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1577, part III, by John Lothrop Motley**

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MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 28

THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC, 1577

By John Lothrop Motley

1855

CHAPTER III.

The city of Namur—Margaret of Valois—Her intrigues in Hainault in favour of Alençon—Her reception by Don John at Namur—Festivities in her honor—Seizure of Namur citadel by Don John—Plan for seizing that of Antwerp—Letter of the estates to Philip, sent by Escovedo—Fortunes and fate of Escovedo in Madrid—Repairing of dykes—The Prince's visit to Holland—His letter to the estates— general on the subject of Namur citadel—His visit to Utrecht— Correspondence and commissioners between Don John and the estates— Acrimonious and passionate character of these colloquies—Attempt of Treslong upon Antwerp citadel frustrated by De Bourse—Fortunate panic of the German mercenaries—Antwerp evacuated by the foreign troops—Renewed correspondence—Audacity of the Governor's demands— Letters of Escovedo and others intercepted—Private schemes of Don John not understood by the estates—His letter to the Empress Dowager—More correspondence with the estates—Painful and false position of the Governor—Demolition, in part, of Antwerp citadel, and of other fortresses by the patriots Statue of Alva—Letter of estates-general to the King.

There were few cities of the Netherlands more picturesque in situation, more trimly built, and more opulent of aspect than the little city of Namur. Seated at the confluence of the Sombre with the Meuse, and throwing over each river a bridge of solid but graceful structure, it lay in the lap of a most fruitful valley. Abroad crescent-shaped plain, fringed by the rapid Meuse, and enclosed by gently rolling hills

cultivated to their crests, or by abrupt precipices of limestone crowned with verdure, was divided by numerous hedgerows, and dotted all over with corn-fields, vineyards, and flower gardens. Many eyes have gazed with delight upon that well-known and most lovely valley, and many torrents of blood have mingled with those glancing waters since that long buried and most sanguinary age which forms our theme; and still placid as ever is the valley, brightly as ever flows the stream. Even now, as in that vanished, but never-forgotten time, nestles the little city in the angle of the two rivers; still directly over its head seems to hang in mid-air the massive and frowning fortress, like the gigantic helmet-in the fiction, as if ready to crush the pigmy town below.

It was this famous citadel, crowning an abrupt precipice five hundred feet above the river's bed, and placed near the frontier of France, which made the city so important, and which had now attracted Don John's attention in this hour of his perplexity. The unexpected visit of a celebrated personage, furnished him with the pretext which he desired. The beautiful Margaret of Valois, Queen of Navarre, was proceeding to the baths of Spa, to drink the waters. Her health was as perfect as her beauty, but she was flying from a husband whom she hated, to advance the interest of a brother whom she loved with a more than sisterly fondness—for the worthless Duke of Alencon was one of the many competitors for the Netherland government; the correspondence between himself and his brother with Orange and his agents being still continued. The hollow truce with the Huguenots in France had, however, been again succeeded by war. Henry of Valois had already commenced operations in Gascony against Henry of Navarre, whom he hated, almost as cordially as Margaret herself could do, and the Duke of Alencon was besieging Issoire. Meantime, the beautiful Queen came to mingle the golden thread of her feminine intrigues with the dark woof of the Netherland destinies.

Few spirits have been more subtle, few faces so fatal as hers. True child of the Medicean mother, worthy sister of Charles, Henry; and Francis—princes for ever infamous in the annals of France—she possessed more beauty and wit than Mary of Scotland, more learning and accomplishments than Elizabeth of England. In the blaze of her beauty, according to the inflated language of her most determined worshiper, the wings of all rivals were melted. Heaven required to be raised higher and earth made wider, before a full sweep could be given to her own majestic flight. We are further informed that she was a Minerva for eloquence, that she composed matchless poems which she sang most exquisitely to the sound of her lute, and that her familiar letters were so full of genius, that "poor Cicero" was but a fool to her in the same branch of composition. The world has shuddered for ages at the dark tragedy of her nuptials. Was it strange that hatred, incest, murder, should follow in the train of a wedding thus hideously solemnized?

Don John, as in his Moorish disguise he had looked upon her perfections, had felt in danger of becoming really the slave he personated—"her beauty is more divine than human," he had cried, "but fitter to destroy men's souls than to bless them;" and now the enchantress was on her way to his dominions. Her road led through Namur to Liege, and gallantry required that he should meet her as she passed. Attended by a select band of gentlemen and a few horsemen of his body-guard, the Governor came to Namur.

Meantime the Queen crossed the frontier, and was courteously received at Cambray. The bishop-of the loyal house of Berlaymont—was a staunch supporter of the King, and although a Fleming, was Spanish to the core. On him the cajolery of the beautiful Queen was first essayed, but was found powerless. The prelate gave her a magnificent ball, but resisted her blandishments. He retired with the appearance of the confections, but the governor of the citadel, the Seigneur d'Inchy remained, with whom Margaret was more successful. She found him a cordial hater of Spain, a favorer of France, and very impatient under the authority of the bishop. He obtained permission to accompany the royal visitor a few stages of her journey, and returned to Cambray, her willing slave; holding the castle in future, neither for king nor bishop, but for Margaret's brother, Alencon, alone. At Mons she was received with great state by the Count Lalain, who was governor of Hainault, while his Countess governed him. A week of festivities graced the advent of the Queen, during which period the hearts of both Lalain and his wife were completely subjugated. They agreed that Flanders had been too long separated from the parental France to which it of right belonged. The Count was a staunch Catholic, but he hated Spain. He was a relative of Egmont, and anxious to avenge his death, but he was no lover of the people, and was jealous of Orange. Moreover, his wife had become entirely fascinated by the designing Queen. So warm a friendship had sprung up between the two fair ladies as to make it indispensable that Flanders and Hainault should be annexed to France. The Count promised to hold his whole government at the service of Alencon, and recommended that an attempt should be made to gain over the incorruptible Governor of Cambray. Margaret did not inform him that she had already turned that functionary round her finger, but she urged Lalain and his wife to seduce him from his allegiance, if possible.

The Count, with a retinue of mounted men, then accompanied her on her way towards Namur, but turned as the distant tramp of Don John's cavalcade was heard approaching, for it was not desirable for Lalain, at that moment, to find himself face to face with the Governor. Don John stood a moment

awaiting the arrival of the Queen. He did not dream of her political intrigues, nor see in the fair form approaching him one mortal enemy the more. Margaret travelled in a splendid litter with gilt pillars, lined with scarlet velvet, and entirely enclosed in glass, which was followed by those of the Princess de la Roche sur Yon, and of Madame de Tournon. After these came ten ladies of honor on horseback, and six chariots filled with female domestics. These, with the guards and other attendants, made up the retinue. On meeting the Queen's litter, Don John sprang from his horse and presented his greetings. The Queen returned his salutation, in the French fashion, by offering her cheek to his embrace, extending the same favor to the Duke of Aerschot and the Marquis of Havre. The cavaliers then remounted and escorted the Queen to Namur, Don John riding by the side of the litter and conversing with her all the way. It was late in the evening when the procession arrived in the city. The streets had, however, been brilliantly illuminated; houses and shops, though it was near midnight, being in a blaze of light. Don John believing that no attentions could be so acceptable at that hour as to provide for the repose of his guest, conducted the Queen at once to the lodgings prepared for her. Margaret was astonished at the magnificence of the apartments into which she was ushered. A spacious and stately hall, most gorgeously furnished, opened into a series of chambers and cabinets, worthy, in their appointments, of a royal palace. The tent and bed coverings prepared for the Queen were exquisitely embroidered in needlework with scenes representing the battle of Lepanto. The great hall was hung with gorgeous tapestry of satin and velvet, ornamented with columns of raised silver work, and with many figures in antique costume, of the same massive embroidery. The rest of the furniture was also of satin, velvet, cloth of gold, and brocade. The Queen was dazzled with so much magnificence, and one of the courtiers could not help expressing astonishment at the splendor of the apartments and decorations, which, as he observed to the Duke of Aerschot; seemed more appropriate to the palace of a powerful monarch than to the apartments of a young bachelor prince. The Duke replied by explaining that the expensive embroidery which they saw was the result, not of extravagance, but of valor and generosity. After the battle of Lepanto, Don John had restored the two sons, who had been taken prisoners, of a powerful Turkish bashaw. The father; in gratitude had sent this magnificent tapestry as a present to the conqueror, and Don John had received it, at Milan; in which city, celebrated for the taste of its upholsterers; it had been arranged for furniture.

