fast. It was impossible, however, to collect all the food into one fund, or to regulate its consumption by municipal arrangements; and after two

months had elapsed, famine had commenced in earnest, and those devices for mitigating the gnawings of hunger began to be employed which none but starving men could bear to think of. Not only the flesh of dogs and horses, but roots, weeds, nettles, every green thing that the eye could detect shooting up from the earth, was ravenously eaten. Many died of want, and thousands fell ill. Still they held out, and indignantly rejected the offers made to them by the besiegers. "When we have nothing else left," said Dousa, in reply to a message from Valdez, "we will eat our left hands, keeping the right to fight with." Once, indeed, hunger seemed to overcome their patriotism, and for some days crowds of gaunt and famished wretches moved along the streets crying, "Let the Spaniards in; oh, for God's sake let them in." Assembling with hoarse clamours at the house of Van der Werf, they demanded that he should give them food, or else surrender. "I have no food to give you," was the burgomaster's reply, "and I have sworn that I will not surrender to the Spaniards; but if my body will be of any service to you, tear me to pieces, and let the hungriest of you eat me." The poor wretches went away, and thought no more of surrendering.

The thought of the Prince of Orange night and day was how to render assistance to the citizens of Leyden—how to convey provisions into the town. He had collected a large supply; but all his exertions could not raise a sufficient force to break through the line of blockade. In this desperate extremity they resolved to have recourse to that expedient which they kept in reserve until it should be clear that no other was left—they would break their dykes, open their sluices, inundate the whole level country round Leyden, and wash the Spaniards and their circle of forts utterly away. It was truly a desperate resource; and it was only in the last extremity that they could bring themselves to think of it. All that vast tract of fertile land, which the labour of ages had drained and cultivated—to see it converted into a sheet of water! there could not possibly be a sight more unseemly and melancholy to a Dutchman's eyes. The damage, it was calculated, would amount to 600,000 guilders. But when the destruction of the dykes round Leyden was once resolved upon, they set to work with a heartiness and a zeal greater than that which had attended their building. Hatchets, hammers, spades, and pickaxes, were in requisition; and by the labour of a single night, the labour of ages was demolished and undone. The water, availing itself of the new outlets, poured over the flat country, and in a short time the whole of the region situated between Leyden and Rotterdam was flooded to a considerable depth. The Spaniards, terror-stricken at first, bethought themselves of the fate of the antediluvians; but at last, seeing that the water did not rise above a certain level, they recovered their courage, and though obliged to abandon those of their forts

which were stationed in the low grounds, they persevered in the blockade. But there was another purpose to be served by the inundation of the country besides that of washing away the Spaniards, and the Prince of Orange was making preparations for effecting it. He had caused about 200 large flat-bottomed boats to be built, and loaded with provisions; these now began to row towards the famished city. The inhabitants saw them coming; they watched them eagerly advancing across the waters, fighting their way past the Spanish forts, and bringing bread to them. But it almost seemed as if Heaven itself had become cruel; for a north wind was blowing, and so long as it continued to blow, the waters would not be deep enough to enable the boats to reach the city. They waited for days, every eye fixed on the vanes; but still the wind blew from the north, although never almost within the memory of the oldest citizen had there been such a continuance of north wind at that season of the year. Many died in sight of the vessels which contained the food which would have kept them alive; and those who still survived shuffled along the streets more like skeletons than men. In two days these would to a certainty have been all dead too; when, lo! the vanes trembled and veered round; the wind shifted first to the north-west, blowing the sea tides with hurricane force into the mouths of the rivers; and then to the south, driving the waves exactly in the direction of the city. The remaining forts of the Spaniards were quickly begirt with water. The Spaniards themselves, pursued by the Zealanders in their boats, were either drowned or shot swimming, or fished out with hooks fastened to the end of poles, and killed with the sword. Several bodies of them, however, effected their escape. The citizens had all crowded to the gates to meet their deliverers. With bread in their hands, they ran through the streets; and many who had outlived the famine died of surfeit. That same day they met in one of the churches—a lean and sickly congregation—with the magistrates at their head, to return thanks to Almighty God for his mercy.

