

against one whose will was now paramount, and he argued in vain. He declined therefore to take any further share in the negotiations with Namur, partly on account of ill-health and partly because he despaired of any favourable result.<sup>1</sup>

The convention as now modified might have well been condensed into a single article—that Don John should abdicate his delegated authority in favour of the Prince of Orange. The Bishop of Bruges and Willerval, who carried the instrument back to Namur, were hard put to it to give any plausible excuse for the violent changes which had been made in it, and which provoked the indignation of the Governor and the laughter of some of his Spanish attendants. They vainly endeavoured to prove that there was no necessary connexion between the presence of Orange at Bruxelles and the sudden importation of insulting conditions into a negotiation which had been just before his arrival conducted with an evident desire on both sides for conciliation and agreement. The truth was too apparent to Don John and the whole world that his great rival had now taken the management of affairs at Bruxelles, and that his voice was for war. After somewhat warmly expressing his displeasure at the manner in which he had been treated, the Governor desired to know for how many days hostilities might still be considered as suspended. The Estates would not accord a truce of more than three days. Don John endeavoured to lengthen the term, but in vain, and in a letter, temperate and dignified in tone, he intimated to the Estates that as it was obvious that in spite of their professions of attachment to the Church and to the King they were prepared to trample on both, he accepted the issue which they had raised. This letter was dated the 2d of October. On the same day, having placed the castle of Namur in the best state of defence that circumstances permitted, he took his departure for Marché-en-Famine. There he remained for a few days, and thence proceeded to Luxemburg, where the Spanish troops, now ordered from Italy and actually on their march, were soon expected to muster.

In reviewing these proceedings of the two parties it is impossible to deny that Don John had a right to complain of the shifting and tortuous policy of the Estates. He had submitted

<sup>1</sup> *Mémoire et recueil de ce qu'est passé entre le Seigneur Don Jan d'Autriche, etc. depuis sa retraite au chasteau de Namur que fust le 24e de Juillet 1577, jusques a la rompue de la paix entre son Altère et les Estats de par de la, rédigé par escrit par le Sieur Grobbendonck comme y aiant esté entremis.* Printed in the *Compte-Rendu des Séances de la Commission Royale d' Histoire*, tom. x., Bruxelles, 8vo, pp. 172-223.

to them a proposal, which they had entertained on condition of certain suggested alterations, and he, having accepted these alterations, had a right to expect that no fresh demands would be put forward in the convention submitted for his signature. It is perhaps difficult to believe that he intended to abide by this convention, or that his fair promises were made for any other purpose than to gain time for fresh hordes of Spanish soldiery to march from the Milanese to the Netherlands. But it may be asked, Why did not the Estates, without relaxing their own preparations for the foreseen struggle, accept the offered terms, and leave with Don John and his master the responsibility of repudiating the bargain, instead of themselves resorting to unfair means of preventing a bargain from being concluded on their own terms? The truth seems to be that the demands of the Estates rose and fell, according as the influence of Orange or the Catholic lords preponderated in their counsels. The one party was for firmness tending to defiance,<sup>1</sup> the other for conciliation tending to submission, and the policy of the Estates took its tone from each by turns.

The crisis of affairs being now reached, the Estates put forth a "Summary discourse of the causes and reasons which constrained them to provide for their defence against Don John of Austria."<sup>2</sup> Besides the intercepted letters of Don John and Escovedo to the King and Perez, of March and April, already noticed, it contained a number of letters from Don John to the German colonels Fronsberg and Fugger, bearing date the 16th of July to the 8th of August; an important letter from Treslong to Don John, of 1st of August; and a letter dated the 14th of August from Don John to his sister the Empress-Dowager Maria, widow of Maximilian II. The letters to the colonels, though worded with great caution, and referring those officers to verbal messages, afforded strong presumptive evidence, when read by the light of recent events, of the plot to seize the citadel of Antwerp. In the letter to the Empress Don John informed her that affairs with the Estates had come to such a pass that his person would have been seized had he not secured himself in the castle of Namur, and that the Estates and people had ceased to recognize or obey either God or His Majesty, but had transferred their allegiance to the most perverse tyrant and heretic rebel in the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 257.

<sup>2</sup> *Sommier discours des justes causes et raisons qu'ont constraint les Estats Generaux des Pays-Bas de pourveoir à leur deffence contre le Seigneur Don Jehan d'Austrice.* Anvers, 1577, 4to, p. 22.

world, the damnable (*condenado*) Prince of Orange. The volume, which was written with great dignity and moderation, was published in seven languages, and it was sent with an address to all the sovereigns of Europe.

A reply on the part of Don John, entitled "A true and simple narrative," giving his account of the same transactions, soon afterwards appeared, and was widely circulated in a similar manner.<sup>1</sup> It was also a very skilful political pamphlet, written in a tone which princely readers may have regarded as singularly forbearing. Great stress was laid on the constant plots for Don John's capture and assassination, which were directly attributed to the Count of Lalaing and the Prince of Orange. The insults inflicted upon the followers and servants of the Governor were also set forth, without passion or minute detail; and a full and not unfair account was given of the rupture of negotiations on account of the new and exorbitant articles thrust into the convention by the Estates at Bruxelles, after its terms had been finally adjusted between their envoys and Don John at Namur. The seizure of Namur castle was lightly touched upon as an unimportant event, in which only the Governor's personal attendants were concerned; and the plot to seize Antwerp was altogether unnoticed, except perhaps in the admission that Treslong had been instructed to remind the garrison of the duty which they owed to His Majesty.

Meanwhile the prospect of a rupture between the Estates and the representatives of the Crown, and of the increasing disposition of the Provinces to place their confidence in the Prince of Orange, had awakened the fear of the Catholics and the jealousy of the great nobles. It was obvious that the commencement of war would make the influence of Orange paramount throughout the land. The ardent Catholics could not follow in the direction whither he was sure to lead them; the great nobles would not be led by him in any direction at all. It occurred to some of them that they might transfer the government of the Provinces from Don John, who had broken faith with them, to another Prince of the House of Austria, with whom a more binding covenant might be made, whose near relationship to the King of Spain would exonerate them from the imputation of desiring a change of dynasty, and whose pre-eminent rank would at once extinguish the pretensions both of Orange and of Anjou. The Archduke

<sup>1</sup> *Vera et simplex narratio eorum quæ ab adventu D. Joannis Austriaci Supremi in Belgio . . . gesta sunt . . . Luxemburg, 1578.*

Matthias, brother of the Emperor Rudolph, a youth who was supposed to be at once amiable and ambitious, and who had just attained his twentieth year, was the Prince upon whom their choice fell.

Amongst the leaders in the movement were Aerschot and his brother Havrech, who, after the trick which Don John had



attempted to play them in the matter of the citadel of Antwerp, had not unnaturally resented the indignity by passing over to the ranks of his avowed opponents. Indeed, they found their position at Namur, where they had been invited to appear as guests, to be more like that of prisoners; their loyalty was greatly suspected because they had sent off the Prince of Chimay soon after the seizure of the castle; and they therefore went out one morning as if for a walk and never returned, their flight being so hastily determined on that the stately and sumptuous Duke was glad to ride off on

a horse without a saddle.<sup>1</sup> Champagne and even Lalaing, in spite of their engagements with Margaret of Navarre, De Heze, and some others, shared their counsels. A secret messenger, the Baron of Maalsteede, was despatched to Vienna at the end of August to confer with the young Archduke and invite him to Bruxelles.

A month later the same idea had suggested itself so forcibly to some of the inferior nobility that they too resolved upon the same step, and they were greatly surprised to learn that their chiefs were already in communication with Matthias. Some weeks after the negotiations were opened the matter was confided to Orange by Havrech. The Prince would not have advised the selection of an Archduke as a champion of popular rights, nor did he view his intervention for its own sake with any hope or favour. But as the choice had been made he assented to it. It was at least a fresh humiliation to his present antagonist Don John, and it might sow the seeds of distrust and dissension in the bosom of the House of Austria.

The Archduke, delighted with the invitation, displayed in his eager acceptance of it all the unscrupulous selfishness of his race, with none of its shrewdness. That it was dishonourable to avail himself of the difficulties of his Spanish kinsman in order to deprive him of a portion of his dominions, and that it was indecent for an Austrian Prince to accept a crown from the rebellious subjects of another member of the Imperial House, were thoughts which never appear to have suggested themselves to his mind. The emissaries who invited him flattered him with the hopes that if the enterprise were successful Philip would acquiesce in the arrangement, and save his own dignity by bestowing on his adventurous nephew the hand of an Infanta with the Netherlands

<sup>1</sup> Motley: *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, iii. 171. Quoting Gachard: *Bulletins de la Commission royale*, ii. 153. Vanderhammen, whose account of the capture of Namur castle differs in several respects from those written nearer the time and spot, says that the Duchess of Aerschot and the Marchioness of Havrech, on hearing that their husbands had fled, sent to Don John to say that they greatly regretted that they had taken that step, and that they themselves were ready to submit to detention as hostages. Don John, however, he adds, gallantly replied that he kissed their hands, and that his habit was not to imprison ladies, but do them all the service in his power; he begged therefore that they would follow their husbands if they chose to do so, and to enable them to do so he sent them five hundred crowns. Vanderhammen: *Don Juan de Austria*, fol. 305. A. Carnero (*Guerras Civiles en Flandes*, p. 117) represents the Marchioness of Havrech as a still warmer partisan of Don John, and as offering him her plate and jewels to assist him in the strait for money in which she knew him to be placed. But the Queen of Navarre, on the contrary, says (*Mémoires*, p. 118) that she was told by Madame de Havrech that she had been detained by Don John for some time as a hostage.

for her dowry. What his own powers and rights were to be, how they were to be guaranteed amongst a people who had been at war with his House for a quarter of a century, how they were to be conquered and maintained in the presence of a Spanish army commanded by the hero of Lepanto, were questions into which Matthias did not inquire. He had neither money, nor military nor political skill or experience, nor powerful allies; nothing but his Imperial name, and the promised support of a few nobles, whose fickleness and selfishness had been main causes of the protracted miseries of their country.

