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HISTORY
OF
THE REIGN
OF
PHILIP II.

PRESCOTT
VOL. II.



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H I S T O R Y

OF

THE REIGN

OF

PHILIP THE SECOND.

Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA


JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

VOL. II.



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H I S T O R Y

OF

THE REIGN

OF

PHILIP THE SECOND,

KING OF SPAIN.



BY WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT,

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF HISTORY AT MADRID, ETC.

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HISTORY

OF

PHILIP THE SECOND.

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JUNTA DE ANDALUCIA

BOOK II.

(CONTINUED.)

VOL. II.

B

HISTORY
OF
PHILIP THE SECOND.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONFEDERATES.

Design of the Confederates. — They enter Brussels. — The Petition. —
The Gueux.

1566.

THE party of the malecontents in the Netherlands comprehended persons of very different opinions, who were by no means uniformly satisfied with the reasonable objects proposed by the compromise. Some demanded entire liberty of conscience. Others would not have stopped short of a revolution that would enable the country to shake off the Spanish yoke. And another class of men without principle of any kind — such as are too often thrown up in strong political fermentations — looked to these intestine troubles as offering the means of repairing their own fortunes out of the wreck of their country's. Yet, with the exception of the last, there were few who

would not have been content to accept the compromise as the basis of their demands.

The winter had passed away, however, and the confederacy had wrought no change in the conduct of the government. Indeed, the existence of the confederacy would not appear to have been known to the regent till the latter part of February, 1566. It was not till the close of the following month that it was formally disclosed to her by some of the great lords.¹ If it was known to her before, Margaret must have thought it prudent to affect ignorance, till some overt action on the part of the league called for her notice.

It became, then, a question with the members of the league what was next to be done. It was finally resolved to present a petition, in the name of the whole body, to the regent, a measure which, as already intimated, received the assent, if not the approbation, of the prince of Orange. The paper was prepared, as it would seem, in William's own house at Brussels, by his brother Louis; and was submitted, we are told, to the revision of the prince, who thus had it in his power to mitigate, in more than one instance, the vehemence, or rather violence, of the expressions.²

To give greater effect to the petition, it was determined that a large deputation from the league should

¹ Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. pp. 399. 401.

² "Libello ab Orangio cæterisque in lenius verborum genus commutato." Vander Haer, *De Initiis Tumultuum*, p. 207.

Alonzo del Canto, the royal *contador*, takes a different, and by no means so probable a view of Wil-

liam's amendments. "Quand les seigneurs tenaient leurs assemblées secrètes à Bruxelles, c'étoit en la maison du prince d'Orange, où ils entraient de nuit par la porte de derrière: ce fut là que la requête des confédérés fut modifiée et rendue pire." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 411.

accompany its presentation to the regent. Notice was given to four hundred of the confederates to assemble at the beginning of April. They were to come well-mounted and armed, prepared at once to proceed to Brussels. Among the number thus enrolled, we find three gentlemen of Margaret's own household, as well as some members of the companies of *ordonnance* commanded by the prince, and by the Counts Egmont, Hoorne, and other great lords.³

The duchess, informed of these proceedings, called a meeting of the council of state and the knights of the Golden Fleece, to determine on the course to be pursued. The discussion was animated, as there was much difference of opinion. Some agreed with Count Barlaimont in regarding the measure in the light of a menace. Such a military array could have no other object than to overawe the government, and was an insult to the regent. In the present excited state of the people, it would be attended with the greatest danger to allow their entrance into the capital.⁴

The prince of Orange, who had yielded to Margaret's earnest entreaties that he would attend this meeting, took a different view of the matter. The number of the delegates, he said, only proved the interest taken in the petition. They were men of rank, some of them kinsmen or personal friends of those present. Their characters and position in the country were sufficient sureties that they meditated no violence to the state. They were the representa-

³ Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. ii. p. 59. et seq.

⁴ Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 213.

tives of an ancient order of nobility; and it would be strange indeed, if they were to be excluded from the right of petition, enjoyed by the humblest individual. —In the course of the debate, William made some personal allusions to his own situation, delivering himself with great warmth. His enemies, he said, had the royal ear, and would persuade the king to kill him and confiscate his property.⁵ He was even looked upon as the head of the confederacy. It was of no use for him to give his opinion in the council, where it was sure to be misinterpreted. All that remained for him was to ask leave to resign his offices, and withdraw to his estates.⁶ Count Hoorne followed in much the same key, inveighing bitterly against the ingratitude of Philip. The two nobles yielded, at length, so far to Margaret's remonstrances, as to give their opinions on the course to be pursued. But when she endeavored to recall them to their duty by reminding them of their oaths to the king, they boldly replied, they would willingly lay down their lives for their country, but would never draw sword for the edicts or the Inquisition.⁷—William's views in regard to the admission of the confederates into Brussels were supported by much the greater part of the assembly, and finally prevailed with the regent.

On the third of April, 1566, two hundred of the confederates entered the gates of Brussels. They

⁵ "Homines genti Nassaviæ infensissimos de nece ipsius, deque fortunarum omnium publicatione agitavisse cum Rege." *Ibid.*, p. 215. See also Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 403.

⁶ Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. ii. p. 404.

⁷ "Ils répondirent qu'ils ne voulaient pas se battre pour la maintenance de l'inquisition et des placards, mais qu'ils le feraient pour la conservation du pays." *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

were on horseback, and each man was furnished with a brace of pistols in his holsters, wearing in other respects only the usual arms of a private gentleman. The Viscount Brederode and Louis of Nassau rode at their head.⁸ They prudently conformed to William's advice, not to bring any foreigners in their train, and to enter the city quietly, without attempting to stir the populace by any military display, or the report of fire-arms.⁹ Their coming was welcomed with general joy by the inhabitants, who greeted them as a band of patriots ready to do battle for the liberties of the country. They easily found quarters in the houses of the principal citizens; and Louis and Brederode were lodged in the mansion of the Prince of Orange.¹⁰

On the following day a meeting of the confederates was held at the hotel of Count Culemborg, where they listened to a letter which Brederode had just received from Spain, informing him of the death of Morone, a Flemish nobleman well known to them all, who had perished in the flames of the Inquisition.¹¹ With feelings exasperated by this gloomy recital, they renewed, in the most solemn manner, their oaths of fidelity to the league. An application was then made to Margaret for leave to lay their petition before her. The day following was assigned for the act; and at noon, on the fifth of April, the whole company walked in solemn procession through the streets of Brussels

⁸ "Eo ipso die sub vesperam conjurati Bruxellas advenere. Erant illi in equis omnino ducenti, forensi veste ornati, gestabantque singuli bina ante ephippium sclopeta, præibat ductor Brederodius, juxtaque Ludovicus Nassavius." Strada,

De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 221.

