

personal influence, found himself unequal to the task.⁴ He was obliged to relinquish the idea of consolidating the different states into one monarchy, and to content himself with the position—not too grateful to a Spanish despot—of head of a republic, or, to speak more properly, of a confederacy of republics.

There was, however, some approach made to a national unity in the institution which grew up after the states were brought together under one sceptre. Thus, while each of the provinces maintained its own courts of justice, there was a supreme tribunal established at Mechlin, with appellate jurisdiction over all the provincial tribunals. In like manner, while each state had its own legislative assembly, there were the states-general, consisting of the clergy, the nobles, and the representatives of the towns, from each of the provinces. In this assembly—but rarely convened—were discussed the great questions having reference to the interests of the whole country. But the assembly was vested with no legislative authority. It could go no further than to present petitions to the sovereign for the redress of grievances. It possessed no right beyond the right of remonstrance. Even in questions of taxation, no subsidy could be settled in that body, without the express sanction of each of the provincial legislatures. Such a form of government, it must be admitted, was altogether too cumbrous in its operations for efficient executive movement. It was by no means favourable to the promptness and energy demanded for military enterprise. But it was a government which, however ill-suited in this respect to the temper of Charles the Fifth, was well suited to the genius of the inhabitants, and to their circumstances, which demanded peace. They had

⁴ Basnage, *Annales des Provinces-Unies*, tom. I. p. 8.

no ambition for foreign conquest. By the arts of peace they had risen to this unprecedented pitch of prosperity, and by peace alone, not by war, could they hope to maintain it.

But under the long rule of the Burgundian princes, and still more under that of Charles the Fifth, the people of the Netherlands felt the influence of those circumstances which in other parts of Europe were gradually compelling the popular, or rather the feudal element, to give way to the spirit of centralization. Thus in time the sovereign claimed the right of nominating all the higher clergy. In some instances he appointed the judges of the provincial courts; and the supreme tribunal of Mechlin was so far dependent on his authority, that all the judges were named and their salaries paid by the crown. The sovereign's authority was even stretched so far as to interfere not unfrequently with the rights exercised by the citizens in the election of their own magistrates,—rights that should have been cherished by them as of the last importance. As for the nobles, we cannot over-estimate the ascendancy which the master of an empire like that of Charles the Fifth must have obtained over men to whom he could open such boundless prospects in the career of ambition.⁵

But the personal character and the peculiar position of Charles tended still further to enlarge the royal authority. He was a Fleming by birth. He had all the tastes and habits of a Fleming. His early days had been passed in Flanders, and he loved to return to his native land as often as his busy life would permit him,

⁵ Ibid., loc. cit.—Bentivoglio, *Guerra di Fiandra*, (Milano, 1806,) p. 9 et seq.—Ranke, *Spanish Empire*, p. 79.

The last writer, with his usual

discernment, has selected the particular facts that illustrate most forcibly the domestic policy of the Netherlands under Charles the Fifth.

and to seek in the free and joyous society of the Flemish capitals some relief from the solemn ceremonial of the Castilian court. This preference of their lord was repaid by the people of the Netherlands with feelings of loyal devotion.

But they had reason for feelings of deeper gratitude in the substantial benefits which the favor of Charles secured to them. It was for Flemings that the highest posts even in Spain were reserved, and the marked preference thus shown by the emperor to his countrymen was one great source of the troubles in Castile. The soldiers of the Netherlands accompanied Charles on his military expeditions, and their cavalry had the reputation of being the best appointed and best disciplined in the imperial army. The vast extent of his possessions, spreading over every quarter of the globe, offered a boundless range for the commerce of the Netherlands, which was everywhere admitted on the most favorable footing. Notwithstanding his occasional acts of violence and extortion, Charles was too sagacious not to foster the material interests of a country which contributed so essentially to his own resources. Under his protecting policy, the industry and ingenuity of the Flemings found ample scope in the various departments of husbandry, manufactures, and trade. The country was as thickly studded with large towns as other countries were with villages. In the middle of the sixteenth century it was computed to contain above three hundred and fifty cities, and more than six thousand three hundred towns of a smaller size.⁶ These towns were not the resort of

⁶ " *Urbes in ea sive mœnibus clausæ, sive clausis magnitudine promodum pares, supra trecentas et quinquaginta censeantur; pagi verò majores ultra sex millia ac trecentos*

numerentur, ut nihil de minoribus vicis arcibusque loquar, quibus supra omnem numerum consitus est Belgicus ager." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. I. p. 32.

monks and mendicants, as in other parts of the Continent, but they swarmed with a busy, laborious population. No man ate the bread of idleness in the Netherlands. At the period with which we are occupied Ghent counted 70,000 inhabitants, Brussels 75,000, and Antwerp 100,000. This was at a period when London itself contained but 150,000.⁷

The country, fertilized by its countless canals and sluices, exhibited everywhere that minute and patient cultivation which distinguishes it at the present day, but which in the middle of the sixteenth century had no parallel but in the lands tilled by the Moorish inhabitants of the south of Spain. The ingenious spirit of the people was shown in their dexterity in the mechanical arts, and in the talent for invention which seems to be characteristic of a people accustomed from infancy to the unfettered exercise of their faculties. The processes for simplifying labor were carried so far, that children, as we are assured, began, at four or five years of age, to earn a livelihood.⁸ Each of the principal cities became noted for its excellence in some branch or other of manufacture. Lille was known for its woollen cloths, Brussels for its tapestry and carpets, Valenciennes for its camlets, while the towns of Holland and Zealand furnished a simpler staple in the form of cheese, butter, and salted fish.⁹

⁷ Guicciardini, *Belgiæ Descriptio*, p. 207 et seq.

The geographer gives us the population of several of the most considerable capitals in Europe in the middle of the sixteenth century. That of Paris, amounting to 300,000, seems to have much exceeded that of every other great city except Moscow.

⁸ "Atque hinc adeo fit, ut isti opera sua ea dexteritate, facilitate, ordineque disponent, ut et parvuli, ac quadriennes modo aut quinquen-

nes eorum filii, victum illico sibi incipient querere." Guicciardini, *Belgiæ Descriptio*, p. 55.

⁹ *Relatione di M. Cavallo tornato Ambasciatore dal Imperatore, 1551, MS.*

The ambassador does not hesitate to compare Antwerp, for the extent of its commerce, to his own proud city of Venice. "Anversa corrisponde di mercantia benissimo a Venetia, Lavania di studio a Padova, Gante per grandezza a Verona, Brussellis per il sito a Brescia."

These various commodities were exhibited at the great fairs held twice a year, for the space of twenty days each, at Antwerp, which were thronged by foreigners as well as natives.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Flemings imported great quantities of wool from England, to be manufactured into cloth at home. But Flemish emigrants had carried that manufacture to England; and in the time of Philip the Second the cloths themselves were imported from the latter country to the amount of above five millions of crowns annually, and exchanged for the domestic products of the Netherlands.¹⁰ This single item of trade with one of their neighbors may suggest some notion of the extent of the commerce of the Low Countries at this period.

But in truth the commerce of the country stretched to the remotest corners of the globe. The inhabitants of the Netherlands, trained from early youth to battle with the waves, found their true element on the ocean. "As much as Nature," says an enthusiastic writer, "restricted their domain on the land, so much the more did they extend their empire on the deep."¹¹ Their fleets were to be found on every sea. In the Euxine and in the Mediterranean they were rivals of the Venetian and the Genoese, and they contended with the English, and even with the Spaniards, for superiority on the "narrow seas" and the great ocean.

The wealth which flowed into the country from this

¹⁰ "Liquido enim constat, eorum, anno annum pensante, et carissæis aliisque panniculis ad integros pannos reductis, ducenta et amplius millia annuatim nobis distribui, quorum singuli minimum æstimentur vicenis quinque scutatis, ita ut in quinque et amplius milliones ratio tandem excrescat." Guicciardini,

Belgiæ Descriptio, p. 244.