The next morning a grand mass with military music was performed, followed by a sumptuous banquet in the grand hall. Don John and the Queen sat at a table three feet apart from the rest, and Ottavio Gonzaga served them wine upon his knees. After the banquet came, as usual; the ball, the festivities continuing till late in the night, and Don John scarcely quitting his fair guest for a moment. The next afternoon, a festival had been arranged upon an island in the river. The company embarked upon the Meuse, in a fleet of gaily-scarfed; and painted vessels, many of which were filled with musicians. Margaret reclined in her gilded barge, under a richly embroidered canopy. A fairer and falser Queen than "Egypt," had bewitched the famous youth who had triumphed not, lost the world, beneath the heights of Actium. The revellers landed on the island, where the banquet was already spread within a spacious bower of ivy, and beneath umbrageous elms. The dance upon the sward was protracted to a late hour, and the summer stars had been long in the sky when the company returned to their barges.

Don John, more than ever enthralled by the bride of St. Bartholomew, knew not that her sole purpose in visiting his dominion had been to corrupt his servants and to undermine his authority. His own purpose, however, had been less to pay court to the Queen than to make, use of her presence to cover his own designs. That purpose he proceeded instantly to execute. The Queen next morning pursued her voyage by the river to Liege, and scarcely had she floated out of his sight than he sprang upon his horse and, accompanied by a few trusty attendants, galloped out of the gate and across the bridge which led to the citadel. He had already despatched the loyal Berlaymont, with his four equally loyal sons, the Seigneurs de Meghen, Floyon, Hierges, and Haultepenne to that fortress. These gentlemen had informed the castellan that the Governor was about to ride forth hunting, and that it would be proper to offer him the hospitalities of the castle as he passed on his way. A considerable number of armed men had been concealed in the woods and thickets of the neighbourhood. The Seigneur de Froymont, suspecting nothing, acceded to the propriety of the suggestion made by the Berlaymonts. Meantime, with a blast of his horn, Don John appeared at the castle gate. He entered the fortress with the castellan, while one of the gentlemen watched outside, as the ambushed soldiers came toiling up the precipice. When all was ready the gentleman returned to the hall, and made a signal to Don John, as he sat at breakfast with the constable. The Governor sprang from the table and drew his sword; Berlaymont and his four sons drew their pistols, while at the same instant, the soldiers entered. Don John, exclaiming that this was the first day of his government, commanded the castellan to surrender. De Froymont, taken by surprise, and hardly understanding this very melo-dramatic attack upon a citadel by its own lawful governor, made not much difficulty in complying. He was then turned out of doors, along with his garrison, mostly feeble old men and invalids. The newly arrived soldiers took their places, at command of the Governor, and the stronghold of Namur was his own.

There was little doubt that the representative of Philip had a perfect right to possess himself of any

fortress within his government; there could be as little that the sudden stratagem by which he had thus made himself master of this citadel would prove offensive to the estates, while it could hardly be agreeable to the King; and yet it is not certain that he could have accomplished his purpose in any other way. Moreover, the achievement was one of a projected series by which he meant to re-vindicate his dwindling authority. He was weary of playing the hypocrite, and convinced that he and his monarch were both abhorred by the Netherlanders. Peace was impossible—war was forbidden him. Reduced almost to a nullity by the Prince of Orange, it was time for him to make a stand, and in this impregnable fastness his position at least was a good one. Many months before, the Prince of Orange had expressed his anxious desire that this most important town and citadel should be secured-for the estates. "You know," he had written to Bossu in December, "the evil and the dismay which the loss of the city and fortress of Namur would occasion to us. Let me beseech you that all possible care be taken to preserve them." Nevertheless, their preservation had been entrusted to a feeble-minded old constable, at the head of a handful of cripples.

We know how intense had been the solicitude of the Prince, not only to secure but to destroy these citadels, "nests of tyranny," which had been built by despots to crush, not protect, the towns at their feet. These precautions had been neglected, and the consequences were displaying themselves, for the castle of Namur was not the only one of which Don John felt himself secure. Although the Duke of Aerschot seemed so very much his humble servant, the Governor did not trust him, and wished to see the citadel of Antwerp in more unquestionable keeping. He had therefore withdrawn, not only the Duke, but his son, the Prince of Chimay, commander of the castle in his father's absence, from that important post, and insisted upon their accompanying him to Namur. So gallant a courtier as Aerschot could hardly refuse to pay his homage to so illustrious a princess as Margaret of Valois, while during the absence of the Duke and Prince the keys of Antwerp-citadel had been, at the command of Don John, placed in the keeping of the Seigneur de Treslong, an unscrupulous and devoted royalist. The celebrated Colonel Van Ende, whose participation, at the head of his German cavalry, in the terrible sack of that city, which he had been ordered to defend, has been narrated, was commanded to return to Antwerp. He was to present himself openly to the city authorities, but he was secretly directed by the Governor-General to act in co-operation with the Colonels Fugger, Frondsberger, and Polwiller, who commanded the forces already stationed in the city. These distinguished officers had been all summer in secret correspondence with Don John, for they were the instruments with which he meant by a bold stroke to recover his almost lost authority. While he had seemed to be seconding the efforts of the states-general to pay off and disband these mercenaries, nothing had in reality been farther from his thoughts; and the time had now come when his secret plans were to be executed, according to the agreement between himself and the German colonels. He wrote to them, accordingly, to delay no longer the accomplishment of the deed—that deed being the seizure of Antwerp citadel, as he had already successfully mastered that of Namur. The Duke of Aerschot, his brother, and son, were in his power, and could do nothing to prevent the co-operation of the colonels in the city with Treslong in the castle; so that the Governor would thus be enabled, laying his head tranquilly upon "the pillow of the Antwerp citadel," according to the reproachful expression subsequently used by the estates, to await the progress of events.

The current of his adventurous career was not, however, destined to run thus smoothly. It is true that the estates had not yet entirely lost their confidence in his character; but the seizure of Namur, and the attempt upon Antwerp, together with the contents of the intercepted letters written by himself and Escovedo to Philip, to Perez, to the Empress, to the Colonels Frondsberger and Fugger, were soon destined to open their eyes. In the meantime, almost exactly at the moment when Don John was executing his enterprise against Namur, Escovedo had taken an affectionate farewell of the estates at Brussels for it had been thought necessary, as already intimated, both for the apparent interests and the secret projects of Don John; that the Secretary should make a visit to Spain. At the command of the Governor-General he had offered to take charge of any communication for his Majesty which the estates might be disposed to entrust to him, and they had accordingly addressed a long epistle to the King, in which they gave ample expression to their indignation and their woe. They remonstrated with the King concerning the continued presence of the German mercenaries, whose knives were ever at their throats, whose plunder and insolence impoverished and tortured the people. They reminded him of the vast sums which the provinces had contributed in times past to the support of government, and they begged assistance from his bounty now. They recalled to his vision the melancholy spectacle of Antwerp, but lately the "nurse of Europe, the fairest flower in his royal garland, the foremost and noblest city of the earth, now quite desolate and forlorn," and with additional instructions to Escovedo, that he should not fail, in his verbal communications, to represent the evil consequences of the course hitherto pursued by his Majesty's governors in the Netherlands, they dismissed him with good wishes, and with "crowns for convoy" in his purse to the amount of a revenue of two thousand yearly. His secret correspondence was intercepted and made known a few weeks after his departure for that terrible Spain whence so few travellers returned.