Thus provided he stole from his bed at Vienna on the night of the 3d of October, and in the disguise of a servant, and with his face blackened, and attended by a very small following, made his way to Cologne. His flight and the purpose of it were known in most of the northern Courts before he reached the Netherlands; and although the Emperor Rudolph protested ignorance and disapproval of the scheme, his connivance was suspected. To Don John Rudolph wrote, giving him early intimation that without his knowledge or consent the Archduke had left Vienna, and was supposed to have taken the road to Flanders. Communicating this fact in a letter to Alexander Farnese, Don John said that he exonerated the Empress-Dowager of all concurrence in the designs of her son, and commiserated her feelings of regret and displeasure, but of the Emperor's share in the business he was still uncertain what judgment to pronounce. He had reason to believe that Rudolph had been informed of the proposals made to Matthias; and he had certainly not been as vigilant as he might have been in guarding against their leading to any result, nor had he communicated them so directly as he ought to have done to the King. For his own part, he added, he should determine his course after the arrival of the Archduke in Flanders. He should first attempt to persuade him not to join himself to the party of the Estates; but if he found him resolved upon that line of conduct, he should then treat him as an enemy.<sup>1</sup>

While the movement of the Archduke produced some of the effects upon which Orange had counted, it was also bringing about others still more favourable to his policy. Both the Prince and the Estates had been earnest in entreating the Queen of England for aid, which she was too wary either to grant or refuse without long deliberation. The coming of Matthias quickened her decision. As soon as it was known in London, Secretary

<sup>1</sup> Strada : *De Bello Belgico*, lib. ix.

Walsingham sent for Meetkercke, colleague of Havrech in a mission from the Estates, and told him that the intervention of an Archduke was a new element in the already complicated affairs of the Netherlands which Elizabeth could not view without great anxiety. It betokened a division in the councils of the Estates at a time when union was especially necessary. Don John was daily receiving fresh troops both from France and from Italy. The Duke of Anjou was at La Fère, where he too was collecting a force. In the Queen's opinion the Prince of Orange was the sole leader upon whom the Estates ought to rely, and it was only upon the faith of his leadership that she would contribute any aid either of troops or money. Meetkercke replied that Matthias had been invited by nearly all the great nobles, who hoped and believed that, with a strong Council of State, he would make an excellent Governor of the Provinces. If the Estates succeeded in placing him in that post, it was probable that the Emperor would withdraw his opposition and induce the King of Spain also to accept him as the successor of Don John. Orange, though he had no hand in bringing the Archduke to the Low Countries, was in favour of receiving him in an honourable manner, because any other course would be an insult to the whole Imperial family. To this defence of the supporters of Matthias, Walsingham merely replied that they could expect no assistance from the Queen unless they immediately appointed the Prince the lieutenant-general of the Archduke.

The first public recognition of Matthias in the Provinces which he aspired to govern took place at Antwerp. There he was met by the Prince of Orange at the head of two thousand horse and an immense concourse of people. Orange was about the same time elected to the post of Ruward of Brabant, an ancient office of great power and dignity, conferred very rarely, and only at times of extreme difficulty and danger. The functions were not very clearly defined, but they were practically those of a protector or dictator, and their exercise was not restricted to any specified limit of time. The place had generally been held by those who were the next heirs to the sovereignty, or who were powerful enough afterwards to usurp it. It was on this occasion revived in favour of Orange by the Estates of Brabant, moved thereto by the chief authorities of Bruxelles and Antwerp. The Prince would not accept it until after repeated solicitations, and after the election had been referred to and confirmed by the States-General. In that body the Catholic party had sufficient

influence to produce some little demur to the nomination, and to obtain the annexation of the condition that it might be cancelled when a Governor-General was appointed. The day on which the confirmation was announced—the 22d of October—was held as a holiday at Antwerp and Bruxelles. The Estates of Flanders at the same time once more elected Orange governor of that Province—an office which, however, he again as before steadily declined. The Catholic nobles had for the second time within a few weeks signally failed in their attempts to curtail his influence. Before his entry into Bruxelles they had endeavoured to extort from him a declaration which would have hampered his future policy. He refused to give it, and was brought in notwithstanding in a flood-tide of popular enthusiasm. They had given him a rival in the person of the Archduke, and it now appeared that that step had been the means of conferring upon him great direct powers which he might not otherwise have obtained, and that the rival himself was likely to prove a very useful and submissive tool.

The city of Ghent, ever foremost in the path of violent revolution, now distinguished itself by a manifestation that the popular will and not a Spanish garrison ruled there. The State Council at Bruxelles had obtained, not without some difficulty, the appointment of Governor of Flanders, refused by Orange, for the Duke of Aerschot. The Antwerp trick and his half imprisonment by Don John had once more turned the old courtier into a patriot, and had made him, in profession at least, a warm friend of Orange. The populace of Ghent, amongst whom were many adherents of the reformed sects, still looked upon him with great distrust and disfavour; and they were induced to receive him quietly only by the promises of revived privileges, studiously and lavishly circulated by his friends. These promises were as ill kept as if they had been made by and not for the Duke. Attention was soon called to them at the meetings of the Estates of Flanders, but in vain. At those meetings the representatives of the nobles and clergy were found greatly to outnumber those of the Third Estate, by whom alone the increase of popular privileges was regarded with favour. The Catholic and aristocratic majority, therefore, not only overbore the small plebeian minority, but abused its strength by the use of violent and exasperating language to opponents who had given no just cause of provocation. The concessions which had been promised, and the expectants who ventured to allude to them, were treated with



contumely, and the people were plainly told that instead of privileges they should have halts. The spirit of the Emperor, who had put ropes round the necks of their grandfathers, still lived, it was insultingly said, in his son, and Don John and the Duke of Aerschot would bring to their senses those who clamoured for inconvenient rights. Whether the old trimmer who had set up the Archduke to contest the viceroyalty with its present occupant had, in spite of all that had passed, returned to the party of Don John, was not known; but there was no sudden treachery of which he was not capable, and his desire to be well with the King was notorious. Copies of a letter, said to be written by Hessels, an old member of Alba's Blood Council, and now in office at Ghent, were in free circulation amongst the popular party. This letter, which was afterwards believed to be a forgery, confirmed the worst suspicions against the Duke. "We hope," said the writer, "that after the Duke of Aerschot is Governor, we shall fully carry out the intentions of His Majesty and the plans of His Highness. We shall also know how to circumvent the scandalous heretic, with all his adherents and followers."<sup>1</sup> Words thus spoken and written roused the populace of Ghent to the fiercest indignation, all the more fierce because the provincial Estates was found to be no arena for its expression. Weak in that assembly, they were strong out of doors, and twenty thousand of them were ready to rise at the bidding of certain nobles, who were warm partisans of Orange.

One of these leaders, Ryhove, made a nocturnal visit to the Prince at Antwerp, and informed him of the state of public feeling at Ghent, and also of a plan formed by himself and a few other hot-brained youths, to seize Aerschot and all the chief personages who shared his anti-national opinions. Orange thought the scheme desperate, and would give no open aid or encouragement; but from Sainte Aldegonde the bold conspirator received a hint that if it were successful their chief would be well pleased. On his return to Ghent, Ryhove found that further exasperation had been produced by a foolish speech made by Aerschot himself. Imbize, another young noble, who was also a popular leader, meeting him in the street, asked him when he was going to proclaim the restoration of the ancient and disused charters. "Charters! charters!" cried Aerschot angrily; "you howl for charters, and shall learn that we can make you dumb with ropes at your throats. I tell you this, however the Prince

<sup>1</sup> Motley, iii. 198; quoting Bor, 905.

" of Orange may hound you on."<sup>1</sup> Ryhove was for immediate action, and infused his own energy into his friends. They mustered their men after nightfall in a public square, and then with lighted torches surrounded the palace of the Governor. The guards closed the gates, the insurgents heaped combustibles before them, and the Duke capitulated. Ryhove had some difficulty in saving the old man's life from the fury of the people, and, barefoot and in his nightgown, the proud courtier was marched by those whom he had threatened with halters to the house of Ryhove. All the important members of the Catholic party then in Ghent were secured during the night, Champagny alone being allowed to escape. A provisional government was formed with Ryhove for its head, to whom oaths of allegiance were demanded and rendered, the arrangements being understood to be subject to the approval of Orange and the States-General. On the 9th of November the victorious party put forth an address defending the revolution, and declaring Aerschot and the Catholic lords to be secretly leagued with Don John for the purpose of bringing back the Spanish soldiery, depriving the Prince of Orange of the Ruwardship, annulling the Ghent Treaty, and suppressing the reformed religion.

Champagny at once wrote to the Prince of Orange to protest against these violent proceedings, and entreated him to use his influence to prevent their continuance. The Prince complied with his request, and urged upon Ryhove the propriety of liberating his prisoners, who had been arrested upon mere suspicion. His recommendation obtained the freedom of Aerschot, who was released on the 14th of November; but those of meaner rank continued to languish in prison for nearly a year, and two of them, the old Blood Councillor Hessels being one, were hanged without trial in the following autumn by Ryhove.<sup>2</sup> But although the advice of Orange was not followed by the revolutionary Government of Ghent, he consented to visit the city during the winter, at the invitation of the Estates of Flanders. His reception was cordial, and splendid with illuminations, banquets, poetical addresses, and allegorical entertainments.

Meanwhile, Don John of Austria had transmitted to the King an account of the menacing attitude of affairs, the increasing confidence of the Estates, their aggressive movements, and the absolute necessity in which he found himself of devoting all his

<sup>1</sup> Motley, iii. p. 201; quoting Meteren, vii. 127; Hoofd, xii. 534; Vander Vynckt, ii. 280.