⁹ Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. ii. pp. 74, 75.

¹⁰ Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 221.

¹¹ Ibid., ubi supra.

to the palace of the regent. She received them, surrounded by the lords, in the great hall adjoining the council-chamber. As they defiled before her, the confederates ranged themselves along the sides of the apartment. Margaret seems to have been somewhat disconcerted by the presence of so martial an array within the walls of her palace. But she soon recovered herself, and received them graciously.¹²

Brederode was selected to present the petition, and he prefaced it by a short address. They had come in such numbers, he said, the better to show their respect to the regent, and the deep interest they took in the cause. They had been accused of opening a correspondence with foreign princes, which he affirmed to be a malicious slander, and boldly demanded to be confronted with the authors of it.¹³—Notwithstanding this stout denial, it is very possible the audience did not place implicit confidence in the assertions of the speaker. He then presented the petition to the regent, expressing the hope that she would approve of it, as dictated only by their desire to promote the glory of the king and the good of the country. If this was its object, Margaret replied, she doubted not she should be content with it.¹⁴ The following day was named for them again to wait on her, and receive her answer.

¹² Ibid. pp., 222. 226.—Vander-vynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. ii. p. 138.—Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 40.

¹³ “Nobiles enixi eam rogare, ut proferat nomina eorum qui hoc detulere: cogatque illos accusationem

legitimè ac palàm adornare.” Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 222.

¹⁴ “Quando nonnisi Regis dignitatem, patriæque salutem spectabant, haud dubiè postulatis satisfacturam.” Ibid., ubi supra.

The instrument began with a general statement of the distresses of the land; much like that in the compromise, but couched in more respectful language. The petitioners had hoped that the action of the great lords, or of the states-general, would have led to some reform. But finding these had not moved in the matter, while the evil went on increasing from day to day, until ruin was at the gate, they had come to beseech her highness to lay the subject herself before the king, and implore his majesty to save the country from perdition by the instant abolition of both the Inquisition and the edicts. Far from wishing to dictate laws to their sovereign, they humbly besought her to urge on him the necessity of convoking the states-general, and devising with them some effectual remedy for the existing evils. Meanwhile they begged of her to suspend the further execution of the laws in regard to religion until his majesty's pleasure could be known. If their prayer were not granted, they at least were absolved from all responsibility as to the consequences, now that they had done their duty as true and loyal subjects.¹⁵—The business-like character of this document forms a contrast to the declamatory style of the compromise; and in its temperate tone, particularly, we may fancy we recognize the touches of the more prudent hand of the prince of Orange.

On the sixth, the confederates again assembled in the palace of the regent, to receive her answer. They were in greater force than before, having been joined

¹⁵ The copy of this document given by Groen is from the papers of Count Louis of Nassau. Archives

de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. ii. pp. 80-84.

by a hundred and fifty of their brethren, who had entered the city the night previous, under the command of Counts Culemborg and Berg. They were received by Margaret in the same courteous manner as on the preceding day, and her answer was made to them in writing, being endorsed on their own petition.

She announced in it her purpose of using all her influence with her royal brother to persuade him to accede to their wishes. They might rely on his doing all that was conformable to his *natural and accustomed benignity*.¹⁶ She had herself, with the advice of her council and the knights of the Golden Fleece, prepared a scheme for moderating the edicts, to be laid before his majesty, which she trusted would satisfy the nation. They must, however, be aware, that she herself had no power to suspend the execution of the laws. But she would send instructions to the inquisitors to proceed with all discretion in the exercise of their functions, until they should learn the king's pleasure.¹⁷ She trusted that the confederates would so demean themselves as not to make it necessary to give different orders. All this she had done with the greater readiness, from her conviction that they had no design to make any innovation in the established religion of the country, but desired rather to uphold it in all its vigour.

To this reply, as gracious in its expressions, and as

¹⁶ "Lesquels ne doivent espérer, sinon toute chose digne et conforme à sa *bénignité naïve et accoustumée*." Ibid., p. 84.

The phrase must have sounded oddly enough in the ears of the confederates.

¹⁷ "Pendant que s'attend sa réponse, Son Alteze donnera ordre, que tant par les inquisiteurs, où il y en a eu jusques ores, que par les officiers respectivement, soit procédé discrètement et modestement." Ibid., p. 85.

favorable in its import, as the league could possibly have expected, they made a formal answer in writing, which they presented in a body to the duchess, on the eighth of the month. They humbly thanked her for the prompt attention she had given to their petition, but would have been still more contented if her answer had been more full and explicit. They knew the embarrassments under which she labored, and they thanked her for the assurance she had given,— which, it may be remarked, she never did give,— that all proceedings connected with the Inquisition and the edicts should be stayed until his majesty's pleasure should be ascertained. They were most anxious to conform to whatever the king, *with the advice and consent of the states-general*, duly assembled, should determine in matters of religion¹⁸; and they would show their obedience by taking such order for their own conduct as should give entire satisfaction to her highness.