For a moment we follow him thither. With a single word in anticipation, concerning the causes and the consummation of this celebrated murder, which was delayed till the following year, the unfortunate Escovedo may be dismissed from these pages. It has been seen how artfully Antonio Perez, Secretary of State, paramour of Princess Eboli, and ruling councillor at that day of Philip, had fostered in the King's mind the most extravagant suspicions as to the schemes of Don John, and of his confidential secretary. He had represented it as their fixed and secret intention, after Don John should be finally established on the throne of England, to attack Philip himself in Spain, and to deprive him of his crown, Escovedo being represented as the prime instigator and controller of this astounding plot, which lunatics only could have engendered, and which probably never had existence.

No proof of the wild design was offered. The language which Escovedo was accused by Perez of having held previously to his departure for Flanders—that it was the intention of Don John and himself to fortify the rock of Mogio, with which, and with the command of the city of Santander, they could make themselves masters of Spain after having obtained possession of England,—is too absurd to have been uttered by a man of Escovedo's capacity. Certainly, had Perez been provided with the least scrap of writing from the hands of Don John or Escovedo which could be tortured into evidence upon this point, it would have been forthcoming, and would have rendered such fictitious hearsay superfluous. Perez in connivance with Philip, had been systematically conducting his correspondence with Don John and Escovedo, in order to elicit some evidence of the imputed scheme. "T was the only way," said Perez to Philip, "to make them unbare their bosoms to the sword."—"I am quite of the same opinion," replied Philip to Perez, "for, according to my theology, you would do your duty neither to God nor the world, unless you did as you are doing." Yet the excellent pair of conspirators at Madrid could wring no damning proofs from the lips of the supposititious conspirators in Flanders, save that Don John, after Escovedo's arrival in Madrid, wrote, impatiently and frequently, to demand that he should be sent back, together with the money which he had gone to Spain to procure. "Money, more money, and Escovedo," wrote the Governor, and Philip was quite willing to accept this most natural exclamation as evidence of his brother's designs against his crown. Out of these shreds and patches—the plot against England, the Pope's bull, the desire expressed by Don John to march into France as a simple adventurer, with a few thousand men at his back—Perez, according to his own statement, drew up a protocol, afterwards formally approved by Philip, which concluded with the necessity of taking Escovedo's life, instantly but privately, and by poison. The Marquis de Los Velos, to whom the memorial was submitted for his advice, averred that if the death-bed wafer were in his own lips, he should vote for the death of the culprit. Philip had already jumped to the same conclusion; Perez joyfully undertook the business, having received *carte blanche* from the King, and thus the unfortunate secretary was doomed. Immediately after the arrival of Escovedo in Madrid, he addressed a letter to the King. Philip filed it away among other despatches, with this annotation: "the '*avant courier*' has arrived—it is necessary to make great haste, and to despatch him before he murders us."

The King, having been thus artfully inflamed against his brother and his unfortunate secretary, became clamorous for the blood of Escovedo. At the same time, that personage, soon after his return to Spain, was shocked by the discovery of the amour of Perez with the Princess Eboli. He considered it his duty, both towards the deceased Prince and the living King, to protest against this perfidy. He threatened to denounce to the King, who seemed the only person about the court ignorant of the affair, this double treason of his mistress and his minister. Perez and Anna of Eboli, furious at Escovedo's insolence, and anxious lest he should execute his menace determined to disembarass themselves of so meddling a person. Philip's rage against Don John was accordingly turned to account, and Perez received the King's secret orders to procure Escovedo's assassination. Thus an imaginary conspiracy of Don John against, the crown of Philip was the pretext, the fears and rage of Eboli and her paramour were the substantial reason, for the crime now projected.

The details of the murder were arranged and executed by Perez, but it must be confessed in justice to Philip, with much inferior nicety to that of his, own performances in the same field. Many persons were privy to the plot. There was much blundering, there was great public scandal in Madrid, and no one ever had a reasonable doubt as to the instigators and the actual perpetrators of the crime. Two attempts to poison Escovedo were made by Perez, at his own table, through the agency of Antonio Enriquez, a confidential servant or page. Both were unsuccessful. A third was equally so, but suspicions were aroused. A female slave in the household of Escovedo, was in consequence arrested, and immediately hanged in the public square, for a pretended attempt to murder her master. A few days afterwards (on the 31st of March, 1578) the deed was accomplished at nightfall in the streets of Madrid, by six conspirators. They consisted of the majordomo of Perez, a page in his household, the page's brother from the country, an ex-scullion from the royal kitchens, Juan Rubio by name, who had been the unsuccessful agent in the poisoning scheme, together with two professional bravos, hired for the occasion. It was Insausti, one of this last-mentioned couple, who despatched Escovedo with a single stab, the others aiding and abetting, or keeping watch in the neighbourhood.

The murderers effected their escape, and made their report to Perez, who for the sake of appearances, was upon a visit in the country. Suspicion soon tracked the real culprits, who were above the reach of justice; nor, as to the motives which had prompted the murders, were many ignorant, save only the murderer himself. Philip had ordered the, assassination; but he was profoundly deceived as to the causes of its accomplishment. He was the dupe of a subtler villain than himself, and thought himself sacrificing a conspirator against his crown, while he had really only crushed a poor creature who had been but too solicitous for what he thought his master's honor.

The assassins were, of course, protected from prosecution, and duly recompensed. Miguel Bosque, the country boy, received one hundred crowns in gold, paid by a clerk of Perez. Mesa, one of the bravos, was rewarded with a gold chain, fifty doubloons of eight, and a silver cup, besides receiving from the fair hand of Princess Eboli herself a certificate as under-steward upon her estates. The second bravo, Insausti, who had done the deed, the page Enriquez, and the scullion, were all appointed ensigns in his Majesty's army, with twenty gold crowns of annual pension besides. Their commissions were signed by Philip on the 19th of April, 1578. Such were the wages of murder at that day in Spain; gold chains, silver cups, doubloons, annuities, and commissions in the army! The reward of fidelity, as in poor Escovedo's case, was oftener the stiletto. Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity?

With the subsequent career of Antonio Perez—his famous process, his banishment, his intrigues, his innuendos, his long exile, and his miserable death, this history has no concern. We return from our brief digression.

Before narrating the issue of the plot against Antwerp citadel, it is necessary to recur for a moment to the Prince of Orange. In the deeds and the written words of that one man are comprised nearly all the history of the Reformation in the Netherlands—nearly the whole progress of the infant Republic. The rest, during this period, is made up of the plottings and counter-plottings, the mutual wranglings and recriminations of Don John and the estates.

In the brief breathing-space now afforded them, the inhabitants of Holland and Zeeland had been employing themselves in the extensive repairs of their vast system of dykes. These barriers, which protected their country against the ocean, but which their own hands had destroyed to preserve themselves against tyranny, were now thoroughly reconstructed, at a great expense, the Prince everywhere encouraging the people with his presence, directing them by his experience, inspiring them with his energy. The task accomplished was stupendous and worthy, says a contemporary, of eternal memory.