¹¹ "Quæ verò ignota marium litora, quasve desinentis mundi oras scrutata non est Belgarum nautica? Nimirum quantò illos natura intra fines terræ contractiores inclusit, tantò ampliores ipsi sibi aperuere oceani campos." Strada, De Bello Belgico, lib. I. p. 32.

extended trade was soon shown in the crowded population of its provinces and the splendor of their capitals. At the head of these stood the city of Antwerp, which occupied the place in the sixteenth century that Bruges had occupied in the fifteenth, as the commercial metropolis of the Netherlands. Two hundred and fifty vessels might often be seen at the same time taking in their cargoes at her quays.¹² Two thousand loaded wagons from the neighboring countries of France, Germany, and Lorraine daily passed through her gates;¹³ and a greater number of vessels, freighted with merchandise from different quarters of the world, were to be seen floating at the same time on the waters of the Scheldt.¹⁴

The city, in common with the rest of Brabant, was distinguished by certain political privileges, which commended it as a place of residence even to foreigners. Women of the other provinces, it is said, when the time of their confinement drew near, would come to Brabant, that their offspring might claim the franchises of this favored portion of the Netherlands.¹⁵ So jealous were the people of this province of their liberties, that in their oath of allegiance to their sovereign, on his accession, it was provided that this allegiance might lawfully be withheld whenever he ceased to respect their privileges.¹⁶

Under the shelter of its municipal rights, foreigners settled in great numbers in Antwerp. The English established a factory there. There was also a Portuguese

¹² Schiller, *Abfall der Niederlande*, (Stuttgart, 1838,) p. 44.

¹³ *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

¹⁴ Burgon, *Life of Sir Thomas Gresham*, (London, 1839,) vol. I. p. 72.

¹⁵ "In quorum (Brabantinorum) Provinciam scimus transferre se solitas e vicinis locis parituras mulieres, ut Brabantinas immunitates

filiis eo solo genitis acquirerent, credere ab agricolis eligi plantaria, in quibus enatæ arbusculæ, primoque illo terræ velut ab ubere lactentes, aliò dein secum auferant dotes hospitalis soli." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, lib. II. p. 61.

¹⁶ *Histoire des Provinces-Unies des Pais-Bas*, (La Haye, 1704,) tom. I. p. 88.

company, an Italian company, a company of merchants from the Hanse Towns, and, lastly, a Turkish company, which took up its residence there for the purpose of pursuing a trade with the Levant. A great traffic was carried on in bills of exchange. Antwerp, in short, became the banking-house of Europe; and capitalists, the Rothschilds of their day, whose dealings were with sovereign princes, fixed their abode in Antwerp, which was to the rest of Europe in the sixteenth century what London is in the nineteenth,—the great heart of commercial circulation.¹⁷

In 1531, the public Exchange was erected, the finest building of its kind at that time anywhere to be seen. The city, indeed, was filled with stately edifices, the largest of which, the great cathedral, having been nearly destroyed by fire, soon after the opening of the Exchange, was rebuilt, and still remains a noble specimen of the architectural science of the time. Another age was to see the walls of the same cathedral adorned with those exquisite productions of Rubens and his disciples, which raised the Flemish school to a level with the great Italian masters.

The rapidly increasing opulence of the city was visible in the luxurious accommodations and sumptuous way of living of the inhabitants. The merchants of Antwerp rivalled the nobles of other lands in the splendor of their dress and domestic establishments. Something of the same sort showed itself in the middle classes; and even in those of humbler condition, there was a comfort approaching to luxury in their households, which attracted the notice of an Italian writer of the sixteenth century. He commends the scrupulous regard to order and cleanliness observed in the arrangement of the dwellings, and

¹⁷ Guicciardini, *Belgiæ Descriptio*, p. 225 et seq.

expresses his admiration, not only of the careful attention given by the women to their domestic duties, but also of their singular capacity for conducting those business affairs usually reserved for the other sex. This was particularly the case in Holland.¹⁸ But this freedom of intercourse was no disparagement to their feminine qualities. The liberty they assumed did not degenerate into licence; and he concludes his animated portraiture of these Flemish matrons by pronouncing them as discreet as they were beautiful.

The humbler classes, in so abject a condition in other parts of Europe at that day, felt the good effects of this general progress in comfort and civilization. It was rare to find one, we are told, so illiterate as not to be acquainted with the rudiments of grammar; and there was scarcely a peasant who could not both read and write;¹⁹—this at a time when to read and write were accomplishments not always possessed, in other countries, by those even in the higher walks of life.

It was not possible that a people so well advanced in the elements of civilization should long remain insensible to the great religious reform which, having risen on their borders, was now rapidly spreading over Christendom. Besides the contiguity of the Netherlands to Germany, their commerce with other countries had introduced them to Protestantism as it existed there. The foreign residents, and the Swiss and German mercenaries quartered in the provinces, had imported along with them these same principles of the Reformation; and lastly

¹⁸ "Ut in multis terræ Provinciis, Hollandia nominatim atque Zelandia, viri omnium fererum suarum curam uxoribus sæpe relinquunt." *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁹ "Majori gentis parti nota Grammaticæ rudimenta, et vel ipsi etiam rustici legendi scribendique periti

sunt." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

Guicciardini, who states this remarkable fact, had ample opportunity for ascertaining the truth of it, since, though an Italian by birth, he resided in the Netherlands for forty years or more.

the Flemish nobles, who, at that time, were much in the fashion of going abroad to study in Geneva, returned from that strong-hold of Calvin well fortified with the doctrines of the great Reformer.²⁰ Thus the seeds of the Reformation, whether in the Lutheran or the Calvinistic form, were scattered wide over the land, and took root in a congenial soil. The phlegmatic temperament of the northern provinces, especially, disposed them to receive a religion which addressed itself so exclusively to the reason, while they were less open to the influences of Catholicism, which, with its gorgeous accessories, appealing to the passions, is better suited to the lively sensibilities and kindling imaginations of the south.

It is not to be supposed that Charles the Fifth could long remain insensible to this alarming defection of his subjects in the Netherlands; nor that the man whose life was passed in battling with the Lutherans of Germany could patiently submit to see their detested heresy taking root in his own dominions. He dreaded this innovation no less in a temporal than in a spiritual view. Experience had shown that freedom of speculation in affairs of religion naturally led to free inquiry into political abuses; that the work of the reformer was never accomplished so long as anything remained to reform, in state as well as in church. Charles, with the instinct of Spanish despotism, sought a remedy in one of those acts of arbitrary power in which he indulged without scruple when the occasion called for them.

In March, 1520, he published the first of his barbarous edicts for the suppression of the new faith. It was followed by several others of the same tenor, repeated at

²⁰ Schiller, *Abfall der Niederlande*, p. 53.—Vandervynckt, *Histoire des Troubles des Pays-Bas*, (Bruxelles, 1822,) tom. II. p. 6.—

Groen Van Prinsterer, *Archives ou Correspondance Inédite de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, (Leide, 1841,) tom. I. p. 164*.

intervals throughout his reign. The last appeared in September, 1550.²¹ As this in a manner suspended those that had preceded it, to which, however, it substantially conformed, and as it became the basis of Philip's subsequent legislation, it will be well to recite its chief provisions.

