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HISTORY OF THE UNITED NETHERLANDS

From the Death of William the Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce--1609

By John Lothrop Motley

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Vol. 75

History of the United Netherlands, 1602-1603

CHAPTER XL.

Protraction of the siege of Ostend--Spanish invasion of Ireland--Prince Maurice again on the march--Siege of Grave--State of the archduke's army--Formidable mutiny--State of Europe--Portuguese expedition to Java--Foundation there of the first Batavian trading settlement--Exploits of Jacob Heemskerck--Capture of a Lisbon carrack--Progress of Dutch commerce--Oriental and Germanic republics--Commercial embassy from the King of Atsgen in Sumatra to the Netherlands--Surrender of Grave--Privateer work of Frederic Spinola--Destruction of Spinola's fleet by English and Dutch cruisers--Continuation of the siege of Ostend--Fearful hurricane and its effects--The attack--Capture of external forts--Encounter between Spinola and a Dutch squadron--Execution of prisoners by the archduke--Philip Fleming and his diary--Continuation of operations before Ostend--Spanish veterans still mutinous--Their capital besieged by Van den Berg--Maurice marches to their relief--Convention between the prince and the mutineers--Great commercial progress of the Dutch--Opposition to international commerce--Organization of the Universal East India Company.

It would be desirable to concentrate the chief events of the siege of Ostend so that they might be presented to the reader's view in a single mass. But this is impossible. The siege was essentially the war--as already observed--and it was bidding fair to protract itself to such an extent that a respect for chronology requires the attention to be directed for a moment to other topics.

The invasion of Ireland under Aquila, so pompously heralded as almost to suggest another grand armada, had sailed in the beginning of the winter, and an army of six thousand men had been landed at Kinsale. Rarely had there been a better opportunity for the Celt to strike for his independence. Shane Mac Neil had an army on foot with which he felt confident of exterminating the Saxon oppressor, even without the assistance of his peninsular allies; while the queen's army, severely

drawn upon as it had been for the exigencies of Vere and the States, might be supposed unable to cope with so formidable a combination. Yet Montjoy made short work of Aquila and Tyrone. The invaders, shut up in their meagre conquest, became the besieged instead of the assailants. Tyrone made a feeble attempt to relieve his Spanish allies, but was soon driven into his swamps, the peasants would not rise; in spite of proclamations and golden mountains of promise, and Aquila was soon glad enough to sign a capitulation by which he saved a portion of his army. He then returned, in transports provided by the English general, a much discomfited man, to Spain instead of converting Ireland into a province of the universal empire. He had not rescued Hibernia, as he stoutly proclaimed at the outset his intention of doing, from the jaws of the evil demon.

The States, not much wiser after the experience of Nieuport, were again desirous that Maurice should march into Flanders, relieve Ostend, and sweep the archduke into the sea. As for Vere, he proposed that a great army of cavalry and infantry should be sent into Ostend, while another force equally powerful should take the field as soon as the season permitted. Where the men were to be levied, and whence the funds for putting such formidable hosts in motion were to be derived, it was not easy to say: "'Tis astonishing," said Lewis William, "that the evils already suffered cannot open his eyes; but after all, 'tis no marvel. An old and good colonel, as I hold him to be, must go to school before he can become a general, and we must beware of committing any second folly, govern ourselves according to our means and the art of war, and leave the rest to God."

Prince Maurice, however; yielding as usual to the persuasions or importunities of those less sagacious than himself; and being also much influenced by the advice of the English queen and the French king, after reviewing the most splendid army that even he had ever equipped and set in the field, crossed the Waal at Nymegen, and the Meuse at Mook, and then moving leisurely along Meuse--side by way of Sambeck, Blitterswyck, and Maasyk, came past St. Truyden to the neighbourhood of Thienen, in Brabant. Here he stood, in the heart of the enemy's country, and within a day's march of Brussels. The sanguine portion of his countrymen and the more easily alarmed of the enemy already thought it would be an easy military promenade for the stadholder to march through Brabant and Flanders to the coast, defeat the Catholic forces before Ostend, raise the weary siege of that place, dictate peace to the archduke, and return in triumph to the Hague, before the end of the summer.

But the experienced Maurice too well knew the emptiness of such dreams. He had a splendid army--eighteen thousand foot and five thousand horse--of which Lewis William commanded the battalia, Vere the right, and Count Ernest the left, with a train of two thousand baggage wagons, and a considerable force of sutlers and camp-followers. He moved so deliberately, and with such excellent discipline, that his two wings could with ease be expanded for black-mail or forage over a considerable extent of country, and again folded together in case of sudden military necessity. But he had no intention of marching through Brussels, Ghent, and Bruges, to the Flemish coast. His old antagonist, the Admiral of

Arragon, lay near Thienen in an entrenched camp, with a force of at least fifteen thousand men, while the archduke, leaving Rivas in command before Ostend, hovered in the neighbourhood of Brussels, with as many troops as could be spared from the various Flemish garrisons, ready to support the admiral.

But Maurice tempted the admiral in vain with the chances of a general action. That warrior, remembering perhaps too distinctly his disasters at Nieuport, or feeling conscious that his military genius was more fitly displayed in burning towns and villages in neutral territory, robbing the peasantry, plundering gentlemen's castles and murdering the proprietors, than it was like to be in a pitched battle with the first general of the age, remained sullenly within his entrenchments. His position was too strong and his force far too numerous to warrant an attack by the stadholder upon his works. After satisfying himself, therefore, that there was no chance of an encounter in Brabant except at immense disadvantage, Maurice rapidly counter-marched towards the lower Meuse, and on the 18th July laid siege to Grave. The position and importance of this city have been thoroughly set before the reader in a former volume. It is only necessary, therefore, to recal the fact that, besides being a vital possession for the republic, the place was in law the private property of the Orange family, having been a portion of the estate of Count de Buren, afterwards redeemed on payment of a considerable sum of money by his son-in-law, William the Silent, confirmed to him at the pacification of Ghent, and only lost to his children by the disgraceful conduct of Captain Hamart, which had cost that officer his head. Maurice was determined at least that the place should not now slip through his fingers, and that the present siege should be a masterpiece. His forts, of which he had nearly fifty, were each regularly furnished with moat, drawbridge, and bulwark. His counterscarp and parapet, his galleries, covered ways and mines, were as elaborate, massive, and artistically finished as if he were building a city instead of besieging one. Buzanval, the French envoy, amazed at the spectacle, protested that his works "were rather worthy of the grand Emperor of the Turks than of, a little commonwealth, which only existed through the disorder of its enemies and the assistance of its friends;" but he admitted the utility of the stadholder's proceedings to be very obvious.

While the prince calmly sat before Grave, awaiting the inexorable hour for burghers and garrison to surrender, the great Francis Mendoza, Admiral of Arragon, had been completing the arrangements for his exchange. A prisoner after the Nieuport battle, he had been assigned by Maurice, as will be recollected, to his cousin, young Lewis Gunther, whose brilliant services as commander of the cavalry had so much contributed to the victory. The amount of ransom for so eminent a captive could not fail to be large, and accordingly the thrifty Lewis William had congratulated his brother on being able, although so young, thus to repair the fortunes of the family by his military industry to a greater extent than had yet been accomplished by any of the race. Subsequently, the admiral had been released on parole, the sum of his ransom having been fixed at nearly one hundred thousand Flemish crowns. By an agreement now made by the States, with consent of the Nassau family, the prisoner was definitely released, on condition of effecting

the exchange of all prisoners of the republic, now held in durance by Spain in any part of the world. This was in lieu of the hundred thousand crowns which were to be put into the impoverished coffers of Lewis Gunther. It may be imagined, as the hapless prisoners afterwards poured in--not only from the peninsula, but from more distant regions, whither they had been sent by their cruel taskmasters, some to relate their sufferings in the horrible dungeons of Spain, where they had long been expiating the crime of defending their fatherland, others to relate their experiences as chained galley-slaves in the naval service of their bitterest enemies, many with shorn heads and long beards like Turks, many with crippled limbs, worn out with chains and blows, and the squalor of disease and filth--that the hatred for Spain and Rome did not glow any less fiercely within the republic, nor the hereditary love for the Nassaus, to whose generosity these poor victims were indebted for their deliverance, become fainter, in consequence of these revelations. It was at first vehemently disputed by many that the admiral could be exchanged as a prisoner of war, in respect to the manifold murders and other crimes which would seem to authorize his trial and chastisement by the tribunals of the republic. But it was decided by the States that the sacred aegis of military law must be held to protect even so bloodstained a criminal as he, and his release was accordingly effected. Not long afterwards he took his departure for Spain, where his reception was not enthusiastic.