The siege of Leyden was raised on the 3d of October 1574; and the anniversary of that day is still celebrated by the citizens. It is the most memorable day in the history of Leyden; and many memorials exist to keep the inhabitants in remembrance of the event which happened on it. Usually, the object which first excites the curiosity of the traveller who visits Leyden is the Stadthouse, or Hotel de Ville, which occupies a conspicuous situation on one of the sides of the Breed Straat, or Broad Street. The date of the erection of the building, 1574, is carved on the front, along with the arms of the town, two cross-keys, and several inscriptions referring to the sufferings of the place during the period of its besiegement. The walls of the venerable apartment in which the burgomasters assemble are of dark panelled wood, partly hung with beautiful old tapestry, and ornamented with several paintings. One picture of modern

date, by Van Bree of Antwerp, is of a size so large as almost to cover one side of the room, and represents the streets of Leyden filled with its famishing inhabitants, in the midst of whom stands prominently forward the figure of the burgomaster, Peter Van der Werf, offering his body to be eaten. The small cut at the head of the present paper is expressive of this affecting scene. Another memorial of the siege of Leyden by the Spaniards is the university of that city, so celebrated for the number of great historical names connected with it. "The Prince of Orange, as a recompense to the inhabitants of Leyden for their heroic conduct, gave them the choice of exemption from taxes for a certain number of years, or of having a university established in the city; and, much to their honour, they preferred the latter. The university of Leyden was accordingly established in 1575."

The fortunate issue of the siege of Leyden changed the face of affairs. Philip consented to hold a conference with the patriots at Breda. Concessions were made on both sides, with a view of coming to an agreement; but on the question of the conduct which the government ought to pursue with reference to religion, the two parties were completely at variance. "The heretics must be expelled from the maritime provinces," was the demand of the Spanish deputies. "If you expel the heretics, as you call them," said the deputies of the patriots, "you will expel more than two-thirds of the inhabitants, and if you do so, there will not be enough of men to mend the dykes." "The king," replied the Spaniards, "would rather lose the provinces than have them peopled with heretics." The conference accordingly broke up, without having accomplished anything.

Again armies began their marchings and countermarchings through the country. Requesens had succeeded in an attempt which he expected to be of great assistance to him in his design of reducing Zealand, and he was endeavouring to follow up this advantage by laying siege to the town of Zurichsee, when he was seized with a fever, and died after a few days' illness.

PATRIOTIC MEASURES OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

On the death of Requesens, the Council of State, consisting at that time of nine members, among whom were Viglius and Barlaimont, as well as some others less devoted to the Spanish cause, assumed the government, there being no person on the spot authorised by Philip to take upon himself the office of regent. Under the rule of this committee the greatest confusion prevailed; but at length the liberal members of the Council of State took courage, and issued an order for a convention of the states; and at this convention, which was opened on the 14th of September 1576, it was agreed to hold a solemn congress of representatives from the various provinces, in the town-house of Ghent, on the 10th of October.

This remarkable turn of affairs was brought about in a great measure by the exertions of the Prince of Orange. The war had now lasted nearly ten years. The result was, that the seventeen provinces constituting the Netherlands, which on Philip's accession had acknowledged his sway, were now broken up into two groups, the maritime provinces constituting one group, and the inland provinces another. In the maritime group, of which Holland and Zealand were the most important members, the majority of the inhabitants were Protestants, and consequently they had maintained a more determined attitude during the war; and at this moment, although they had not formally disowned Philip's sovereignty, they were really governing themselves under the administration of the Prince of Orange. In the inland group, the state of matters was very different. The majority of the inhabitants of this group were Catholics, and consequently their opposition to Spanish tyranny had been less vigorous and less enthusiastic. But William was not content with seeing only one part of the Netherlands delivered from Spanish tyranny, even if it had been possible to deliver the maritime provinces without convulsing and agitating the others. His object was to secure liberty to the whole of the Netherlands, whether that were to be accomplished by a judicious compromise with Spain, or by formally casting off all allegiance to Spain whatever, and uniting the various provinces into a new independent European state. It was in consequence, therefore, of his public recommendations to the Council of State, and his secret dealings with influential men, that the States-General had been held, and the congress of Ghent agreed upon.

After sitting for about a month, the congress published the result of its deliberations in the shape of a treaty of confederacy between the maritime and the inland provinces. This treaty is known in history by the name of the *Pacification of Ghent*. It consisted of twenty-five articles, and its principal provisions were, that the maritime provinces, with the Prince of Orange on the one hand, and the inland or Catholic provinces on the other, should mutually assist each other in expelling the Spaniards; that all the tyrannous and persecuting decrees of Alva should be repealed; that in the inland provinces the Catholic religion should still continue to be the legal one; and that in Holland and Zealand all civil and religious arrangements should be permitted to stand until they should be revised by a future assembly of the states.

