

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Molière
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke
Poe Aristotle Wells Bunner Shakespeare Chambers Irving
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**History of the United Netherlands
from the Death of William the
Silent to the Twelve Year's Truce,
1585b**

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Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: John Lothrop Motley

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8424-5714-0

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CHAPTER V., Part 1.

Position and Character of Farnese – Preparations for Antwerp Siege –

Its Characteristics – Foresight of William the Silent – Sainte Aldegonde, the Burgomaster – Anarchy in Antwerp – Character of Sainte

Aldegonde – Admiral Treslong – Justinus de Nassau – Hohenlo – Opposition

to the Plan of Orange – Liefkenshoek – Head – Quarters of Parma at

Kalloo – Difficulty of supplying the City – Results of not piercing the Dykes – Preliminaries of the Siege – Successes of the Spaniards –

Energy of Farnese with Sword and Pen – His Correspondence with the

Antwerpers – Progress of the Bridge – Impoverished Condition of Parma

– Patriots attempt Bois-le-Duc – Their Misconduct – Failure of the

Enterprise – The Scheldt Bridge completed – Description of the Structure

The negotiations between France and the Netherlands have been massed, in order to present a connected and distinct view of the relative attitude of the different countries of Europe. The conferences and diplomatic protocolling had resulted in nothing positive; but it is very necessary for the reader to understand the negative effects of all this dissimulation and palace-politics upon the destiny of the new commonwealth, and upon Christendom at large. The League had now achieved a great triumph; the King of France had virtually abdicated, and it was now requisite for the King of Navarre, the Netherlands, and Queen Elizabeth, to draw more closely together than before, if the last hope of forming a counter-league were not to be abandoned. The next step in political combination was therefore a solemn embassy of the States-General to England. Before detailing those negotiations, however, it is proper to direct

attention to the external public events which had been unrolling themselves in the Provinces, contemporaneously with the secret history which has been detailed in the preceding chapters.

By presenting in their natural groupings various distinct occurrences, rather than by detailing them in strict chronological order, a clearer view of the whole picture will be furnished than could be done by intermingling personages, transactions, and scenery, according to the arbitrary command of Time alone.

The Netherlands, by the death of Orange, had been left without a head. On the other hand, the Spanish party had never been so fortunate in their chief at any period since the destiny of the two nations had been blended with each other. Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, was a general and a politician, whose character had been steadily ripening since he came into the command of the country. He was now thirty-seven years of age—with the experience of a sexagenarian. No longer the impetuous, arbitrary, hot-headed youth, whose intelligence and courage hardly atoned for his insolent manner and stormy career, he had become pensive, modest, almost gentle. His genius was rapid in conception, patient in combination, fertile in expedients, adamantine in the endurance or suffering; for never did a heroic general and a noble army of veterans manifest more military virtue in the support of an infamous cause than did Parma and his handful of Italians and Spaniards. That which they considered to be their duty they performed. The work before them they did with all their might.

Alexander had vanquished the rebellion in the Celtic provinces, by the masterly diplomacy and liberal bribery which have been related in a former work. Artois, Hainault, Douay, Orchies, with the rich cities of Lille, Tournay, Valenciennes, Arras, and other important places, were now the property of Philip. These unhappy and misguided lands, however, were already reaping the reward of their treason. Beggared, trampled upon, plundered, despised, they were at once the prey of the Spaniards, and the cause that their sister-states, which still held out, were placed in more desperate condition than ever. They were also, even in their abject plight, made still more forlorn by the forays of Balagny, who continued in command of Cambray. Catharine de' Medici claimed that city as her property,

by will of the Duke of Anjou. A strange title—founded upon the treason and cowardice of her favourite son—but one which, for a time, was made good by the possession maintained by Balagny. That usurper meantime, with a shrewd eye to his own interests, pronounced the truce of Cambray, which was soon afterwards arranged, from year to year, by permission of Philip, as a "most excellent milch-cow;" and he continued to fill his pails at the expense of the "reconciled" provinces, till they were thoroughly exhausted.