From this epoch is to be dated a considerable reform in the laws regulating the exchange of prisoners of war.--[Grotius]

While Maurice was occupied with the siege of Grave, and thus not only menacing an important position, but spreading, danger and dismay over all Brabant and Flanders, it was necessary for the archduke to detach so large a portion of his armies to observe his indefatigable and scientific enemy, as to much weaken the vigour of the operations before Ostend. Moreover, the execrable administration of his finances, and the dismal delays and sufferings of that siege; had brought about another mutiny--on the whole, the most extensive, formidable, and methodical of all that had hitherto occurred in the Spanish armies.

By midsummer, at least three thousand five hundred veterans, including a thousand of excellent cavalry, the very best soldiers in the service, had seized the city of Hoogstraaten. Here they established themselves securely, and strengthened the fortifications; levying contributions in corn, cattle, and every other necessary, besides wine, beer, and pocket-money, from the whole country round with exemplary regularity. As usual, disorder assumed the forms of absolute order. Anarchy became the best organized of governments; and it would have been difficult to find in the world--outside the Dutch commonwealth--a single community where justice appeared to be so promptly administered as in this temporary republic, founded upon rebellion and theft.

For; although a brotherhood of thieves, it rigorously punished such of its citizens as robbed for their own, not for the public good. The immense booty swept daily from the granges, castles; and villages of Flanders was divided with the simplicity of early Christians, while the success and steadiness of the operations paralyzed their sovereign, and

was of considerable advantage to the States.

Albert endeavoured in vain to negotiate with the rebels. Nuncius Frangipani went to them in person, but was received with calm derision. Pious exhortations might turn the keys of Paradise, but gold alone, he was informed, would unlock the gates of Hoogstraaten. In an evil hour the cardinal-archduke was tempted to try the effect of sacerdotal thunder. The ex-archbishop of Toledo could not doubt that the terrors of the Church would make those brown veterans tremble who could confront so tranquilly the spring-tides of the North Sea, and the batteries of Vere and Nassau. So he launched a manifesto, as highly spiced as a pamphlet of Marnig, and as severe as a sentence of Torquemada. Entirely against the advice of the States-General of the obedient provinces, he denounced the mutineers as outlaws and accursed. He called on persons of every degree to kill any of them in any way, at any time, or in any place, promising that the slayer of a private soldier should receive a reward of "ten crowns for each head" brought in, while for a subaltern officer's head one hundred crowns were offered; for that of a superior officer two hundred, and for that of the Eletto or chief magistrate, five hundred crowns. Should the slayer be himself a member of the mutiny, his crime of rebellion was to be forgiven, and the price of murder duly paid. All judges, magistrates, and provost-marshals were ordered to make inventories of the goods, moveable and immoveable, of the mutineers, and of the clothing and other articles belonging to their wives and children, all which property was to be brought in and deposited in the hands of the proper functionaries of the archduke's camp, in order that it might be duly incorporated into the domains of his Highness.

The mutineers were not frightened. The ban was an anachronism. If those Spaniards and Italians had learned nothing by their much campaigning in the land of Calvinism, they had at least unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle. It happened, too, that among their numbers were to be found pamphleteers as ready and as unscrupulous as the scribes of the archduke.

So there soon came forth and was published to the world, in the name of the Eletto and council of Hoogstraaten, a formal answer to the ban.

"If scolding and cursing be payment," said the magistrates of the mutiny, "then we might give a receipt in full for our wages. The ban is sufficient in this respect; but as these curses give no food for our bellies nor clothes for our backs, not preventing us, therefore, who have been fighting so long for the honour and welfare of the archdukes from starving with cold and hunger, we think a reply necessary in order to make manifest how much reason these archdukes have for thundering forth all this choler and fury, by which women and children may be frightened, but at which no soldier will feel alarm.

"When it is stated," continued the mutineers, "that we have deserted our banners just as an attempt was making by the archduke to relieve Grave, we can only reply that the assertion proves how impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains. Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory, but, as good friends, we will recal to the

recollection of your Highness that it was not your Highness, but the Admiral of Arragon, that commanded the relieving force before that city.

"Tis very true that we summon your Highnesses, and levy upon your provinces, in order to obtain means of living; for in what other quarter should we make application. Your Highnesses give us nothing except promises; but soldiers are not chameleons, to live on such air. According to every principle of law, creditors have a lien on the property of their debtors.

"As to condemning to death as traitors and scoundrels those who don't desire to be killed, and who have the means of killing such as attempt to execute the sentence; this is hardly in accordance with the extraordinary wisdom which has always characterized your Highnesses.

"As, to the confiscation of our goods, both moveable and immoveable, we would simply make this observation:

"Our moveable goods are our swords alone, and they can only be moved by ourselves. They are our immoveable goods as well; for should any one but ourselves undertake to move them, we assure your Highnesses that they will prove too heavy to be handled.

"As to the official register and deposit ordained of the money, clothing, and other property belonging to ourselves, our wives and children, the work may be done without clerks of inventory. Certainly, if the domains of your Highnesses have no other sources of revenue than the proceeds of this confiscation, wherewith to feed the ostrich-like digestions of those about you, 'tis to be feared that ere long they will be in the same condition as were ours, when we were obliged to come together in Hoogstraaten to devise means to keep ourselves, our wives, and children alive. And at that time we were an unbreeched people, like the Indians--saving your Highnesses' reverence--and the climate here is too cold for such costume. Your Highnesses, and your relatives the Emperor and King of Spain, will hardly make your royal heads greasy with the fat of such property as we possess, 'Twill also be a remarkable spectacle after you have stripped our wives and children stark naked for the benefit of your treasury, to see them sent in that condition, within three days afterwards, out of the country, as the ban ordains.

"You order the ban to be executed against our children and our children's children, but your Highness never learned this in the Bible, when you were an archbishop, and when you expounded, or ought to have expounded, the Holy Scriptures to your flock. What theology teaches your Highness to vent your wrath upon the innocent?

"Whenever the cause of discontent is taken away, the soldiers will become obedient and cheerful. All kings and princes may mirror themselves in the bad government of your Highness, and may see how they fare who try to carry on a war, while with their own hands they cut the sinews of war. The great leaders of old--Cyrus, Alexander, Scipio, Caesar--were accustomed, not to starve, but to enrich their soldiers. What did Alexander, when in an arid desert they brought, him a helmet full of

water? He threw it on the sand, saying that there was only enough for him, but not enough for his army.

"Your Highnesses have set ten crowns, and one hundred, and five hundred crowns upon our heads, but never could find five hundred mites nor ten mites to keep our souls and bodies together.

"Yet you have found means to live yourselves with pomp and luxury, far exceeding that of the great Emperor Charles and much surpassing the magnificence of your Highnesses' brothers, the emperor and the king."

Thus, and much more, the magistrates of the "Italian republic"--answering their master's denunciations of vengeance, both in this world and the next, with a humorous scorn very refreshing in that age of the world to contemplate. The expanding influence of the Dutch commonwealth was already making itself felt even in the ranks of its most determined foes.

The mutineers had also made an agreement with the States-General, by which they had secured permission, in case of need, to retire within the territory of the republic.

Maurice had written to them from his camp before Grave, and at first they were disposed to treat him with as little courtesy as they had shown the Nuncius; for they put the prince's letter on a staff, and fired at it as a mark, assuring the trumpeter who brought it that they would serve him in the same manner should he venture thither again. Very soon afterwards, however, the Eletto and council, reproving the folly of their subordinates, opened negotiations with the stadholder, who, with the consent of the States, gave them preliminary permission to take refuge under the guns of Bergenop-Zoom, should they by chance be hard pressed.