At the very instant when the Netherlands were beginning to rejoice in the hopes arising from the pacification of Ghent, there arrived a new regent, sent from Spain. This was Don John of Austria, a natural son of Charles V., a man of great talent, both civil and military, and of an exceedingly amiable and winning disposition. By the advice of the Prince of Orange, the Council resolved to conclude a strict bargain with the new regent before

admitting him to the government. A meeting of noblemen, ecclesiastics, and other influential persons was held at Brussels on the 9th of January 1577, at which a compact in support of the late resolutions at Ghent was formed, known by the name of the *Union of Brussels*; and a copy of the deed of union having been transmitted to Don John, the result was a conference between him and certain deputies appointed by the states. At this conference, which was held in a city of Luxemburg, a treaty was agreed upon, dated the 12th of February 1577, and known by the name of the *Perpetual Edict*. It secured for the inland provinces all that they had been so earnestly contending for, all that the *Pacification of Ghent* bound them to demand—the removal of the Spanish troops, the release of prisoners, and a mild and considerate government. The Protestant provinces of Holland and Zealand, however, were dissatisfied with it, and refused their concurrence.

It appeared now as if the long struggle had come to an end; as if Spain and the Netherlands had finally compromised their differences. When Don John made his entry into Brussels on the 1st of May 1577, the citizens congratulated themselves on the skill with which they had managed to limit his authority, and said to each other, "Ah, it will cost our new regent some trouble to play his game as Alva did."

No sooner, however, had John taken the reins of government in his hands, than he began to free himself from all the restraints which the inland provinces thought they had imposed on him. Resolved to recover all the prerogatives he had parted with, he despatched letters written in cipher to Philip, urging him to send back the Spanish and Italian forces into the Netherlands; and making a journey from Brussels to the frontier province of Namur, he took possession of the capital of the province, intending to wait there till the troops should arrive. The letters were intercepted by the king of Navarre, and being immediately sent to the Prince of Orange, were by him made public. Enraged at the discovery of the regent's treachery, the authorities of the inland provinces now determined to cast him off; and at the same time they intreated the Prince of Orange to come to Brussels and assume the administration of affairs. Accordingly, leaving his own faithful maritime provinces, the prince sailed up the Scheldt, and thence made his passage by canal to Brussels, amid the cheers of the multitudes who stood lining the banks for miles, anxious to obtain a sight of "Vader Willem" coming to do for them what he had already done for the Hollanders and Zealanders. He entered Brussels on the 23d of September, and was immediately invested with the office of governor of Brabant, a title which gave him as much power as if he had been a regent appointed by Philip himself. The whole of the Netherlands now, except the two frontier provinces of Luxemburg and Namur, where Don John still maintained his influence, were under the

government of William of Orange. His darling scheme of uniting the maritime and the inland provinces under one system of government, extending to both the blessings of perfect civil freedom, and allowing each group to establish that form of worship which was most conformable to its own wishes—the maritime group the Protestant, and the inland group the Catholic form—while yet neither the Catholics should be persecuted in the one, nor the Protestants in the other—this scheme was now all but realised. With respect to the question, how Philip's rights as the sovereign of the Netherlands should be dealt with, this was a point about which, in the meantime, it was unnecessary to give himself much trouble. It would be decided afterwards by the course of events.

This happy aspect of things was not of long duration. William had hardly entered on his office, when he began to be harassed by those petty insect annoyances which always buzz and flutter round greatness, making the life of a man who pursues a career of active well-doing on a large scale very far from a pleasant one to himself. At length a powerful cabal was formed against him by certain Catholic noblemen; and, without the consent of the states, or any other legitimate authority, the Archduke Mathias, brother of the emperor of Germany, was invited to come and assume the government of the southern provinces of the Netherlands. The arrival of this self-announced governor was a decided surprise to the states; but the quick eye of the Prince of Orange saw that it might be turned to advantage. By inviting Mathias to assume the office which Don John considered to be his, the Catholic nobles had given an unpardonable offence to Philip; and if Mathias *did* assume the government, it would set the Spanish king and the German emperor at variance; both of which events were exceedingly desirable as matters then stood. William therefore was the first to recommend his own resignation, and the appointment of Mathias as governor instead; a change which would do no harm, as Mathias was a silly young man whom it would be very easy to manage. On the 18th of January 1578, Mathias therefore was formally installed as governor-general, with the Prince of Orange as his lieutenant in every department; and Don John was at the same time declared a public enemy.