To this the duchess briefly replied, that, if there were any cause for offence hereafter, it would be chargeable, not on her, but on them. She prayed the confederates henceforth to desist from their secret practices, and to invite no new member to join their body.¹⁹

This brief and admonitory reply seems not to have been to the taste of the petitioners, who would willingly have drawn from Margaret some expression

¹⁸ "Ne desirons sinon d'ensuyvre tout ce que par Sa Ma^{te}. avecq l'advís et consentement des états-généraux assabléz serat ordonné pour le maintenement de l'ancienne religion." Ibid. p. 86.

¹⁹ "Vous priens de ne passer plus avant par petites practiques secrètes et de n'attirer plus personne." Ibid., p. 88.

that might be construed into a sanction of their proceedings. After a short deliberation among themselves, they again addressed her by the mouth of one of their own number, the lord of Kerdes. The speaker, after again humbly thanking the regent for her favorable answer, said that it would have given still greater satisfaction to his associates, if she would but have declared, in the presence of the great lords assembled, that she took the union of the confederates in good part and for the service of the king²⁰; and he concluded with promising that they would henceforth do all in their power to give contentment to her highness.

To all this the duchess simply replied, she had no doubt of it. When again pressed by the persevering deputy to express her opinion of this assembly, she bluntly answered, she could form no judgment in the matter.²¹ — She gave pretty clear evidence, however, of her real opinion, soon after, by dismissing the three gentlemen of her household whom we have mentioned as having joined the league.²²

²⁰ "De bonne part et pour le service du Roy." *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²¹ "Et comme ma dite dame respondit qu'elle le croyt ainsy, n'affermant nullement en quelle part elle recevoit nostre assemblée, luy fut replicqué par le dit Sr de Kerdes: Madame, il plairast à V. A. en dire ce qu'elle en sent, à quoy elle respondit qu'elle ne pouvoit juger." *Ibid.*, ubi supra. — See also Strada, (*De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 225.), who, however, despatches this interview with the Seigneur de Kerdes in a couple of sentences.

²² Count Louis drew up a petition to the duchess, or rather a re-

monstrance, requesting her to state the motives of this act, that people might not interpret it into a condemnation of their proceedings. To this Margaret replied, with some spirit, that it was her own private affair, and she claimed the right that belonged to every other individual, of managing her own household in her own way. — One will readily believe that Louis did not act by the advice of his brother in this matter. See the correspondence as collected by the diligent Groen, *Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, tom. ii. pp. 100—105.

As Margaret found that the confederates were not altogether satisfied with her response to their petition, she allowed Count Hoogstraten, one of her councillors, to inform some of them, privately, that she had already written to the provinces to have all processes in affairs of religion stayed until Philip's decision should be known. To leave no room for distrust, the count was allowed to show them copies of the letters.²³

The week spent by the league in Brussels was a season of general jubilee. At one of the banquets given at Culemborg House, where three hundred confederates were present, Brederode presided. During the repast he related to some of the company, who had arrived on the day after the petition was delivered, the manner in which it had been received by the duchess. She seemed at first disconcerted, he said, by the number of the confederates, but was reassured by Barlaimont, who told her "they were nothing but a crowd of beggars."²⁴ This greatly incensed some of the company,—with whom, probably, it was too true for a jest. But Brederode, taking it more good-humoredly, said that he and his friends had no objection to the name, since they were ready at any time to become beggars for the service of their king and country.²⁵ This sally was received with great applause by the guests, who, as they drank

²³ Meteren, *Hist. des Pays-Bas*, fol. 41.

²⁴ "Illum quidem, ut Gubernatrix animum firmaret, ita locutum, quasi nihil ei à mendicis ac nebulonibus pertimescendum esset."

Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 226.

²⁵ "Se verò libenter appellationem illam, quæ ea cumque esset, accipere, ac Regis patriæque causâ Gheusios se mendicosque re ipsâ futuros." *Ibid.*, ubi supra.

to one another, shouted forth, "*Vivent les Gueux!*" — "Long live the beggars!"

Brederode, finding the jest took so well, — an event, indeed, for which he seems to have been prepared, — left the room, and soon returned with a beggar's wallet, and a wooden bowl, such as was used by the mendicant fraternity in the Netherlands. Then, pledging the company in a bumper, he swore to devote his life and fortune to the cause. The wallet and the bowl went round the table; and, as each of the merry guests drank in turn to his confederates, the shout arose of "*Vivent les Gueux!*" until the hall rang with the mirth of the revellers.²⁶

It happened that at the time the prince of Orange and the Counts Egmont and Hoorne were passing by on their way to the council. Their attention was attracted by the noise, and they paused a moment, when William, who knew well the temper of the jovial company, proposed that they should go in, and endeavour to break up their revels. "We may have some business of the council to transact with these men this evening," he said, "and at this rate they will hardly be in a condition for it." The appearance of the three nobles gave a fresh impulse to the boisterous merriment of the company; and as the new-comers pledged their friends in the wine-cup, it was received with the same thundering acclamations of "*Vivent les Gueux!*"²⁷ This incident, of so little

²⁶ Ibid. ubi supra. — Vander Haer, *De Initiis Tumultuum*, p. 211. — *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. i. p. 149. — Vandervynckt, *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. p. 142. et seq. — This last author tells

the story with uncommon animation.

²⁷ So says Strada. (*De Bello Belgico*, tom. ii. p. 227.) But the duchess, in a letter written in cipher to the king, tells him that

importance in itself, was afterwards made of consequence by the turn that was given to it in the prosecution of the two unfortunate noblemen who accompanied the prince of Orange.

Every one knows the importance of a popular name to a faction, — a *nom. de guerre*, under which its members may rally and make head together as an independent party. Such the name of "*Gueux*" now became to the confederates. It soon was understood to signify those who were opposed to the government, and, in a wider sense, to the Roman Catholic religion. In every language in which the history of these acts has been recorded, — the Latin, German, Spanish, or English, — the French term *Gueux* is ever employed to designate this party of malecontents in the Netherlands.²⁸

It now became common to follow out the original idea by imitations of the different articles used by mendicants. Staffs were procured, after the fashion of those in the hands of the pilgrims, but more elaborately carved. Wooden bowls, spoons, and knives became in great request, though richly inlaid with silver, according to the fancy or wealth of the possessor. Medals resembling those stuck by the beggars

the three lords pledged the company in the same toast of "*Vivent les Gueux*," that had been going the rounds of the table. "Le prince d'Oranges et les comtes d'Egmont et de Hornes vinrent à la maison de Culembourg après de dîner; ils burent avec les confédérés, et crièrent aussi *vivent les gueux!*" Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 409.