This large south-western section of the Netherlands being thus permanently re-annexed to the Spanish crown, while Holland, Zee-land, and the other provinces, already constituting the new Dutch republic, were more obstinate in their hatred of Philip than ever, there remained the rich and fertile territory of Flanders and Brabant as the great debateable land. Here were the royal and political capital, Brussels, the commercial capital, Antwerp, with Mechlin, Dendermonde, Vilvoorde, and other places of inferior importance, all to be struggled for to the death. With the subjection of this district the last bulwark between the new commonwealth and the old empire would be overthrown, and Spain and Holland would then meet face to face.

If there had ever been a time when every nerve in Protestant Christendom should be strained to weld all those provinces together into one great commonwealth, as a bulwark for European liberty, rather than to allow them to be broken into stepping-stones, over which absolutism could stride across France and Holland into England, that moment had arrived. Every sacrifice should have been cheerfully made by all Netherlanders, the uttermost possible subsidies and auxiliaries should have been furnished by all the friends of civil and religious liberty in every land to save Flanders and Brabant from their impending fate.

No man felt more keenly the importance of the business in which he was engaged than Parma. He knew his work exactly, and he meant to execute it thoroughly. Antwerp was the hinge on which the fate of the whole country, perhaps of all Christendom, was to turn. "If we get Antwerp," said the Spanish soldiers—so frequently that the expression passed into a proverb—"you shall all go to mass

with us; if you save Antwerp, we will all go to conventicle with you."

Alexander rose with the difficulty and responsibility of his situation. His vivid, almost poetic intellect formed its schemes with perfect distinctness. Every episode in his great and, as he himself termed it, his "heroic enterprise," was traced out beforehand with the tranquil vision of creative genius; and he was prepared to convert his conceptions into reality, with the aid of an iron nature that never knew fatigue or fear.

But the obstacles were many. Alexander's master sat in his cabinet with his head full of Mucio, Don Antonio, and Queen Elizabeth; while Alexander himself was left neglected, almost forgotten. His army was shrinking to a nullity. The demands upon him were enormous, his finances delusive, almost exhausted. To drain an ocean dry he had nothing but a sieve. What was his position? He could bring into the field perhaps eight or ten thousand men over and above the necessary garrisons. He had before him Brussels, Antwerp, Mechlin, Ghent, Dendermonde, and other powerful places, which he was to subjugate. Here was a problem not easy of solution. Given an army of eight thousand, more or less, to reduce therewith in the least possible time, half-a-dozen cities; each containing fifteen or twenty thousand men able to bear arms. To besiege these places in form was obviously a mere chimera. Assault, battery, and surprises — these were all out of the question.

Yet Alexander was never more truly heroic than in this position of vast entanglement. Untiring, uncomplaining, thoughtful of others, prodigal of himself, generous, modest, brave; with so much intellect and so much devotion to what he considered his duty, he deserved to be a patriot and a champion of the right, rather than an instrument of despotism.

And thus he paused for a moment — with much work already accomplished, but his hardest life-task before him; still in the noon of manhood, a fine martial figure, standing, spear in hand, full in the sunlight, though all the scene around him was wrapped in gloom — a noble, commanding shape, entitled to the admiration which the energetic display of great powers, however unscrupulous, must always command. A dark, meridional physiognomy, a quick; alert,

imposing head; jet black, close-clipped hair; a bold eagle's face, with full, bright, restless eye; a man rarely reposing, always ready, never alarmed; living in the saddle, with harness on his back—such was the Prince of Parma; matured and mellowed, but still unharmed by time.

The cities of Flanders and Brabant he determined to reduce by gaining command of the Scheldt. The five principal ones Ghent, Dendermonde, Mechlin, Brussels Antwerp, lie narrow circle, at distances from each other varying from five miles to thirty, and are all strung together by the great Netherland river or its tributaries. His plan was immensely furthered by the success of Balthasar Gerard, an ally whom Alexander had despised and distrusted, even while he employed him. The assassination of Orange was better to Parma than forty thousand men. A crowd of allies instantly started up for him, in the shape of treason, faintheartedness, envy, jealousy, insubordination, within the walls of every beleaguered city. Alexander knew well how to deal with those auxiliaries. Letters, artfully concocted, full of conciliation and of promise, were circulated in every council-room, in almost every house.

The surrender of Ghent—brought about by the governor's eloquence, aided by the golden arguments which he knew so well how to advance—had by the middle of September (19th Sept. 1584), put him in possession of West Flanders, with the important exception of the coast. Dendermonde capitulated at a still earlier day; while the fall of Brussels, which held out till many persons had been starved to death, was deferred till the 10th March of the following year, and that of Mechlin till midsummer.