Meanwhile Philip had sent a powerful army to reinstate Don John. At the head of this army was Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, the son of that Duchess of Parma who had been regent before Alva, and though yet young, reputed to be the first military genius of the age. Pushing into the interior of the Netherlands with this army, Don John speedily reconquered a large tract of the country; and the states, defeated in several engagements, were obliged to intreat assistance from foreign powers. After several months of war, they were delivered from all fear of having the treacherous John restored to the regency;

for, on the 1st of October 1578, he died suddenly at Bougy. But if delivered of one enemy in John, they had to contend with another in all respects more formidable in his successor, the matchless Prince of Parma. The prospect of a campaign against a man so eminent in the art of war completely disheartened them; and any chance they might have had of being able to repel the invasion which he conducted, was infinitely lessened by the outbreak of violent dissensions in the southern provinces, especially between the Flemings, or inhabitants of Flanders, and the Walloons, or inhabitants of the south-eastern provinces.

UNION OF THE SEVEN PROVINCES.

In these circumstances, the Prince of Orange thought it best to take precautions for securing the independence of at least a part of the Netherlands. It had long appeared to William that the next best thing to a union of all the provinces of the Netherlands under a free government, would be the union of the maritime provinces by themselves under such a government. These provinces would form a distinct state, thoroughly Dutch and thoroughly Protestant; and the difficulty of governing them separately would be far less than that of governing them in conjunction with the southern or Walloon provinces, whose inhabitants were not only Catholic, but half French in their lineage and their habits. The progress which the Prince of Parma was now making, not only in conquering, but in conciliating the Walloons, decided William to carry into effect his long-cherished idea, and to attempt a formal separation between the northern provinces and the rest of the Netherlands. His efforts succeeded; and on the 29th of January, there was solemnly signed at Utrecht a treaty of union between the five provinces of Holland, Zealand, Guelderland, Utrecht, and Friesland, by which they formed themselves into an independent republic. Thus was a new European state founded, which, being joined afterwards by the two provinces of Overijssel and Groningen, and recognised by the foreign powers, obtained the name of *The Seven United Provinces*, and subsequently of *Holland*.

But while labouring to effect this great object, William by no means ceased to struggle for another which he considered greater still, the independence of the whole Netherlands. If a community of religion, and the enthusiastic attachment of the people to his person, endeared the northern provinces to him in a peculiar manner, the breadth of his intellect, and his general love of liberty, made him take a deep interest in the fate of the southern provinces; and gladly would he devote his best exertions to secure for the Flemings and the Walloons of the south that independence which he had to all appearance secured for the Dutch of the north. Accordingly, both before and after the union of the northern provinces, he continued to act as

lieutenant-governor under Mathias, and to superintend the administration of the southern provinces.

Meanwhile an attempt was made by the pope and the emperor of Germany to bring about a reconciliation between Spain and the Netherlands. But Philip's bigotry again interposed a barrier in the way of an agreement; for he declared, that whatever other concessions he might be willing to make, he never would be at peace with heresy. While these negotiations were pending, the Prince of Parma had slackened his military activity; but when the congress broke up its sittings in the end of 1579, he recommenced his campaign in the southern provinces with fresh ardour.

It was evident, however, to the Prince of Orange, that the issue of the struggle could not be decided by one or two battles with the Prince of Parma. His aim all along had been to thwart Philip by engaging some of the principal European powers on the side of the Netherlands. No sooner, therefore, had he seen the Protestant provinces of the north united by the treaty of Utrecht, than he began to mature another scheme by which he hoped to obtain for the union greater strength within itself, and greater estimation in the eyes of foreign nations. This was no other than the formal deposition of Philip from the sovereignty of the Netherlands, and the election of a new sovereign capable of bringing into the field all the power of some foreign nation to counterpoise that of Spain. He hesitated for some time whether the future sovereign of the Netherlands should be Queen Elizabeth of England, or the Duke of Anjou, brother to the French king; but at last decided in favour of the latter. Having finally weighed his scheme, and resolved to adopt it, he procured a meeting of the States-General at Antwerp; and there Philip was deposed as "a tyrant;" the Netherlands were declared a free and independent state; and the Duke of Anjou having become bound to use the power of France to expel the Spaniards from his new dominion, entered on the exercise of the sovereignty. At the same time, William of Orange was installed in the government of Holland, Zealand, and Friesland, under the title of Stadtholder, and with the reservation of the right of homage to the Duke of Anjou.