Thus throughout Europe a singular equilibrium of contending forces seemed established. Before Ostend, where the chief struggle between imperialism and republicanism had been proceeding for more than a year with equal vigour, there seemed no possibility of a result. The sands drank up the blood of the combatants on both sides, month after month, in summer; the pestilence in town and camp mowed down Catholic and Protestant with perfect impartiality during the winter, while the remorseless ocean swept over all in its wrath, obliterating in an hour the patient toil of months.

In Spain, in England, and Ireland; in Hungary, Germany, Sweden, and Poland, men wrought industriously day by day and year by year, to destroy each other, and to efface the products of human industry, and yet no progress could fairly be registered. The Turk was in Buda, on the right bank of the Danube, and the Christian in Pest, on the left, while the crescent; but lately supplanted by the cross, again waved in triumph over Stuhlweissenberg, capital city of the Magyars. The great Marshal Biron, foiled in his stupendous treachery, had laid down his head upon the block; the catastrophe following hard upon the madcap riot of Lord Essex in the Strand and his tragic end. The troublesome and restless favourites of Henry and of Elizabeth had closed their stormy career, but the designs of the great king and the great queen were growing wider and

wilder, more false and more fantastic than ever, as the evening shadows of both were lengthening.

But it was not in Europe nor in Christendom: alone during that twilight epoch of declining absolutism, regal and sacerdotal, and the coming glimmer of freedom, religious and commercial, that the contrast between the old and new civilizations was exhibiting itself.

The same fishermen and fighting men, whom we have but lately seen sailing forth from Zeeland and Friesland to confront the dangers of either pole, were now contending in the Indian seas with the Portuguese monopolists of the tropics.

A century long, the generosity of the Roman pontiff in bestowing upon others what was not his property had guaranteed to the nation of Vasco de Gama one half at least of the valuable possessions which maritime genius, unflinching valour, and boundless cruelty had won and kept. But the spirit of change was abroad in the world. Potentates and merchants under the equator had been sedulously taught that there were no other white men on the planet but the Portuguese and their conquerors the Spaniards, and that the Dutch--of whom they had recently heard, and the portrait of whose great military chieftain they had seen after the news of the Nieuport battle had made the circuit of the earth--were a mere mob of pirates and savages inhabiting the obscurest of dens. They were soon, however, to be enabled to judge for themselves as to the power and the merits of the various competitors for their trade.

Early in this year Andreas Hurtado de Mendoza with a stately fleet of galleons and smaller vessels, more than five-and-twenty in all, was on his way towards the island of Java to inflict summary vengeance upon those oriental rulers who had dared to trade with men forbidden by his Catholic Majesty and the Pope.

The city of Bantam was the first spot marked out for destruction, and it so happened that a Dutch skipper, Wolfert Hermann by name, commanding five trading vessels, in which were three hundred men, had just arrived in those seas to continue the illicit commerce which had aroused the ire of the Portuguese. His whole force both of men and of guns was far inferior to that of the flag-ship alone of Mendoza. But he resolved to make manifest to the Indians that the Batavians were not disposed to relinquish their promising commercial relations with them, nor to turn their backs upon their newly found friends in the hour of danger. To the profound astonishment of the Portuguese admiral the Dutchman with his five little trading ships made an attack on the pompous armada, intending to avert chastisement from the king of Bantam. It was not possible for Wolfert to cope at close quarters with his immensely superior adversary, but his skill and nautical experience enabled him to play at what was then considered long bowls with extraordinary effect. The greater lightness and mobility of his vessels made them more than a match, in this kind of encounter, for the clumsy, top-heavy, and sluggish marine castles in which Spain and Portugal then went forth to battle on the ocean. It seems almost like the irony of history, and yet it is the literal fact, that the Dutch galleot of that day--hardly changed in two

and a half centuries since--"the bull-browed galleot butting through the stream,"--[Oliver Wendell Holmes]--was then the model clipper, conspicuous among all ships for its rapid sailing qualities and ease of handling. So much has the world moved, on sea and shore, since those simple but heroic days. And thus Wolfert's swift-going galleots circled round and round the awkward, ponderous, and much-puzzled Portuguese fleet, until by well-directed shots and skilful manoeuvring they had sunk several ships, taken two, run others into the shallows, and, at last, put the whole to confusion. After several days of such fighting, Admiral Mendoza fairly turned his back upon his insignificant opponent, and abandoned his projects upon Java. Bearing away for the Island of Amboyna with the remainder of his fleet, he laid waste several of its villages and odoriferous spice-fields, while Wolfert and his companions entered Bantam in triumph, and were hailed as deliverers. And thus on the extreme western verge of this magnificent island was founded the first trading settlement of the Batavian republic in the archipelago of the equator--the foundation-stone of a great commercial empire which was to encircle the earth. Not many years later, at the distance, of a dozen leagues from Bantam, a congenial swamp was fortunately discovered in a land whose volcanic peaks rose two miles into the air, and here a town duly laid out with canals and bridges, and trim gardens and stagnant pools, was baptized by the ancient and well-beloved name of Good-Meadow or Batavia, which it bears to this day.

Meantime Wolfert Hermann was not the only Hollander cruising in those seas able to convince the Oriental mind that all Europeans save the Portuguese were not pirates and savages, and that friendly intercourse with other foreigners might be as profitable as slavery to the Spanish crown.

Captain Nek made treaties of amity and commerce with the potentates of Ternate, Tydor, and other Molucca islands. The King of Candy on the Island of Ceylon, lord of the odoriferous fields of cassia which perfume those tropical seas, was glad to learn how to exchange the spices of the equator for the thousand fabrics and products of western civilization which found their great emporium in Holland. Jacob Heemskerk, too, who had so lately astonished the world by his exploits and discoveries during his famous winter in Nova Zembla, was now seeking adventures and carrying the flag and fame of the republic along the Indian and Chinese coasts. The King of Johor on the Malayan peninsula entered into friendly relations with him, being well pleased, like so many of those petty rulers, to obtain protection against the Portuguese whom he had so long hated and feared. He informed Heemskerk of the arrival in the straits of Malacca of an immense Lisbon carrack, laden with pearls and spices, brocades and precious-stones, on its way to Europe, and suggested an attack. It is true that the roving Hollander merely commanded a couple of the smallest galleots, with about a hundred and thirty men in the two. But when was Jacob Heemskerk ever known to shrink from an encounter--whether from single-handed combat with a polar bear, or from leading a forlorn hope against a Spanish fort, or from assailing a Portuguese armada. The carrack, more than one thousand tons burthen, carried seventeen guns, and at least eight times as many men as he commanded. Nevertheless, after a combat of but brief duration Heemskerk was master

of the carrack: He spared the lives of his seven hundred prisoners, and set them on shore before they should have time to discover to what a handful of Dutchmen they had surrendered. Then dividing about a million florins' worth of booty among his men, who doubtless found such cruising among the spice-islands more attractive than wintering at the North Pole, he sailed in the carrack for Macao, where he found no difficulty in convincing the authorities of the celestial empire that the friendship of the Dutch republic was worth cultivating. There was soon to be work in other regions for the hardy Hollander--such as was to make the name of Heemskerck a word to conjure with down to the latest posterity. Meantime he returned to his own country to take part in the great industrial movements which were to make this year an epoch in commercial history.

The conquerors of Mendoza and deliverers of Bantam had however not paused in their work. From Java they sailed to Banda; and on those volcanic islands of nutmegs and cloves made, in the name of their commonwealth, a treaty with its republican antipodes. For there was no king to be found in that particular archipelago, and the two republics, the Oriental and the Germanic, dealt with each other with direct and becoming simplicity. Their convention was in accordance with the commercial ideas of the day, which assumed monopoly as the true basis of national prosperity. It was agreed that none but Dutchmen should ever purchase the nutmegs of Banda, and that neither nation should harbour refugees from the other. Other articles, however; showed how much farther, the practice of political and religious liberty had advanced than had any theory of commercial freedom. It was settled that each nation should judge its own citizens according to its own laws, that neither should interfere by force with the other in regard to religious matters, but that God should be judge over them all. Here at least was progress beyond the system according to which the Holy Inquisition furnished the only engine of civilization. The guardianship assumed by Holland over these children of the sun was at least an improvement on the tyranny which roasted them alive if they rejected religious dogmas which they could not comprehend, and which proclaimed with fire, sword, and gibbet that the Omnipotent especially forbade the nutmeg trade to all but the subjects, of the most Catholic king.