The details of the military or political operations, by which the reduction of most of these places were effected, possess but little interest. The siege of Antwerp, however, was one of the most striking events of the age; and although the change in military tactics and the progress of science may have rendered this leaguer of less technical importance than it possessed in the sixteenth century, yet the illustration that it affords of the splendid abilities of Parma, of the most cultivated mode of warfare in use at that period, and of the internal politics by which the country was then regulated, make it

necessary to dwell upon the details of an episode which must ever possess enduring interest.

It is agreeable to reflect, too, that the fame of the general is not polluted with the wholesale butchery, which has stained the reputation of other Spanish commanders so indelibly. There was no killing for the mere love of slaughter. With but few exceptions, there was no murder in cold blood; and the many lives that were laid down upon those watery dykes were sacrificed at least in bold, open combat; in a contest, the ruling spirits of which were patriotism, or at least honour.

It is instructive, too, to observe the diligence and accuracy with which the best lights of the age were brought to bear upon the great problem which Parma had undertaken to solve. All the science then at command was applied both by the Prince and by his burgher antagonists to the advancement of their ends. Hydrostatics, hydraulics, engineering, navigation, gunnery, pyrotechnics, mining, geometry, were summoned as broadly, vigorously, and intelligently to the destruction or preservation of a trembling city, as they have ever been, in more commercial days, to advance a financial or manufacturing purpose. Land converted into water, and water into land, castles built upon the breast of rapid streams, rivers turned from their beds and taught new courses; the distant ocean driven across ancient bulwarks, mines dug below the sea, and canals made to percolate obscene morasses—which the red hand of war, by the very act, converted into blooming gardens—a mighty stream bridged and mastered in the very teeth of winter, floating ice-bergs, ocean-tides, and an alert and desperate foe, ever ready with fleets and armies and batteries—such were the materials of which the great spectacle was composed; a spectacle which enchained the attention of Europe for seven months, and on the result of which, it was thought, depended the fate of all the Netherlands, and perhaps of all Christendom.

Antwerp, then the commercial centre of the Netherlands and of Europe, stands upon the Scheldt. The river, flowing straight, broad, and full along the verge of the city, subtends the arc into which the place arranges itself as it falls back from the shore. Two thousand ships of the largest capacity then known might easily find room in

its ample harbours. The stream, nearly half a mile in width, and sixty feet in depth, with a tidal rise and fall of eleven feet, moves, for a few miles, in a broad and steady current between the provinces of Brabant and Flanders. Then, dividing itself into many ample estuaries, and gathering up the level isles of Zeeland into its bosom, it seems to sweep out with them into the northern ocean. Here, at the junction of the river and the sea, lay the perpetual hope of Antwerp, for in all these creeks and currents swarmed the fleets of the Zeelanders, that hardy and amphibious race, with which few soldiers or mariners could successfully contend, on land or water.

Even from the beginning of the year 1584 Parma had been from time to time threatening Antwerp. The victim instinctively felt that its enemy was poisoning and hovering over head, although he still delayed to strike. Early in the summer Sainte Aldegonde, Recorder Martini, and other official personages, were at Delft, upon the occasion of the christening ceremonies of Frederic Henry, youngest child of Orange. The Prince, at that moment, was aware of the plans of Parma, and held a long conversation with his friends upon the measures which he desired to see immediately undertaken. Unmindful of his usual hospitality, he insisted that these gentlemen should immediately leave for Antwerp. Alexander Farnese, he assured them, had taken the firm determination to possess himself of that place, without further delay. He had privately signified his purpose of laying the axe at once to the root of the tree, believing that with the fall of the commercial capital the infant confederacy of the United States would fall likewise. In order to accomplish this object, he would forthwith attempt to make himself master of the banks of the Scheldt, and would even throw a bridge across the stream, if his plans were not instantly circumvented.