²⁸ Strada, De Bello Belgico,

tom. i. p. 227. — Vandervynckt, Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. ii. p. 143.

The word *gueux* is derived by Vander Haer from *Goth*, in the old German form, *Geute*. "Eandem esse eam vocem gallicam quæ esset Teutonum vox, Geuten, quam maiore vel Gothis genti Barbaræ tribuissent, vel odio Gothici nominis convicium fecissent." De Initii Tumultuum, p. 212.

in their bonnets were worn as a badge; and the "Gueux penny," as it was called,—a gold or silver coin,—was hung from the neck, bearing on one side the effigy of Philip, with the inscription, "*Fideles au roi*;" and on the other, two hands grasping a beggar's wallet, with the further legend, "*jusques à porter la besace*;"—"Faithful to the king, even to carrying the wallet."²⁹ Even the garments of the mendicant were affected by the confederates, who used them as a substitute for their family liveries; and troops of their retainers, clad in the ash-gray habiliments of the begging friars, might be seen in the streets of Brussels and the other cities of the Netherlands.³⁰

On the tenth of April, the confederates quitted Brussels, in the orderly manner in which they had entered it; except that, on issuing from the gate, they announced their departure by firing a salute in honor of the city which had given them so hospitable a welcome.³¹ Their visit to Brussels had not only created a great sensation in the capital itself, but throughout the country. Hitherto the league had worked in darkness, as it were, like a band of secret conspirators. But they had now come forward into the light of day, boldly presenting themselves before

²⁹ Vander Haer, *De Initiiis Tumultuum*, loc. cit. — Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 228.

Arend, in his *Algemeene Geschiedenis des Vaderlands*, has given engravings of these medals, on which the devices and inscriptions were not always precisely the same. Some of these mendicant paraphernalia are still to be found in ancient cabinets in the Low

Countries, or were in the time of Vandervynckt. See his *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. p. 143.

³⁰ Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 228. — Vander Haer, *De Initiiis Tumultuum*, p. 212.

³¹ "En sortant de la porte de la ville, ils ont fait une grande décharge de leurs pistolets." *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. i. p. 408.

the regent, and demanding redress of the wrongs under which the nation was groaning. The people took heart, as they saw this broad ægis extended over them to ward off the assaults of arbitrary power. Their hopes grew stronger, as they became assured of the interposition of the regent and the great lords in their favor; and they could hardly doubt that the voice of the country, backed as it was by that of the government, would make itself heard at Madrid, and that Philip would at length be compelled to abandon a policy which menaced him with the loss of the fairest of his provinces. — They had yet to learn the character of their sovereign.



P.C. Monumental de la Alhambra y Generalife
CONSEJERÍA DE CULTURA

CHAPTER XI.

FREEDOM OF WORSHIP.

The Edicts suspended. — The Sectaries. — The Public Preachings. — Attempt to suppress them. — Meeting at St. Trond. — Philip's Concessions.

1566.

ON quitting Brussels, the confederates left there four of their number as a sort of committee to watch over the interests of the league. The greater part of the remainder, with Broderode at their head, took the road to Antwerp. They were hardly established in their quarters in that city, when the building was surrounded by thousands of the inhabitants, eager to give their visitors a tumultuous welcome. Broderode came out on the balcony, and, addressing the crowd, told them that he had come there, at the hazard of his life, to rescue them from the miseries of the Inquisition. He called on his audience to take him as their leader in this glorious work; and as the doughty champion pledged them in a goblet of wine which he had brought with him from the table, the mob answered by such a general shout as was heard in the furthest corners of the city.¹ Thus a relation was

¹ "Vos si mecum in hoc preclaro opere consentitis, agite, et qui vestrum salvam libertatem, me duce volent, propinatum hoc sibi poculum, benevolentiae meae signi-

ficationem genialiter accipiant, idque manûs indicio contestentur." Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 231.

openly established between the confederates and the people, who were to move forward together in the great march of the revolution.

Soon after the departure of the confederates from Brussels, the regent despatched an embassy to Madrid to acquaint the king with the recent proceedings, and to urge his acquiescence in the reforms solicited by the league. The envoys chosen were the Baron de Montigny — who had taken charge, it may be remembered, of a similar mission before — and the Marquis of Bergen, a nobleman of liberal principles, but who stood high in the regard of the regent.² Neither of the parties showed any alacrity to undertake a commission which was to bring them so closely in contact with the dread monarch in his capital. Bergen found an apology for some time in a wound from a tennis-ball, which disabled his leg; an ominous accident, interpreted by the chroniclers of the time into an intimation from Heaven of the disastrous issue of the mission.³ Montigny reached Madrid some time before his companion, on the 17th of June, and met with a gracious reception from Philip, who listened with a benignant air to the recital of the measures suggested for the relief of the country, terminating, as usual, with an application for a summons of the states-general, as the most effectual remedy for the disorders. But although the envoy was admitted

² "Estans mesmes personnages si prudes, discrets et tant imbus de tout ce que convient remonstrer a V. M., outre l'affection que j'ay toujours trouvé en eux, tant adonnez au service d'icelle." Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, p. 24.