<sup>2</sup> Motley: *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, iii. pp. 272, 273.

energy to preparing for the war which was now certain. If the royal authority were to be maintained in the Netherlands at all, money and troops must now be supplied to him. The King responded to these appeals by action somewhat more prompt than was usual with him. Orders were sent to Italy that all the troops that could be spared from the Spanish garrisons there should march to Flanders. Cardinal Granvelle, then at Rome, was directed to proceed to the Abruzzi, and endeavour to persuade the Duchess of Parma to quit her retreat at Aquila and resume the government of the Belgian Provinces. The King wrote to her of the wisdom and success of her previous administration, and of the love with which the Flemings regarded her; and he promised that if she would undertake the civil duties of his representative, the command of those military operations which were to reduce her loving subjects to obedience should be conferred on her son Prince Alexander. The wily Cardinal could produce no effect on the resolutions of the wary Princess. She was ten years older and more gouty than when she had so nearly died of her well-remembered humiliations at Bruxelles; and she justified her brother's praise of her sagacity by declining his offer. Alexander, however, was paying her a visit at the time of Granvelle's visit; he was delighted at the prospect of actual service, joyfully accepted the proposals of the King, and at once set out for Flanders.

To Don John the King addressed a despatch, which was really intended for the Estates, and which, although not a formal reply, was a tolerably conclusive answer to their complaints of grievances and their hints as to the Governor's recall. In this document the Estates were peremptorily required to lay down their arms, to dismiss the Prince of Orange, and to conform to the Perpetual Edict. Don John transmitted a copy of it to Bruxelles.<sup>1</sup>

This paper and the tidings of preparations at Luxemburg led the Estates to take a step which put an end to all further compromise or parley with Don John. On the 7th of December they put forth, in the King's name, a proclamation in which Don John was declared to have ceased to be Stadtholder, Governor, and Captain-General, and was denounced as a breaker of the peace which he had sworn to keep, and an enemy to the commonwealth. All Netherlanders who should take part with him were declared rebels and traitors, and it was decreed that an inventory

<sup>1</sup> Strada: *De Bello Belgico*, lib. ix.

should be taken of the property of all such persons. Three days later, on the 10th of December, a new Act of Union was exposed for public signature, and signed by great multitudes of people of all ranks, including the Catholic nobles like Egmont and Lalaing. By this remarkable document Roman Catholics and those who had embraced the new forms of faith mutually bound themselves to respect each other's religious liberty and to defend it against all attacks. The Ghent Treaty had suppressed active persecution, but this new paper at last recognized the rights of freedom of opinion and the duty of toleration. It was the work of Orange, and seemed to be the crowning stone of the edifice of liberty which he had been so long laboriously rearing. It was the third, and, unhappily, the last deed of confederation between all the Provinces. The subsequent success of the Spanish arms tore it asunder, and religious dissensions riveted the chains of the larger portion of the Netherlands for several ages more.

While one Governor was thus deliberately dismissed by the States-General, another was kept waiting for induction into office with little regard to his dignity or his expectations. The Archduke, who had made such haste from Vienna, was allowed to remain for nearly two months in the country as a private individual before the Prince of Orange and the Estates had time to draw up and submit to him the conditions upon which they were willing to allow him to be their nominal ruler. His power was to be exercised in the King's name and subject to his approbation; but his oath of allegiance was to be taken both to the King and the States. All his acts were to be ratified by the approval of a majority of his State Council; and in the higher matters of legislation and policy—in making laws, alliances, peace or war, contracting loans, imposing taxes, levying troops, and establishing garrisons—neither he nor the State-Council could do anything without the approval of a majority of the States-General. Over taxation and expenditure the control of that powerful body was absolute. It was to assemble when, where, and as often, and sit as long, as it should deem expedient. It was to be bound to meet whenever any single Province should desire it. To the Governor and his Council patronage both civil and military was accorded, but it was to be exercised subject to the advice and review of the States-General. The Provincial Governors were to be appointed by the Governor and Council, but in each case with the consent of the Province. Although the office

of Ruward had been made voidable on the appointment of a Governor, it was stipulated that the Prince of Orange was to be continued in that office, and he was likewise nominated lieutenant-general for the Governor.

These terms made the post which Matthias had come so far to fill a mere honorary distinction. Not only was all definite power lodged in the hands of the Council and the States-General, but there was put over him a lieutenant of vast personal influence who was clothed with a dictatorial authority, sanctioned by usage, yet indefinite and extraordinary. The only consolation offered to the Archduke lay in the fact that the King, whom he represented, had no more power than himself, there being left to him the mere nominal prerogative of approving, if he pleased, proceedings which his disapproval would not invalidate. Nevertheless, hard as the terms were, Matthias eagerly accepted them.

The negotiations with the helpless Archduke were easier than those with the wary Queen of England. Elizabeth, however, was ultimately induced to sign on the 7th of January 1578 a treaty by which she engaged to become security for the Estates to the extent of one hundred thousand pounds for one year, and to send a force of five thousand foot and one thousand horse to the Provinces under the command of a distinguished leader, who was to enjoy a seat and vote in the Council of State. In case of an attack on herself, the Estates were to afford her equivalent aid, which was not to be less than forty ships, if naval assistance should be required. She accepted the appointment of Matthias, because it disconcerted the schemes of Anjou and the French party. She affected, however, to consider that aid lent to the Estates and the Archduke was by no means a declaration of war against Philip II. and Don John of Austria, and sent envoys to Madrid and Luxemburg for the purpose of explaining a policy which certainly required explanation. For while Havrech and Meetkercke were thus successfully pleading the cause of the Belgian rebellion in London, there was present there to watch and impede their proceedings not only the usual resident Spanish ambassador, but also a special agent of Don John in the person of the Viscount of Ghent. Don John was well informed as to the aid which Orange and the States desired to obtain from England, and Ghent was especially ordered to remonstrate against any loan or security being granted to them, and to tell the Queen plainly that any open or secret assistance would add one more to the many grievances of which the Crown of Spain had to complain,

and for which at some fitting time reckoning would be demanded.<sup>1</sup> On Ghent's fidelity and zeal in his mission his subsequent conduct threw some doubt. It is a singular proof of the levity with which in that unhappy time men of rank and character passed from party to party and from camp to camp, that in these English negotiations Havrech, the successful representative of the Estates, had very recently been a friend and companion of Don John, and that Ghent, the baffled envoy of Don John, was found, when the war began a few weeks afterwards, commanding the cavalry in the army of the Estates.

The Archduke Matthias having assented to all the conditions imposed upon him, there was no longer any pretence for keeping him from the coveted chair of State at Bruxelles. The inaugural ceremonies took place on the 18th of January 1578. The Prince of Orange, the Prince of Chimay, and other nobles, met him at Vilvorde with a splendid cavalcade, and conducted him in triumph to the capital. Within nine months Don John and Orange had entered its gates with similar honours. The gay city, however, on this occasion outdid itself in triumphal arches and other sumptuous decorations, and in dramatic and rhetorical and pyrotechnic exhibitions. The Archduke, who had never made a campaign or done anything worthy of remark until his midnight flight from Vienna, was symbolized and extolled under the various forms of Curtius leaping into the gulf, Scipio Africanus conquering Carthage, and David smiting Goliath, the closed chasm and the vanquished foes being the prototypes of Spain and Don John. Odes, banquets, and feasts followed hard on these mythological and historical honours, amidst which must not be omitted the name of clerk (*greffier*) to the Prince of Orange, bestowed on the Archduke by the populace. Next day he took the oaths to the King and the States-General, and Orange was also sworn in as his lieutenant-general and as Governor of Brabant, an office which he had at length agreed to accept. The events were celebrated by the usual flowery rhetoric and drunken revels.

The reception of the Archduke was followed by a change in the State Council, effected under the authority of the Estates. Those members of that small body who adhered to Don John were formally deposed from their functions and their places filled by adherents of the national policy. The new Council and the Estates then drew up a form of oath to be taken by all persons, lay and ecclesiastic, who by it engaged to obey and defend the

<sup>1</sup> Vanderhammen : *Don Juan de Austria*, f. 308.

Archduke Matthias as sovereign Governor of the Netherlands until the King and Estates should appoint another, and to treat Don John as an enemy of the commonwealth. At Antwerp, the Jesuits having refused through their provincial to take this oath, their house and church were sacked and pillaged by the mob, and they themselves were put on board some Dutch vessels and conveyed out of the city. At Bruges, Tournay, and Maestricht, the example was followed, and not only the Jesuits, but the Cordeliers and many priests were for the same reason expelled from these towns. These outrages were highly distasteful to the Archduke, although they professed to be committed in assertion of his dignity. They were followed by a petition to him and to the Estates from the Calvinists for liberty of conscience, which, in spite of the opposition of Matthias and the Catholic party, was for some time allowed and enjoyed.<sup>1</sup>

It was now plain to all the world, as it had been for some time plain to Don John, that his kinsman the Archduke was not to be moved by his remonstrances and by his appeals to their common allegiance to the interest and glory of the House of Austria. Matthias had sworn allegiance to the Estates, and his cousin must now treat him as an enemy. A few days before the ceremonies at Bruxelles, on the 11th of January, Don John addressed a long letter to the Emperor, which bears in its tone strong evidence that the writer by no means acquitted Rudolph of participation in his brother's venture. He began by expressing his hope that the Imperial commissioners might possibly do something towards bringing about peace in the Netherlands, which had always been his own endeavour and desire. For peace, in so far as it was compatible with the safety of religion and the rights of the Crown, he had made many sacrifices. He had dismissed garrisons from places where he might have retained both the places and the troops, and the places were now in the hands of men who were in arms against their King. He reminded the Emperor that the quarrel between Philip and the Netherlands ought to interest all sovereigns; that disobedience to one Prince was dangerous to all, even to those who were without troubles at home; and that all ought to aid in finding a cure for it, lest their own subjects should one day do the like; for, he wrote, "this liberty which they are seeking after is a contagious malady which goes on spreading its infections from neighbour to neighbour if it be not promptly checked in time." It was obvious

<sup>1</sup> Strada: *De Bello Belgico*, lib. ix.