William of Orange then briefly indicated his plan; adding that he had no fears for the result; and assuring his friends, who expressed much anxiety on the subject, that if Parma really did attempt the siege of Antwerp it should be his ruin. The plan was perfectly simple. The city stood upon a river. It was practicable, although extremely hazardous, for the enemy to bridge that river, and by so doing ultimately to reduce the place. But the ocean could not be bridged; and it was quite possible to convert Antwerp, for a season, into an ocean-port. Standing alone upon an island, with the sea

flowing around it, and with full and free marine communication with Zeeland and Holland, it might safely bid defiance to the land-forces, even of so great a commander as Parma. To the furtherance of this great measure of defence, it was necessary to destroy certain bulwarks, the chief of (10th June, 1584) which was called the Blaw-garen Dyke; and Sainte Aldegonde was therefore requested to return to the city, in order to cause this task to be executed without delay.

Nothing could be more judicious than this advice. The low lands along the Scheldt were protected against marine encroachments, and the river itself was confined to its bed, by a magnificent system of dykes, which extended along its edge towards the ocean, in parallel lines. Other barriers of a similar nature ran in oblique directions, through the wide open pasture lands, which they maintained in green fertility, against the ever-threatening sea. The Blaw-garen, to which the prince mainly alluded, was connected with the great dyke upon the right bank of the Scheldt. Between this and the city, another bulwark called the Kowensyn Dyke, crossed the country at right angles to the river, and joined the other two at a point, not very far from Lillo, where the States had a strong fortress.

The country in this neighbourhood was low, spongy, full of creeks, small meres, and the old bed of the Scheldt. Orange, therefore, made it very clear, that by piercing the great dyke just described, such a vast body of water would be made to pour over the land as to submerge the Kowensyn also, the only other obstacle in the passage of fleets from Zeeland to Antwerp. The city would then be connected with the sea and its islands, by so vast an expanse of navigable water, that any attempt on Parma's part to cut off supplies and succour would be hopeless. Antwerp would laugh the idea of famine to scorn; and although this immunity would be purchased by the sacrifice of a large amount of agricultural territory the price so paid was but a slender one, when the existence of the capital, and with it perhaps of the whole confederacy was at stake.

Sainte Aldegonde and Martini suggested, that, as there would be some opposition to the measure proposed, it might be as well to make a similar attempt on the Flemish side, in preference, by breaking through the dykes in the neighbourhood of Saftingen. Orange

replied, by demonstrating that the land in the region which he had indicated was of a character to ensure success, while in the other direction there were certain very unfavourable circumstances which rendered the issue doubtful. The result was destined to prove the sagacity of the Prince, for it will be shown in the sequel, that the Saftingen plan, afterwards really carried out, was rather advantageous than detrimental to the enemy's projects.

Sainte Aldegonde, accordingly, yielded to the arguments and entreaties of his friend, and repaired without delay to Antwerp.

The advice of William the Silent—as will soon be related—was not acted upon; and, within a few weeks after it had been given, he was in his grave. Nowhere was his loss more severely felt than in Antwerp. It seemed, said a contemporary, that with his death had died all authority. The Prince was the only head which the many-membered body of that very democratic city ever spontaneously obeyed. Antwerp was a small republic—in time of peace intelligently and successfully administered—which in the season of a great foreign war, amid plagues, tumults, famine, and internal rebellion, required the firm hand and the clear brain of a single chief. That brain and hand had been possessed by Orange alone.

Before his death he had desired that Sainte Aldegonde should accept the office of burgomaster of the city. Nominally, the position was not so elevated as were many of the posts which that distinguished patriot had filled. In reality, it was as responsible and arduous a place as could be offered to any man's acceptance throughout the country. Sainte Aldegonde consented, not without some reluctance. He felt that there was odium to be incurred; he knew that much would be expected of him, and that his means would be limited. His powers would be liable to a constant and various restraint. His measures were sure to be the subject of perpetual cavil. If the city were besieged, there were nearly one hundred thousand mouths to feed, and nearly one hundred thousand tongues to dispute about furnishing the food.

For the government of Antwerp had been degenerating from a well-organised municipal republicanism into anarchy. The clashing of the various bodies exercising power had become incessant and intolerable. The burgomaster was charged with the chief executive

authority, both for peace and war. Nevertheless he had but a single vote in the board of magistrates, where a majority decided. Moreover, he could not always attend the sessions, because he was also member of the council of Brabant. Important measures might therefore be decided by the magistracy, not only against his judgment, but without his knowledge. Then there was a variety of boards or colleges, all arrogating concurrent – which in truth was conflicting – authority. There was the board of militia-colonels, which claimed great powers. Here, too, the burgomaster was nominally the chief, but he might be voted down by a majority, and of course was often absent. Then there were sixteen captains who came into the colonels' sessions whenever they liked, and had their word to say upon all subjects broached. If they were refused a hearing, they were backed by eighty other captains, who were ready at any moment to carry every disputed point before the "broadcouncil."