³ "Crederes id ab illius accidisse genio, qui non contentus admonendo aurem ei vellicasse, nunc quasi compedibus injectis, ne infaustum iter ingrederetur, attineret pedes." Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 235.

to more than one audience, he obtained no more comfortable assurance, than that the subject should receive the most serious consideration of his majesty.⁴

Meanwhile the regent was busy in digesting the plan of compromise to which she had alluded in her reply to the confederates. When concluded, it was sent to the governors of the several provinces, to be laid before their respective legislatures. Their sanction, it was hoped, would recommend its adoption to the people at large. It was first submitted to some of the smaller states, as Artois, Namur, and Luxemburg, as most likely to prove subservient to the wishes of the government. It was then laid before several of the larger states, as Brabant and Flanders, whose determination might be influenced by the example of the others. Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and one or two other provinces, where the spirit of independence was highest, were not consulted at all. Yet this politic management did not entirely succeed; and although some few gave an unconditional assent, most of the provinces coupled their acquiescence with limitations that rendered it of little worth.⁵

This was not extraordinary. The scheme was one which, however large the concessions it involved on the part of the government, fell far short of those demanded by the people. It denounced the penalty of death on all ministers and teachers of the reformed religion, and all who harbored them; and while it

⁴ "Les seules réponses qu'il ait obtenues de S. M., sont qu'elle y pensera, que ces affaires sont de grande importance, etc." Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 426.

⁵ Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 41. — Hopper, Recueil et Mémoires, p. 78. — Vander Haer, De Initiis Tumultuum, p. 216.

greatly mitigated the punishment of other offenders, its few sanguinary features led the people sneeringly to call it, instead of "moderation," the act of "*murderation*."⁶ It fared, indeed, with this compromise of the regent, as with most other half-way measures. It satisfied neither of the parties concerned in it. The king thought it as much too lenient as the people thought it too severe. It never received the royal sanction, and of course never became a law. It would therefore hardly have deserved the time I have bestowed on it, except as evidence of the conciliatory spirit of the regent's administration.

In the same spirit Margaret was careful to urge the royal officers to give a liberal interpretation to the existing edicts, and to show the utmost discretion in their execution. These functionaries were not slow in obeying commands, which released them from so much of the odium that attached to their ungrateful office. The amiable temper of the government received support from a singular fraud which took place at this time. An instrument was prepared, purporting to have come from the knights of the Golden Fleece, in which this body guaranteed to the confederates that no one in the Low Countries should be molested on account of his religion until otherwise determined by the king and the states-general. This document, which carried its spurious origin on its face, was nevertheless eagerly caught up and circulated among the people, ready to believe what they most desired. In vain the regent, as soon as she

⁶ "Ceste moderation, que le peuple apelloit meurderation." Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 41.

heard of it, endeavoured to expose the fraud. It was too late; and the influence of this imposture combined with the tolerant measures of the government to inspire a confidence in the community which was soon visible in its results. Some who had gone into exile returned to their country. Many, who had cherished the new doctrines in secret, openly avowed them; while others who were wavering, now that they were relieved from all fear of consequences, became fixed in their opinions. In short, the Reformation, in some form or other, was making rapid advances over the country.⁷

Of the three great sects who embraced it, the Lutherans, the least numerous, were the most eminent for their rank. The Anabaptists, far exceeding them in number, were drawn almost wholly from the humbler classes of the people. It is singular that this sect, the most quiet and inoffensive of all, should have been uniformly dealt with by the law with peculiar rigor. It may, perhaps, be attributed to the bad name which attached to them from the excesses committed by their brethren, the famous Anabaptists of Münster. The third denomination, the Calvinists, far out-numbered both of the other two. They were also the most active in the spirit of proselytism. They were stimulated by missionaries trained in the schools of Geneva; and as their doctrines spread silently over the land, not only men of piety and learning, but persons of the highest social position, were occasionally drawn within the folds of the sect.

⁷ Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. pp. 233, 234, 239. — Brandt, *Reformation in the Low Countries*, vol. i. p. 170. — See the forged

document mentioned in the text in the *Supplément à Strada*, tom. ii. p. 330.

The head-quarters of the Calvinists were in Flanders, Hainault, Artois, and the provinces contiguous to France. The border land became the residence of French Huguenots, and of banished Flemings, who on this outpost diligently labored in the cause of the Reformation. The press teemed with publications,—vindications of the faith, polemical tracts, treatises, and satires against the Church of Rome and its errors,—those spiritual missiles, in short, which form the usual magazine for controversial warfare. These were distributed by means of peddlers and travelling tinkers, who carried them, in their distant wanderings, to the humblest firesides throughout the country. There they were left to do their work; and the ground was thus prepared for the laborers whose advent forms an epoch in the history of the Reformation.⁸

These were the ministers or missionaries, whose public preaching soon caused a great sensation throughout the land. They first made their appearance in Western Flanders, before small audiences gathered together stealthily in the gloom of the forest and in the silence of night. They gradually emerged into the open plains, thence proceeding to the villages, until, growing bolder with impunity, they showed themselves in the suburbs of the great towns and cities. On these occasions, thousands of the inhabitants, men, women, and children, in too great force for the magistrates to resist them, poured out of the

⁸ Vandervynckt, *Troubles des Pays-Bas*, tom. ii. p. 150. et seq.—*Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche*, p. 127.

gates to hear the preacher. In the centre of the ground a rude staging was erected, with an awning to protect him from the weather. Immediately round this rude pulpit was gathered the more helpless part of the congregation, the women and children. Behind them stood the men, — those in the outer circle usually furnished with arms, — swords, pikes, muskets, — any weapon they could pick up for the occasion. A patrol of horse occupied the ground beyond, to protect the assembly and prevent interruption. A barricade of wagons and other vehicles was thrown across the avenues that led to the place, to defend it against the assaults of the magistrates or the military. Persons stationed along the high roads distributed religious tracts, and invited the passengers to take part in the services.⁹

The preacher was frequently some converted priest or friar, accustomed to speak in public, who, having passed the greater part of his life in battling for the Church, now showed equal zeal in overturning it. It might be, however, that the orator was a layman; some peasant or artisan, who, gifted with more wit, or possibly more effrontery, than his neighbors, felt himself called on to assume the perilous vocation of a preacher. The discourse was in French or Flemish, whichever might be the language spoken in the neighborhood. It was generally of the homely texture suited both to the speaker and his audience. Yet sometimes he descanted on the woes of the land with

⁹ Languet, *Epist. secr.*, quoted by Groen, *Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau*, tom. ii. p. 180.— See also Strada, *De Bello Belgico*,

tom. i. p. 241.—Brandt, *Reformation in the Low Countries*, tom. i. p. 172.

a pathos which drew tears from every eye; and at others gave vent to a torrent of fiery eloquence, that kindled the spirit of the ancient martyr in the bosoms of his hearers.