By this edict, or "placard," as it was called, it was ordained that all who were convicted of heresy should suffer death "by fire, by the pit, or by the sword;"²² in other words, should be burned alive, be buried alive, or be beheaded. These terrible penalties were incurred by all who dealt in heretical books, or copied or bought them, by all who held or attended conventicles, by all who disputed on the Scriptures in public or private, by all who preached or defended the doctrines of reform. Informers were encouraged by the promise of one half of the confiscated estate of the heretic. No suspected person was allowed to make any donation, or sell any of his effects, or dispose of them by will. Finally, the courts were instructed to grant no remission or mitigation of punishment under the fallacious idea of mercy to the convicted party, and it was made penal for the friends of the accused to solicit such indulgence on his behalf.²³

The more thoroughly to enforce these edicts, Charles took a hint from the terrible tribunal with which he was familiar in Spain,—the Inquisition. He obtained a bull from his old preceptor, Adrian the Sixth, appointing an

²¹ The whole number of "placards" issued by Charles the Fifth amounted to eleven. See the dates in Gachard, *Correspondance de Philippe II. sur les Affaires des Pays-Bas*, (Bruxelles, 1848,) tom. I. pp. 105, 106.

²² "*Le fer, la fosse, et le feu.*" *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

²³ Meteren, *Histoire des Pays-*

Bas, ou Recueil des Guerres et Choses memorables, depuis l'An 1315, jusques à l'An 1612, traduit de Flamend, (La Haye, 1618.) fol. 10.—Brandt, *History of the Reformation in the Low Countries*, translated from the Dutch, (London, 1720,) vol. I. p. 88.

inquisitor-general, who had authority to examine persons suspected of heresy, to imprison and torture them, to confiscate their property, and finally sentence them to banishment or death. These formidable powers were intrusted to a layman,—a lawyer of eminence, and one of the council of Brabant. But this zealous functionary employed his authority with so good effect, that it speedily roused the general indignation of his countrymen, who compelled him to fly for his life.

By another bull from Rome, four inquisitors were appointed in the place of the fugitive. These inquisitors were ecclesiastics, not of the fierce Dominican order, as in Spain, but members of the secular clergy. All public officers were enjoined to aid them in detecting and securing suspected persons, and the common prisons were allotted for the confinement of their victims.

The people would seem to have gained little by the substitution of four inquisitors for one. But in fact they gained a great deal. The sturdy resistance made to the exercise of the unconstitutional powers of the inquisitor-general compelled Charles to bring those of the new functionaries more within the limits of the law. For twenty years or more their powers seem not to have been well defined. But in 1546 it was decreed that no sentence whatever could be pronounced by an inquisitor without the sanction of some member of the provincial council. Thus, however barbarous the law against heresy, the people of the Netherlands had this security, that it was only by their own regular courts of justice that this law was to be interpreted and enforced.²⁴

Such were the expedients adopted by Charles the Fifth for the suppression of heresy in the Netherlands.

²⁴ Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. I. p. 108.—Grotius, *Annales et Historiæ de Rebus Belgicis*, (Amstelædami, 1657,) p. 11.—Brandt, *Reformation in the Low Countries*, vol. I. p. 88.

Notwithstanding the name of "inquisitors," the new establishment bore faint resemblance to the dread tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition, with which it has been often confounded.²⁵ The Holy Office presented a vast and complicated machinery, skilfully adapted to the existing institutions of Castile. It may be said to have formed part of the government itself, and, however restricted in its original design, it became in time a formidable political engine, no less than a religious one. The grand-inquisitor was clothed with an authority before which the monarch himself might tremble. On some occasions, he even took precedence of the monarch. The courts of the Inquisition were distributed throughout the country, and were conducted with a solemn pomp that belonged to no civil tribunal. Spacious buildings were erected for their accommodation, and the gigantic prisons of the Inquisition rose up, like impregnable fortresses, in the principal cities of the kingdom. A swarm of menials and officials waited to do its bidding. The proudest nobles of the land held it an honor to serve as familiars of the Holy Office. In the midst of this external pomp, the impenetrable veil thrown over its proceedings took strong hold of the imagination, investing the tribunal with a sort of supernatural terror. An individual disappeared from the busy scenes of life. No one knew whither he had gone, till he reappeared, clothed in the fatal garb of the *san benito*, to take part

²⁵ Viglius, afterwards president of the privy council, says plainly, in one of his letters to Granvelle, that the name of *Spanish* Inquisition was fastened on the Flemish, in order to make it odious to the people. "Queruntur autem imprimis, a nobis novam inductam inquisitionem, quam vocant Hispanicam. Quod falso populo a quibusdam persuadetur, ut

nomine ipso rem odiosam reddant, cum nulla alia ab Cæsare sit instituta inquisitio, quam ea, quæ cum jure scripto scilicet Canonico, convenit, et usitata antea fuit in hac Provincia." Viglii Epistolæ Selectæ, ap. Hoynek, *Analecta Belgica*, (Hagæ Comitum, 1743,) tom. II. pars I. p. 349.

in the tragic spectacle of an *auto de-fé*. This was the great triumph of the Inquisition, rivalling the ancient Roman triumph in the splendor of the show, and surpassing it in the solemn and mysterious import of the ceremonial. It was hailed with enthusiasm by the fanatical Spaniard of that day, who, in the martyrdom of the infidel, saw only a sacrifice most acceptable to the Deity. The Inquisition succeeded in Spain, for it was suited to the character of the Spaniard.

But it was not suited to the free and independent character of the people of the Netherlands. Freedom of thought they claimed as their birthright; and the attempt to crush it by introducing the pernicious usages of Spain was everywhere received with execration. Such an institution was an accident, and could not become an integral part of the constitution. It was a vicious graft on a healthy stock. It could bear no fruit, and sooner or later it must perish.

Yet the Inquisition, such as it was, did its work while it lasted in the Netherlands. This is true, at least, if we are to receive the popular statement, that fifty thousand persons, in the reign of Charles the Fifth, suffered for their religious opinions by the hand of the executioner!²⁶ This monstrous statement has been repeated by one historian after another, with apparently as little distrust as examination. It affords one among many examples of the facility with which men adopt the most startling results, especially when conveyed in the form of numerical estimates. There is something that strikes the imagination, in a numerical estimate, which settles a question so summarily, in a form so precise and so portable. Yet whoever has had occasion

²⁶ Grotius swells the number to one hundred thousand! (Annales, p. 12.) It is all one; beyond a certain

point of the incredible, one ceases to estimate probabilities.

to make any researches into the past,—that land of uncertainty,—will agree that there is nothing less entitled to confidence.

In the present instance, such a statement might seem to carry its own refutation on the face of it. Llorente, the celebrated secretary of the Holy Office, whose estimates will never be accused of falling short of the amount, computes the whole number of victims sacrificed during the first eighteen years of the Inquisition in Castile, when it was in most active operation, at about ten thousand.²⁷ The storm of persecution there, it will be remembered, fell chiefly on the Jews,—that ill-omened race, from whom every pious Catholic would have rejoiced to see his land purified by fire and fagot. It will hardly be believed that five times the number of these victims perished in a country like the Netherlands, in a term of time not quite double that occupied for their extermination in Spain;—the Netherlands, where every instance of such persecution, instead of being hailed as a triumph of the Cross, was regarded as a fresh outrage on the liberties of the nation. It is not too much to say, that such a number of martyrs as that pretended would have produced an explosion that would have unsettled the authority of Charles himself, and left for his successor less territory in the Netherlands at the beginning of his reign, than he was destined to have at the end of it.

Indeed, the frequent renewal of the edicts, which was repeated no less than nine times during Charles's administration, intimates plainly enough the very sluggish and unsatisfactory manner in which they had been executed. In some provinces, as Luxembourg and Groningen, the Inquisition was not introduced at all.

²⁷ Histoire de l'Inquisition d'Espagne, (Paris, 1818,) tom. I. p. 280.

Gueldres stood on its privileges, guaranteed to it by the emperor on his accession. And Brabant so effectually remonstrated on the mischief which the mere name of the Inquisition would do to the trade of the country, and especially of Antwerp, its capital, that the emperor deemed it prudent to qualify some of the provisions, and to drop the name of Inquisitor altogether.²⁸ There is no way more sure of rousing the sensibilities of a commercial people, than by touching their pockets. Charles did not care to press matters to such extremity. He was too politic a prince, too large a gainer by the prosperity of his people, willingly to put it in peril, even for conscience' sake. In this lay the difference between him and Philip.