These arrangements were concluded in 1581 and 1582; and for two years after, the history of the struggle is but an uninteresting record of sieges and engagements, important at the time, but too numerous to be detailed in a narrative. We hasten to the concluding act of the drama.

ASSASSINATION OF THE PRINCE OF ORANGE.

Philip, surrounded by the haughty ceremonial of a Spanish court, kept his dark and evil eye ever rolling towards the Netherlands. Foiled, defeated, gaining an advantage only to lose it again, he had watched the course of the struggle with a bitter

earnestness. A scowl passed over his brow at every recollection of the manner in which his heretical subjects had resisted his authority and baffled his purposes. But the last indignity was worst of all. To be openly deposed in the face of all Europe, to be rejected and cast off by a portion of his subjects inhabiting a little corner of his vast dominions, to have another sovereign elected in his stead; this was an insult such as monarch had never experienced before. And all this had been done by that one man, William of Orange. In the course of his life he had already been thwarted, or supposed himself to be thwarted, by one personal enemy after another; and these, if history be true, he had successively disposed of, by sending them prematurely out of the world. The poisoned cup, or the dagger of the hired assassin, had rid him of several blood relations whom he conceived to be his enemies. His own son, his eldest born, had died by his orders; and now he resolved to rid himself by similar means of the man who had robbed him of the Netherlands. Early in 1580 he issued a proclamation offering a reward of 25,000 golden crowns, with a patent of nobility, and a pardon for all past offences, to any one who should assassinate the Prince of Orange. In reply to this brutal proclamation the prince published a defence of his own conduct, which, under the name of "The Apology," has been always admired as one of the noblest refutations ever penned. It is believed to have been the composition of a Protestant clergyman, a friend of the prince.

For some time no effects followed the issuing of Philip's proclamation, and William was quietly engaged in consolidating the government under the Duke of Anjou. He had gone to Antwerp to attend the ceremony of the new sovereign's inauguration, and was to stay there some time, until everything was fairly settled. On the 18th of March 1582, he gave a great dinner at the castle of the town to celebrate the duke's birthday. Leaving the hall to ascend to his own chamber, he was met at the door by a silly melancholy-looking young man, who desired to present a petition. While he was looking at the paper, the young man fired a pistol at his head. The ball entered below the right ear, and passing through his mouth, came out at the other side. The prince fell apparently dead, and the assassin was instantly put to death by the attendants. It appeared, from papers found on his person, that he was a Spaniard named John Jaureguay, clerk to Gaspar Anastro, a Spanish merchant in the town. Anastro had engaged to Philip, for a reward of 28,000 ducats, to effect the object which the proclamation had not been able to accomplish; but, unwilling to undertake the assassination in person, he had fixed upon his melancholy half-crazed clerk as his deputy; and the poor wretch had been persuaded by a Dominican monk of the name of Timmerman, that the death he was sure to die in the performance of so glorious an act of duty would be an immediate

entrance into paradise. Timmerman, and Venero, Anastro's cashier, who was also implicated in the murder, were seized and executed; but Anastro himself escaped. It was long feared that the wound was mortal; but it proved not to be so; and in a short time the prince was again able to resume his duties, dearer now than ever to the people of the Netherlands. He had scarcely recovered, when he was summoned to act in a new crisis. The Duke of Anjou began to act falsely towards his subjects. Failing in a treacherous attempt to seize the town of Antwerp, Anjou was obliged to become a fugitive from his own kingdom. Perplexed and uncertain how to act, the states again had recourse to the counsel of the Prince of Orange; and after much hesitation, he gave it as his deliberate opinion, that, upon the whole, in the present state of matters, nothing was so advisable as to readmit the duke to the sovereignty, after binding him by new and more stringent obligations. In giving this advice, William spoke from his intimate knowledge of the state of Europe. The reasons, however, which actuated the Prince of Orange in advising the recall of Anjou, although very satisfactory to men experienced in statecraft, and gifted with the same political insight as himself, were too subtle to be appreciated by the popular understanding; and it began to be murmured by the gossips of Antwerp that the Prince of Orange had gone over to the French interest, and was conspiring to annex the Netherlands to France. Hurt at these suspicions, which impeded his measures, and rendered his exertions fruitless, William left Antwerp, and withdrew to his own northern provinces, where the people would as soon have burnt the ships in their harbours as suspected the good faith of their beloved stadtholder "Vader Willem." By removing into the north, however, William did not mean to cease taking any part in the affairs of the southern provinces. He continued to act by letters and messengers, allaying various dissensions among the nobility, and smoothing the way for the return of the Duke of Anjou, who was then residing in France. But it was destined that the treacherous Frenchman should never again set his foot within the Netherlands. Taken suddenly ill at the Chateau-Thierry, he died there on the 10th of June 1584, aged thirty years.