In Atsgen or Achim, chief city of Sumatra, a treaty was likewise made with the government of the place, and it was arranged that the king of Atsgen should send over an embassy to the distant but friendly republic. Thus he might judge whether the Hollanders were enemies of all the world, as had been represented to him, or only of Spain; whether their knowledge of the arts and sciences, and their position among the western nations entitled them to respect, and made their friendship desirable; or whether they were only worthy of the contempt which their royal and aristocratic enemies delighted to heap upon their heads. The envoys sailed from Sumatra on board the same little fleet which, under the command of Wolfert Hermann, had already done such signal service, and on their way to Europe they had an opportunity of seeing how these republican sailors could deal with their enemies on the ocean.

Off St. Helena an immense Portuguese carrack richly laden and powerfully armed, was met, attacked, and overpowered by the little merchantmen with

their usual audacity and skill. A magnificent booty was equitably divided among the captors, the vanquished crew were set safely on shore; and the Hollanders then pursued their home voyage without further adventures.

The ambassadors; with an Arab interpreter, were duly presented to Prince Maurice in the lines before the city of Grave. Certainly no more favourable opportunity could have been offered them for contrasting the reality of military power, science, national vigour; and wealth, which made the republic eminent among the nations, with the fiction of a horde of insignificant and bloodthirsty savages which her enemies had made so familiar at the antipodes. Not only were the intrenchments bastions, galleries, batteries, the discipline and equipment of the troops, a miracle in the eyes of these newly arrived Oriental ambassadors, but they had awakened the astonishment of Europe, already accustomed to such spectacles. Evidently the amity of the stadholder and his commonwealth was a jewel of price, and the King of Achim would have been far more barbarous than he had ever deemed the Dutchmen to be, had he not well heeded the lesson which he had sent so far to learn.

The chief of the legation, Abdulzamar, died in Zeeland, and was buried with honourable obsequies at Middleburg, a monument being raised to his memory. The other envoys returned to Sumatra, fully determined to maintain close relations with the republic.

There had been other visitors in Maurice's lines before Grave at about the same period. Among others, Gaston Spinola, recently created by the archduke Count of Bruay, had obtained permission to make a visit to a wounded relative, then a captive in the republican camp, and was hospitably entertained at the stadholder's table. Maurice, with soldierly bluntness, ridiculed the floating batteries, the castles on wheels, the sausages, and other newly-invented machines, employed before Ostend, and characterized them as rather fit to catch birds with than to capture a city, defended by mighty armies and fleets.

"If the archduke has set his heart upon it, he had far better try to buy Ostend," he observed.

"What is your price?" asked the Italian; "will you take 200,000 ducats?"

"Certainly not less than a million and a half," was the reply; so highly did Maurice rate the position and advantages of the city. He would venture to prophesy, he added, that the siege of Ostend would last as long as the siege of Troy.

"Ostend is no Troy," said Spinola with a courtly flourish, "although there are certainly not wanting an Austrian Agamemnon, a Dutch Hector, and an Italian Achilles." The last allusion was to the speaker's namesake and kinsman, the Marquis Anibrose Spinola, of whom much was to be heard in the world from that time forth.

Meantime, although so little progress had been made at Ostend, Maurice had thoroughly done his work before Grave. On the 18th September the

place surrendered, after sixty days' siege, upon the terms usually granted by the stadholder. The garrison was to go out with the honours of war. Those of the inhabitants who wished to leave were to leave; those who preferred staying were to stay; rendering due allegiance to the republic, and abstaining in public from the rites of the Roman Church, without being exposed, however, to any inquiries as to their religious opinions, or any interference within their households.

The work went slowly on before Ostend. Much effect had been produced, however, by the operations of the archduke's little naval force. The galley of that day, although a child's toy as compared with the wonders of naval architecture of our own time, was an effective machine enough to harass fishing and coasting vessels in creeks and estuaries, and along the shores of Holland and Zeeland during tranquil weather.

The locomotive force of these vessels consisted of galley-slaves, in which respect the Spaniards had an advantage over other nations; for they had no scruples in putting prisoners of war into chains and upon the benches of the rowers. Humanity--"the law of Christian piety," in the words of the noble Grotius--forbade the Hollanders from reducing their captives to such horrible slavery, and they were obliged to content themselves with condemned criminals, and with the few other wretches whom abject poverty and the impossibility of earning other wages could induce to accept the service. And as in the maritime warfare of our own day, the machinery--engines, wheels, and boilers--is the especial aim of the enemy's artillery, so the chain-gang who rowed in the waist of the galley, the living engine, without which the vessel became a useless tub, was as surely marked out for destruction whenever a sea-fight took place.

The Hollanders did not very much favour this species of war-craft, both by reason of the difficulty of procuring the gang, and because to a true lover of the ocean and of naval warfare the galley was about as clumsy and amphibious a production as could be hoped of human perverseness. High where it should be low. Exposed, flat, and fragile, where elevation and strength were indispensable--encumbered and top-heavy where it should be level and compact, weak in the waist, broad at stem and stern, awkward in manoeuvre, helpless in rough weather, sluggish under sail, although possessing the single advantage of being able to crawl over a smooth sea when better and faster ships were made stationary by absolute calm, the galley was no match for the Dutch galleot, either at close quarters or in a breeze.

Nevertheless for a long time there had been a certain awe produced by the possibility of some prodigious but unknown qualities in these outlandish vessels, and already the Hollanders had tried their hand at constructing them. On a late occasion a galley of considerable size, built at Dort, had rowed past the Spanish forts on the Scheld, gone up to Antwerp, and coolly cut out from the very wharves of the city a Spanish galley of the first class, besides seven war vessels of lesser dimensions, at first gaining advantage by surprise, and then breaking down all opposition in a brilliant little fight. The noise of the encounter summoned the citizens and garrison to the walls, only to witness the triumph achieved by Dutch

audacity, and to see the victors dropping rapidly down the river, laden with booty and followed by their prizes. Nor was the mortification of these unwilling spectators diminished when the clear notes of a bugle on board the Dutch galley brought to their ears the well-known melody of "Wilhelmus of Nassau," once so dear to every, patriotic heart in Antwerp, and perhaps causing many a renegade cheek on this occasion to tingle with shame.

Frederic Spinola, a volunteer belonging to the great and wealthy Genoese family of that name, had been performing a good deal of privateer work with a small force of galleys which he kept under his command at Sluys. He had succeeded in inflicting so much damage upon the smaller merchantmen of the republic, and in maintaining so perpetual a panic in calm weather among the seafaring multitudes of those regions, that he was disposed to extend the scale of his operations. On a visit to Spain he had obtained permission from Government to employ in this service eight great galleys, recently built on the Guadalquivir for the Royal Navy. He was to man and equip them at his own expense, and was to be allowed the whole of the booty that might result from his enterprise. Early in the autumn he set forth with his eight galleys on the voyage to Flanders, but, off Cezimbra, on the Portuguese coast, unfortunately fell in with Sir Robert Mansell, who; with a compact little squadron of English frigates, was lying in wait for the homeward-bound India fleet on their entrance to Lisbon. An engagement took place, in which Spinola lost two of his galleys. His disaster might have been still greater, had not an immense Indian carrack, laden with the richest merchandize, just then hove in sight, to attract his conquerors with a hope of better prize-money than could be expected from the most complete victory over him and his fleet.