that nothing would now have satisfied the rebels but the overthrow of the ancient constitution of the country and the establishment of unbridled license. So many indecent acts subversive of both religion and the royal authority had been committed that he could now hold no further communication with the Provinces or their States-General without fresh instructions from the King. He entreated the Emperor not to attend to the words of the States-General, but to watch its acts. Nor must he give ear to absurd stories of the King being in treaty with France for the transfer of the Netherlands, which were the inventions of traitors. The duty and necessity of a good understanding and common action between all the members of the Imperial house were urged on the Emperor's mind. The Archduke's visit had been well meant, no doubt, but it would have been better had it been omitted, and the Emperor would do well to recall him according to his promise. He would also be doing the King's cause great service if he could remove the difficulties which were thrown in the way of the royal officers when recruiting in Germany, or the facilities which were there given to the rebels.<sup>1</sup>

The special envoy Leyton, whom Queen Elizabeth sent to Don John, did not succeed, and indeed can hardly have hoped to succeed, in calming the Governor's displeasure with the Treaty which had been concluded between England and the Estates. In vain Leyton endeavoured to dazzle him with hopes of the prize which had been so long held up before the eyes of the Princes of Europe—the Crown-matrimonial of England. He assured Don John that his mistress would not marry Anjou; that an Austrian husband would be much more agreeable to her; and that if he himself were to be named perpetual Governor of the Netherlands with the concurrence of the Estates, he might aspire to the hand of the English Queen.<sup>2</sup> Don John replied that he had now received his Sovereign's commands to make war on these rebel Provinces, and that he was about to obey the command with all his heart; of the policy of France, or England, or the Emperor, he knew nothing; but he knew that against the Emperor the Turks might be let loose to punish him for his perfidy, and that the burghers of Bruxelles should soon feel the weight of their master's vengeance.<sup>3</sup>

In France the whole power of the Catholic party under the

<sup>1</sup> This letter was first brought to light by Mr. Motley (*Rise of the Dutch Republic*, iii. pp. 213, 214).

<sup>2</sup> Vanderhammen: *Don Juan de Austria*, f. 311.

<sup>3</sup> Motley, iii. p. 217.



House of Guise was thrown into the Spanish scale in the quarrel between Spain and the Netherlands. Geronimo de Curiel, an agent whom Don John had sent to Paris to endeavour to raise money and pick up men, returned thence with four hundred thousand ducats and four hundred Spanish soldiers who had taken service in France, and with promises of further recruits.<sup>1</sup> Henry III. was, however, very lukewarm, and was even suspected of being hostile. He had not yet openly abetted the intrigues of his brother Anjou, who was generally out of favour at Court, and who was now, moreover, in one of his periods of transition from the side of the Catholics to that of the Huguenots.

From Rome alone, of all foreign Courts, did Don John receive all the support that was possible. Gregory XIII. had already sent him a liberal donation in money. He now aided him with his spiritual thunder in the shape of a bull, framed on the model of those issued in favour of crusades against the Moslem, in which power was given him to levy contributions towards his war expenses on the property of the Church, and plenary absolution was promised to all who should enlist under the standard of the Cross now unfurled against heresy in the Netherlands.

During the autumn and winter the English envoy, Davison, continued to report to his Government the abortive negotiations for peace, and the preparations made by each party for war. In his opinion war was unavoidable. "I see not what is to be looked for but war," he wrote on the 8th of September, before the actual rupture of the negotiations for a convention. He put no faith in the professions of Don John, and even notices the copy of a letter from the King, sent by the Governor to the Estates, as "a letter which, as he said, he had received out of Spain, but no doubt came out of his closet, where he lacks no blanks, and can make the King write what he lists."<sup>2</sup> Nor did the other party escape the Englishman's scorn. "The younger Hamilton and one James Shaw, Scots," he wrote on the 15th of September, "arrived this last week at Namur out of Spain, by whose coming His Alteze [Highness] hath received such news as seemeth much to content him. In somme, here is nothing to be attended but troubles, whatsoever speech or countenance of peace there be; and if the Prince [of Orange] come not all the sooner, things will go hardly, for from a multitude so divided

<sup>1</sup> Carnero : *Guerras Civiles en Flandes*, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> State Paper Office, Flanders, 1577. No. 30. W. Davison to Sir F. Walsingham, 8th September.

“ there is no good government to be expected. Even though the “ King,” he continued, “ would put up with the expulsion of the “ Spaniards, the conspiracies against his brother and lieutenant, “ the taking arms against him, the imprisoning of his captains “ and colonels, the dismissing of his garrisons, the razing of the “ castles of Antwerp, Ghent, and Utrecht, without his assent, “ yea, directly contrary to his pleasure, the despoiling of officers, “ closing and assigning of offices at their pleasure, the confederacy “ with the Prince, the intelligence in France, England, and other “ places, with things that cannot sink into my belief; yet would “ Don John rather hazard and try his uttermost fortune, such is “ his cruel, revenging, and insolent nature, than depart with that “ note of dishonour, to be expelled and chased out of his govern- “ ment by a set of drunken Flemings; respecting the reputation “ he hath hitherto carried, and hoping as he doth by spoil and “ subduing of this country to make way to greater things which “ he hath already embraced in imagination.”<sup>1</sup>

On the 17th of October, Davison reported that “ a gentleman “ arrived on Sunday last out of Italy, hath made a report unto “ the Estates that there lie about Turin above ten thousand men, “ what Spaniards, Italians, and Piedmontese, entertained and pre- “ paring to come down to His Alteze. Divers other Spaniards “ and Italians are said to arrive daily at Luxemburg by sundry “ troops, unarmed and disguised. His Alteze maketh great “ reckoning of the succour of the Pope and divers Princes of “ Italy, with the whole garrisons of Naples, Sicily, and other “ parts there. Above all the towns in this country he threateneth “ Bruxelles with a cruelty never heard of, where, he vaunteth, he “ would be sorry any man should mount the breach before himself. “ Before his return from Namur he wrote unto Burgundy to hasten “ the marching of the forces levied there with all diligence, giving “ out and assuring himself in the meanwhile that he could so “ enchant and entertain the Estates, as they should follow him to “ Luxemburg with hope of peace. Whereunto he would still “ make semblance to incline till he was thoroughly provided for “ a war, using it as a necessary stratagem to make them negligent “ with his advantage.”<sup>2</sup>

During the winter of 1577-8 the minds of men were much disturbed by the appearance of a comet, to which many of the

<sup>1</sup> State Paper Office, as above, 15th September.

<sup>2</sup> State Paper Office, Flanders, 1577. No. 31. Oct. 17. W. Davison to Sir F. Walsingham.

troubles and deaths which followed were popularly attributed. It was first observed in Flanders on the 14th November, and it remained visibly "perplexing monarchs" until the 18th January. On the 3d of December its tail assumed a triple form, dividing itself into three great rays, which were supposed to point towards Italy, Gibraltar, and the West.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Carnero : *Guerras Civiles en Flandes*, p. 133.

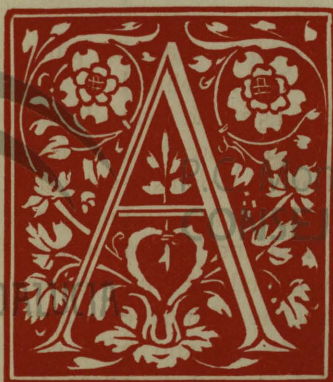


KNIGHT ON HORSEBACK, WITH THE ARMS AND DEVICE OF DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA  
ON THE HORSE-FURNITURE.



## CHAPTER IX.

AFFAIRS OF THE NETHERLANDS ; FROM THE MIDDLE OF  
JANUARY TO THE END OF APRIL 1578.



GAIN the dispute between Philip II. and the people of the Netherlands was about to be submitted to the arbitration of the sword. The war which had been waged with such bloody defeats and such invincible constancy by the Netherlanders against Alba was to be renewed against Don John. But the tremendous odds which were formerly on the side of Spain had now disappeared. Instead of an army of mercenaries raised mainly by the

resources of a single family and a few towns, the liberties of the Netherlands were now defended by a large national force. At the head of this force appeared an Archduke of Austria—a puppet, it is true, but a puppet with a great name at home and abroad ; and around Orange, the real chief, had now rallied the best blood of the country. The cause of liberty was in the ascendant. In spite of the victories of Alba and Requesens, the royal cause had every year lost ground ; and the recall of the soldiers who had gained these victories had been at last wrested from the King. The Netherlanders were going to fight the battle over again, but at a time and on ground chosen by themselves.

Fair as were the prospects of the Estates, they would have been still fairer had it been possible for them to commence active warlike operations some months before. When Don John

retired from Namur to Luxemburg there were no more than four thousand troops who would obey his orders in the Netherlands. These were the three German regiments, a small body of Walloons, and a still smaller band of Spaniards who had returned to his standard from France. But the Germans were shut up in Bergen-op-Zoom and Breda, which places they eventually surrendered to the forces of Orange; and the handful of Walloons and Spaniards was, in truth, the only force on whose spirit Don John could rely, and whose services he could actually command. Orange and the Estates had in different parts of the country at this time troops amounting to about fifteen thousand men. Had the Governor therefore been followed and closely pressed at that critical juncture he might have been compelled to surrender himself a prisoner, or he might at least have been blockaded at Luxemburg by vastly superior numbers. From this humiliation he was saved by the slowness of a deliberative assembly to act in military affairs, by the jealousies of the various leaders of the national army, and, above all, by the uncertain and changeable policy of the Catholic party.

During the whole autumn of 1577 Don John had been sedulously preparing for war. In January 1578 he found himself at the head of about twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse. Of his infantry, four thousand were Spanish veterans; four thousand were Frenchmen, recruited from amongst the partisans of the House of Guise; five thousand were Germans; and the rest Walloons. The French were led by Peter Ernest, Count of Mansfeldt; the Spaniards by the Prince of Parma, Mendoza, Mondragone, Verdugo, and other old and tried commanders. The Spanish regiments had sustained a severe loss in the Colonel Julian Romero, who fell dead from his horse at Cremona at the commencement of their northern march. But both officers and men entered the Netherlands in high spirits—the recruits looking forward eagerly to the plunder of the richest country in Europe, and the veterans, whose hopes of pillage were moderated by the recollection of their recent operations in the same field, nevertheless delighted at being recalled so soon to the scenes of former victories, from which they had been ignominiously expelled in deference to the wishes of the vanquished.