Again were the Netherlands thrown into a state of anarchy and confusion. The northern provinces alone, under the government of William, enjoyed internal tranquillity and freedom from war. The southern provinces were torn by religious dissension; while, to aggravate the evil, the Prince of Parma was conducting military operations within the territory. And now that the sovereign they had elected was dead, what should be done? Who should be elected next? Rendered wise and unanimous by their adversity, the secret wishes of all turned to William; and negotiations were set on foot for electing William, Prince of Orange, and stadtholder of the northern provinces, to the con-

stitutional sovereignty of the Netherlands. He was to accept the crown on nearly the same terms as he had himself proposed in the case of the Duke of Anjou.

These hopes were doomed to be disappointed. William had gone to Delft, and was there engaged in business, preparatory to his accession to the sovereignty. On the 10th of July, having left his dining-room in the palace, he had just placed his foot on the first step of the staircase leading to the upper part of the house, when a pale man with a cloak, who had come on pretence of getting a passport, pointed a horse-pistol at his breast and fired. The prince fell. "God have mercy on me and on this poor people," were the only words he was able to utter; and in a few moments he was dead; his wife, Louisa de Coligni, whose father and first husband had also been murdered, bending over him. The assassin was seized, attempting to escape. His name was Balthasar Gerard, a native of Burgundy. Like Jaureguay, he had been actuated to the crime by the hopes of fame on earth and glory in heaven. Documents also exist which show that he was an instrument of the Spanish authorities, and had communicated his design to several Spanish monks. He suffered death in the most horrible form which detestation for his crime could devise; his right hand being first burnt off, and the flesh being then torn from his bones with red-hot pincers. He died with the composure of a martyr.

The Prince of Orange was fifty-two years of age at the time of his murder. He had been four times married, and left ten children, three sons and seven daughters.

CONCLUDING HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS.

The death of the Prince of Orange left the Netherlands divided into two parts—the northern or Protestant provinces, united in a confederacy, and to all intents and purposes independent of Spain; and the southern or Catholic provinces, either subject to Spain, or only struggling for independence. The subsequent histories of these two portions of the Netherlands are different.

Holland, as the seven united provinces of Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, Guelderland, Friesland, Overyssel, and Groningen came to be called, successfully resisted all the attempts of Spain to re-subjugate it. Prince Maurice inherited his father's abilities and his honours, and for many years he conducted the war in which the determination of Spain to recover its territory involved the provinces. On his death, in 1625, he was succeeded in the government by his youngest brother, Frederic Henry; and before his death, in 1647, the existence of Holland as an independent European state was recognised by almost every foreign cabinet, and Spain saw that it was in vain to continue the war. His son William II. died, after a short and turbulent reign, in 1650, leaving a widow, who, within a week of her husband's death, gave birth to a son, William III.

On the abdication of James II. of England, this William III., the great-grandson of the hero of the Netherlands, came from Holland to ascend the throne of Great Britain, in conjunction with his wife Mary, James's daughter. During his reign, Great Britain and Holland were under one rule; but when he died childless in 1701, the States-General of the Seven Provinces, instead of appointing a new stadtholder, took the government into their own hands. The title of Prince of Orange, however, did not become extinct; it was inherited by his cousin, Frison of Nassau, who was governor of the single province of Friesland. The activity and energy of this new Prince of Orange and of his son soon gave them an ascendancy in all the provinces; and in 1747, in the person of the latter, the House of Orange again acceded to the dignity of the stadtholderate of the United Provinces. At the close of the last century, Holland suffered from the invasion of the French, and was for some time in their hands; but finally, in 1813, the Prince of Orange was restored to power; being admitted to the government as a sovereign prince.

Having thus traced the history of the northern provinces of the Netherlands down to 1815, let us trace that of the southern ones down to the same year.