There were a college of ward-masters, a college of select men, a college of deacons, a college of ammunition, of fortification, of ship-building, all claiming equal authority, and all wrangling among themselves; and there was a college of "peace-makers," who wrangled more than all the rest together.

Once a week there was a session of the board or general council. Dire was the hissing and confusion, as the hydra heads of the multitudinous government were laid together. Heads of colleges, presidents of chambers, militia-chieftains; magistrates, ward-masters, deans of fishmongers, of tailors, gardeners, butchers, all met together pell-mell; and there was no predominant authority. This was not a convenient working machinery for a city threatened with a siege by the first captain of the age. Moreover there was a deficiency of regular troops: The burgher-militia were well trained and courageous, but not distinguished for their docility. There was also a regiment of English under Colonel Morgan, a soldier of great experience, and much respected; but, as Stephen Le Sieur said, "this force, unless seconded with more, was but a breakfast for the enemy." Unfortunately, too, the insubordination, which was so ripe in the city, seemed to affect these auxiliaries. A mutiny broke out among the English troops. Many deserted to Parma, some escaped to England, and it was not until Morgan had beheaded Captain Lee and Captain Powell, that discipline could be restored.

And into this scene of wild and deafening confusion came Philip de Marnix, Lord of Sainte Aldegonde.

There were few more brilliant characters than he in all Christendom. He was a man, of a most rare and versatile genius. Educated in Geneva at the very feet of Calvin, he had drunk, like mother's milk, the strong and bitter waters of the stern reformer's, creed; but he had in after life attempted, although hardly with success, to lift himself to the height of a general religious toleration. He had also been trained in the severe and thorough literary culture which characterised that rigid school. He was a scholar, ripe and rare; no holiday trifler in the gardens of learning. He spoke and wrote Latin like his native tongue. He could compose poignant Greek epigrams. He was so familiar with Hebrew, that he had rendered the Psalms of David out of the original into flowing Flemish verse, for the use of the reformed churches. That he possessed the modern tongues of civilized Europe, Spanish, Italian, French, and German, was a matter of course. He was a profound jurisconsult, capable of holding debate against all competitors upon any point of theory or practice of law, civil, municipal, international. He was a learned theologian, and had often proved himself a match for the doctors, bishops, or rabbins of Europe, in highest argument of dogma, creed, or tradition. He was a practised diplomatist, constantly employed in delicate and difficult negotiations by William the Silent, who ever admired his genius, cherished his friendship, and relied upon his character. He was an eloquent orator, whose memorable harangue, beyond all his other efforts, at the diet of Worms, had made the German princes hang their heads with shame, when, taking a broad and philosophical view of the Netherland matter, he had shown that it was the great question of Europe; that Nether Germany was all Germany; that Protestantism could not be unravelled into shreds; that there was but one cause in Christendom— that of absolutism against national liberty, Papacy against the reform; and that the seventeen Provinces were to be assisted in building themselves into an eternal barrier against Spain, or that the "burning mark of shame would be branded upon the forehead of Germany;" that the war, in short, was to be met by her on the threshold; or else that it would come to seek

her at home—a prophecy which the horrible Thirty Years' War was in after time most signally to verify.

He was a poet of vigour and originality, for he had accomplished what has been achieved by few; he had composed a national hymn, whose strophes, as soon as heard, struck a chord in every Netherland heart, and for three centuries long have rung like a clarion wherever the Netherland tongue is spoken. "Wilhelmus van Nassouwe," regarded simply as a literary composition, has many of the qualities which an ode demands; an electrical touch upon the sentiments, a throb of patriotism, sympathetic tenderness, a dash of indignation, with rhythmical harmony and graceful expression; and thus it has rung from millions of lips, from generation to generation.