With the remainder of his vessels Spinola crept out of sight while the English were ransacking the carrack. On the 3rd of October he had entered the channel with a force which, according to the ideas of that day, was still formidable. Each of his galleys was of two hundred and fifty slave power, and carried, beside the chain-gang, four hundred fighting men. His flag-ship was called the St. Lewis; the names of the other vessels being the St. Philip, the Morning Star, the St. John, the Hyacinth, and the Padilla. The Trinity and the Opportunity had been destroyed off Cezimbra. Now there happened to be cruising just then in the channel, Captain Peter Mol, master of the Dutch war-ship Tiger, and Captain Lubbertson, commanding the Pelican. These two espied the Spanish squadron, paddling at about dusk towards the English coast, and quickly gave notice to Vice-Admiral John Kant, who in the States' ship Half-moon, with three other war-galleets, was keeping watch in that neighbourhood. It was dead calm as the night fell, and the galleys of Spinola, which had crept close up to the Dover cliffs, were endeavouring to row their way across in the darkness towards the Flemish coast, in the hope of putting unobserved into the Gut of Sluys. All went well with Spinola till the moon rose; but, with the moon, sprang up a steady breeze, so that the galleys lost all their advantage. Nearly off Gravelines another States' ship, the Mackerel, came in sight, which forthwith attacked the St: Philip, pouring a broadside into her by which fifty men were killed. Drawing off from this assailant, the galley found herself close to the

Dutch admiral in the Half-moon, who, with all sail set, bore straight down upon her, struck her amidships with a mighty crash, carrying off her mainmast and her poop, and then, extricating himself with difficulty from the wreck, sent a tremendous volley of cannon-shot and lesser missiles straight into the waist where sat the chain-gang. A howl of pain and terror rang through the air, while oars and benches, arms, legs, and mutilated bodies, chained inexorably together, floated on the moonlit waves. An instant later, and another galleot bore down to complete the work, striking with her iron prow the doomed St. Philip so straightly and surely that she went down like a stone, carrying with her galley slaves, sailors, and soldiers, besides all the treasure brought by Spinola for the use of his fleet.

The Morning Star was the next galley attacked, Captain Sael, in a stout galleot, driving at her under full sail, with the same accuracy and solidity of shock as had been displayed in the encounter with the St. Philip and with the same result. The miserable, top-heavy monster galley was struck between mainmast and stern, with a blow which carried away the assailant's own bowsprit and fore-bulwarks, but which--completely demolished the stem of the galley, and crushed out of existence the greater portion of the live machinery sitting chained and rowing on the benches. And again, as the first enemy hauled off from its victim, Admiral pant came up once more in the Half-moon, steered straight at the floundering galley, and sent her with one crash to the bottom. It was not very scientific practice perhaps. It was but simple butting, plain sailing, good steering, and the firing of cannon at short pistol-shot. But after all, the work of those unsophisticated Dutch skippers was done very thoroughly, without flinching, and, as usual, at great odds of men and guns. Two more of the Spanish galleys were chased into the shallows near Gravelines, where they went to pieces. Another was wrecked near Calais. The galley which bore Frederic Spinola himself and his fortunes succeeded in reaching Dunkirk, whence he made his way discomfited, to tell the tale of his disaster to the archduke at Brussels. During the fight the Dutch admiral's boats had been active in picking up such of the drowning crews, whether galley-slaves or soldiers, as it was possible to save. But not more than two hundred were thus rescued, while by far the greater proportion of those on board, probably three thousand in number, perished, and the whole fleet, by which so much injury was to have been inflicted on Dutch commerce, was, save one damaged galley, destroyed. Yet scarcely any lives were lost by the Hollanders, and it is certain that the whole force in their fleet did not equal the crew of a single one of the enemy's ships. Neither Spinola nor the archduke seemed likely to make much out of the contract. Meantime, the Genoese volunteer kept quiet in Sluy's, brooding over schemes to repair his losses and to renew his forays on the indomitable Zeelanders.

Another winter had now closed in upon Ostend, while still the siege had scarcely advanced an inch. During the ten months of Governor Dorp's administration, four thousand men had died of wounds or malady within the town, and certainly twice as many in the trenches of the besieging force. Still the patient Bucquoy went on, day after day, night after night, month after month, planting his faggots and fascines, creeping forward almost imperceptibly with his dyke, paying five florins each to the

soldiers who volunteered to bring the materials, and a double ducat to each man employed in laying them. So close were they under the fire of the town; that a life was almost laid down for every ducat, but the Gullet, which it was hoped to close, yawned as wide as ever, and the problem how to reduce a city, open by sea to the whole world, remained without solution. On the last day of the year a splendid fleet of transports arrived in the town, laden with whole droves of beeves and flocks of sheep, besides wine and bread and beer enough to supply a considerable city; so that market provisions in the beleaguered town were cheaper than in any part of Europe.

Thus skilfully did the States-General and Prince Maurice watch from the outside over Ostend, while the audacious but phlegmatic sea-captains brought their cargoes unscathed through the Gullet, although Bucquoy's batteries had now advanced to within seventy yards of the shore.

On the west side, the besiegers were slowly eating their way through the old harbour towards the heart of the place. Subterranean galleries, patiently drained of their water, were met by counter-galleries leading out from the town, and many were the desperate hand-to-hand encounters, by dim lanterns, or in total darkness, beneath the ocean and beneath the earth; Hollander, Spaniard, German, Englishman, Walloon, digging and dying in the fatal trenches, as if there had been no graves at home. Those insatiable sand-banks seemed ready to absorb all the gold and all the life of Christendom. But the monotony of that misery it is useless to chronicle. Hardly an event of these dreary days has been left unrecorded by faithful diarists and industrious soldiers, but time has swept us far away from them, and the world has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin. All winter long those unwearied, intelligent, fierce, and cruel creatures toiled and fought in the stagnant waters, and patiently burrowed in the earth. It seemed that if Ostend were ever lost it would be because at last entirely bitten away and consumed. When there was no Ostend left, it might be that the archduke would triumph.

As there was always danger that the movements on the east side might be at last successful, it was the command of Maurice that the labours to construct still another harbour should go on in case the Gullet should become useless, as the old haven had been since the beginning of the siege. And the working upon that newest harbour was as dangerous to the Hollanders as Bucquoy's dike-building to the Spaniards, for the pioneers and sappers were perpetually under fire from the batteries which the count had at last successfully established on the extremity of his work. It was a piteous sight to see those patient delvers lay down their spades and die, hour after hour, to be succeeded by their brethren only to share their fate. Yet still the harbour building progressed; for the republic was determined that the city should be open to the sea so long as the States had a stiver, or a ship, or a spade.

While this deadly industry went on, the more strictly military operations were not pretermitted day nor night. The Catholics were unwearied in watching for a chance of attack, and the Hollanders stood on the ramparts and in the trenches, straining eyes and ears through the perpetual icy

mists of that black winter to catch the sight and sound of a coming foe. Especially the by-watches, as they were called, were enough to break down constitutions of iron; for, all day and night, men were stationed in the inundated regions, bound on pain of death to stand in the water and watch for a possible movement of the enemy, until the waves should rise so high as to make it necessary to swim. Then, until the tide fell again, there was brief repose.

And so the dreary winter faded away at last into chill and blustering spring. On the 13th of April a hurricane, such as had not occurred since the siege began; raged across the ocean, deluging and shattering the devoted town. The waters rose over dyke and parapet, and the wind swept from the streets and ramparts every living thing. Not a soldier or sailor could keep his feet, the chief tower of the church was blown into the square, chimneys and windows crashed on all sides, and the elements had their holiday, as if to prove how helpless a thing was man, however fierce and determined, when the powers of Nature arose in their strength. It was as if no siege existed, as if no hostile armies had been lying nearly two years long close to each other, and losing no opportunity to fly at each other's throats. The strife of wind and ocean gave a respite to human rage.

It was but a brief respite. At nightfall there was a lull in the tempest, and the garrison crept again to the ramparts. Instantly the departing roar of the winds and waters were succeeded by fainter but still more threatening sounds, and the sentinels and the drums and trumpets to rally the garrison, when the attack came. The sleepless Spaniards were already upon them. In the Porcupine fort, a blaze of wickerwork and building materials suddenly illuminated the gathering gloom of night; and the loud cries of the assailants, who had succeeded in kindling this fire by their missiles, proclaimed the fierceness of the attack. Governor Dorp was himself in the fort, straining every nerve to extinguish the flames, and to hold this most important position. He was successful. After a brief but bloody encounter the Spaniards were repulsed with heavy loss. All was quiet again, and the garrison in the Porcupine were congratulating themselves on their victory when suddenly the ubiquitous Philip Fleeting plunged, with a face of horror, into the governor's quarters, informing him that the attack on the redoubt had been a feint, and that the Spaniards were at that very moment swarming all over the three external forts, called the South Square, the West Square, and the Polder. These points, which have been already described, were most essential to the protection of the place, as without them the whole counterscarp was in danger. It was to save those exposed but vital positions that Sir Francis Vere had resorted to the slippery device of the last Christmas Eve but one.