Notwithstanding, therefore, his occasional abuse of power, and the little respect he may have had at heart for the civil rights of his subjects, the government of Charles, as already intimated, was on the whole favorable to their commercial interests. He was well repaid by the enlarged resources of the country, and the aid they afforded him for the prosecution of his ambitious enterprises. In the course of a few years, as we are informed by a contemporary, he drew from the Netherlands no less than twenty-four millions of ducats.²⁹ And this supply—furnished not ungrudgingly, it is true—was lavished, for the most part, on objects in which the nation had no interest. In like manner, it was the revenues of the Netherlands which defrayed great part of Philip's expenses in the war that followed his accession. "Here," exclaims the Venetian envoy, Soriano, "were the true treasures of the king of Spain; here were his mines, his Indies, which furnished Charles

²⁸ Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. I. pp. 123, 124.

potuto cavare in 24 milioni d' oro in pochi anni." Relatione di Soriano, MS.

²⁹ "Donde che l' Imperatore ha

with the means of carrying on his wars for so many years with the French, the Germans, the Italians, which provided for the defence of his own states, and maintained his dignity and reputation."³⁰

Such then was the condition of the country at the time when the sceptre passed from the hands of Charles the Fifth into those of Philip the Second;—its broad plains teeming with the products of an elaborate culture; its cities swarming with artisans, skilled in all kinds of ingenious handicraft; its commerce abroad on every sea, and bringing back rich returns from distant climes. The great body of its people, well advanced in the arts of civilization, rejoiced in "such abundance of all things," says a foreigner who witnessed their prosperity, "that there was no man, however humble, who did not seem rich for his station."³¹ In this active development of their powers, the inquisitive mind of the inhabitants naturally turned to those great problems in religion which were agitating the neighboring countries of France and Germany. All the efforts of Charles were unavailing to check the spirit of inquiry; and in the last year of his reign he bitterly confessed the total failure of his endeavor to stay the progress of heresy in the Netherlands.³² Well had it been for his successor, had he taken counsel by the failure of his father, and substituted a more lenient policy for the ineffectual system of persecution. But such was not the policy of Philip.

³⁰ "Questi sono li tesori del Re di Spagna, queste le minere, queste l'Indie che hanno sostenuto l'imprese dell'Imperatore tanti anni nelle guerre di Francia, d'Italia et d'Alemagna, et hanno conservato et diffuso li stati, la dignità et la riputatione sua." Ibid.

³¹ "Et però in ogni luogo corrono

tanto i denari et tanto il spacciamento d'ogni cosa che non vi è huomo per basso et inerte, che sia, che per il suo grado non sia ricco." Relatione di Cavallo, MS.

³² See an extract from the original letter of Charles, dated Brussels, January 27, 1555, ap. Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. I. p. cxxii.

CHAPTER II.

SYSTEM ESTABLISHED BY PHILIP.

Unpopular Manners of Philip.—He enforces the Edicts.—Increase of Bishoprics.—Margaret of Parma Regent.—Meeting of the States-General.—Their spirited Conduct.—Organization of the Councils.—Rise and Character of Granvelle.—Philip's Departure.

1559.

PHILIP THE SECOND was no stranger to the Netherlands. He had come there, as it will be remembered, when very young, to be presented by his father to his future subjects. On that occasion he had greatly disgusted the people by that impenetrable reserve which they construed into haughtiness, and which strongly contrasted with the gracious manners of the emperor. Charles saw with pain the impression which his son had left on his subjects; and the effects of his paternal admonitions were visible in a marked change in Philip's deportment on his subsequent visit to England. But nature lies deeper than manner; and when Philip returned, on his father's abdication, to assume the sovereignty of the Netherlands, he wore the same frigid exterior as in earlier days.

His first step was to visit the different provinces, and receive from them their oaths of allegiance. No better occasion could be offered for conciliating the good-will

of the inhabitants. Everywhere his approach was greeted with festivities and public rejoicing. The gates of the capitals were thrown open to receive him, and the population thronged out, eager to do homage to their new sovereign. It was a season of jubilee for the whole nation.

In this general rejoicing, Philip's eye alone remained dark.¹ Shut up in his carriage, he seemed desirous to seclude himself from the gaze of his new subjects, who crowded around, anxious to catch a glimpse of their young monarch.² His conduct seemed like a rebuke of their enthusiasm. Thus chilled as they were in the first flow of their loyalty, his progress through the land, which should have won him all hearts, closed all hearts against him.

The emperor, when he visited the Netherlands, was like one coming back to his native country. He spoke the language of the people, dressed in their dress, conformed to their usages and way of life. But Philip was in everything a Spaniard. He spoke only the Castilian. He adopted the Spanish etiquette and burdensome ceremonial. He was surrounded by Spaniards, and, with few exceptions, it was to Spaniards only that he gave his confidence. Charles had disgusted his Spanish subjects by the marked preference he had given to his Flemish. The reverse now took place, and Philip displeased the Flemings by his partiality for the Spaniards. The people

¹ It is the fine expression of Schiller, applied to Philip on another occasion. *Abfall der Niederlande*, p. 61.

² "Il se cachait ordinairement dans le fond de son carrosse, pour se dérober à la curiosité d'un peuple qui courait audevant de lui et s'empressait à le voir; le peuple se crut dédaigné et méprisé." *Vandervynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. II. p. 17.

Coaches were a novelty then in Flanders, and indeed did not make their appearance till some years later in London. Sir Thomas Gresham writes from Antwerp in 1560, "The Regent ys here still; and every other day rydes abowght this town in her cowche, *brave come le sol*, trymmed after the Itallione fasshone." *Burghon, Life of Gresham*, vol. I. p. 305.

of the Netherlands felt with bitterness that the sceptre of their country had passed into the hands of a foreigner.

During his progress Philip caused reports to be prepared for him of the condition of the several provinces, their population and trade,—presenting a mass of statistical details, in which, with his usual industry, he was careful to instruct himself. On his return, his first concern was to provide for the interests of religion. He renewed his father's edicts relating to the Inquisition, and in the following year confirmed the "placard" respecting heresy. In doing this, he was careful, by the politic advice of Granvelle, to conform as nearly as possible to the language of the original edicts, that no charge of innovation might be laid to him, and thus the odium of these unpopular measures might remain with their original author.³

But the object which Philip had most at heart was a reform much needed in the ecclesiastical establishment of the country. It may seem strange that in all the Netherlands there were but three bishoprics,—Arras, Tournay, and Utrecht. A large part of the country was incorporated with some one or other of the contiguous German dioceses. The Flemish bishoprics were of enormous extent. That of Utrecht alone embraced no less than three hundred walled towns, and eleven hundred churches.⁴ It was impossible that any pastor, however diligent, could provide for the wants of a flock so widely scattered, or that he could exercise supervision over the clergy themselves, who had fallen into a lamentable decay both of discipline and morals.

Still greater evils followed from the circumstance of

³ Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. I. pp. 108, 126.—Vandervynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. II. p. 10.—Brandt, Reformation in the

Low Countries, tom. I. p. 107.

⁴ Correspondance de Philippe II. tom. I. p. 94.

the episcopal authority's being intrusted to foreigners. From their ignorance of the institutions of the Netherlands, they were perpetually trespassing on the rights of the nation. Another evil consequence was the necessity of carrying up ecclesiastical causes, by way of appeal, to foreign tribunals; a thing, moreover, scarcely practicable in time of war.