At the popular request, the Prince afterwards made a tour through the little provinces, honoring every city with a brief visit. The spontaneous homage which went up to him from every heart was pathetic and simple. There were no triumphal arches, no martial music, no banners, no theatrical pageantry nothing but the choral anthem from thousands of grateful hearts. "Father William has come! Father William has come!" cried men, women, and children to each other, when the news of his arrival in town or village was announced. He was a patriarch visiting his children, not a conqueror, nor a vulgar potentate displaying himself to his admirers. Happy were they who heard his voice, happier they who touched his hands, for his words were full of tenderness, his hand was offered to all. There were none so humble as to be forbidden to approach him, none so ignorant as not to know his deeds. All knew that to combat in their cause he had descended from princely station, from luxurious ease, to the position of a proscribed and almost beggared outlaw. For them he had impoverished himself and his family, mortgaged his estates, stripped himself of jewels, furniture, almost of food and raiment. Through his exertions the Spaniards had been banished from their little territory, the Inquisition crushed within their borders, nearly all the sister provinces but yesterday banded into a common cause.

He found time, notwithstanding congratulating crowds who thronged his footsteps, to direct the labors of the states-general, who still looked more than ever to his guidance, as their relations with Don John became more complicated and unsatisfactory. In a letter addressed to them, on the 20th of June from Harlem, he warned them most eloquently to hold to the Ghent Pacification as to their anchor in the storm. He assured them, if it was, torn from them, that their destruction was inevitable. He reminded them that hitherto they had got but the shadow, not the substance of the Treaty; that they had been robbed of that which was to have been its chief fruit—union among themselves. He and his brothers, with their labor, their wealth, and their blood, had laid down the bridge over which the country had stepped to the Pacification of Ghent. It was for the nation to maintain what had been so painfully won; yet he proclaimed to them that the government were not acting in good faith, that secret preparations were making to annihilate the authority of the states; to restore the edicts, to put strangers into high places, and to set up again the scaffold and the whole machinery of persecution.

In consequence of the seizure of Namur Castle, and the accusations made by Don John against

Orange, in order to justify that act, the Prince had already despatched Taffin and Saint Aldegonde to the states-general with a commission to declare his sentiments upon the subject. He addressed, moreover, to the same body a letter full of sincere and simple eloquence. "The Seigneur Don John," said he, has accused me of violating the peace, and of countenancing attempts against his life, and in endeavouring to persuade you into joining him in a declaration of war against me and against Holland and Zealand; but I pray you, most affectionately, to remember our mutual and solemn obligations to maintain the treaty of Ghent." He entreated the states, therefore, to beware of the artifices employed to seduce them from the only path which led to the tranquillity of their common country, and her true splendor and prosperity. "I believe there is not one of you," he continued, "who can doubt me, if he will weigh carefully all my actions, and consider closely the course which I am pursuing and have always pursued. Let all these be confronted with the conduct of Don John, and any man will perceive that all my views of happiness, both for my country and myself, imply a peaceable enjoyment of the union, joined with the legitimate restoration of our liberties, to which all good patriots aspire, and towards which all my designs have ever tended. As all the grandeur of Don John, on the contrary, consists in war, as there is nothing which he so much abhors as repose, as he has given ample proof of these inclinations in all his designs and enterprises, both before and after the Treaty of Marche en Famine, both within the country and beyond its borders, as it is most manifest that his purpose is, and ever has been, to embroil us with our neighbours of England and Scotland in new dissensions, as it must be evident to every one of you that his pretended accusations against me are but colors and shadows to embellish and to shroud his own desire for war, his appetite for vengeance, and his hatred not only to me but to yourselves, and as his determination is, in the words of Escovedo, to chastise some of us by means of the rest, and to excite the jealousy of one portion of the country against the other—therefore, gentlemen, do I most affectionately exhort you to found your decision, as to these matters, not upon words but upon actions. Examine carefully my conduct in the points concerning which the charges are made; listen attentively to what my envoys will communicate to you in my behalf; and then, having compared it with all the proceedings of Seigneur Don John, you will be able to form a resolution worthy the rank which you occupy, and befitting your obligations to the whole people, of whom you have been chosen chiefs and protectors, by God and by men. Put away all considerations which might obscure your clear eye-sight; maintain with magnanimity, and like men, the safety of yourselves, your wives, your children, your estates, your liberties; see that this poor people, whose eyes are fixed upon you, does not perish; preserve them from the greediness of those who would grow great at your expense; guard them from the yoke of miserable servitude; let not all our posterity lament that, by our pusillanimity, they have lost the liberties which our ancestors had conquered for them, and bequeathed to them as well as to us, and that they have been subjugated by the proud tyranny of strangers.

"Trusting," said the Prince, in conclusion, "that you will accord faith and attention to my envoys, I will only add an expression of my sincere determination to employ myself incessantly in your service, and for the welfare of the whole people, without sparing any means in my power, nor my life itself."

The vigilant Prince was indeed not slow to take advantage of the Governor's false move. While in reality intending peace, if it were possible, Don John had thrown down the gauntlet; while affecting to deal openly and manfully, like a warrior and an emperor's son, he had involved himself in petty stratagems and transparent intrigues, by all which he had gained nothing but the character of a plotter, whose word could not be trusted. Saint Aldegonde expressed the hope that the seizure of Namur Castle would open the eyes of the people, and certainly the Prince did his best to sharpen their vision.

While in North Holland, William of Orange received an urgent invitation from the magistracy and community of Utrecht to visit that city. His authority, belonging to him under his ancient commission, had not yet been recognized over that province, but there was no doubt that the contemplated convention of "satisfaction" was soon to be; arranged, for his friends there were numerous and influential. His princess, Charlotte de Bourbon, who accompanied him on his tour, trembled at the danger to which her husband would expose himself by venturing thus boldly into a territory which might be full of his enemies, but the Prince determined to trust the loyalty of a province which he hoped would be soon his own. With anxious forebodings, the Princess followed her husband to the ancient episcopal city. As they entered its gates, where an immense concourse was waiting to receive him, a shot passed through the carriage window, and struck the Prince upon the breast. The affrighted lady threw her arms about his neck; shrieking that they were betrayed, but the Prince, perceiving that the supposed shot was but a wad from one of the cannon, which were still roaring their welcome to him, soon succeeded in calming her fears. The carriage passed lowly through the streets, attended by the vociferous greetings of the multitude; for the whole population had come forth to do him honor. Women and children clustered upon every roof and balcony, but a painful incident again marred the tranquillity of the occasion. An apothecary's child, a little girl of ten years, leaning eagerly from a lofty balcony, lost her balance and fell to the ground, directly before the horses of the Prince's carriage. She was killed stone dead by the fall. The procession stopped; the Prince alighted, lifted the little corpse in his arms, and delivered it, with gentle words and looks of consolation, to the unhappy parents. The day

seemed marked with evil omens, which were fortunately destined to prove fallacious. The citizens of Utrecht became more than ever inclined to accept the dominion of the Prince, whom they honored and whom they already regarded as their natural chief. They entertained him with banquets and festivities during his brief visit, and it was certain before he took his departure that the treaty of "Satisfaction" would not be long delayed. It was drawn up, accordingly, in the autumn of the same year, upon the basis of that accepted by Harlem and Amsterdam—a basis wide enough to support both religions, with a nominal supremacy to the ancient Church.

Meantime, much fruitless correspondence had taken place between Don John and the states Envoys; despatched by the two parties to each other, had indulged in bitterness and recrimination. As soon as the Governor, had taken possession of Namur Castle, he had sent the Seigneur, de Rassinghem to the states-general. That gentleman carried with him copies of two anonymous letters, received by Don John upon the 19th and 21st of July, 1577, in which a conspiracy against his life and liberty was revealed. It was believed by the Governor that Count Lalain, who had secretly invited him to a conference, had laid an ambush for him. It was known that the country was full of disbanded soldiers, and the Governor asserted confidently that numbers of desperadoes were lying in wait for him in every village alehouse of Hainault and Flanders. He called on the states to ferret out these conspirators, and to inflict condign punishment upon their more guilty chiefs; he required that the soldiers, as well as the citizens, should be disarmed at Brussels and throughout Brabant, and he justified his seizure of Namur, upon the general ground that his life was no longer safe, except in a fortress.