Dorp refused to believe the intelligence. The squares were well guarded, the garrison ever alert. Spaniards were not birds of prey to fly up those perpendicular heights, and for beings without wings the thing was impossible. He followed Fleming through the darkness, and was soon convinced that the impossible was true. The precious squares were in the hands of the enemy. Nimble as monkeys, those yellow jerkined Italians, Walloons, and Spaniards--stormhats on their heads and swords in their

teeth--had planted rope-ladders, swung themselves up the walls by hundreds upon hundreds, while the fight had been going on at the Porcupine, and were now rushing through the forts grinning defiance, yelling and chattering with fierce triumph, and beating down all opposition. It was splendidly done. The discomfited Dorp met small bodies of his men, panic-struck, reeling out from their stronghold, wounded, bleeding, shrieking for help and for orders. It seemed as if the Spaniards had dropped from the clouds. The Dutch commandant did his best to rally the fugitives, and to encourage those who had remained. All night long the furious battle raged, every inch of ground being contested; for both Catholics and Hollanders knew full well that this triumph was worth more than all that had been gained for the archduke in eighteen months of siege. Pike to pike, breast to breast, they fought through the dark April night; the last sobs of the hurricane dying unheard, the red lanterns flitting to and fro, the fireworks hissing in every direction of earth and air, the great wicker piles, heaped up with pitch and rosin, flaming over a scene more like a dance of goblins than a commonplace Christian massacre. At least fifteen hundred were killed--besiegers and besieged--during the storming of the forts and the determined but unsuccessful attempt of the Hollanders to retake them. And when at last the day had dawned, and the Spaniards could see the full extent of their victory, they set themselves with--unusual alacrity to killing such of the wounded and prisoners as were in their hands, while, at the same time, they turned the guns of their newly acquired works upon the main counterscarp of the town.

Yet the besieged--discomfited but undismayed lost not a moment in strengthening their inner works, and in doing their best, day after day, by sortie, cannonade, and every possible device, to prevent the foe from obtaining full advantage of his success. The triumph was merely a local one, and the patient Hollanders soon proved to the enemy that the town was not gained by carrying the three squares, but that every inch of the place was to be contested as hotly as those little redoubts had been. Ostend, after standing nearly two years of siege, was not to be carried by storm. A goodly slice of it had been pared off that April night, and was now in possession of the archduke, but this was all. Meantime the underground work was resumed on both sides.

Frederic Spinola, notwithstanding the stunning defeat sustained by him in the preceding October, had not lost heart while losing all his ships. On the contrary, he had been busy during the winter in building other galleys. Accordingly, one fine morning in May, Counsellor Flooswyk, being on board a war vessel convoying some empty transports from Ostend, observed signs of mischief brewing as he sailed past the Gut of Sluys; and forthwith gave notice of what he had seen to Admiral Joost de Moor, commanding the blockading squadron. The counsellor was right. Frederic Spinola meant mischief. It was just before sunrise of a beautiful summer's day. The waves were smooth--not a breath of wind stirring--and De Moor, who had four little war-ships of Holland, and was supported besides by a famous vessel called the Black Galley of Zeeland, under Captain Jacob Michelzoon, soon observed a movement from Sluys.

Over the flat and glassy surface of the sea, eight galleys of the largest

size were seen crawling slowly, like vast reptiles, towards his .. position. Four lesser vessels followed in the wake of the great galleys. The sails of the admiral's little fleet flapped idly against the mast. He could only placidly await the onset. The Black Galley, however, moved forward according to her kind; and was soon vigorously attacked by two galleys of the enemy. With all the force that five hundred rowers could impart, these two huge vessels ran straight into the Zeeland ship, and buried their iron prows in her sides. Yet the Black Galley was made of harder stuff than were those which had gone down in the channel the previous autumn under the blows of John Kant. Those on board her, at least, were made of tougher material than were galley-slaves and land-soldiers. The ramming was certainly not like that of a thousand horsepower of steam, and there was no very great display of science in the encounter; yet Captain Jacob Michelzoon, with two enemy's ships thus stuck to his sides, might well have given himself up for lost. The disproportion of ships and men was monstrous. Beside the chain-gang, each of Spinola's ships was manned by two hundred soldiers, while thirty-six musketeers from the Flushing garrison were the only men-at-arms in De Moor's whole squadron. But those amphibious Zeelanders and Hollanders, perfectly at home in the water, expert in handling vessels, and excellent cannoneers, were more than a match for twenty times their number of landsmen. It was a very simple-minded, unsophisticated contest. The attempt to board the Black Galley was met with determined resistance, but the Zeeland sailors clambered like cats upon the bowsprits of the Spanish galleys, fighting with cutlass and handspike, while a broadside or two was delivered with terrible effect into the benches of the chained and wretched slaves. Captain Michelzoon was killed, but his successor, Lieutenant Hart, although severely wounded, swore that he would blow up his ship with his own hands rather than surrender. The decks of all the vessels ran with blood, but at last the Black Galley succeeded in beating off her assailants; the Zeelanders, by main force, breaking off the enemy's bowsprits, so that the two ships of Spinola were glad to sheer off, leaving their stings buried in the enemy's body.

Next, four galleys attacked the stout little galleot of Captain Logier, and with a very similar result. Their prows stuck fast in the bulwarks of the ship, but the boarders soon found themselves the boarded, and, after a brief contest, again the iron bowsprits snapped like pipe-stems, and again the floundering and inexperienced Spaniards shrank away from the terrible encounter which they had provoked. Soon afterwards, Joost de Moor was assailed by three galleys. He received them, however, with cannonade and musketry so warmly that they willingly obeyed a summons from Spinola, and united with the flag-ship in one more tremendous onset upon the Black Galley of Zeeland. And it might have gone hard with that devoted ship, already crippled in the previous encounter, had not Captain Logier fortunately drifted with the current near enough to give her assistance, while the other sailing ships lay becalmed and idle spectators. At last Spinola, conspicuous by his armour, and by magnificent recklessness of danger, fell upon the deck of his galley, torn to pieces with twenty-four wounds from a stone gun of the Black Galley, while at nearly the same moment a gentle breeze began in the distance to ruffle the surface of the waters. More than a thousand men had fallen in Spinola's fleet, inclusive of the miserable slaves, who

were tossed overboard as often as wounds made them a cumbrous part of the machinery, and the galleys, damaged, discomfited, laden with corpses and dripping with blood, rowed off into Sluys as speedily as they could move, without waiting until the coming wind should bring all the sailing ships into the fight, together with such other vessels under Haultain as might be cruising in the distance. They succeeded in getting into the Gut of Sluys, and so up to their harbour of refuge. Meantime, baldheaded, weather-beaten Joost de Moor--farther pursuit being impossible--piped all hands on deck, where officers and men fell on their knees, shouting in pious triumph the 34th Psalm: "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be in my mouth O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." So rang forth the notes of humble thanksgiving across the placid sea. And assuredly those hardy mariners, having gained a victory with their little vessels over twelve ships and three thousand men--a numerical force of at least ten times their number,--such as few but Dutchmen could have achieved; had a right to give thanks to Him from whom all blessings flow.

Thus ended the career of Frederic Spinola, a wealthy, gallant, high-born, brilliant youth, who might have earned distinction, and rendered infinitely better service to the cause of Spain and the archdukes, had he not persuaded himself that he had a talent for seamanship. Certainly, never was a more misplaced ambition, a more unlucky career. Not even in that age of rash adventure, when grandees became admirals and field-m Marshals because they were grandees, had such incapacity been shown by any restless patrician. Frederic Spinola, at the age of thirty-two, a landsman and a volunteer, thinking to measure himself on blue water with such veterans as John Rant, Joost de Moor, and the other Dutchmen and Zeelanders whom it was his fortune to meet, could hardly escape the doom which so rapidly befel him.

On board the Black Galley Captain Michelznon, eleven of his officers, and fifteen of his men were killed; Admiral de Moor was slightly wounded, and had five of his men killed and twenty wounded; Captain Logier was wounded in the foot, and lost fifteen killed and twelve wounded.