After his wearisome and fruitless discussions with churchmen and jurists about constitutional privileges and other subtleties which he neither understood nor thought it worth his while to understand, it was a great relief to Don John to find himself once

more surrounded by his old companions-in-arms, and engaged in the congenial occupations of the garrison and the camp. His year in the Low Countries, with its humiliations and anxieties, had told severely on his health. The Prince of Parma, who arrived at Luxemburg on the 18th of December 1577, and who had come post in advance of the army, partly in consequence of the urgent letters of Don John, found him greatly changed. He was thinner, and had lost the brightness of his complexion and that air of self-confidence and majesty which had formerly been remarkable in his aspect and bearing. The friends met with great cordiality, and Don John showed his perfect confidence in Alexander by laying before him the letters of the King, desiring that he should be made acquainted with all the business of the government, civil as well as military, and that he should receive the monthly pay of one thousand golden crowns—an allowance made only to Viceroys and Generals holding an independent command.<sup>1</sup>

While at Luxemburg Don John had been holding correspondence both with the King of Spain and the House of Guise, on the subject of the deliverance of Mary of Scotland from captivity, and of his marriage with that Princess, who would bring him as her dowry the Crown of England. The Guises had been desirous of marrying their unfortunate relative to the Duke of Norfolk; but as the active and earnest assistance of Spain was absolutely essential to any movement in her favour, they conceived that they could best secure that assistance by promising her hand to Don John of Austria. Gregory XIII. used all his influence with Philip II. in support of that scheme, and Philip had declared himself favourably disposed towards it. In the present state of Belgian affairs, however, Don John saw that any attempt towards its execution could lead only to disappointment and disaster, and he therefore sent Alonso de Sotomayor to Paris during this winter to explain his position and his views to the Princes of Lorraine. Sotomayor, who was a captain of horse, made the equipment of his troop the pretext of his visit to Paris, and he was also the bearer of letters from Don John to the Spanish minister, Juan de Vargas Mexia, as well as to the Dukes of Guise and Mayenne. The real object of his mission was to assure these great nobles, on the part of Don John, that although the war which was imminent in the Netherlands left him neither time nor resources for any other undertaking, he hoped ere long to see the

<sup>1</sup> Strada : *De Bello Belgico*, lib. ix.

royal cause triumphant, when the King's forces by sea and land would be at liberty to act in favour of the imprisoned Queen, and when he would gladly fulfil to the letter all the engagements which he had undertaken for her deliverance and for her restoration to her rights. The Princes of Lorraine saw the necessity of yielding to the force of events, and were satisfied with the explanations of Don John. All parties to the negotiation agreed to wait for those better times which never came.

In the marriage of Don John the Pope Gregory XIII. took a most paternal interest. He was at first greatly taken with the idea of matching him with Queen Elizabeth, an idea which appears to have originated in one of the personal and political coquetries of that Princess herself. In this connexion the Pope saw the restoration of England and her Queen to the Roman communion, and in the Papal balance that great advantage to the Church, of course, far outweighed the mere rights of the Catholic Mary Stuart, constantly asserted by the Roman Pontiffs against the pretensions of the Protestant bastard of Anne Boleyn. The Nuncio at Madrid was therefore ordered to urge upon the King the propriety of employing Don John as a missionary-husband for the conversion of Elizabeth and her realms.

Don John himself never gave any sanction to this preposterous scheme, but always alleged the difference of their religions as an insuperable bar to the marriage. He received the advances of the Queen with a cold and distant courtesy, which she did not approve and to which she was little accustomed in the Princes whom she encouraged to aspire to her hand. Although it is impossible to believe that she had ever seriously thought of marrying him, it is not the less probable that she was much displeased by his refusal even to woo her. She expressed, it is said, great indignation at the slight put upon her by a bastard, and the Spaniards believed that she set on foot plots for his assassination.<sup>1</sup>

The idea of this English marriage for his brother does not appear to have been seriously entertained by Philip II. The Pope therefore returned his regards to the Scottish Queen; and in order to keep Don John in mind of her forlorn condition, and to authorize any descent upon England which he might find leisure to execute during the war in the Netherlands, he sent him, by the hands of Monsignor Zitlolomini, the bulls and briefs necessary for his investiture in the royal rights of his destined

<sup>1</sup> Vanderhammen: *Don Juan de Austria*, f. 318.

bride.<sup>1</sup> For this favour Don John despatched to Rome a special and confidential messenger to offer his dutiful thanks.<sup>2</sup>

While his army was mustering Don John had carefully avoided any collision with the forces of the Estates. A few skirmishes took place between detached bodies, but there was no action of importance. The Estates gained possession of Bergen-op-Zoom and Breda, in the one case reducing Fugger by blockade, and in the other causing Fronsberg's men to mutiny and surrender the place and their commander. The Count of Hohenlohe, the leader into whose hands Breda fell, afterwards made an expedition against Ruremonde, which was still held by a body of Germans under Polwiller. The Baron of Hierges, however, moved with a considerable body of troops to the relief of the place. Assisted by a well-timed sally by Polwiller, he attacked Hohenlohe and routed him, with the loss of four officers and three hundred men. Ruremonde was therefore left unmolested.<sup>3</sup>

About the middle of January Don John concentrated his forces in and around Namur. He himself came thither on the 19th of that month. On the 25th he issued a proclamation which was probably intended and certainly was received as his declaration of war. In this document, which was published in French, Flemish, and German, he called upon all the citizens and soldiers of the Provinces to range themselves under his banner and support the royal authority and the Catholic faith against the rebels and heretics who were threatening to destroy both. To those who had unhappily been drawn aside into the paths of sedition and schism free pardon was offered, if they would now return to the right way. The safety of religion and the royal prerogative assured, the King would respect and protect the privileges of the Provinces, and would restore the system of government which had existed under the Emperor Charles. It was the old proposal, made by governor after governor, that the Netherlands should relinquish all that they had been so long arguing for and fighting for, and trust to the justice and mercy of a sovereign who for twenty years had been showing them that he was neither merciful nor just.

While the royal army was assembling at Namur the forces of the Estates mustered at Gemblours, a small walled town in a rich

<sup>1</sup> Vanderhammen : *Don Juan de Austria*, f. 318.

<sup>2</sup> Vanderhammen (*ibid.*) says Escovedo was sent, and that he went from Rome to Madrid. We have seen (*supra*, p. 233) that he was sent to Madrid the previous summer.

<sup>3</sup> A. Carnero : *Guerras Civiles en Flandes*, p. 124.



country about nine miles to the north-west. They had considerably strengthened the defences of the place, and they had established there various magazines of ammunition and provisions which were already well filled. To meet the twenty-two thousand men under Don John the Estates had raised an army of nearly equal strength. Inferior in the quality of its troops, it was somewhat superior both in numbers and in cavalry. But from the moment when the sword was actually drawn the advantages of undivided power became abundantly obvious. Although Orange was lieutenant-general for the Archduke and possessed the confidence of a majority of his countrymen, the jealousy with which he felt himself regarded by the Catholic nobles who held important posts in the army of the Estates rendered it inexpedient for him to assume the chief command. He had even been desirous of declining the lieutenant-generalship, in order not to give offence to the Count of Lalaing; and as that noble was now at the head of the infantry Orange would not place himself in a position of authority over him. The command, therefore, was given to Anthony de Goignies, Baron of Vendege, an officer who, having served his apprenticeship in war under Charles V., led a troop in that famous cavalry charge by which Egmont won the battle of St. Quentin, and had since been employed in a military capacity in France. Soon after his appointment he had had a dispute with Orange as to the engaging of German mercenaries. These troops, the Catholic nobles asserted, were preferred in order to provide for the German relatives and friends of the Prince. De Goignies shared this opinion, and would rather have employed Netherlanders, saying that a man's house was safest in his own keeping. The views of Orange were, however, adopted by the States. De Goignies had been diligently engaged during the winter in fortifying Quesnoy and other places, and in casting ordnance.<sup>1</sup>

The chief commands in the army were given to the Catholic nobles, less on account of their military experience or aptitude than from the hope of attaching them cordially to the national cause, and for the sake of bringing them and their personal following into the field against the King. Lalaing, the Viscount of Ghent, and Pardieu de la Motte, commanded respectively the infantry, the cavalry, and the artillery. The first intention of De Goignies was to advance towards Namur and attack Don John. He marched as far as St. Martin, a village about five miles from

<sup>1</sup> A. Carnero : *Guerras Civiles en Flandes*, p. 125.

the city. There, however, he saw reason to alter his plans. His scouts brought him intelligence that the royal army was stronger and better equipped than he had supposed, and that it seemed preparing to march out to meet him. His principal officers—Lalaing, Ghent, and La Motte—were opposed to his design of giving battle, and took the opportunity of the halt at St. Martin to return to Bruxelles, in order, as they alleged, to be present at the marriage of the niece and heiress of the unfortunate Marquess of Berghen. In their absence De Goignies shrank from the responsibility of making his intended attack upon Don John, and he determined, therefore, to fall back upon Gemblours. Some stragglers from his camp, being made prisoners by a party of Italian troopers who were exploring the ground between the two armies, apprised Don John of his plans. Don John immediately resolved to pursue him and compel an engagement during his retreat.

The 30th of January was spent by Don John and the Prince of Parma in riding over the ground which was to be the scene of operations, and examining the roads leading towards Gemblours. Before the dawn of the following day two Spanish officers, Acosta and Olivera, were sent forward with some cavalry and light infantry, with orders to move on the flank of the army of De Goignies, and explore the woods here and there bordering the road in which it was possible that ambuscades might be posted. At daybreak the royal army was in motion. Ottavio Gonzaga, at the head of the cavalry, and one thousand picked musketeers and pikemen under Christopher Mondragone, led the van; Peter Ernest, Count of Mansfeldt, the rear. Don John and the Prince of Parma marched in the centre of the main body, near the royal standard, upon which Don John had caused a cross to be emblazoned, with the words, *IN HOC SIGNO VICI TURCOS IN HOC SIGNO VINCAM HÆRETICOS*. The officers had received orders to march with the greatest circumspection and attention to discipline. The baggage followed in the rear, under the care of a regiment of Walloons. A force was left behind, on the banks of the Meuse, under the orders of Count Charles of Mansfeldt.