These lofty flights were too often degraded by coarse and scurrilous invectives against the pope, the clergy, and the Inquisition,—themes, peculiarly grateful to his audience, who testified their applause by as noisy demonstrations as if they had been spectators in a theatre. The service was followed by singing some portion of the Psalms in the French version of Marot, or in a Dutch translation which had recently appeared in Holland¹⁰, and which, although sufficiently rude, passed with the simple people for a wonderful composition. After this, it was common for those who attended to present their infants for baptism; and many couples profited by the occasion to have the marriage ceremony performed with the Calvinistic rites. The exercises were concluded by a collection for the poor of their own denomination. In fine, these meetings, notwithstanding the occasional license of the preacher, seem to have been conducted with a seriousness and decorum which hardly merit the obloquy thrown on them by some of the Catholic writers.

The congregation, it is true, was made up of rather motley materials. Some went out merely to learn what manner of doctrine it was that was taught; others, to hear the singing, where thousands of voices blended together in rude harmony under the canopy

¹⁰ Brandt, Reformation in the Low Countries, ubi supra.

of heaven; others, again, with no better motive than amusement, to laugh at the oddity — perhaps the buffoonery — of the preacher. But far the larger portion of the audience went with the purpose of joining in the religious exercises, and worshipping God in their own way.¹¹ We may imagine what an influence must have been exercised by these meetings, where so many were gathered together, under a sense of common danger, to listen to the words of the teacher, who taught them to hold all human law as light in comparison with the higher law of conscience seated in their own bosoms. Even of those who came to scoff, few there were, probably, who did not go away with some food for meditation, or, it may be, the seeds of future conversion implanted in their breasts.

The first of these public preachings — which began as early as May — took place in the neighborhood of Ghent. Between six and seven thousand persons were assembled. A magistrate of the city, with more valor than discretion, mounted his horse, and, armed with sword and pistol, rode in among the multitude, and undertook to arrest the minister. But the people hastened to his rescue, and dealt so roughly with the unfortunate officer, that he barely escaped with life from their hands.¹²

From Ghent the preachings extended to Ypres, Bruges, and other great towns of Flanders, — always in the suburbs, — to Valenciennes, and to Tournay, in the province of Hainault, where the Reformers

¹¹ Ibid., p. 173.

¹² Ibid., p. 171.

were strong enough to demand a place of worship within the walls. Holland was ready for the Word. Ministers of the *new religion*, as it was called, were sent both to that quarter and to Zealand. Gatherings of great multitudes were held in the environs of Amsterdam, the Hague, Haarlem, and other large towns, at which the magistrates were sometimes to be found mingled with the rest of the burghers.

But the place where these meetings were conducted on the greatest scale was Antwerp, a city containing then more than a hundred thousand inhabitants, and the most important mart for commerce in the Netherlands. It was the great resort of foreigners. Many of these were Huguenots, who, under the pretext of trade, were much more busy with the concerns of their religion. At the meetings without the walls, it was not uncommon for thirteen or fourteen thousand persons to assemble.¹³ Resistance on the part of the magistrates was ineffectual. The mob got possession of the keys of the city; and, as most of the Calvinists were armed, they constituted a formidable force. Conscious of their strength, they openly escorted their ministers back to town, and loudly demanded that some place of worship should be appropriated to them within the walls of Antwerp. The quiet burghers became alarmed. As it was known that in the camp of the Reformers were many reckless and disorderly persons, they feared the town might be given over to pillage. All trade ceased. Many of the merchants

¹³ "Se y sont le dimanche dernier encoires fait deux presches, l'une en françois, l'autre en flamand, en plein jour, et estoient ces deux

assemblées de 13 à 14 mille personnes." Correspondance de Marguerite d'Autriche, p. 65.

secreted their effects, and some prepared to make their escape as speedily as possible.¹⁴

The magistrates, in great confusion, applied to the regent, and besought her to transfer her residence to Antwerp, where her presence might overawe the spirit of sedition. But Margaret's council objected to her placing herself in the hands of so factious a population; and she answered the magistrates by inquiring what guaranty they could give her for her personal safety. They then requested that the prince of Orange, who held the office of *burgrave* of Antwerp, and whose influence with the people was unbounded, might be sent to them. Margaret hesitated as to this; for she had now learned to regard William with distrust, as assuming more and more an unfriendly attitude towards her brother.¹⁵ But she had no alternative, and she requested him to transfer his residence to the disorderly capital, and endeavor to restore it to tranquillity. The prince, on the other hand, disgusted with the course of public affairs, had long wished to withdraw from any share in their management. It was with reluctance he accepted the commission.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-88. — Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 243. — Meteren, *Hist. des Pays-Bas*, fol. 42. — *Correspondance de Philippe II.*, tom. i. p. 433.

A Confession of Faith, which appeared in 1563, was revised by a Calvinistic synod, and reprinted in Antwerp, in May of the present year, 1566. The prefatory letter addressed to King Philip, in which the Reformers appealed to their creed and to their general conduct

as affording the best refutation of the calumnies of their enemies, boldly asserted that their number in the Netherlands at that time was at least a hundred thousand. Brandt, *Reformation in the Low Countries*, vol. i. p. 158.

¹⁵ "La Duquesa, ya demasiado informada de las plasticas inclinaciones y disimulaciones de este Principe, defirió á resolverse en ello." *Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes*, cap. 15. MS.