He was a soldier, courageous, untiring, prompt in action, useful in council, and had distinguished himself in many a hard-fought field. Taken prisoner in the sanguinary skirmish at Maaslandssluis, he had been confined a year, and, for more than three months, had never laid his head, as he declared, upon the pillow without commending his soul as for the last time to his Maker, expecting daily the order for his immediate execution, and escaping his doom only because William the Silent proclaimed that the proudest head among the Spanish prisoners should fall to avenge his death; so that he was ultimately exchanged against the veteran Mondragon.

From the incipient stages of the revolt he had been foremost among the patriots. He was supposed to be the author of the famous "Compromise of the Nobles," that earliest and most conspicuous of the state-papers of the republic, and of many other important political documents; and he had contributed to general literature many works of European celebrity, of which the 'Roman Bee-Hive' was the most universally known.

Scholar, theologian, diplomatist, swordsman, orator, poet, pamphleteer, he had genius for all things, and was eminent in all. He was even famous for his dancing, and had composed an intelligent and philosophical treatise upon the value of that amusement, as an agent of civilisation, and as a counteractor of the grosser pleasures of the table to which Upper and Nether Germans were too much addicted.

Of ancient Savoyard extraction, and something of a southern nature, he had been born in Brussels, and was national to the heart's core.

A man of interesting, sympathetic presence; of a physiognomy where many of the attaching and attractive qualities of his nature revealed themselves; with crisp curling hair, surmounting a tall, expansive forehead—full of benevolence, idealism, and quick perceptions; broad, brown, melancholy eyes, overflowing with tenderness; a lean and haggard cheek, a rugged Flemish nose; a thin flexible mouth; a slender moustache, and a peaked and meagre beard; so appeared Sainte Aldegonde in the forty-seventh year of his age, when he came to command in Antwerp.

Yet after all—many-sided, accomplished, courageous, energetic, as he was—it may be doubted whether he was the man for the hour or the post. He was too impressionable; he had too much of the temperament of genius. Without being fickle, he had, besides his versatility of intellect, a character which had much facility in turning; not, indeed, in the breeze of self-interest, but because he seemed placed in so high and clear an atmosphere of thought that he was often acted upon and swayed by subtle and invisible influences. At any rate his conduct was sometimes inexplicable. He had been strangely fascinated by the ignoble Duke of Anjou, and, in the sequel, it will be found that he was destined to experience other magnetic or magical impulses, which were once thought suspicious, and have remained mysterious even to the present day.

He was imaginative. He was capable of broad and boundless hopes. He was sometimes prone to deep despair. His nature was exquisitely tempered; too fine and polished a blade to be wielded among those hydra-heads by which he was, now surrounded; and for which the stunning sledgehammer of arbitrary force was sometimes necessary.

He was perhaps deficient in that gift, which no training and no culture can bestow, and which comes from above alone by birth-right divine—that which men willingly call master, authority; the effluence which came so naturally from the tranquil eyes of William the Silent.

Nevertheless, Sainte Aldegonde was prepared to do his best, and all his best was to be tasked to the utmost. His position was rendered still more difficult by the unruly nature of some of his coordinates.

"From the first day to the last," said one who lived in Antwerp during the siege, "the mistakes committed in the city were incredible." It had long been obvious that a siege was contemplated by Parma. A liberal sum of money had been voted by the States-General, of which Holland and Zeeland contributed a very large proportion (two hundred thousand florins); the city itself voted another large subsidy, and an order was issued to purchase at once and import into the city at least a year's supply of every kind of provisions of life and munitions of war.

William de Blois, Lord of Treslong, Admiral of Holland and Zeeland, was requested to carry out this order, and superintend the victualling of Antwerp. But Treslong at once became troublesome. He was one of the old "beggars of the sea," a leader in the wild band who had taken possession of the Brill, in the teeth of Alva, and so laid the foundation of the republic. An impetuous noble, of wealthy family, high connections, and refractory temper—a daring sailor, ever ready for any rash adventure, but possessed of a very moderate share of prudence or administrative ability, he fell into loose and lawless courses on the death of Orange, whose firm hand was needed to control him. The French negotiation had excited his profound disgust, and knowing Sainte Aldegonde to be heart and soul in favour of that alliance, he was in no haste whatever to carry out his orders with regard to Antwerp. He had also an insignificant quarrel with President Meetkerk. The Prince of Parma—ever on the watch for such opportunities—was soon informed of the Admiral's discontent, and had long been acquainted with his turbulent character. Alexander at once began to inflame his jealousy and soothe his vanity by letters and messengers, urging upon him the propriety of reconciling himself with the King, and promising him large rewards and magnificent employments in the royal service. Even the splendid insignia of the Golden Fleece were dangled before his eyes. It is certain that the bold Hollander was not seduced by these visions, but there is no doubt that he listened to the voice of the tempter. He unquestionably neglected his duty. Week after week he remained,