In reply to the letter of the Governor, which was dated the 24th of July, the states despatched Marolles, Archdeacon of Ypres, and the Seigneur de Bresse, to Namur, with a special mission to enter into the whole subject of these grievances. These gentlemen, professing the utmost devotion to the cause of his Majesty's authority and the Catholic religion, expressed doubts as to the existence of the supposed conspiracy. They demanded that Don John should denounce the culprits, if any such were known, in order that proper chastisement might be instantly inflicted. The conversation which ensued was certainly unsatisfactory. The Governor used lofty and somewhat threatening language, assuring Marolles that he was at that moment in possession, not only of Namur but of Antwerp citadel; and the deputies accordingly departed, having accomplished very little by their journey. Their backs were scarcely turned, when Don John, on his part, immediately appointed another commission, consisting of Rassinghem and Grobbendonck, to travel from Namur to Brussels. These envoys carried a long letter of grievances, enclosing a short list of demands. The letter reiterated his complaints about conspiracies, and his protestations of sincerity. It was full of censure upon the Prince of Orange; stigmatized his intrigues to obtain possession of Amsterdam without a proper "Satisfaction," and of Utrecht, to which he had no claim at all. It maintained that the Hollanders and Zealanders were bent upon utterly exterminating the Catholic religion, and that they avowed publicly their intention to refuse obedience to the assembly-general, should it decree the maintenance of the ancient worship only. His chief demands were that the states should send him a list of persons qualified to be members of the general assembly, that he might see whether there were not individuals among them whom he might choose to reject. He further required that, if the Prince of Orange did not instantly fulfil the treaty of Ghent, the states should cease to hold any communication with him. He also summoned the states to provide him forthwith with a suitable body-guard.

To these demands and complaints, the estates replied by a string of resolutions. They made their usual protestations of attachment to his Majesty and the Catholic faith, and they granted willingly a foot-guard of three hundred archers. They, however, stoutly denied the Governor's right to make eliminations in their lists of deputies, because, from time immemorial, these representatives had been chosen by the clergy, nobles, cities, and boroughs. The names might change daily, nor were there any suspicious ones among them, but it was a matter with which the Governor had no concern. They promised that every effort should be made to bring about the execution of the treaty by the Prince of Orange. They begged Don John; however, to abandon the citadel of Namur, and gave him to understand that his secret practices had been discovered, a large packet of letters having recently been intercepted in the neighbourhood of Bourdeaux, and sent to the Prince of Orange. Among them were some of the despatches of Don John and Escovedo, to his Majesty and to Antonio Perez, to which allusion has already been made.

Count Bossu, De Bresse, and Meetkercke were the envoys deputed to convey these resolutions to Namur. They had a long and bitter conversation with Don John, who complained, more furiously than ever of the conspiracies against his person, and of the intrigues of Orange. He insisted that this arch-traitor had been sowing the seed of his damnable doctrines broadcast through the Netherlands; that the earth was groaning with a daily ripening harvest of rebellion and heresy. It was time, he cried, for the states to abandon the Prince, and rally round their King. Patience had been exhausted. He had himself done all, and more than could have been demanded. He had faithfully executed the Ghent Pacification, but his conduct had neither elicited gratitude nor inspired confidence.

The deputies replied, that to the due execution of the Ghent treaty it was necessary that he should disband the German troops, assemble the states-general, and carry out their resolutions. Until these things, now undone, had been accomplished, he had no right to plead his faithful fulfilment of the Pacification. After much conversation—in which the same grievances were repeated, the same statements produced and contradicted, the same demands urged and evaded, and the same menaces exchanged as upon former occasions—the deputies returned to Brussels.

Immediately after their departure, Don John learned the result of his project upon Antwerp Castle. It will be remembered that he had withdrawn Aerschot, under pretext of requiring his company on the visit to Queen Margaret, and that he had substituted Treslong, an unscrupulous partisan of his own, in the government of the citadel. The temporary commander soon found, however, that he had undertaken more than he could perform. The troops under Van Ende were refused admittance into the town, although permission to quarter them there had been requested by the Governor-General. The 'authorities had been assured that the troops were necessary for the protection of their city, but the magistrates had learned, but too recently, the nature of the protection which Van Ende, with his mercenaries, would afford. A detachment of states troops under De Yers, Champagne's nephew, encountered the regiment of Van Ende, and put it to flight with considerable loss. At the same time, an officer in the garrison of the citadel itself, Captain De Bours, undertook secretly to carry the fortress for the estates. His operations were secret and rapid. The Seigneur de Liedekerke had succeeded Champagne in the government of the city. This appointment had been brought about by the agency of the Greffier Martini, a warm partisan of Orange. The new Governor was known to be very much the Prince's friend, and believed to be at heart a convert to the Reformed religion. With Martini and Liedekerke, De Bours arranged his plot. He was supplied with a large sum of money, readily furnished in secret by the leading mercantile houses of the city. These funds were successfully invested in gaining over the garrison, only one company holding firm for Treslong. The rest, as that officer himself informed Don John, were ready at any moment "to take him by the throat."

On the 1st of August, the day firmed upon in concert with the Governor and Greffier, he was, in fact, taken by the throat. There was but a brief combat, the issue of which became accidentally doubtful in the city. The white-plumed hat of De Bours had been struck from his head in the struggle, and had fallen into the foss. Floating out into the river, it had been recognized by the scouts sent out by the personages most interested, and the information was quickly brought to Liedekerke, who was lying concealed in the house of Martini, awaiting the result. Their dismay was great, but Martini, having more confidence than the Governor, sallied forth to learn the whole truth. Scarcely had he got into the streets than he heard a welcome cry, "The Beggars have the castle! the Beggars have the castle!" shouted a hundred voices. He soon met a lieutenant coming straight from the fortress, who related to him the whole affair. Learning that De Bours was completely victorious, and that Treslong was a prisoner, Martini hastened with the important intelligence to his own home, where Liedekerke lay concealed. That functionary now repaired to the citadel, whither the magistrates, the leading citizens, and the chief merchants were instantly summoned. The castle was carried, but the city was already trembling with apprehension lest the German mercenaries quartered within its walls, should rise with indignation or panic, and repeat the horrid tragedy of The Antwerp Fury.

In truth, there seemed danger of such a catastrophe. The secret correspondence of Don John with the colonels was already discovered, and it was seen how warmly he had impressed upon the men with whom he had been tampering, "that the die was cast," and that all their art was necessary to make it turn up successfully. The castle was carried, but what would become of the city? A brief and eager consultation terminated in an immediate offer of three hundred thousand crowns by the leading merchants. This money was to be employed in amicably satisfying, if possible, the German soldiers, who had meanwhile actually come to arms, and were assembled in the Place de Meer. Feeling unsafe; however, in this locality, their colonels had led them into the new town. Here, having barricaded themselves with gun-carriages, bales, and boxes, they awaited, instead of initiating, the events which the day might bring forth. A deputation soon arrived with a white flag from the castle, and commissioners were appointed by the commanding officers of the soldiery. The offer was made to pay over the arrears of their wages, at least to a very large amount, on condition that the troops should forthwith and for ever evacuate the city. One hundred and fifty thousand crowns were offered on the nail. The merchants stood on the bridge leading from the old town-to the new, in full sight of the soldiers. They held in their hands their purses, filled with the glittering gold. The soldiers were frantic with the opportunity, and swore that they would have their officers' lives, if the tempting and unexpected offer should be declined. Nevertheless, the commissioners went to and fro, ever finding something to alter or arrange. In truth, the merchants had agreed to furnish; if necessary, three hundred thousand Browns; but the thrifty negotiators were disposed, if diplomacy could do it, to save the moiety of that sum. Day began to sink, ere the bargain was completed, when suddenly sails were descried in the distance, and presently a large fleet of war vessels, with, banner and pennon flying before a favoring breeze; came sailing up the Scheld. It was a squadron of the Prince's ships, under