The number of those killed in Spinola's fleet has been placed as high as fourteen hundred, including two hundred officers and gentlemen of quality, besides the crowds of galley-slaves thrown overboard. This was perhaps an exaggeration. The losses were, however, sufficient to put a complete atop to the enterprise out of which the unfortunate Spinola had conceived such extravagant hopes of fame and fortune.

The herring-smacks and other coasters, besides the transports passing to and from Ostend, sailed thenceforth unmolested by any galleys from Sluys. One unfortunate sloop, however, in moving out from the beleaguered city, ran upon some shoals before getting out of the Gullet and thus fell a prize to the besiegers. She was laden with nothing more precious than twelve wounded soldiers on their way to the hospitals at Flushing. These prisoners were immediately hanged, at the express command of the archduke, because they had been taken on the sea where, according to his highness, there were no laws of war.

The stadholder, against his will--for Maurice was never cruel--felt himself obliged to teach the cardinal better jurisprudence and better humanity for the future. In order to show him that there was but one belligerent law on sea and on land, he ordered two hundred Spanish prisoners within his lines to draw lots from an urn in which twelve of the tickets were inscribed with the fatal word gibbet. Eleven of the twelve thus marked by ill luck were at once executed. The twelfth, a comely youth, was pardoned at the intercession of a young girl. It is not stated whether or not she became his wife. It is also a fact worth mentioning, as illustrating the recklessness engendered by a soldier's life, that the man who drew the first blank sold it to one of his comrades and plunged his hand again into the fatal urn. Whether he succeeded in drawing the gibbet at his second trial has not been recorded. When these executions had taken place in full view of the enemy's camp, Maurice formally announced that for every prisoner thenceforth put to death by the archduke two captives from his own army should be hanged. These stern reprisals, as usual, put an end to the foul system of martial murder.

Throughout the year the war continued to be exclusively the siege of Ostend. Yet the fierce operations, recently recorded, having been succeeded by a period of comparative languor, Governor Dorp at last obtained permission to depart to repair his broken health. He was succeeded in command of the forces within the town by Charles Van der Noot, colonel of the Zeeland regiment which had suffered so much in the first act of the battle of Nieuport. Previously to this exchange, however, a day of solemn thanksgiving and prayer was set apart on the anniversary of the beginning of the siege. Since the 5th of July, 1601, two years had been spent by the whole power of the enemy in the attempt to reduce this miserable village, and the whole result thus far had been the capture of three little external forts. There seemed cause for thanksgiving.

Philip Fleming, too, obtained a four weeks' holiday--the first in eleven years--and went with his family outside the pestiferous and beleaguered town. He was soon to return to his multifarious duties as auditor, secretary, and chronicler of the city, and unattached aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, whoever that might be; and to perform his duty with the same patient courage and sagacity that had marked him from the beginning. "An unlucky cannon-ball of the enemy," as he observes, did some damage at this period to his diary, but it happened at a moment when comparatively little was doing, so that the chasm was of less consequence.

"And so I, Philip Fleming, auditor to the Council of War," he says with homely pathos, "have been so continually employed as not to have obtained leave in all these years to refresh, for a few days outside this town, my troubled spirit after such perpetual work, intolerable cares, and slavery, having had no other pleasure allotted me than with daily sadness, weeping eyes, and heavy yearnings to tread the ramparts, and, like a poor slave laden with fetters, to look at so many others sailing out of the harbour in order to feast their souls in other provinces with green fields and the goodly works of God. And thus it has been until it

has nearly gone out of my memory how the fruits of the earth, growing trees, and dumb beasts appear to mortal eye."

He then, with whimsical indignation, alludes to a certain author who pleaded in excuse for the shortcomings of the history of the siege the damage done to his manuscripts by a cannon-ball. "Where the liar dreamt of or invented his cannon-ball," he says, "I cannot tell, inasmuch as he never saw the city of Ostend in his life; but the said cannon-ball, to my great sorrow, did come one afternoon through my office, shot from the enemy's great battery, which very much damaged not his memoirs but mine; taking off the legs and arms at the same time of three poor invalid soldiers seated in the sun before my door and killing them on the spot, and just missing my wife, then great with child, who stood by me with faithfulness through all the sufferings of the bloody siege and presented me twice during its continuance, by the help of Almighty God, with young Amazons or daughters of war."

And so honest Philip Fleming went out for a little time to look at the green trees and the dumb creatures feeding in the Dutch pastures. Meantime the two armies--outside and within Ostend--went moiling on in their monotonous work; steadily returning at intervals, as if by instinct, to repair the ruin which a superior power would often inflict in a half-hour on the results of laborious weeks.

In the open field the military operations were very trifling, the wager of battle being by common consent fought out on the sands of Ostend, and the necessities for attack and defence absorbing, the resources of each combatant. France, England, and Spain were holding a perpetual diplomatic tournament to which our eyes must presently turn, and the Sublime Realm of the Ottoman and the holy Roman Empire were in the customary equilibrium of their eternal strife.

The mutiny of the veterans continued; the "Italian republic" giving the archduke almost as much trouble, despite his ban and edicts and outlawry, as the Dutch commonwealth itself. For more than a twelvemonth the best troops of the Spanish army had been thus established as a separate empire, levying black-mail on the obedient provinces, hanging such of their old officers as dared to remonstrate, and obeying their elected chief magistrates with exemplary docility.

They had become a force of five thousand strong, cavalry and infantry together, all steady, experienced veterans--the best and bravest soldiers of Europe. The least of them demanded two thousand florins as owed to him by the King of Spain and the archduke. The burghers of Bois-le-Duc and other neighbouring towns in the obedient provinces kept watch and ward, not knowing how soon the Spaniards might be upon them to reward them for their obedience. Not a peasant with provisions was permitted by the mutineers to enter Bois-le-Duc, while the priests were summoned to pay one year's income of all their property on pain of being burned alive. "Very much amazed are the poor priests at these proceedings," said Ernest Nassau, "and there is a terrible quantity of the vile race within and around the city. I hope one day to have the plucking of some of their feathers myself."

The mutiny governed itself as a strict military democracy, and had caused an official seal to be engraved, representing seven snakes entwined in one, each thrusting forth a dangerous tongue, with the motto--

"tutto in ore
E sua Eccellenza in nostro favore."

"His Excellency" meant Maurice of Nassau, with whom formal articles of compact had been arranged. It had become necessary for the archduke, notwithstanding the steady drain of the siege of Ostend, to detach a considerable army against this republic and to besiege them in their capital of Hoogstraaten. With seven thousand foot and three thousand cavalry Frederic Van den Berg took the field against them in the latter part of July. Maurice, with nine thousand five hundred infantry and three thousand horse, lay near Gertruydenberg. When united with the rebel "squadron," two thousand five hundred strong, he would dispose of a force of fifteen thousand veterans, and he moved at once to relieve the besieged mutineers. His cousin Frederic, however, had no desire to measure himself with the stadholder at such odds, and stole away from him in the dark without beat of drum. Maurice entered Hoogstraaten, was received with rapture by the Spanish and Italian veterans, and excited the astonishment of all by the coolness with which he entered into the cage of these dangerous serpents--as they called themselves--handling them, caressing them, and being fondled by them in return. But the veterans knew a soldier when they saw one, and their hearts warmed to the prince--heretic though he were--more than they had ever done to the unfrocked bishop who, after starving them for years, had doomed them to destruction in this world and the next.

The stadholder was feasted and honoured by the mutineers during his brief visit to Hoogstraaten, and concluded with them a convention, according to which that town was to be restored to him, while they were to take temporary possession of the city of Grave. They were likewise to assist, with all their strength, in his military operations until they should make peace on their own terms with the archduke. For two weeks after such treaty they were not to fight against the States, and meantime, though fighting on the republican side, they were to act as an independent corps and in no wise to be merged in the stadholder's forces. So much and no more had resulted from the archduke's excommunication of the best part of his army. He had made a present of those troops to the enemy. He had also been employing a considerable portion of his remaining forces in campaigning against their own comrades. While at Grave, the mutineers, or the "squadron" as they were now called, were to be permitted to practise their own religious rites, without offering however, any interference with the regular Protestant worship of the place. When they should give up Grave, Hoogstraaten was to be restored to them if still in possession of the States and they were to enter into no negotiations with the archduke except with full knowledge of the stadholder.