at Ostend, sneering at the French and quaffing huge draughts in honour of Queen Elizabeth. At last, after much time had elapsed, he agreed to victual Antwerp if he could be furnished with thirty krom-stevens,—a peculiar kind of vessel, not to be found in Zeeland. The krom-stevens were sent to him from Holland. Then, hearing that his negligence had been censured by the States-General, he became more obstinate than ever, and went up and down proclaiming that if people made themselves disagreeable to him he would do that which should make all the women and children in the Netherlands shriek and tremble. What this nameless horror was to be he never divulged, but meantime he went down to Middelburg, and swore that not a boat-load of corn should go up to Antwerp until two members of the magistracy, whom he considered unpleasant, had been dismissed from their office. Wearied with all this bluster, and imbued with grave suspicion as to his motives, the States at last rose upon their High Admiral and threw him into prison. He was accused of many high crimes and misdemeanours, and, it was thought, would be tried for his life. He was suspected and even openly accused of having been tampered with by Spain, but there was at any rate a deficiency of proof.

"Treslong is apprehended," wrote Davison to Burghley, "and, is charged to have been the cause that the fleet passed not up to Antwerp. He is suspected to have otherwise forgotten himself, but whether justly or not will appear by his trial. Meantime he is kept in the common prison of Middelburg, a treatment which it is thought they would not offer him if they had not somewhat of importance against him."

He was subsequently released at the intercession of Queen Elizabeth, and passed some time in England. He was afterwards put upon trial, but no accuser appearing to sustain the charges against him, he was eventually released. He never received a command in the navy again, but the very rich sinecures of Grand Falconer and Chief Forester of Holland were bestowed upon him, and he appears to have ended his days in peace and plenty.

He was succeeded in the post of Admiral of Holland and Zeeland by Justinus de Nassau, natural son of William the Silent, a young man of much promise but of little experience.

General Count Hohenlo, too, lieutenant for young Maurice, and virtual commander-in-chief of the States' forces, was apt to give much trouble. A German noble, of ancient descent and princely rank; brave to temerity, making a jest of danger; and riding into a foray as if to a merry-making; often furiously intoxicated, and always turbulent and uncertain; a handsome, dissipated cavalier, with long curls floating over his shoulders, an imposing aristocratic face, and a graceful, athletic figure, he needed some cool brain and steady hand to guide him—valuable as he was to fulfil any daring project but was hardly willing to accept the authority of a burgomaster. While the young Maurice yet needed tutelage, while "the sapling was growing into the tree," Hohenlo was a dangerous chief-tain and a most disorderly lieutenant.

With such municipal machinery and such coadjutors had Sainte Aldegonde to deal, while, meantime, the delusive French negotiation was dragging its slow length along, and while Parma was noiselessly and patiently proceeding with his preparations.

The burgomaster—for Sainte Aldegonde, in whom vulgar ambition was not a foible, had refused the dignity and title of Margrave of Antwerp, which had been tendered him—had neglected no effort towards carrying into effect the advice of Orange, given almost with his latest breath. The manner in which that advice was received furnished a striking illustration of the defective machinery which has been portrayed.

Upon his return from Delft, Sainte Aldegonde had summoned a meeting of the magistracy of Antwerp. He laid before the board the information communicated by Orange as to Parma's intentions. He also explained the scheme proposed for their frustration, and urged the measures indicated with so much earnestness that his fellow-magistrates were convinced. The order was passed for piercing the Blauw-garen Dyke, and Sainte Aldegonde, with some engineers, was requested to view the locality, and to take order for the immediate fulfilment of the plan.

Unfortunately there were many other boards in session besides that of the Schepens, many other motives at work besides those of patriotism. The guild of butchers held a meeting, so soon as the plan