command of Admiral Haultain. He had been sent against Tholen, but, having received secret intelligence, had, with happy audacity, seized the opportunity of striking a blow in the cause which he had served so faithfully. A shot or two fired from the vessels among the barricades had a quickening effect. A sudden and astounding panic seized the soldiers. "The Beggars are coming! the Beggars are coming!" they yelled in dismay; for the deeds of the ocean-beggars had not become less appalling since the memorable siege of Leyden. The merchants still stood on the bridge with their purses in their hand. The envoys from the castle still waved their white flags. It was too late. The horror inspired by the wild Zealanders overpowered the hope of wages, extinguished all confidence in the friendship of the citizens. The mercenaries, yielding to a violent paroxysm of fear, fled hither and thither, panting, doubling, skulking, like wolves before the hounds. Their flight was ludicrous. Without staying to accept the money which the merchants were actually offering, without packing up their own property, in many cases even throwing away their arms, they fled, helter skelter, some plunging into the Scheid, some skimming along the dykes, some rushing across the open fields. A portion of them under Colonel Fugger, afterwards shut themselves up in Bergen op Zoom, where they were at once besieged by Champagny, and were soon glad to compromise the matter by surrendering their colonel and laying down their arms. The remainder retreated to Breda, where they held out for two months, and were at length overcome by a neat stratagem of Orange. A captain, being known to be in the employment of Don John, was arrested on his way to Breda. Carefully sewed up in his waistband was found a letter, of a finger's breadth, written in cipher, and sealed with the Governor-General's seal. Colonel Frondsberger, commanding in Breda, was in this missive earnestly solicited to hold out two months longer, within which time a certain relief was promised. In place of this letter, deciphered with much difficulty, a new one was substituted, which the celebrated printer, William Sylvius, of Antwerp, prepared with great adroitness, adding the signature and seal of Don John. In this counterfeit epistle; the Colonel was directed to do the best he could for himself, by reason that Don John was himself besieged, and unable to render him assistance. The same captain who had brought the real letter was bribed to deliver the counterfeit. This task he faithfully performed, spreading the fictitious intelligence besides, with such ardor through the town, that the troops rose upon their leader, and surrendered him with the city and their own arms, into the custody of the estates. Such was the result of the attempt by Don John to secure the citadel—of Antwerp. Not only was the fortress carried for the estates, but the city itself, for the first time in twelve years, was relieved from a foreign soldiery.

The rage and disappointment of the Governor-General were excessive. He had boasted to Marolles a day too soon. The prize which he thought already in his grasp had slipped through his fingers, while an interminable list of demands which he dreamed not of, and which were likely to make him bankrupt, were brought to his door. To the states, not himself, the triumph seemed for the moment decreed. The "dice" had taken a run against him, notwithstanding his pains in loading and throwing. Nevertheless, he did not yet despair of revenge. "These rebels," he wrote to the Empress-dowager, his sister, "think that fortune is all smiles for them now, and that all is ruin for me. The wretches are growing proud enough, and forget that their chastisement, some fine morning, will yet arrive."

On the 7th of August he addressed another long letter to the estates. This document was accompanied, as usual, by certain demands, drawn up categorically in twenty-three articles. The estates considered his terms hard and strange, for in their opinion it was themselves, not the Governor, who were masters of the situation. Nevertheless, he seemed inclined to treat as if he had gained, not missed, the citadel of Antwerp; as if the troops with whom he had tampered were mustered in the field, not shut up in distant towns, and already at the mercy of the states party. The Governor demanded that all the forces of the country should be placed under his own immediate control; that Count Bossu, or some other person nominated by himself, should be appointed to the government of Friesland; that the people of Brabant and Flanders should set themselves instantly to hunting, catching, and chastising all vagrant heretics and preachers. He required, in particular, that Saint Aldegonde and Theron, those most mischievous rebels, should be prohibited from setting their foot in any city of the Netherlands. He insisted that the community of Brussels should lay down their arms, and resume their ordinary handicrafts. He demanded that the Prince of Orange should be made to execute the Ghent treaty; to suppress the exercise of the Reformed religion in Harlem, Schoonhoven, and other places; to withdraw his armed vessels from their threatening stations, and to restore Nieuport, unjustly detained by him. Should the Prince persist in his obstinacy, Don John summoned them to take arms against him, and to support their lawful Governor. He, moreover, required the immediate restitution of Antwerp citadel, and the release of Treslong from prison.

Although, regarded from the Spanish point of view, such demands might seem reasonable, it was also natural that their audacity should astonish the estates. That the man who had violated so openly the Ghent treaty should rebuke the Prince for his default—that the man who had tampered with the German mercenaries until they were on the point of making another Antwerp Fury, should now claim the command over them and all other troops—that the man who had attempted to gain Antwerp citadel by a base stratagem should now coolly demand its restoration, seemed to them the perfection of

insolence. The baffled conspirator boldly claimed the prize which was to have rewarded a successful perfidy. At the very moment when the Escovedo letters and the correspondence with the German colonels had been laid before their eyes, it was a little too much that the double-dealing bastard of the double-dealing Emperor should read them a lecture upon sincerity. It was certain that the perplexed, and outwitted warrior had placed himself at last in a very false position. The Prince of Orange, with his usual adroitness, made the most of his adversary's false moves. Don John had only succeeded in digging a pitfall for himself. His stratagems against Namur and Antwerp had produced him no fruit, saving the character, which his antagonist now fully succeeded in establishing for him, of an unscrupulous and artful schemer. This reputation was enhanced by the discovery of the intercepted letters, and by the ingenuity and eagerness with which they were turned to account against him by the Prince, by Saint Aldegonde, and all the anti-Catholic party. The true key to his reluctance against despatching the troops by land, the states had not obtained. They did not dream of his romantic designs upon England, and were therefore excusable in attributing a still deeper perfidy to his arrangements.

Even had he been sent to the Netherlands in the full possession of his faculties, he would have been no match in political combinations for his powerful antagonists. Hoodwinked and fettered, suspected by his master, baffled, bewildered, irritated by his adversary, what could he do but plunge from one difficulty to another and oscillate between extravagant menace, and desponding concession, until his hopes and life were wasted quite away. His instructions came from Philip through Perez, and that most profound dissembler, as we have seen, systematically deceived the Governor, with the view of eliciting treasonable matters, Philip wishing, if possible, to obtain proofs of Don John's secret designs against his own crown. Thus every letter from Spain was filled with false information and with lying persuasions. No doubt the Governor considered himself entitled to wear a crown, and meant to win it, if not in Africa, then in England, or wherever fate might look propitiously upon him. He was of the stuff of which crusaders and dynasty founders had been made, at a somewhat earlier epoch. Who could have conquered the holy sepulchre, or wrested a crown from its lawful wearer, whether in Italy, Muscovy, the Orient, or in the British Ultima Thule, more bravely than this imperial bastard, this valiant and romantic adventurer? Unfortunately, he came a few centuries too late. The days when dynasties were founded, and European thrones appropriated by a few foreign freebooters, had passed, and had not yet returned. He had come to the Netherlands desirous of smoothing over difficulties and of making a peaceful termination to that rebellion a steppingstone to his English throne. He was doomed to a profound disappointment, a broken heart, and a premature grave, instead of the glittering baubles which he pursued. Already he found himself bitterly deceived in his hopes. The obstinate Netherlanders would not love him, notwithstanding the good wishes he had manifested. They would not even love the King of Spain, notwithstanding the blessings which his Majesty was declared to have heaped upon them. On the contrary, they persisted in wasting their perverse affections upon the pestilent Prince of Orange. That heretic was leading them to destruction, for he was showing them the road to liberty, and nothing, in the eyes of the Governor, could be more pitiable than to behold an innocent people setting forth upon such a journey. "In truth," said he, bitterly, in his memorable letter to his sister the Empress, "they are willing to recognize neither God nor king. They pretend to liberty in all things: so that 'tis a great pity to see how they are going on; to see the impudence and disrespect with which they repay his Majesty for the favors which he has shown them, and me for the labors, indignities, and dangers which I have undergone for their sakes."