As he drew near to Antwerp the people flocked out by thousands to welcome him. It would seem as if they hailed him as their deliverer; and every window, verandah, and roof was crowded with spectators as he rode through the gates of the capital.¹⁶ The people ran up and down the streets, singing psalms, or shouting, "*Vivent les Gueux!*" while they thronged round the prince's horse in so dense a mass that it was scarcely possible for him to force a passage.¹⁷ Yet these demonstrations of his popularity were not altogether satisfactory; and he felt no pleasure at being thus welcomed as a chief of the league, which, as we have seen, he was far from regarding with approbation. Waving his hand repeatedly to those around him, he called on them to disperse, impatiently exclaiming, "Take heed what you do, or, by Heaven, you will have reason to rue it."¹⁸ He rode straight to the hall where the magistrates were sitting, and took counsel with them as to the best means of allaying the popular excitement, and of preventing the wealthy burghers from quitting the city. During the few weeks he remained there, the prince conducted affairs so discreetly, as to bring about a better understanding between the authorities and the citizens. He even prevailed on the Calvinists to lay aside their arms. He found more difficulty in persuading them to relinquish the design of appropriating to themselves some place of worship within the walls.

¹⁶ Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 244.

¹⁷ A mob of no less than thirty thousand men, according to William's own statement. "A mon semblant, trouvis, tant hors que dedans la ville, plus de trente mil

hommes." *Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne*, tom. ii. p. 136.

¹⁸ "Viderent, per Deum, quid agerent: ne, si pergerent, eos aliquando poeniteret." Strada, *De Bello Belgico*, tom. i. p. 244.

It was not till William called in the aid of the military to support him, that he compelled them to yield.¹⁹

Thus the spirit of reform was rapidly advancing in every part of the country, — even in presence of the court, under the very eye of the regent. In Brussels the people went through the streets by night, singing psalms, and shouting the war-cry of *Vivent les Gueux!* The merchants and wealthy burghers were to be seen with the insignia of the confederates on their dress.²⁰ Preparations were made for a public preaching without the walls; but the duchess at once declared, that in that event she would make one of the company at the head of her guard, seize the preacher, and hang him up at the gates of the city!²¹ This menace had the desired effect.

During these troublous times, Margaret, however little she may have accomplished, could not be accused of sleeping on her post. She caused fasts to be observed, and prayers to be offered in all the churches, to avert the wrath of Heaven from the land. She did not confine herself to these spiritual weapons, but called on the magistrates of the towns to do their duty, and on all good citizens to support them. She commanded foreigners to leave Antwerp,

¹⁹ For the account of the proceedings at Antwerp, see Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne, tom. ii. pp. 136. 138. 140. et seq. — Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. pp. 244–248. — Meteren, Hist. des Pays-Bas, fol. 42. — Hopper, Recueil et Mémorial, pp. 90, 91. — Brandt, Reformation in the Low Countries, vol. i. pp. 173–176. — Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes, MS.

²⁰ “Insignia etiam à mercatoribus usurpari cœpta.” Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 238.

²¹ “Ils auraient prêché hors de Bruxelles, si Madame n’y avait pourvu, allant jusqu’à dire qu’avec sa personne, sa maison et sa garde, elle s’y opposerait, et ferait pendre en sa présence les ministres.” Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. i. p. 447.

except those only who were there for traffic. She caused placards to be everywhere posted up, reciting the terrible penalties of the law against heretical teachers and those who abetted them; and she offered a reward of six hundred florins to whoever should bring any such offender to punishment.²² She strengthened the garrisoned towns, and would have levied a force to overawe the refractory; but she had not the funds to pay for it. She endeavored to provide these by means of loans from the great clergy and the principal towns; but with indifferent success. Most of them were already creditors of the government, and they liked the security too little to make further advances. In her extremity, Margaret had no resource but the one so often tried,—that of invoking the aid of her brother. “I have no refuge,” she wrote, “but in God and your majesty. It is with anguish and dismay I must admit that my efforts have wholly failed to prevent the public preaching, which has spread over every quarter of the country.”²³ She bitterly complains, in another letter, that, after “so many pressing applications, she should be thus left, without aid and without instructions, to grope her way at random.”²⁴ She

²² “So pena de proceder contra los Predicadores ministros y semejantes con el ultimo suplicio y confiscacion de hacienda por aplicarlo al provecho de los que havian la aprehension de ellos y por falta de hacienda, su magestad mandará librar del suyo seiscientos florines.” Renom de Francia, Alborotos de Flandes, MS.

²³ “Je suis forcée avecq douleur et angoisse d’esprit lui dire de re-

chief que nonobstant tous les devoirs que je fais journellement, Je ne puis remédier ny empêcher les assemblées des presches publicques.” Correspondance de Marguerite d’Autriche, p. 72.

²⁴ “Sains aide et sans ordres, de manière que, dans tout ce qu’elle fait, elle doit aller en tâtonnant et au hasard.” Correspondance de Philippe II., tom. ii. p. 428.

again beseeches Philip to make the concessions demanded, in which event the great lords assure her of their support in restoring order.

It was the policy of the cabinet of Madrid not to commit itself. The royal answers were brief, vague, never indicating a new measure, generally intimating satisfaction with the conduct of the regent, and throwing as far as possible all responsibility on her shoulders.

But besides his sister's letters, the king was careful to provide himself with other sources of information respecting the state of the Netherlands. From some of these the accounts he received of the conduct of the great lords were even less favorable than hers. A letter from the secretary, Armenteros, speaks of the difficulty he finds in fathoming the designs of the prince of Orange,—a circumstance which he attributes to his probable change of religion. "He relies much," says the writer, "on the support he receives in Germany, on his numerous friends at home, and on the general distrust entertained of the king. The prince is making preparations in good season," he concludes, "for defending himself against your majesty."²⁵

Yet Philip did not betray any consciousness of this

²⁵ "Le prince se prépare de longue main à la défense qu'il sera forcé de faire contre le Roi." *Ibid.*, p. 431.