There were no further military, operations of moment during the rest of the year.

Much, more important, however, than siege, battle, or mutiny, to human civilization, were the steady movements of the Dutch skippers and merchants at this period. The ears of Europe were stunned with the clatter of destruction going on all over Christendom, and seeming the only reasonable occupation of Christians; but the little republic; while fighting so heroically against the concentrated powers of despotism in the West, was most industriously building up a great empire in the East. In the new era just dawning, production was to become almost as honourable and potent, a principle as destruction.

The voyages among the spicy regions of the equator--so recently wrested from their Catholic and Faithful Majesties by Dutch citizens who did not believe in Borgia--and the little treaties made with petty princes and commonwealths, who for the first time were learning that there were other white men in the world beside the Portuguese, had already led to considerable results. Before the close of, the previous year that great commercial corporation had been founded--an empire within an empire; a republic beneath a republic--a counting-house company which was to organize armies, conquer kingdoms, build forts and cities, make war and peace, disseminate and exchange among the nations of the earth the various products of civilization, more perfectly than any agency hitherto known, and bring the farthest disjoined branches of the human family into closer, connection than had ever existed before. That it was a monopoly, offensive to true commercial principles, illiberal, unjust, tyrannical; ignorant of the very rudiments of mercantile philosophy; is plain enough. For the sages of the world were but as clowns, at that period, in economic science.

Was not the great financier of the age; Maximilian de Bethune, at that very moment exhausting his intellect in devices for the prevention of all international commerce even in Europe? "The kingdom of France," he groaned, "is stuffed full of the manufactures of our neighbours, and it is incredible what a curse to us are these wares. The import of all foreign goods has now been forbidden under very great penalties." As a necessary corollary to this madhouse legislation an edict was issued, prohibiting the export of gold and silver from France, on pain, not only of confiscation of those precious metals, but of the whole fortune of such as engaged in or winked at the traffic. The king took a public oath never to exempt the culprits from the punishment thus imposed, and, as the thrifty Sully had obtained from the great king a private grant of all those confiscations, and as he judiciously promised twenty-five per cent. thereof to the informer, no doubt he filled his own purse while impoverishing the exchequer.

The United States, not enjoying the blessings, of a paternal government, against which they had been fighting almost half a century, could not be expected to rival the stupendous folly of such political economy, although certainly not emancipated from all the delusions of the age.

Nor are we to forget how very recently, and even dimly, the idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations, the freest of all in polity and religion. Certainly the vices and shortcomings of the commercial

system now inaugurated by the republic may be justly charged in great part to the epoch, while her vast share in the expanding and upward movement which civilization, under the auspices of self-government; self-help, political freedom, free thought, and unshackled science, was then to undertake--never more perhaps to be permanently checked --must be justly ascribed to herself.

It was considered accordingly that the existence of so many private companies and copartnerships trading to the East was injurious to the interests of commerce. Merchants arriving at the different Indian ports would often find that their own countrymen had been too quick for them, and that other fleets had got the wind out of their sails, that the eastern markets had been stripped, and that prices had gone up to a ruinous height, while on the other hand, in the Dutch cities, nutmegs and cinnamon, brocades and indigo, were as plentiful as red herrings. It was hardly to be expected at that day to find this very triumph of successful traffic considered otherwise than as a grave misfortune, demanding interference on the part of the only free Government then existing in the world. That already free competition and individual enterprise, had made such progress in enriching the Hollanders and the Javanese respectively with a superfluity of useful or agreeable things, brought from the farthest ends of the earth, seemed to the eyes of that day a condition of things likely to end in a general catastrophe. With a simplicity, amazing only to those who are inclined to be vain of a superior wisdom--not their own but that of their wisest contemporaries--one of the chief reasons for establishing the East India Company was stated to be the necessity of providing against low prices of Oriental productions in Europe.

But national instinct is often wiser than what is supposed to be high national statesmanship, and there can be no doubt that the true foundation of the East India Company was the simple recognition of an iron necessity. Every merchant in Holland knew full well that the Portuguese and Spaniards could never be driven out of their commercial strongholds under the equator, except by a concentration of the private strength and wealth, of the mercantile community. The Government had enough on its hands in disputing, inch by inch, at so prodigious an expenditure of blood and treasure, the meagre territory with which nature had endowed the little commonwealth. Private organisation, self-help; union of individual purses and individual brains, were to conquer an empire at the antipodes if it were to be won at all. By so doing, the wealth of the nation and its power to maintain the great conflict with the spirit of the past might be indefinitely increased, and the resources of Spanish despotism proportionally diminished. It was not to be expected of Jacob Heemskerck, Wolfert Hermann, or Joris van Spilberg, indomitable skippers though they were, that each, acting on his own responsibility or on that of his supercargo, would succeed every day in conquering a whole Spanish fleet and dividing a million or two of prize-money among a few dozen sailors. Better things even than this might be done by wholesome and practical concentration on a more extended scale.

So the States-General granted a patent or charter to one great company with what, for the time, was an enormous paid-up capital, in order that

the India trade might be made secure and the Spaniards steadily confronted in what they had considered their most impregnable possessions. All former trading companies were invited to merge themselves in the Universal East India Company, which, for twenty-one years, should alone have the right to trade to the east of the Cape of Good Hope and to sail through the Straits of Magellan.

The charter had been signed on 20th March, 1602, and was mainly to the following effect.

The company was to pay twenty-five thousand florins to the States-General for its privilege. The whole capital was to be six million six hundred thousand florins. The chamber of Amsterdam was to have one half of the whole interest, the chamber of Zeeland one fourth; the chambers of the Meuse, namely, Delft, Rotterdam, and the north quarter; that is to say, Hoorn and Enkhuizen, each a sixteenth. All the chambers were to be governed by the directors then serving, who however were to be allowed to die out, down to the number of twenty for Amsterdam, twelve for Zeeland, and seven for each of the other chambers. To fill a vacancy occurring among the directors, the remaining members of the board were to nominate three candidates, from whom the estates of the province should choose one. Each director was obliged, to have an interest in the company amounting to at least six thousand florins, except the directors for Hoorn and Enkhuizen, of whom only three thousand should be required. The general assembly of these chambers should consist of seventeen directors, eight for Amsterdam, four for Zeeland, two for the Meuse, and two for the north quarter; the seventeenth being added by turns from the chambers of Zeeland, the Meuse, and the north quarter. This assembly was to be held six years at Amsterdam, and then two years in Zeeland. The ships were always to return to the port from which they had sailed. All the inhabitants of the provinces had the right, within a certain time, to take shares in the company. Any province or city subscribing for forty thousand florins or upwards might appoint an agent to look after its affairs.

The Company might make treaties with the Indian powers, in the name of the States-General of the United Netherlands or of the supreme authorities of the same, might build fortresses; appoint generals, and levy troops, provided such troops took oaths of fidelity to the States, or to the supreme authority, and to the Company. No ships, artillery, or other munitions of war belonging to the Company were to be used in service of the country without permission of the Company. The admiralty was to have a certain proportion of the prizes conquered from the enemy.

The directors should not be liable in property or person for the debts of the Company. The generals of fleets returning home were to make reports on the state of India to the States.

Notification; of the union of all India companies with this great corporation was duly sent to the fleets cruising in those regions, where it arrived in the course of the year 1603.

Meantime the first fleet of the Company, consisting of fourteen vessels

under command of Admiral Wybrand van Warwyk, sailed before the end of 1602, and was followed towards the close of 1603 by thirteen other ships, under Stephen van der Hagen?

The equipment of these two fleets cost two million two hundred thousand florins.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Bestowing upon others what was not his property
Four weeks' holiday--the first in eleven years
Idea of freedom in commerce has dawned upon nations
Impossible it is to practise arithmetic with disturbed brains
Passion is a bad schoolmistress for the memory
Prisoners were immediately hanged
Unlearned their faith in bell, book, and candle
World has rolled on to fresher fields of carnage and ruin

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