Charles the Fifth, whose sagacious mind has left its impress on the permanent legislation of the Netherlands, saw the necessity of some reform in this matter. He accordingly applied to Rome for leave to erect six bishoprics, in addition to those previously existing in the country. But his attention was too much distracted by other objects to allow time for completing his design. With his son Philip, on the other hand, no object was allowed to come in competition with the interests of the Church. He proposed to make the reform on a larger scale than his father had done, and applied to Paul the Fourth for leave to create fourteen bishoprics and three archbishoprics. The chief difficulty lay in providing for the support of the new dignitaries. On consultation with Granvelle, who had not been advised of the scheme till after Philip's application to Rome, it was arranged that the income should be furnished by the abbey lands of the respective dioceses, and that the abbeys themselves should hereafter be placed under the control of priors or provosts depending altogether on the bishops. Meanwhile, until the bulls should be received from Rome, it was determined to keep the matter profoundly secret. It was easy to foresee that a storm of opposition would arise, not only among those immediately interested in preserving the present order of things, but among the great body of the nobles, who would look with an evil eye on the admission into their ranks of so large a

number of persons servilely devoted to the interests of the crown.⁵

Having concluded his arrangements for the internal settlement of the country, Philip naturally turned his thoughts towards Spain. He was the more desirous of returning thither from the reports he received, that even that orthodox land was becoming every day more tainted with the heretical doctrines so rife in the neighboring countries. There were no hostilities to detain him longer in the Netherlands, now that the war with France had been brought to a close. The provinces, as we have already stated, had furnished the king with important aid for carrying on that war, by the grant of a stipulated annual tax for nine years. This had not proved equal to his necessities. It was in vain, however, to expect any further concessions from the states. They had borne, not without murmurs, the heavy burdens laid on them by Charles,—a monarch whom they loved. They bore still more impatiently the impositions of a prince whom they loved so little as Philip. Yet the latter seemed ready to make any sacrifice of his permanent interests for such temporary relief as would extricate him from his present embarrassments. His correspondence with Granvelle on the subject, unfolding the suicidal schemes which he submitted to that minister, might form an edifying chapter in the financial history of that day.⁶ The difficulty of carrying on the government of the Netherlands in this crippled state of the finances doubtless strengthened the desire of the monarch

⁵ Ibid, ubi supra.—Historia de los Alborotos de Flandes, por el Caballero Renom de Francia, Señor de Noyelles, y Presidente de Malinas, MS.—Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 31.

⁶ See, in particular, the king's

letter, in which he proposes to turn to his own account the sinking fund provided by the states for the discharge of the debt they had already contracted for him, Papiers d'Etat de Granvelle, tom. V. p. 594.

to return to his native land, where the manners and habits of the people were so much more congenial with his own.

Before leaving the country, it was necessary to provide a suitable person to whom the reins of government might be intrusted. The duke of Savoy, who, since the emperor's abdication, had held the post of regent, was now to return to his own dominions, restored to him by the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis. There were several persons who presented themselves for this responsible office in the Netherlands. One of the most prominent was Lamoral, prince of Gavre, count of Egmont, the hero of St. Quentin and of Gravelines. The illustrious house from which he was descended, his chivalrous spirit, his frank and generous bearing, no less than his brilliant military achievements, had made him the idol of the people. There were some who insisted that these achievements inferred rather the successful soldier than the great captain;⁷ and that, whatever merit he could boast in the field, it was no proof of his capacity for so important a civil station as that of governor of the Netherlands. Yet it could not be doubted that his nomination would be most acceptable to the people. This did not recommend him to Philip.

Another candidate was Christine, duchess of Lorraine, the king's cousin. The large estates of her house lay in the neighborhood of the Netherlands. She had shown her talent for political affairs by the part she had taken in effecting the arrangements of Cateau-Cambresis. The prince of Orange, lately become a widower, was desirous, it was said, of marrying her daughter. Neither did this prove a recommendation with Philip, who was by no

⁷ "Il Duca di Sessa et il Conte d' Egmont hano acquistato il nome di Capitano nuovamente perche una giornata vinta o per vertu o per

fortuna, una sola fattione ben riuscita, porta all' huomini riputatione et grandezza." Relatione di Soriano, MS.

means anxious to raise the house of Orange higher in the scale, still less to intrust it with the destinies of the Netherlands. In a word, the monarch had no mind to confide the regency of the country to any one of its powerful nobles.⁸

The individual on whom the king at length decided to bestow this mark of his confidence was his half-sister, Margaret, duchess of Parma. She was the natural daughter of Charles the Fifth, born about four years before his marriage with Isabella of Portugal. Margaret's mother, Margaret Vander Gheenst, belonged to a noble Flemish house. Her parents both died during her infancy. The little orphan was received into the family of Count Hoogstraten, who, with his wife, reared her with the same tenderness as they did their own offspring. At the age of seventeen she was unfortunate enough to attract the eye of Charles the Fifth, who, then in his twenty-third year, was captivated by the charms of the Flemish maiden. Margaret's virtue was not proof against the seductions of her royal suitor; and the victim of love—or of vanity—became the mother of a child, who received her own name of Margaret.

The emperor's aunt, then regent of the Netherlands, took charge of the infant; and on the death of that princess, she was taken into the family of the emperor's sister, Mary, queen of Hungary, who succeeded in the regency. Margaret's birth did not long remain a secret; and she received an education suited to the high station she was to occupy in life. When only twelve years of age, the emperor gave her in marriage to Alexander de' Medici, grand duke of Tuscany, some fifteen years older than herself. The ill-fated connection did not subsist

⁸ Strada, De Bello Belgico, lib. I. p. 42.—Francia, Alborotos de Flandes, MS.—Bentivoglio, Guerra di Fiandra, p. 25.



Jas. Bowen sc.

MARGARET OF PARMA,
REGENT OF THE NETHERLANDS.

London Richard Bentley 1855.

long, as, before twelve months had elapsed, it was terminated by the violent death of her husband.

When she had reached the age of womanhood, the hand of the young widow was bestowed, together with the duchies of Parma and Placentia as her dowry, on Ottavio Farnese, grandson of Paul the Third. The bridegroom was but twelve years old. Thus again it was Margaret's misfortune that there should be such disparity between her own age and that of her husband as to exclude anything like sympathy or similarity in their tastes. In the present instance, the boyish years of Ottavio inspired her with a sentiment not very different from contempt, that in later life settled into an indifference in which both parties appear to have shared, and which, as a contemporary remarks with *naïveté*, was only softened into a kindlier feeling when the husband and wife had been long separated from each other.⁹ In truth, Margaret was too ambitious of power to look on her husband in any other light than that of a rival.

In her general demeanor, her air, her gait, she bore great resemblance to her aunt, the regent. Like her, Margaret was excessively fond of hunting, and she followed the chase with an intrepidity that might have daunted the courage of the keenest sportsman. She had but little of the natural softness that belongs to the sex, but in her whole deportment was singularly masculine; so that, to render the words of the historian by a homely phrase, in her woman's dress she seemed like a man in petticoats.¹⁰ As if to add to the illusion, Nature had given her somewhat of a beard; and, to crown the whole, the malady to which she was constitutionally

⁹ Strada, De Bello Belgico, lib. I. p. 52.

¹⁰ "Sed etiam habitus quidam corporis incessusque, quo non tam

femina sortita viri spiritus, quam vir ementitus veste feminam videretur." Ibid., ubi supra.

subject was a disease to which women are but rarely liable,—the gout.¹¹ It was good evidence of her descent from Charles the Fifth.

Though masculine in her appearance, Margaret was not destitute of the kindlier qualities which are the glory of her sex. Her disposition was good; but she relied much on the advice of others, and her more objectionable acts may probably be referred rather to their influence than to any inclination of her own.

Her understanding was excellent, her apprehension quick. She showed much versatility in accommodating herself to the exigencies of her position, as well as adroitness in the management of affairs, which she may have acquired in the schools of Italian politics. In religion she was as orthodox as Philip the Second could desire. The famous Ignatius Loyola had been her confessor in early days. The lessons of humility which he inculcated were not lost on her, as may be inferred from the care she took to perform the ceremony, in Holy Week, of washing the dirty feet—she preferred them in this condition—of twelve poor maidens;¹² outstripping, in this particular, the humility of the pope himself.—Such was the character of Margaret, duchess of Parma, who now, in the thirty-eighth year of her age, was called, at a most critical period, to take the helm of the Netherlands.