After the death of William of Orange, the Prince of Parma continued his victorious career in the southern provinces; and if he did not altogether crush the spirit of patriotism, he at least rendered it weak and powerless. Although, therefore, Prince Maurice and Prince Frederic Henry, while repelling the attempts of the Spaniards to reconquer Holland, endeavoured also to drive them out of the rest of the Netherlands, they were never able fully to effect this, and Spain still kept possession of all the southern provinces. In 1713, Philip III. of Spain gave these southern provinces as a marriage portion to his daughter Isabella when she espoused Albert, Archduke of Austria; and from that time they ceased to be called the Spanish provinces, and obtained the name of the Belgian provinces, or of the Austrian Netherlands. This arrangement lasted till 1795, when it was swept away by the French Revolution. After a struggle between France and Austria, the Austrian Netherlands and the province of Liege were divided into nine departments, forming an integral part of the French republic; and they continued to be so till the fall of Napoleon in 1815.

At this great epoch, when Europe, recovering from the shock of the French Revolution, had leisure to arrange its various territories according to its own pleasure, separating some countries which had been long joined, and joining others which had been long separated, it was determined once more to unite Holland and the Belgian provinces into one state. Accordingly, in 1815, the Prince of Orange had the southern provinces added to his dominions, and was recognised by the various powers of Europe as king of the whole Netherlands. In 1579 the country had

been broken up into two parts ; and now, in 1815, they were reunited, with no chance, so far as appearances went, of ever being separated again. But appearances were fallacious. As we have already informed our readers, there had always been certain marked differences of lineage, religion, language, and habits, between the people of the northern and those of the southern provinces of the Netherlands. In 1830, when the second French revolution took place, the Belgians revolted from their allegiance, and insisted on being separated from Holland, and erected into an independent kingdom. The demand was, after some delay, complied with by foreign powers. On the 15th of November 1831 the boundary-line was fixed, and the Netherlands were divided into the two independent states of Holland and Belgium. The crown of the latter was accepted by Leopold of Saxe-Cobourg, now sovereign of the country.

The modern kingdom of Holland consists of the following ten provinces :—North Holland, South Holland, Zealand, North Brabant, Guelderland, Utrecht, Friesland, Overysse, Groningen, and Drenthe ; its capital is the Hague. The population on the 1st of January 1839 amounted to 2,583,271. The prevailing form of worship is the Calvinistic ; but all other forms enjoy perfect toleration. Holland is celebrated for its excellent educational institutions, which are on a liberal footing, and acceptable to all sects and classes.

The kingdom of Belgium consists of nine provinces—Limbourg, Liege, Namur, Luxemburg, Hainault, South Brabant, East Flanders, West Flanders, Antwerp ; its capital is Brussels. The population of Belgium in 1830 was 4,064,235. The Belgians are almost altogether Roman Catholics. The ancient Teutonic language, which has taken the form of Dutch in Holland, has degenerated into Flemish in Belgium ; besides which, there is the language called Walloon, a species of old French mingled with German, and spoken principally in Hainault, on the borders of France. Nevertheless, modern French may be described as the predominating language of Belgium.

We have now shown how the Netherlands effected their independence ; how the country became divided into the two modern kingdoms of Holland and Belgium ; and it only remains for us to say that, successful as were the struggles of the people against oppression, the Netherlands, taken as a whole, have not till this hour attained the opulence and prosperity of which they were deprived by the iniquitous aggressions of Philip II. in the sixteenth century. In travelling through the country, we everywhere see symptoms of fallen grandeur. Antwerp, once the most opulent mercantile city in Europe, is now in a state of decay ; while Louvain, Mechlin, Utrecht, Leyden, Dort, Delft, all exhibit similar tokens of desertion. To "the Spaniards" is everywhere ascribed the ruin of trade, the destruction of works of art, and the distresses to which the country has been exposed. Such

WILLIAM OF ORANGE AND THE NETHERLANDS.

are the results of the unhappy war which scourged the Netherlands in the sixteenth century. Although advancing by new efforts towards its former condition, three centuries have not obliterated the traces of this fearful struggle for civil and religious freedom. Considering the services performed by William of Orange in this great effort, no one can look without emotion on the splendid monument erected over his tomb in the New Church of Delft, of which we append a representation. It is a lofty structure of marble, embellished with many figures, one of which is that of the prince, in bronze, sitting with his truncheon of office, and his helmet at his feet; while behind is a figure of Fame sounding with her trumpet the praises of the hero.