De Goignies and his troops were also early astir. As they left their encampment they set fire to the huts of which it was composed. The leading regiments were those of Montigny and De Heez. Count Bossu, who had but lately left the royal cause, and Champagne commanded the centre, consisting of two regiments of Walloons and Germans, three companies of Frenchmen, and

thirteen of English and Scotch auxiliaries. To their care were confided the artillery and the baggage. The rear-guard was composed of the cavalry, under the orders of the young Count of Egmont, the son of the unfortunate hero of St. Quentin, and Lunoy de la Marck. With this division De Goignies himself marched, attended by the Marquess of Havrech.

The road from Namur to Gemblours lies for the most part along the bottom of a winding valley, bordered by gentle heights, sometimes cultivated, sometimes clothed with wood, and watered by a sluggish and muddy stream. The valley is of very various width at different points; and its sides here close in upon the brook and the road, forcing them into close proximity, and there retire to a distance, leaving each free to choose its path over an expanse of rich meadow. The wintry rains had lately swollen the stream; and the road and great part of the adjacent pastures were still deep in mire and marsh.

Early in the morning the advanced party under Acosta and Olivera, hanging upon the skirts of the retiring enemy, picked up two prisoners, whom they sent back to the main body. The vanguard of the royal army soon came in sight of the rear of the enemy, when Gonzaga and his cavalry, pushing forward, engaged in frequent skirmishes with the horsemen of Egmont. Don John had given strict orders that his vanguard should be very cautious in its operations, and should on no account risk any considerable attack out of reach of support from the main body. An Italian officer named Perotti, a captain in the regiment of Camillo di Monte, as the day wore on, led his troop so far in advance of the rest as, in the opinion of Gonzaga, to disobey these orders. A message was therefore sent him by the General to return. The message appears to have been delivered in a manner somewhat irritating, for Perotti replied that he had never yet turned his back on the enemy, and even if he were willing to do so now, such a movement was impossible. By this time the Prince of Parma had ridden forward to the vanguard, and was now by the side of Gonzaga. The point at which Perotti and his men had arrived was one of those where the valley was much contracted, and where the road was rendered to all appearance impassable by the floods. The retiring enemy and the pursuers were therefore making their way with difficulty along the higher ground above the level of the inundation. The Prince noted the hesitation and confusion which marked their progress, and the disordered condition of their line as indicated by the lances of the horsemen. It occurred to him

that now was the time, by a rapid advance along the flooded road, to turn the enemy's retreat into a rout, and to deal an unexpected blow upon a portion of the army which, being at some distance from the rear files, considered itself in perfect security. The success of the movement of course depended upon the condition of the submerged track. If that were firm enough to bear cavalry, the rapid onslaught on an unforeseen point would probably be a decisive blow. If the floods had covered the road with mud, the horsemen who risked themselves upon it would infallibly fall an easy prey to the muskets of the enemy. The fact that the enemy, who had had leisure to pick and choose their way, had seen fit to deviate from this road and to struggle through the heavy soil of the slopes above afforded presumptive evidence that a passage through the water was extremely hazardous. Yet this hazard Parma at once determined to run. Taking a lance from the officer who attended him, and mounting a fresh and powerful horse furnished by Camillo di Monte, he said to his attendant: "Go to Don John and tell him that, like the ancient Roman, I am about to plunge into a gulf, by the aid of God and under the auspices of the House of Austria, to win a great and memorable victory." His enthusiasm was immediately caught by old Mondragone, Bernardino de Mendoza, Fernando de Toledo, and many other officers. Pushing to the front of a squadron of the cavalry of Mucio Pagano, and followed by his band of gallant gentlemen and the most daring of the troopers, the Prince dashed into the water and successfully made his way through the miry flood. He paused for a few moments at the point where the road rose again to daylight and dry ground. The footing, though bad, was better than might have been expected, and the greater part of the adventurers formed behind him in battle order. With levelled lances they at once charged the astonished foes in a part of their line at some distance from the rear files, which, still skirmishing with Perotti, had perhaps not observed the masterly movement of Alexander. The troopers who received the shock of this unexpected attack at once put spurs to their horses, and the whole line was thrown into confusion. The cavalry of Gonzaga, followed by the musketeers of Mondragone, soon came up to support their comrades, and fresh troops were sent forward at intervals by Don John. De Goignies, Egmont, and the other officers of the Estates army, did all that personal valour could do to restore the confidence of their men and rally them against the royalists; but the panic was too

general and too well founded to be assuaged. The cavalry in their terror galloped into and over the foot, and the companies, thus broken and bewildered, threw away their arms and likewise took to headlong flight. Thirty-four banners, most of the artillery, and a great quantity of baggage and ammunition, fell into the hands of the conquerors. De Goignies and a few officers were taken prisoners, but the greater part of the nobles and gentlemen who were with the army escaped, having been in the van instead of the rear, a fact which says little for their earnestness in the cause which they had espoused. In the enormous number of the slain on the side of the vanquished, and the trifling loss of the victors, the battle of Gemblours resembled that of Jemmingem, where seven thousand Netherlanders fell and only seven Spaniards. The numbers were not on this occasion collected with any accuracy, but they have been stated at ten thousand,<sup>1</sup> eight thousand,<sup>2</sup> seven thousand,<sup>3</sup> and three thousand,<sup>4</sup> on one side, and at ten,<sup>5</sup> nine,<sup>6</sup> seven,<sup>7</sup> and none at all,<sup>8</sup> on the other. It is evident that the slaughter was great, and that the slain must be reckoned by thousands, while in the capture and destruction of its materials of war the army of the Estates may be said to have been annihilated. This severe blow was inflicted not in a general, but in an affair in which the number of the royalists engaged has been stated as low as six hundred,<sup>9</sup> and at the highest estimate does not exceed two thousand,<sup>10</sup> and which lasted only for a few hours.

The broken remains of the army of the Estates fled to Gemblours, whither they were immediately followed by the victors. No sooner did the royal banner appear at the gate, than some of the beaten troops continued their flight further into Brabant. The rest sent a flag of truce to Don John, offering to surrender the town on certain conditions, which were refused, a refusal which was soon followed by an immediate and unconditional surrender. In the place were found provisions for several months, and a considerable supply of munitions of war. De Goignies, the captured leader of the routed army, was then brought to the presence of the victorious Governor. It was said that he had asked leave to kiss his hand, and that Don John, in receiving him, bade him "mark the hand of God in abasing those who revolted against religion and the King, and learn, by what had happened, in the rout of a great army by a handful of men, that God was

<sup>1</sup> Strada: *De Bello Belgico*, lib. ix.

<sup>2</sup> Hareus, iii. 274.

<sup>3</sup> Cabrera: *Felipe II.*, lib. xii. 968.

<sup>4</sup> Bentivoglio: *Guerra di Fiandra*, x. 206.

<sup>5</sup> Hoofd, xiii. 550.

<sup>6</sup> Strada, note 1.

<sup>7</sup> Cabrera, note 3.

<sup>8</sup> Bentivoglio, note 4.

<sup>9</sup> Strada, note 1.

<sup>10</sup> Hareus, note 2.

"ever on the side of Kings." In reply to this piece of royalist reasoning the prisoner contented himself with assuring Don John that he had never thought of taking up arms against religion. He was then sent with his companions in misfortune to Namur.<sup>1</sup>

Don John afterwards held a levee of his officers, and once more had the satisfaction of thanking them, with his accustomed grace and dignity, for their conduct during the day, and of distinguishing by name those who had especially signalized themselves. In the affectionate greeting and thanks which he gave to Alexander Farnese was mingled a gentle rebuke for his excessive daring. He ought to remember, said his chief, that he had been sent to Flanders by the King, not as a private soldier, but as a captain, whose counsel and sagacity were ever to be available for His Majesty's service. Farnese replied that he was of opinion that no man could be a good captain until he had first proved himself to be a good soldier, especially when he fought under the eye of a great General, a reply for which Don John tenderly embraced him, and which produced new plaudits from the assembled officers for the hero of the day.<sup>2</sup>

The town of Gemblours was mercifully dealt with, and was, by the orders and precautions of Don John, saved from the pillage which was the usual fate of a place which admitted an enemy within its walls. The treatment of the six hundred prisoners, most of whom were Scotchmen, who were marched to Namur, was more in accordance with the savage practice of the time. Some were hanged, and the most of the rest drowned in the Meuse, into which they were thrown from the bridge.<sup>3</sup>

When the news of the defeat of the national army reached Bruxelles, the Archduke Matthias and his council were sitting in consultation as to the most advisable means of employing it. Should they attack Don John at once, or should they avoid a battle? should the army be kept together, or sent to act at different points? were the questions under discussion when the tidings arrived that already a battle had been fought and the army lost. The fugitives, whom every hour brought to the capital, soon furnished the Estates with sufficient evidence that their army had ceased to exist. The Prince of Orange, making

<sup>1</sup> Strada, lib. ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Strada (*De Bello Belgico*, lib. ix.) says the prisoners were disarmed and released on condition of making a promise that they would not bear arms—the Flemings at any time, and the foreigners for a year—against the King. Cabrera (lib. xii. 968) relates that Don John set six hundred Scotch at liberty, "showing them his clemency." But Tassis (iv. 294), who was on the spot, and a councillor of Don John, states that most of them were put to death by drowning.

what dispositions he could for the defence of Bruxelles, retired with the Archduke and his Court and Council to Antwerp.