Nothing, indeed, in the Governor's opinion, could surpass the insolence of the Netherlanders, save their ingratitude. That was the serpent's tooth which was ever wounding the clement King and his indignant brother. It seemed so bitter to meet with thanklessness, after seven years of Alva and three of Requesens; after the labors of the Blood Council, the massacres of Naarden, Zutphen, and Harlem, the siege of Leyden, and the Fury of Antwerp. "Little profit there has been," said the Governor to his sister, "or is like to be from all the good which we have done to these bad people. In short, they love and obey in all things the most perverse and heretic tyrant and rebel in the whole world, which is this damned Prince of Orange, while, on the contrary, without fear of God or shame before men, they abhor and dishonor the name and commandments of their natural sovereign." Therefore, with a doubting spirit, and almost with a broken heart, had the warrior shut himself up in Namur Castle, to await the progress of events, and to escape from the snares of his enemies. "God knows how much I desire to avoid extremities," said he, "but I know not what to do with men who show themselves so obstinately rebellious."

Thus pathetically Don John bewailed his fate. The nation had turned from God, from Philip, from himself; yet he still sat in his castle, determined to save them from destruction and his own hands from bloodshed, if such an issue were yet possible. Nor was he entirely deserted, for among the faithless a few were faithful still. Although the people were in open revolt, there was still a handful of nobles resolved to do their duty towards their God and King. "This little band," said the Governor, "has accompanied me hither, like gentlemen and chevaliers of honor." Brave Berlaymont and his four sons were loyal to the last, but others of this limited number of gentlemen and chevaliers of honor were

already deserting him. As soon as the result of the enterprise against Antwerp citadel was known, and the storm was gathering most darkly over the royal cause, Aerschot and Havre were first to spread their wings and flutter away in search of a more congenial atmosphere. In September, the Duke was again as he had always professed himself to be, with some important interval of exception—"the affectionate brother and cordial friend of the Prince of Orange."

The letter addressed by Don John to the states upon the 7th of August, had not yet been answered. Feeling, soon afterwards, more sensible of his position, and perhaps less inflamed with indignation; he addressed another communication to them, upon the 13th of the same month. In this epistle he expressed an extreme desire for peace, and a hearty desire to be relieved, if possible, from his most painful situation. He protested, before God and man, that his intentions were most honest, and that he abhorred war more than anything else in the world. He averred that, if his person was as odious to them as it seemed, he was only too ready to leave the land, as soon as the King should appoint his successor. He reminded them that the question of peace or war lay not with himself, but with them; and that the world would denounce as guilty those with whom rested the responsibility. He concluded with an observation which, in its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical, that if they had quite finished the perusal of the despatches from Madrid to his address, which they had intercepted, he should be thankful for an opportunity of reading them himself. He expressed a hope, therefore, that they would be forwarded to Namur.

This letter was answered at considerable length, upon the second day. The states made their customary protestations of attachment to his Majesty, their fidelity to the Catholic church, their determination to maintain both the Ghent treaty and the Perpetual Edict. They denied all responsibility for the present disastrous condition of the relations between themselves and government, having disbanded nearly all their own troops, while the Governor had been strengthening his forces up to the period of his retreat into Namur. He protested, indeed, friendship and a sincere desire for peace, but the intercepted letters of Escovedo and his own had revealed to them the evil counsels to which he had been listening, and the intrigues which he had been conducting. They left it to his conscience whether they could reasonably believe, after the perusal of these documents, that it was his intention to maintain the Ghent treaty, or any treaty; and whether they were not justified in their resort to the natural right of self-defence.

Don John was already fully aware of the desperate error which he had committed. In seizing Namur and attempting Antwerp, he had thrown down the gauntlet. Wishing peace, he had, in a panic of rage and anxiety; declared and enacted war. The bridge was broken behind him, the ships burned, a gulf opened, a return to peace rendered almost impossible. Yet it is painful to observe the almost passionate longings which at times seemed to possess him for accommodating the quarrel, together with his absolute incapacity to appreciate his position. The Prince was triumphant; the Governor in a trap. Moreover, it was a trap which he had not only entered voluntarily, but which he had set himself; he had played into the Prince's hands, and was frantic to see his adversary tranquilly winning the game. It was almost melancholy to observe the gradation of his tone from haughty indignation to dismal concession. In an elaborate letter which he addressed "to the particular states, bishops, councillors, and cities of the Netherlands," he protested as to the innocence of his intentions, and complained bitterly of the calumnies circulated to his discredit by the Prince of Orange. He denied any intention of recalling the troops which he had dismissed, except in case of absolute necessity: He affirmed that his Majesty sincerely desired peace. He averred that the country was either against the King, against the Catholic religion, against himself, or against all three together. He bitterly asked what further concessions were required. Had he not done all he had ever promised? Had he not discharged the Spaniards, placed the castles in the hands of natives, restored the privileges, submitted to insults and indecencies? Yet, in spite of all which had passed, he declared his readiness to resign, if another prince or princess of the blood more acceptable to them could be appointed. The letter to the states was followed by a proposition for a cessation of hostilities, and for the appointment of a commission to devise means for faithfully executing the Ghent treaty. This proposition was renewed, a few days later, together with an offer for an exchange of hostages.

It was not difficult for the estates to answer the letters of the Governor. Indeed, there was but little lack of argument on either side throughout this unhappy controversy. It is dismal to contemplate the interminable exchange of protocols, declarations, demands, apostilles, replications and rejoinders, which made up the substance of Don John's administration. Never was chivalrous crusader so out of place. It was not a soldier that was then required for Philip's exigency, but a scribe. Instead of the famous sword of Lepanto, the "barbarous pen" of Hopperus had been much more suitable for the work required. Scribbling Joachim in a war-galley, yard-arm and yard-arm with the Turkish capitan pacha, could have hardly felt less at ease than did the brilliant warrior thus condemned to scrawl and dissemble. While marching from concession to concession, he found the states conceiving daily more distrust, and making daily deeper encroachments. Moreover, his deeds up to the time when he seemed

desirous to retrace his steps had certainly been, at the least, equivocal. Therefore, it was natural for the estates, in reply to the questions in his letter, to observe that he had indeed dismissed the Spaniards, but that he had tampered with and retained the Germans; that he had indeed placed the citadels in the hands of natives, but that he had tried his best to wrest them away again; that he had indeed professed anxiety for peace, but that his intercepted letters proved his preparations for war. Already there were rumors of Spanish troops returning in small detachments out of France. Already the Governor was known to be enrolling fresh mercenaries to supply the place of those whom he had unsuccessfully endeavoured to gain to his standard. As early as the 26th of July, in fact, the Marquis d'Ayamonte in Milan, and Don Juan de Idiaquez in Genoa, had received letters from Don John of Austria, stating that, as the provinces had proved false to their engagements, he would no longer be held by his own, and intimating his desire that the veteran troops which had but so recently been dismissed from Flanders, should forthwith return. Soon afterwards, Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, received instructions from the King to superintend these movements, and to carry the aid of his own already distinguished military genius to his uncle in the Netherlands.