It was natural that the relations of William with the party of reform should have led to the persuasion that he had returned to the opinions in which he had been early educated. These were Lutheran. There is no reason to suppose that

at the present time he had espoused the doctrines of Calvin. The intimation of Armenteros respecting the prince's change of religion seems to have made a strong impression on Philip. On the margin of the letter he wrote against the passage, "No one has said this so unequivocally before;"—"No lo ha escrito nadie así claro."

unfriendly temper in the nobles. To the prince of Orange, in particular, he wrote: "You err in imagining that I have not entire confidence in you. Should any one seek to do you an ill office with me, I should not be so light as to give ear to him, having had so large experience of your loyalty and your services."²⁶ "This is not the time," he adds, "for men like you to withdraw from public affairs." But William was the last man to be duped by these fair words. When others inveighed against the conduct of the regent, William excused her by throwing the blame on Philip. "Resolved to deceive all," he said, "he begins by deceiving his sister."²⁷

It was about the middle of July that an event occurred which caused still greater confusion in the affairs of the Netherlands. This was a meeting of the confederates at St. Trond, in the neighborhood of Liege. They assembled, two thousand in number, with Count Louis and Brederode at their head. Their great object was to devise some means for their personal security. They were aware that they were held responsible, to some extent, for the late religious movements among the people.²⁸ They were discon-

²⁶ "Vos os engañariades mucho en pensar que yo no tubiese toda confianza de vos, y quando hubiese alguno querido hazer oficio con migo en contrario á esto, no soy tan liviano que hubiese dado credito á ello, teniendo yo tanta experiencia de vuestra lealtad y de vuestros servicios." Correspondance de Guillaume le Taciturne, tom. ii. p. 171.

²⁷ "Que le roi, résolu de les tromper tous, commençait par tromper sa sœur." Vandervynckt,

Troubles des Pays-Bas, tom. ii. p. 148.

²⁸ This responsibility is bluntly charged on them by Renom de Francia. "El dia de las predicaciones oraciones y cantos estando concertado, se acordó con las principales villas que fuese el San Juan siguiente y de continuar en adelante, primero en los Bosques y montañas, despues en los arrabales y Aldeas y pues en las villas, por medida que el numero, la audacia y sufrimiento creciese." Alborotos de Flandes, MS.

tented with the prolonged silence of the king, and they were alarmed by rumors of military preparations, said to be designed against them. The discussions of the assembly, long and animated, showed some difference of opinion. All agreed to demand some guaranty from the government for their security. But the greater part of the body, no longer halting at the original limits of their petition, were now for demanding absolute toleration in matters of religion. Some few of the number, staunch Catholics at heart, who for the first time seem to have had their eyes opened to the results to which they were inevitably tending, now, greatly disgusted, withdrew from the league. Among these was the younger Count Mansfeldt,—a name destined to become famous in the annals of the revolution.

Margaret, much alarmed by these new demonstrations, sent Orange and Egmont to confer with the confederates, and demand why they were thus met in an unfriendly attitude towards the government which they had so lately pledged themselves to support in maintaining order. The confederates replied by sending a deputation of their body to submit their grievances anew to the regent.

The deputies, twelve in number, and profanely nicknamed at Brussels "the twelve apostles,"²⁹ presented themselves, with Count Louis at their head, on the twenty-eighth of July, at the capital. Margaret, who with difficulty consented to receive them in person, gave unequivocal signs of her displeasure. In

²⁹ "Qui vulgari joco duodecim Apostoli dicebantur." Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 248.

the plain language of Louis, "the regent was ready to burst with anger."³⁰ The memorial, or rather remonstrance, presented to her was not calculated to allay it.

Without going into details, it is only necessary to say, that the confederates, after stating their grounds for apprehension, requested that an assurance should be given by the government that no harm was intended them. As to pardon for the past, they disclaimed all desire for it. What they had done called for applause, not condemnation. They only trusted that his majesty would be pleased to grant a convocation of the states-general, to settle the affairs of the country. In the mean time, they besought him to allow the concerns of the confederates to be placed in the hands of the prince of Orange, and the Counts Egmont and Hoorne, to act as their mediators with the crown, promising in all things to be guided by their counsel. Thus would tranquillity be restored. But without some guaranty for their safety, they should be obliged to protect themselves by foreign aid.³¹

The haughty tone of this memorial forms a striking contrast with that of the petition presented by the same body not four months before, and shows with what rapid strides the revolution had advanced. The religious agitations had revealed the amount of discontent in the country, and to what extent, therefore, the confederates might rely on the sympathy of the

³⁰ "S'est mise en une telle colère contre nous, qu'elle a pensé crever." Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. ii. p. 178.

³¹ "Alioqui externa remedia quamvis invitos postremò quæsitu-ros." Strada, De Bello Belgico, tom. i. p. 248.

people. This was most unequivocally proved during the meeting at St. Trond, where memorials were presented by the merchants, and by persons of the Reformed religion, praying the protection of the league to secure them freedom of worship, till otherwise determined by the states-general. This extraordinary request was granted.³² Thus the two great parties leaned on each other for support, and gave mutual confidence to their respective movements. The confederates, discarding the idea of grace, which they had once solicited, now darkly intimated a possible appeal to arms. The Reformers, on their side, instead of the mitigation of penalties, now talked of nothing less than absolute toleration. Thus political Revolution and religious Reform went hand in hand together. The nobles and the commons, the two most opposite elements of the body politic, were united closely by a common interest; and a formidable opposition was organized to the designs of the monarch, which might have made any monarch tremble on his throne.

An important fact shows that the confederates coolly looked forward, even at this time, to a conflict with Spain. Louis of Nassau had a large correspondence with the leaders of the Huguenots in France, and of the Lutherans in Germany. By the former he had been offered substantial aid in the way of troops. But the national jealousy entertained of the French would have made it impolitic to accept it. He turned therefore to Germany, where he had numerous connections, and where he subsidized a force consisting

³² The memorials are given at length by Groen, Archives de la Maison d'Orange-Nassau, tom. ii. pp. 159—167.