In the council of war which Don John held after the victory of Gemblours the design of marching upon the capital and besieging it was at first entertained. Upon looking more carefully into his resources, the number of his troops, and the balance in his military chest, the Governor decided that he was not sufficiently strong to take a step so important. He therefore sent out detachments to take possession of various towns of Brabant and Hainault. This was in most cases an easy service. In some of the places there was a party in favour of Don John, to which his recent victory had for the time given irresistible influence, and in but few of them was there an Estates garrison or a patriotic zeal sufficiently strong to enable or dispose the inhabitants to make a stand against the victors of Gemblours. Malines and Vilvorde, having lately received strong reinforcements from Bruxelles, refused to obey the summons of Gonzaga, and were left unmolested. But Joudvigne, Tillemont, and Louvain rose against their Scotch garrisons, expelled them before he appeared at the gate, and surrendered themselves with an appearance of loyal enthusiasm. Bovines, summoned by Hierges, capitulated upon certain conditions.

Alexander Farnese found Sichem more refractory. He was obliged to cannonade the walls for some hours, and in the assault which followed his troops were several times driven back with the loss of some of their officers. When the town was taken the two hundred soldiers who alone remained of the defenders retired into the citadel, from which they were not dislodged till next day. The governor, his officers, and some of the men, were hanged on the ramparts, and the rest of the unfortunate band were slain at night in prison, their bodies being thrown into the river Demer, which flowed beneath the walls of the fortress. The town was given up to pillage. Farnese justified his cruel treatment of the garrison on the plea that it was necessary to repress rebellion by a terrible example, and that many of those who fought against him at Sichem were prisoners who had been dismissed after Gemblours on pledging themselves not to serve against the King. Appalled by the fate of Sichem, the neighbouring town of Diest, which belonged to the Prince of Orange, after having at first refused submission, capitulated on favourable terms. The town was spared, and three hundred Walloons of the Estates army were permitted to march out with arms and baggage, giving up

only their banners. With these they must have parted with little regret, for the whole body as they filed out closed with an offer to take service in the royal army. Leuwe next opened its gates to Farnese, who had thus compelled or received the submission of three considerable towns within seven days. Chimay capitulated to Count Charles of Mansfeldt and his French regiment; but while the terms were being discussed a number of his soldiers stole into the citadel for the purpose of pillaging it, and accidentally exploded a powder magazine, by which two hundred of them perished. Nivelles offered so obstinate a resistance to the survivors under the same officer that Don John appeared before it in person with a strong force, which was further increased by the detachment of the Prince of Parma. Mansfeldt had been repulsed in two assaults, but the arrival of an overwhelming force made further defence hopeless. The inhabitants and the garrison made an ingenious excuse for their resistance. They had no animosity, they said, either to the King or his brother, but they nourished a hereditary hatred of Frenchmen, and to them they could not yield without dishonour. Now that the Spaniards had come they were quite willing to lay down their arms. The excuse was accepted, and easy conditions were granted by Don John. The lives and property of the inhabitants were respected, and the soldiers of the garrison were permitted to march out with their swords only, their other arms and their effects being made over to the Frenchmen whom they had baffled by way of compensation for the loss of the expected plunder. In a quarrel which ensued about the division of this booty another powder magazine was exploded by the unlucky Frenchmen. A quantity of loaded arquebuses at the same time poured their contents into the soldiery whom they were to have armed. More than a hundred and twenty were slain, and many more were wounded. The remainder of the regiment asked leave to retire from the army, which Don John easily accorded, very glad, says a Spanish historian, to "rid himself of their insolence and blasphemies."<sup>1</sup> Within two months most of these men were again in the field, but that time in the pay of the Estates.

While he lay before Nivelles, Don John was called upon to suppress a mutiny. It arose from the old cause, long-deferred pay, and broke out in one of the German regiments. The demand of the soldiers was, immediate payment of arrears or leave to pillage the town, and the alternative was proposed to

<sup>1</sup> Vanderhammen: *D. Juan de Austria*, fol. 318.



Don John by a deputation of the mutineers. He dismissed them with fair words, which gave them some hope of gaining one or other of their wishes, and then ordered the colonel, the Baron of Meghem, a courageous and trustworthy officer, to take the companies which had not joined the mutiny, and some other troops, and occupy certain points on the roads leading to Antwerp and Bruxelles. The malcontents, thus left isolated in their quarters, were soon after surrounded by an overwhelming force of other regiments, and ordered to give up their arms and the names of the ringleaders. The order was complied with, and twelve of the chief mutineers were arrested, of whom four, selected by lot, were condemned to death. Two of these were pardoned on the petition of the other regiments; and of the remaining two, one was also forgiven on account of his wounds and good service. The sedition was therefore quelled by the vigorous measures of the General at the expense of a single victim.

Binche, once famous for its beautiful palace and gardens, the creation and favourite residence of Queen Mary of Hungary, and destroyed by Henry II. of France in retaliation for similar havoc wrought by Mary at his castle of Folembray, soon afterwards opened its gates to a royal garrison. Malblod on the Sambre, Reulx, Belmont, Soigni, Barlemont, and several other towns, did the same. None of these places were in themselves of great importance, but the possession of them gave to Don John the command of the greater part of the frontier Province of Hainault. Philippeville, the chief fortress of the Province, threatened to offer some serious resistance. It was a place built only twenty-four years before, in 1554, to protect the frontier from the incursions of the French. Situated on a small hill rising out of a great plain, it was furnished with all the appliances of strength which the science of the engineer had yet devised. Five royal bastions of great size commanded the approaches, and were connected with massive earthen curtains faced with masonry. A broad and deep double ditch surrounded the whole. Against this formidable fortress Don John led the main body of his army. Having formed a blockade, he opened a trench, and having reached the outer ditch, began to undermine the wall. The besieged defended themselves for some days, and did some execution with their artillery. Communications were also opened by the Estates with some bands of French mercenaries, who were invited to cross the frontier to the relief of the place; the Estates promising to put into their hands some frontier-towns in pledge

for their pay. But the approach of these auxiliaries being notified to Don John, he sent against them a strong force, under Gonzaga, who slew two hundred of them and captured fifty, so that the number who reached the gates was inconsiderable. Many of the slain and taken were found to have belonged to Mansfeldt's unlucky battalion which had been dismissed at their own request after the fall of Nivelles.<sup>1</sup> Before the besiegers' mines were fit for offensive use, Philippeville succumbed to some still more secret operations within. The Estates had unwisely or unwittingly left in command of Philippeville a governor named Florigny, who was at heart a royalist. Just before the royal army appeared before the walls, his treason had been discovered, and he had been put under arrest by some of his officers. But by some of them, and by many of the soldiers, his sentiments appear to have been shared, for he was released from durance, and allowed to open negotiations with Don John. Irregularity in paying the troops, the great solvent of sixteenth-century discipline, cost the Estates both Philippeville and a part of its garrison. The terms of the surrender were that the town should be respected, and that the troops should be permitted to march out armed and with flags flying, drums beating, and "all the pomp with which soldiers "celebrate the obsequies of the fortress they have lost," and that those of them who preferred to enter the service of the King should receive the three months' wages due to them by the Estates. Upon this latter condition five hundred men transferred themselves and their venal valour to the ranks of the royal army; and Don John continued Florigny in the command of Philippeville.

These successes in the Southern Netherlands were not obtained without some countervailing loss in the North. In the opulent and flourishing city of Amsterdam there had hitherto been a Royalist and Catholic party sufficiently strong to maintain a formidable opposition to the policy of the Prince of Orange and the desires of the people of Holland. It was a city of rich ecclesiastic and monastic foundations, the wealth and influence of which disposed a considerable number of the burghers to take the side of the religion and the supremacy of Spain, hoping against hope for some satisfactory compromise between the rights of the country and the prerogative of the Crown. The great victory of Gemblours and the annihilation of the army of the Estates opened many eyes to the futility of such expectations. Men saw that the King would be satisfied with nothing less than the conquest

<sup>1</sup> Vanderhammen : *D. Juan de Austria*, f. 320-1.

of the country, an achievement which now seemed far from impossible. The arguments by which Amsterdam had been hitherto dissuaded from giving her full confidence to Orange lost the greater part of their force after the news of Gemblours. A deputation from Utrecht induced the burghers to give their allegiance to Orange on the same terms upon which Utrecht itself had joined him a few months before; and on the 8th of February the agreement, or, as it was called, the "Satisfaction," was finally concluded. The nominal supremacy of the Catholic religion, with perfect toleration for the reformed faith which was professed by the vast majority of the people; the free exercise of Protestant worship without the walls, and the right of Protestant burial within them, were the chief features of the long-desired Treaty, which put Holland and Orange in possession of the capital of the Province, and which deprived the royal cause of its last place of secure footing in the northern portion of the country.

While these events were taking place, the Baron de Selles, a royalist Netherlander, arrived from Spain with despatches from the King. He first waited upon Don John, although his ostensible business was to deliver to the Estates a reply to their remonstrances addressed to the King in the previous autumn.<sup>1</sup> The proclamations of Don John and the treaty of Gemblours had already furnished unmistakable answers to these remonstrances. But Philip loved to do all things in correct official form, and the well-known unmeaning formula of a reply now arrived at a period when a frank offer to redress grievances would have been too late. The rebels who were in arms against him, and who were straining every nerve to retrieve their late discomfiture, were addressed in a calm and courteous document, which insisted upon the maintenance of the royal authority and the Catholic religion as both had existed under the Emperor Charles. In other words, the King was willing to arrange the quarrel if the Estates would concede all the points for which they were contending. The stand which they had made for liberty might be forgiven if they would consent to the quiet re-establishment of despotism.