On the other hand, the states felt their strength daily more sensibly. Guided, as usual, by Orange, they had already assumed a tone in their correspondence which must have seemed often disloyal, and sometimes positively insulting, to the Governor. They even answered his hints of resignation in favor of some other prince of the blood, by expressing their hopes that his successor, if a member of the royal house at all, would at least be a legitimate one. This was a severe thrust at the haughty chieftain, whose imperial airs rarely betrayed any consciousness of Barbara Blomberg and the bend sinister on his shield. He was made to understand, through the medium of Brabantine bluntness, that more importance was attached to the marriage, ceremony in the Netherlands than he seemed to imagine. The categorical demands made by the estates seemed even more indigestible than such collateral affronts; for they had now formally affirmed the views of Orange as to the constitutional government of the provinces. In their letter of 26th August, they expressed their willingness, notwithstanding the past delinquencies of the Governor, to yield him their confidence again; but at the same time; they enumerated conditions which, with his education and views, could hardly seem to him admissible. They required him to disband all the soldiers in his service, to send the Germans instantly out of the country, to dismiss every foreigner from office, whether civil or military, and to renounce his secret league with the Duke of Guise. They insisted that he should thenceforth govern only with the advice and consent of the State Council, that he should execute that which should by a majority of votes be ordained there, that neither measures nor despatches should be binding or authentic unless drawn up at that board. These certainly were views of administration which, even if consonant with a sound historical view of the Netherland constitutions, hardly tallied with his monarch's instructions, his own opinions, or the practice under Alva and Requesens, but the country was still in a state of revolution, and the party of the Prince was gaining the upper hand.

It was the determination of that great statesman, according to that which he considered the legitimate practice of the government, to restore the administration to the State Council, which executive body ought of right to be appointed by the states-general. In the states-general, as in the states-particular, a constant care was to be taken towards strengthening the most popular element, the "community" of each city, the aggregate, that is to say, of its guild-representatives and its admitted burghers. This was, in the opinion of the Prince, the true theory of the government—republican in all but form—under the hereditary protection, not the despotic authority, of a family, whose rights were now nearly forfeited. It was a great step in advance that these views should come to be thus formally announced, not in Holland and Zealand only, but by the deputies of the states-general, although such a doctrine, to the proud stomach of Don John, seemed sufficiently repulsive. Not less so was the cool intimation with which the paper concluded, that if he should execute his threat of resigning, the country would bear his loss with fortitude, coupled as was that statement with a declaration that, until his successor should be appointed, the State Council would consider itself charged ad interim with the government. In the meantime, the Governor was requested not to calumniate the estates to foreign governments, as he had so recently done in his intercepted letter to the Empress-dowager.

Upon receiving this letter, "Don John," says a faithful old chronicler, "found that the cranes had invited the frog to dinner." In truth, the illustrious soldier was never very successful in his efforts, for which his enemies gave him credit, to piece out the skin of the lion with that of the fox. He now felt himself exposed and outwitted, while he did not feel conscious of any very dark design. He answered the letter of the states by a long communication, dated from Namur Castle, 28th of August. In style, he was comparatively temperate, but the justification which he attempted of his past conduct was not very happy. He noticed the three different points which formed the leading articles of the accusation brought against him, the matter, namely, of the intercepted letters, of the intrigues with the German colonels, and the seizure of Namur. He did not deny the authorship of the letters, but contented himself with a reference to their date, as if its priority to his installation as Governor furnished a sufficient palliation of the bad faith which the letters revealed. As to the despatches of Escovedo, he denied

responsibility for any statements or opinions which they might contain. As the Secretary, however, was known to be his most confidential friend, this attempt to shuffle off his own complicity was held to be both lame and unhandsome. As for the correspondence with the colonels, his defence was hardly more successful, and rested upon a general recrimination upon the Prince of Orange. As that personage was agitating and turbulent, it was not possible, the Governor urged, that he should himself remain quiet. It was out of his power to execute the treaty and the edict, in the face of a notorious omission on the part of his adversary to enforce the one or to publish the other. It comported neither with his dignity nor his safety to lay down his weapons while the Prince and his adherents were arming. He should have placed himself "in a very foolish position," had he allowed himself unarmed to be dictated to by the armed. In defence of himself on the third point, the seizure of Namur Castle, he recounted the various circumstances with which the reader is already acquainted. He laid particular stress upon the dramatic manner in which the Vicomte De Gand had drawn his curtains at the dead of night; he narrated at great length the ominous warning which he had likewise received from the Duke of Aerschot in Brussels, and concluded with a circumstantial account of the ambush which he believed to have been laid for him by Count De Lalain. The letter concluded with a hope for an arrangement of difficulties, not yet admitted by the Governor to be insurmountable, and with a request for a formal conference, accompanied by an exchange of hostages.

While this correspondence was proceeding between Namur and Brussels, an event was occurring in Antwerp which gave much satisfaction to Orange. The Spanish Fury, and the recent unsuccessful attempt of Don John to master the famous citadel, had determined the authorities to take the counsel which the Prince had so often given in vain, and the fortress of Antwerp was at length razed to the ground, on the side towards the city.—It would be more correct to say that it was not the authorities, but the city itself which rose at last and threw off the saddle by which it had so long been galled. More than ten thousand persons were constantly at work, morning, noon, and night, until the demolition was accomplished. Grave magistrates, great nobles, fair ladies, citizens and their wives, beggars and their children, all wrought together pell-mell. All were anxious to have a hand in destroying the nest where so many murders had been hatched, whence so much desolation had flown. The task was not a long one for workmen so much in earnest, and the fortress was soon laid low in the quarter where it could be injurious to the inhabitants. As the work proceeded, the old statue of Alva was discovered in a forgotten crypt, where it had lain since it had been thrown down by the order of Requesens. Amid the destruction of the fortress, the gigantic phantom of its founder seemed to start suddenly from the gloom, but the apparition added fresh fuel to the rage of the people. The image of the execrated Governor was fastened upon with as much fierceness as if the bronze effigy could feel their blows, or comprehend their wrath. It was brought forth from its dark hiding-place into the daylight. Thousands of hands were ready to drag it through the streets for universal inspection and outrage. A thousand sledge-hammers were ready to dash it to pieces, with a slight portion, at least, of the satisfaction with which those who wielded them would have dealt the same blows upon the head of the tyrant himself. It was soon reduced to a shapeless mass. Small portions were carried away and preserved for generations in families as heirlooms of hatred. The bulk was melted again and reconverted, by a most natural metamorphosis, into the cannon from which it had originally sprung.

The razing of the Antwerp citadel set an example which was followed in other places; the castle of Ghent, in particular, being immediately levelled, amid demonstrations of universal enthusiasm. Meantime, the correspondence between Don John and the estates at Brussels dragged its slow length along, while at the same time, two elaborate letters were addressed to the King, on the 24th of August and the 8th of September, by the estates-general of the Netherlands. These documents, which were long and able, gave a vigorous representation of past evils and of the present complication of disorders under which the commonwealth was laboring. They asked, as usual, for a royal remedy; and expressed their doubts whether there could be any sincere reconciliation so long as the present Governor, whose duplicity and insolence they represented in a very strong light, should remain in office. Should his Majesty, however, prefer to continue Don John in the government, they signified their willingness, in consideration of his natural good qualities, to make the best of the matter. Should, however, the estrangement between themselves and the Governor seem irremediable, they begged that another and a legitimate prince of the blood might be appointed in his place.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Country would bear his loss with fortitude
Its humility, seemed sufficiently ironical

Not upon words but upon actions
Perfection of insolence
Was it astonishing that murder was more common than fidelity?

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC — VOLUME
26: 1577, PART III ***

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