The appointment seems to have given equal satisfaction to herself and to her husband, and no objection was made to Philip's purpose of taking back with him to Castile their little son, Alexander Farnese,—a name

¹¹ "Nec deerat aliqua mento superiorique labello barbula: ex qua virilis ei non magis species, quam auctoritas conciliabatur. Immo, quod rarè in mulieres, nec nisi in prævalidas cadit, podagrâ idemtidem labo-

rabat." -Ibid., p. 53.

¹² "Ob eam causam singulis annis, tum in sanctiori hebdomada, duodenis pauperibus puellis pedes (quos a sordibus purgatos antè veterat) abluebat." Ibid., ubi supra.

destined to become in later times so renowned in the Netherlands. The avowed purpose was to give the boy a training suited to his rank, under the eye of Philip; combined with which, according to the historian, was the desire of holding a hostage for the fidelity of Margaret and of her husband, whose dominions in Italy lay contiguous to those of Philip in that country.¹³

Early in June, 1559, Margaret of Parma, having reached the Low Countries, made her entrance in great state into Brussels, where Philip awaited her, surrounded by his whole court of Spanish and Flemish nobles. The duke of Savoy was also present, as well as Margaret's husband, the duke of Parma, then in attendance on Philip. The appointment of Margaret was not distasteful to the people of the Netherlands, for she was their countrywoman, and her early days had been passed amongst them. Her presence was not less welcome to Philip, who looked forward with eagerness to the hour of his departure. His first purpose was to present the new regent to the nation, and for this he summoned a meeting of the States-General at Ghent, in the coming August.

On the twenty-fifth of July, he repaired with his court to this ancient capital, which still smarted under the effects of that chastisement of his father, which, terrible as it was, had not the power to break the spirits of the men of Ghent. The presence of the court was celebrated with public rejoicings, which continued for three days, during which Philip held a chapter of the Golden Fleece for the election of fourteen knights. The ceremony was conducted with the magnificence with which the meetings of this illustrious order were usually

¹³ Ibid., pp. 46—53, 543.—Ca- —Vandervynckt, Troubles des Pays-
brera, Filipe Segundo, lib. V. cap. 2. Bas, tom. II. p. 13.

celebrated. It was memorable as the last chapter of it ever held.¹⁴ Founded by the dukes of Burgundy, the order of the Golden Fleece drew its members immediately from the nobility of the Netherlands. When the Spanish sovereign, who remained at its head, no more resided in the country, the chapters were discontinued; and the knights derived their appointment from the simple nomination of the monarch.

On the eighth of August, the States-General assembled at Ghent. The sturdy burghers who took their seats in this body came thither in no very friendly temper to the government. Various subjects of complaint had long been rankling in their bosoms, and now found vent in the form of animated and angry debate. The people had been greatly alarmed by the avowed policy of their rulers to persevere in the system of religious persecution, as shown especially by the revival of the ancient edicts against heresy and in support of the Inquisition. Rumors had gone abroad, probably with exaggeration, of the proposed episcopal reforms. However necessary, they were now regarded only as part of the great scheme of persecution. Different nations, it was urged, required to be guided by different laws. What suited the Spaniards would not for that reason suit the people of the Netherlands. The Inquisition was ill adapted to men accustomed from their cradles to freedom of thought and action. Persecution was not to be justified in matters of conscience, and men were not to be reclaimed from spiritual error by violence, but by gentleness and persuasion.

But what most called forth the invective of the Flemish orators was the presence of a large body of foreign troops in the country. When Philip disbanded his forces after

¹⁴ Vandervynckt, *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. II. p. 21.

the French war had terminated, there still remained a corps of the old Spanish infantry, amounting to some three or four thousands, which he thought proper to retain in the western provinces. His avowed object was to protect the country from any violence on the part of the French. Another reason assigned by him was the difficulty of raising funds to pay their arrears. The true motive, in the opinion of the states, was to enforce the execution of the new measures, and overcome any resistance that might be made in the country. These troops, like most of the soldiers of that day, who served for plunder quite as much as for pay, had as little respect for the rights or the property of their allies, as for those of their enemies. They quartered themselves on the peaceful inhabitants of the country, and obtained full compensation for loss of pay by a system of rapine and extortion that beggared the people, and drove them to desperation. Conflicts with the soldiery occasionally occurred, and in some parts the peasantry even refused to repair the dikes, in order to lay the country under water rather than submit to such outrages! "How is it," exclaimed the bold syndic of Ghent, "that we find foreign soldiers thus quartered on us, in open violation of our liberties? Are not our own troops able to protect us from the dangers of invasion? Must we be ground to the dust by the exactions of these mercenaries in peace, after being burdened with the maintenance of them in war?" These remonstrances were followed by a petition to the throne, signed by members of the other orders as well as the commons, requesting that the king would be graciously pleased to respect the privileges of the nation, and send back the foreign troops to their own homes.

Philip, who sat in the assembly with his sister, the future regent, by his side, was not prepared for this

independent spirit in the burghers of the Netherlands. The royal ear had been little accustomed to this strain of invective from the subject. For it was rare that the tone of remonstrance was heard in the halls of Castilian legislation, since the power of the commons had been broken on the field of Villalar. Unable or unwilling to conceal his displeasure, the king descended from his throne, and abruptly quitted the assembly.¹⁵

Yet he did not, like Charles the First of England, rashly vent his indignation by imprisoning or persecuting the members who had roused it. Even the stout syndic of Ghent was allowed to go unharmed. Philip looked above him to a mark more worthy of his anger,—to those of the higher orders who had encouraged the spirit of resistance in the commons. The most active of these malecontents was William of Orange. That noble, as it may be remembered, was one of the hostages who remained at the court of Henry the Second for the fulfilment of the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis. While there, a strange disclosure was made to the prince by the French monarch, who told him that, through the duke of Alva, a secret treaty had been entered into with his master, the king of Spain, for the extirpation of heresy throughout their dominions. This inconsiderate avowal of the French king was made to William on the supposition that he was stanch in the Roman Catholic faith, and entirely in his master's confidence. Whatever may have been the prince's claims to orthodoxy at this period, it is certain he was not in Philip's confidence. It is equally certain that he possessed one Christian virtue which belonged neither to Philip nor to Henry,—the virtue of

¹⁵ Bentivoglio, Guerra di Fiandra, p. 27 et seq.—Cabrera, Filipe Segundo, lib. V. cap. 2.—Strada, De Bello Belgico, lib. I. p. 57.—Van-

dervynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. II. p. 22.—Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 24.—Schiller, Abfall der Niederlande, p. 84.

toleration. Greatly shocked by the intelligence he had received, William at once communicated it to several of his friends in the Netherlands. One of the letters unfortunately fell into Philip's hands. The prince soon after obtained permission to return to his own country, bent, as he tells us in his Apology, on ridding it of the Spanish vermin.¹⁶ Philip, who understood the temper of his mind, had his eye on his movements, and knew well to what source, in part at least, he was to attribute the present opposition. It was not long after, that a Castilian courtier intimated to the prince of Orange and to Egmont, that it would be well for them to take heed to themselves; that the names of those who had signed the petition for the removal of the troops had been noted down, and that Philip and his council were resolved, when a fitting occasion offered, to call them to a heavy reckoning for their temerity.¹⁷

Yet the king so far yielded to the wishes of the people as to promise the speedy departure of the troops. But no power on earth could have been strong enough to shake his purpose where the interests of religion were involved. Nor would he abate one jot of the stern provisions of the edicts. When one of his ministers, more hardy than the rest, ventured to suggest to him that perseverance in this policy might cost him the sovereignty of the provinces, "Better not reign at all," he answered, "than reign over heretics!"¹⁸—an answer extolled by

¹⁶ "Je confesse que je fus tellement esmeu de pitié et de compassion que dès lors j'entrepris à bon escient d'ayder à faire chasser cette vermine d'Espaignols hors de ce Pays." Apology of the Prince of Orange, ap. Dumont, Corps Diplomatique, tom. V. p. 392.