The delivery of this solemn piece of trifling was, however, not the real business of De Selles. He was charged by Philip with secret orders to confer privately with the leading personages in the Estates, and to convey to them, with as much force as was consistent with a safe vagueness, the desire of the King for peace;

<sup>1</sup> See p. 258.

and to intimate that he would withdraw Don John and appoint as his successor either the Prince of Parma or the Archduke Ferdinand; or even, upon certain conditions, confirm the Archduke Matthias in the place which he had so irregularly taken, if the Provinces would return to their allegiance to their sovereign and the Roman Catholic faith. Like most of the proposals of Philip, this offer, even if it had been more specific, came too late. A few weeks earlier the Catholic nobles might have been tempted by the prospect of the puppet Governor of their own choice being accepted by the King. But they had discovered that the Archduke, instead of being their instrument, had become the mere mouthpiece of Orange. They had therefore begun to renew their intrigues with the French party and the Duke of Anjou. Moreover, they had had so many memorable proofs of the King's inincerity that they were not to be induced to believe him sincere, merely because he showed that he could also be false to Don John; nor were they disposed to put more confidence in the propositions of the King because the receipt of his letter was followed by a fresh proclamation from Don John, once more calling on the Provinces to return to their allegiance. It contained nothing to distinguish it from the many similar papers which had preceded it, except an assertion that the Estates had already sworn to maintain the supremacy of the King and the Catholic faith as it had existed under the rule of the Emperor. This statement was met by the Estates with an indignant protest, declaring it to be an infamous falsehood, and affirming that the Ghent Treaty, to which they had sworn obedience, and to which alone the offensive reasoning of the proclamation could apply, had been framed for the express purpose of abolishing for ever those illegal edicts and that hateful Inquisition which had been found intolerable in the last as well as in the present reign.

Out of this altercation there arose a war of words on which it is not easy to understand why those who had fought and were about again to fight with sterner weapons should have been disposed to waste time and thought. Probably the combatants who used the pen were not those who used the sword. Possibly each party, however hopeless or careless of convincing the other, conceived it important that its cause should be placed in the fairest light before that portion of the people of Europe which might find it necessary to intervene in the quarrel.

The Estates addressed a letter to the King, in their own name and that of the Archduke Matthias, insisting on the maintenance

of the Ghent Treaty and the recall of Don John. This paper was placed in the hands of De Selles, the royal envoy. By him it was communicated to Don John; and by him a reply from Don John was presented to the Estates along with a letter from himself. The envoy's letter acknowledged that that which it enclosed was somewhat harsh in tone. Don John's letter merely called upon the Estates to obey the King, and reflected severely on their audacity in soliciting aid from foreign powers, a step which neither Philip nor his Viceroy could be expected to regard as anything but treason. Some days later, on the 18th of February, De Selles propounded a scheme of his own for resolving all difficulties. He suggested that the Prince of Orange and the Prince of Parma should be exchanged as hostages; that the one should repair to the camp of Don John and the other to Bruxelles, alone and unarmed; and that to their hands the negotiations for a settlement should be confided. This absurd plan, which was received with no favour in any quarter, produced on the part of the Estates a reply in which they regretted that the son of the Duchess Margaret should take part with the enemy of the Netherlands, and expressed their resolve never more to submit to the edicts, the Inquisition, the executions, or the armies of Spain, or to the principles and practice of the Imperial reign. The correspondence was absolutely without result, except to produce a swarm of angry pamphlets with which the presses of Antwerp and Bruxelles continued to teem, until men's minds were again occupied with the interests and anxieties of real warfare. Prints of a scurrilous character were likewise publicly sold and eagerly circulated. The Pope and the Cardinals, the Inquisition, the Bishops, the King, the Duke of Alba, Requesens, and Don John, were the subjects chiefly satirized. One of the most daring of these publications represented a hand proceeding from heaven and transferring the Crown from the head of Philip II. to that of Orange. Those who could neither write nor draw expressed their hatred and contempt in simpler ways, like the Governor of Mechlin, who bestowed on a whelp which ran about his house the name of Don John.<sup>1</sup>

Under the care of Orange the prospects of the Estates were gradually improving. Don John was not strong enough both to garrison the country and to threaten the greater cities. His successes had for the time united the Catholic and Protestant parties by the bonds of a common fear. Orange had therefore

<sup>1</sup> A. Carnero: *Guerras Civiles en Flandes*, p. 142.

ample time for his financial arrangements and cordial co-operation in making them. His agents in Germany succeeded in negotiating the aid of twelve thousand men, to be led across the Rhine in the spring by the Duke John Casimir of the Pfalz, and to be paid



JOHN CASIMIR COUNT PALATINE, ETC.  
MEDAL STRUCK ON OCCASION OF HIS EXPEDITION INTO BELGIUM.

with the subsidy which Queen Elizabeth had promised to his agents in England. The shattered ranks of the national army were rapidly filling. The great cities and the provincial Estates were munificent in advancing loans and in furnishing contributions. New taxes were cheerfully imposed upon themselves by citizens who knew that the Spanish soldiery were once more in possession of many of their southern fortresses, and who remembered the horrors of their former occupation of the land.

Sainte Aldegonde was sent by the Estates to attend the Imperial Diet of Germany, which met in the spring at Worms. He addressed the assembly in an oration, in which he set forth the wrongs and the dangers of his country with great eloquence, but with small effect on the unfavourable audience. At Worms, however, he learned that the King of Spain had been in negotiation with Sweden for some armed vessels to be employed against Amsterdam. He conveyed this information to his friends in Holland. The Protestants of Amsterdam, who had found many grounds of complaint in the operation of the compact with the Catholic aristocracy of their city, now determined to rid themselves of neighbours whom they believed to be plotting the restoration of Spanish dominion. The Catholics still enjoyed most of the higher municipal offices, and their rich monasteries were nests of Spanish intrigue. One Bardez organized a plot for the overthrow of the magistracy and the expulsion of the friars. A party of picked soldiers of Orange were introduced secretly into the town and lodged in various private houses, and many of

the citizens engaged themselves to rise in arms. The plan was carried into effect with perfect success on the 28th of May, and without a drop of blood being shed. The whole Catholic magistracy and all the friars were arrested at mid-day, placed on shipboard, and conducted out of the city, after which they were landed unharmed upon a dyke, with a warning not to be found again within the gates. A new magistracy was elected and new train-bands organized, and the churches were thrown open to Protestant worship, to the exclusion of that of the Catholics—an intolerant and illegal restriction which was soon afterwards removed. From that day Amsterdam became a principal stronghold of civil and religious liberty.

When Leyton, the English envoy to Don John, was returning to his own Court, he was requested by the Estates to convey to Queen Elizabeth a report of their recent correspondence with the Governor with whom they were at war, and especially of the language recently held by him towards them. He was also desired to express their hopes that the Queen's promises of aid, in money and men, might speedily be fulfilled.

During the spring of 1578 Elizabeth had sent another agent, Mr. Wilkes, to the Low Countries, no doubt to report on the state of affairs, though his ostensible instructions were "to urge Don John to grant a surseance of arms, and to enter into a treaty of peace."<sup>1</sup> Wilkes remained in the Netherlands during the greater part of the summer, offering ineffectual advice, and receiving evasive replies.

The preparations of Don John for the coming campaign were more satisfactory than those which he had been able to make in the previous autumn. At the end of April, Mr. Fenton, an English agent, made a very favourable report to his Government on the state of the royal camp, and the prospects of the Governor. "Don John," he wrote, "remaineth in that part of Hainault that bordereth upon France, and commandeth sixteen walled towns. . . . His whole camp containeth eighteen thousand men for the fight, viz. three thousand horsemen, and the residue footmen; of these he maketh special account of six thousand, being Spaniards of the old bands; the residue are mercenaries of sundry nations and customs, and of resolution and valour doubtful. He lieth not encamped in any one place, but has disbanded his companies into garrisons within the towns he hath

<sup>1</sup> State Paper Office, Flanders, 1578, No. 32, April 5. Instructions for Mr. Wilkes, sent to Don John from Queen Elizabeth.

"won, by which impediment he is not able to put an army to  
 "the field, nor advance any great exploit of war, having withal  
 "no store of great artilleries, field pieces, nor gunpowder. He  
 "expecteth a provision of these munitions from Luxemburg. He  
 "entertaineth great intelligence with certain particulars in the  
 "council of the Estates by whom joining the factions he hath in  
 "many of their principal towns, he pretendeth to prevail more  
 "than by his forces. He hath contracted with the Duke of  
 "Brunswick for four thousand *reitres* and two thousand lance-  
 "knights, who, as soon as they arrive, he meaneth to take the  
 "field and march, pretending to bestow in his towns the lance-  
 "knights, and revoke to the camp his own companies. [But] I  
 "hear that by the Diet of Worms the Duke of Brunswick is  
 "forbidden to make any levies against the Estates. Such places  
 "as Don John taketh by composition he observeth justly his  
 "covenants [with]; every particular in the country where he  
 "commandeth, liveth in no less freedom and security than if  
 "there were no war at all. The husbandman under his protec-  
 "tion laboureth the ground in safety; and, bringing victuals to  
 "his camp, he receiveth his money in quietness, and returneth  
 "without fear of violence. He punisheth with death all sorts of  
 "pillage and insolency, not sparing in that crime any nation or  
 "nature of soldiers of what merit soever. By these humanities  
 "he maketh deep impression in the hearts of the people, and so  
 "changeth the course of the war that he beginneth to make less  
 "in the popular sort the hatred universally borne to the nature of  
 "the Spaniards. He is environed with a grave council, with  
 "whom he useth to counsel touching all expeditions and  
 "directions of the war. These are of his Privy Council; the  
 "Prince of Parma, Ottavio Gonzaga (he governeth him most),  
 "Don Gabriel Niño, Doctor Del Rio, Count Barlaymont, Count  
 "Charles of Mansfeldt, Don Lopus [Lope de Figueroa?], Don  
 "Pe. de Taxis [J. B. de Tassis?], Monsieur de Billi, and Mondra-  
 "gone. These in all their behaviour do wonderfully reverence  
 "him, and by their example he is honoured with a wonderful  
 "obedience of the inferiors."<sup>1</sup>

The successes of Don John's arms had brought both soldiers  
 to his standard and money to his coffers. The King had at  
 last listened to his entreaties, and sent him one million nine  
 hundred crowns, and he promised a further monthly remittance

<sup>1</sup> State Paper Office, Flanders, 1578, No. 32, April 29. Mr. Fenton's declaration  
 of Don John's estate.