¹⁷ "Que le Roi et son Conseil avoyent arresté que tous ceux qui avoient consenti et signé la Re-

queste, par laquelle on demandoit que la Gendarmerie Espaignolle s'en allast, qu'on auroit souvenance de les chastier avec le temps, et quand la commodité s'en presenteroit, et qu'il les en advertissoit comme amy." Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 25.

¹⁸ "Che egli voleva piuttosto restar senza regni, che possederli con l'eresia." Bentivoglio, Guerra di Fiandra, p. 31.

some as the height of the sublime, by others derided as the extravagance of a fanatic. In whatever light we view it, it must be admitted to furnish the key to the permanent policy of Philip in his government of the Netherlands.

Before dissolving the States-General, Philip, unacquainted with the language of the country, addressed the deputies through the mouth of the bishop of Arras. He expatiated on the warmth of his attachment to his good people of the Netherlands, and paid them a merited tribute for their loyalty both to his father and to himself. He enjoined on them to show similar respect to the regent, their own countrywoman, into whose hands he had committed the government. They would reverence the laws and maintain public tranquillity. Nothing would conduce to this so much as the faithful execution of the edicts. It was their sacred duty to aid in the extermination of heretics,—the deadliest foes both of God and their sovereign. Philip concluded by assuring the states that he should soon return in person to the Netherlands, or send his son Don Carlos as his representative.

The answer of the legislature was temperate and respectful. They made no allusion to Philip's proposed ecclesiastical reforms, as he had not authorized this by any allusion to them himself. They still pressed, however, the removal of the foreign troops, and the further removal of all foreigners from office, as contrary to the constitution of the land. This last shaft was aimed at Granvelle, who held a high post in the government, and was understood to be absolute in the confidence of the king. Philip renewed his assurances of the dismissal of the forces, and that within the space, as he promised, of four months. The other request of the deputies he did not condescend to notice. His feelings on the subject were

intimated in an exclamation he made to one of his ministers: "I too am a foreigner; will they refuse to obey me as their sovereign?"¹⁹

The regent was to be assisted in the government by three councils which of old time had existed in the land;—the council of finance, for the administration, as the name implies, of the revenues; the privy council, for affairs of justice and the internal concerns of the country; and the council of state, for matters relating to peace and war, and the foreign policy of the nation. Into this last, the supreme council, entered several of the Flemish nobles, and among them the prince of Orange and Count Egmont. There were, besides, Count Barlaimont, president of the council of finance, Viglius, president of the privy council, and lastly Granvelle, bishop of Arras.

The regent was to act with the coöperation of these several bodies in their respective departments. In the conduct of the government, she was to be guided by the council of state. But by private instructions of Philip, questions of a more delicate nature, involving the tranquillity of the country, might be first submitted to a select portion of this council; and in such cases, or when a spirit of faction had crept into the council, the regent, if she deemed it for the interest of the state, might adopt the opinion of the minority. The select body with whom Margaret was to advise in the more important matters was termed the *Consulta*; and the members who composed it were Barlaimont, Viglius, and the bishop of Arras.²⁰

¹⁹ Ranke, Spanish Empire, p. 81. Schiller, Abfall der Niederlande, p. 85.—Bentivoglio, Guerra di Fiandra, p. 27.—Strada, De Bello Belgico, p. 57.—Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 25.

²⁰ The existence of such a confidential body proved a fruitful source

of disaster. The names of the parties who composed it are not given in the instructions to the regent, which leave all to her discretion. According to Strada, however, the royal will in the matter was plainly intimated by Philip. (De Bello Belgico, tom. I. p. 57.) Copies of the

The first of these men, Count Barlaimont, belonged to an ancient Flemish family. With respectable talents and constancy of purpose, he was entirely devoted to the interests of the crown. The second, Viglius, was a jurist of extensive erudition, at this time well advanced in years, and with infirmities that might have pressed heavily on a man less patient of toil. He was personally attached to Granvelle; and as his views of government coincided very nearly with that minister's, Viglius was much under his influence. The last of the three, Granvelle, from his large acquaintance with affairs, and his adroitness in managing them, was far superior to his colleagues;²¹ and he soon acquired such an ascendancy over them, that the government may be said to have rested on his shoulders. As there is no man who for some years is to take so prominent a part in the story of the Netherlands, it will be proper to introduce the reader to some acquaintance with his earlier history.

Anthony Perrenot—whose name of Granvelle was derived from an estate purchased by his father—was born in the year 1517, at Besançon, a town in Franche Comté. His father, Nicholas Perrenot, founded the fortunes of the family, and from the humble condition of a poor country attorney rose to the rank of chancellor of the empire. This extraordinary advancement was not owing to caprice, but to his unwearied industry, extensive learning, and a clear and comprehensive intellect, combined with steady devotion to the interests of

regent's commission, as well as of two documents, the one indorsed as "private," the other as "secret" instructions, and all three bearing the date of August 8, 1559, are to be found entire in the Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. II., Appendix, Nos. 2—4.

²¹ "Ma non dal tanto alcuno

dell' altri nè tutt' insieme quanto Monsr. d' Aras solo, il quale per il gran giudicio che ha et per la longa pratica del governo del mondo et nel tentar l'imprese grandi più accorto et più animoso di tutti più destro et più sicuro nel maneggiarle et nel finirle più costante et più risoluto." Relazione di Soriano, MS.

his master, Charles the Fifth. His talent for affairs led him to be employed not merely in official business, but in diplomatic missions of great importance. In short, he possessed the confidence of the emperor to a degree enjoyed by no other subject; and when the chancellor died, in 1550, Charles pronounced his eulogy to Philip in a single sentence, saying that in Granvelle they had lost the man on whose wisdom they could securely repose.²²

Anthony Perrenot, distinguished from his father in later times as Cardinal Granvelle, was the eldest of eleven children. In his childhood he discovered such promise, that the chancellor bestowed much pains personally on his instruction. At fourteen he was sent to Padua, and after some years was removed to Louvain, then the university of greatest repute in the Netherlands. It was not till later that the seminary of Douay was founded, under the auspices of Philip the Second.²³ At the university, the young Perrenot soon distinguished himself by the vivacity of his mind, the acuteness of his perceptions, an industry fully equal to his father's, and remarkable powers of acquisition. Besides a large range of academic study, he made himself master of seven languages, so as to read and converse in them with fluency. He seemed to have little relish for the amusements of the youth of his own age. His greatest amusement was a book. Under this incessant application his health gave way, and for a time his studies were suspended.

²² "Mio figliuolo et io e voi habbiamo perso un buon letto di riposo,"—literally, a good bed to repose on. Leti, Vita di Filippo II, tom. I. p. 195.

²³ A principal motive of Philip the Second in founding this university, according to Hopper, was to give

Flemings the means of getting a knowledge of the French language without going abroad into foreign countries for it. Recueil et Mémoires des Troubles des Pays-Bas, cap. 2, ap. Hoyneck, Analecta Belgica, tom. II.

Whether from his father's preference or his own, young Granvelle embraced the ecclesiastical profession. At the age of twenty-one he was admitted to orders. The son of the chancellor was not slow in his advancement, and he was soon possessed of several good benefices. But the ambitious and worldly temper of Granvelle was not to be satisfied with the humble duties of the ecclesiastic. It was not long before he was called to court by his father, and there a brilliant career was opened to his aspiring genius.

The young man soon showed such talent for business, and such shrewd insight into character, as, combined with the stores of learning he had at his command, made his services of great value to his father. He accompanied the chancellor on some of his public missions, among others to the Council of Trent, where the younger Granvelle, who had already been promoted to the see of Arras, first had the opportunity of displaying that subtle, insinuating eloquence, which captivated as much as it convinced.

The emperor saw with satisfaction the promise afforded by the young statesman, and looked forward to the time when he would prove the same pillar of support to his administration that his father had been before him. Nor was that time far distant. As the chancellor's health declined, the son became more intimately associated with his father in the counsels of the emperor. He justified this confidence by the unwearied toil with which he devoted himself to the business of the cabinet; a toil to which even night seemed to afford no respite. He sometimes employed five secretaries at once, dictating to them in as many different languages.²⁴ The same

²⁴ "On remarque de lui ce qu'on avoit remarqué de César, et même d'une façon plus singulière, c'est qu'il occupoit cinq secrétaires à la fois, en leur dictant des lettres en différentes langues." Levesque,

thing, or something as miraculous, has been told of other remarkable men, both before and since. As a mere *tour de force*, Granvelle may possibly have amused himself with it. But it was not in this way that the correspondence was written which furnishes the best key to the events of the time. If it had been so written, it would never have been worth the publication.

Every evening Granvelle presented himself before the emperor, and read to him the programme he had prepared of the business of the following day, with his own suggestions.²⁵ The foreign ambassadors who resided at the court were surprised to find the new minister so entirely in the secrets of his master; and that he was as well instructed in all their doings as the emperor himself.²⁶ In short, the confidence of Charles, given slowly and with much hesitation, was at length bestowed as freely on the son as it had been on the father. The two Granvelles may be truly said to have been the two persons who most possessed the confidence of the emperor, from the time that he took the reins of government into his own hands.

When raised to the see of Arras, Granvelle was but twenty-five years old. It is rare that the mitre has descended on a man of a more ambitious spirit. Yet Granvelle was not averse to the good things of the world, nor altogether insensible to its pomps and vanities. He affected great state in his manner of living, and

Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire du Cardinal de Granvelle, (Paris, 1753,) tom. I. p. 215.

²⁵ "Di modo che ogni sera sopra un foglio di carta che lor chiamono beliero esso Granvela, manda all' Imperatore il suo parere del quale sopra li negotii del seguente giorno sua maestà ha da fare." Relatione di Soriano, MS.

²⁶ "Havendo prima lui senza ri-

solvere cosa alcuna mandata ogn' informatione et ogni particolare negotiatione con gli Ambasciatori et altri ad esso Monsignore, di modo che et io et tutti gl' altri Ambasciatori si sono avveduti essendo rimesse a Monsignor Granvela che sua Eccellenza ha inteso ogni particolare et quasi ogni parola passata fra l'Imperatore et loro." Ibid.

thus necessity, no less than taste, led him to covet the possession of wealth as well as of power. He obtained both; and his fortunes were rapidly advancing when, by the abdication of his royal master, the sceptre passed into the hands of Philip the Second.

Charles recommended Granvelle to his son as every way deserving of his confidence. Granvelle knew that the best recommendation—the only effectual one—must come from himself. He studied carefully the character of his new sovereign, and showed a wonderful flexibility in conforming to his humors. The ambitious minister proved himself no stranger to those arts by which great minds, as well as little ones, sometimes condescend to push their fortunes in a court.

Yet, in truth, Granvelle did not always do violence to his own inclinations in conforming to those of Philip. Like the king, he did not come rapidly to results, but pondered long, and viewed a question in all its bearings, before arriving at a decision. He had, as we have seen, the same patient spirit of application as Philip, so that both may be said to have found their best recreation in labor. Neither was he less zealous than the king for the maintenance of the true faith, though his accommodating nature, if left to itself, might have sanctioned a different policy from that dictated by the stern, uncompromising spirit of his master.

Granvelle's influence was further aided by the charms of his personal intercourse. His polished and insinuating manners seem to have melted even the icy reserve of Philip. He maintained his influence by his singular tact in suggesting hints for carrying out his master's policy, in such a way that the suggestion might seem to have come from the king himself. Thus careful not to alarm the jealousy of his sovereign, he was con-

tent to forego the semblance of power for the real possession of it.²⁷

It was soon seen that he was as well settled in the confidence of Philip as he had previously been in that of Charles. Notwithstanding the apparent distribution of power between the regent and the several councils, the arrangements made by the king were such as to throw the real authority into the hands of Granvelle. Thus the rare example was afforded of the same man continuing the favorite of two successive sovereigns. Granvelle did not escape the usual fate of favorites; and whether from the necessity of the case, or that, as some pretend, he did not on his elevation bear his faculties too meekly, no man was so generally and so heartily detested throughout the country.²⁸

Before leaving the Netherlands, Philip named the governors of the several provinces,—the nominations, for the most part, only confirming those already in office. Egmont had the governments of Flanders and Artois; the prince of Orange, those of Holland, Zealand,

²⁷ A striking example of the manner in which Granvelle conveyed his own views to the king is shown by a letter to Philip dated Brussels, July 17, 1559, in which the minister suggests the arguments that might be used to the authorities of Brabant for enforcing the edicts. The letter shows, too, that Granvelle, if possessed naturally of a more tolerant spirit than Philip, could accommodate himself so far to the opposite temper of his master as to furnish him with some very plausible grounds for persecution. *Papiers d'Etat de Granvelle*, tom. V. p. 614.

²⁸ Levesque, *Mémoires de Granvelle*, tom. I. p. 207 et seq.—Courchetet, *Histoire du Cardinal de Granvelle*, (Bruxelles, 1784,) tom. I. passim.—Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, p. 85.—Burgon, *Life of Gresham*,

vol. I. p. 267.

The author of the *Mémoires de Granvelle* was a member of a Benedictine convent in Besançon, which, by a singular chance, became possessed of the manuscripts of Cardinal Granvelle, more than a century after his death. The good Father Levesque made but a very indifferent use of the rich store of materials placed at his disposal, by digesting them into two duodecimo volumes, in which the little that is of value seems to have been pilfered from the unpublished MS. of a previous biographer of the Cardinal. The work of the Benedictine, however, has the merit of authenticity. I shall take occasion, hereafter, to give a more particular account of the Granvelle collection.

Utrecht, and West Friesland. The commission to William, running in the usual form, noticed "the good, loyal, and notable services he had rendered both to the emperor and his present sovereign."²⁹ The command of two battalions of the Spanish army was also given to the two nobles,—a poor contrivance for reconciling the nation to the continuance of these detested troops in the country.

Philip had anxiously waited for the arrival of the papal bull which was to authorize the erection of the bishoprics. Granvelle looked still more anxiously for it. He had read the signs of the coming storm, and would gladly have encountered it when the royal presence might have afforded some shelter from its fury. But the court of Rome moved at its usual dilatory pace, and the apostolic nuncio did not arrive with the missive till the eve of Philip's departure,—too late for him to witness its publication.³⁰

Having completed all his arrangements, about the middle of August the king proceeded to Zealand, where, in the port of Flushing, lay a gallant fleet, waiting to take him and the royal suite to Spain. It consisted of fifty Spanish and forty other vessels,—all well manned, and victualled for a much longer voyage.³¹ Philip was escorted to the place of embarkation by a large body of Flemish nobles, together with the foreign ambassadors and the duke and duchess of Savoy. A curious scene is reported to have taken place as he was about to go

²⁹ "En considération des bons, léaux, notables et agréables services faits par lui, pendant plusieurs années, à feu l'Empereur, et depuis au Roi." *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. I. p. 184.

³⁰ "Vandervynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. II. p. 69 et seq.—*Strada, De Bello Belgico*, p. 40.—

Hopper, *Recueil et Mémorial*, cap. 2.—*Francia, Alborotos de Flandes*, MS.

³¹ The royal larder seems to have been well supplied in the article of poultry, to judge from one item, mentioned by Meteren, of fifteen thousand capons. *Hist. des Pays-Bas*, tom. I. fol. 25.