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THE
HISTORY OF HOLLAND

AND THE

Dutch Nation,

FROM

THE BEGINNING OF THE TENTH CENTURY TO THE END OF
THE EIGHTEENTH;

INCLUDING

AN ACCOUNT OF THE MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS, COMMERCIAL
PURSUITS, AND SOCIAL HABITS OF THE PEOPLE;

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION,
IN HOLLAND;

The Intestine Dissensions, Foreign Wars, &c.

CHIEFLY COMPILED,

BY PERMISSION OF THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT, FROM ORIGINAL
DOCUMENTS AND STATE PAPERS.

BY

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HISTORY OF HOLLAND.

PART III.

CHAPTER VIII.

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1660 THE United Provinces of Holland were at this period at the summit of their glory and prosperity. The treaty of the Pyrenees, concluded in the last year between France and Spain, containing a solemn renunciation by Louis XIV. of all the claims of the Infanta to the dominions of the Crown of Spain, on the occasion of his marriage with that princess, had relieved the Dutch from the fear they had, since the negotiations of Munster, entertained, that the peace would at one time or other be purchased by the cession of the Netherlands to France. In alliance with nearly all the powers of Europe, their navigation, secured by the pacification of the northern nations, and by the late commercial treaty with France,—their commerce, now extended to every part of the world, and supplying the deficiencies of one country from the superfluities of another, diffused comfort and civilization among all, and rendered Holland the storehouse of Europe.

Norway, it was truly said, was her forest; the banks 1660 of the Rhine, the Garonne, and Dordogne, her vineyards; Silesia, Poland, Saxony, Portugal, Spain, and Ireland, were her sheep-folds; Prussia and Poland her granaries; India and Arabia her gardens. Increasing trade and manufactures supported a numerous population in abundance and contentment; while the government, under the influence of the enlightened De Witt, maintaining itself on the legitimate basis of its own energy and wisdom, had rendered itself cherished at home and respected abroad.

Yet already might the eye of an attentive observer discover the existence of those causes which were to bring about the degradation, and eventually the utter ruin, of the Dutch republic. As in the human frame, no sooner does beauty attain its fulness, and strength its prime, than senility creeps on with stealthy and imperceptible steps—than the elastic muscles begin to grow rigid, the delicate membranes to thicken, and the nerves to lose their sensitiveness*;—so in the body politic, during the apparent prime and vigour of its existence, the decay has often already commenced which must terminate in its final dissolution. It seems, indeed, as though free constitutions contained within themselves some principles of this decay, from which less excellent forms of government are in a great measure exempt. Party-spirit and corruption in particular, the besetting and fatal vices of a free constitution, are in absolute governments more rarely found, and when they do exist, are comparatively less pernicious. The slaves of a despot, the serfs of an oligarchy, ignorant of aught better than their own state of social existence, hopeless and undesirous of change, are little apt to form schemes for the improve-

* Buffon, Hist. Nat. "Sur la vieillesse et la mort."

1660 ment of their condition; accustomed to unlimited obedience, they receive implicitly their political opinions from their masters, and subjects of political discussion therefore seldom arise; while the administration of public affairs is confined to few persons, and these, if they seek to distinguish themselves at all, seek to do so rather by their zeal in the service of the prince than by the introduction of novelties, or of measures which, however conducive to the improvement and happiness of the people, have a tendency to disturb or alter the existing order of things. In free constitutions, the more fully developed energies and capabilities of the people, their more numerous wants, their more extended relations, create the necessity and the desire for continual improvement, and consequently continual change. Schemes are devised, alterations proposed, many or all of which perhaps being, or supposed to be, inimical to the interests of some particular class of persons, become the subject of debate, which soon increases into contention, and is exasperated into animosity. The career of public ambition being open to all, a greater number of men of ability are produced on the political arena; and in their struggle for power and influence, each seeks to obtain it by espousing with vehemence some cherished interest, some popular opinion, of the class from whose favour and support he has the most reason to expect advancement. Hence principles and men become identified in the public mind, and parties are formed; men being induced to support one whom they might otherwise have opposed, for the sake of the principle he advocates, while others are led to espouse opinions from esteem for the person by whom they are recommended.

In proportion as the leaders of parties thus acquire influence, they soon find, owing to the natural prone-

ness of mankind to adopt opinions without the labour 1660 of examination, numbers ready blindly to acquiesce in any which come recommended to them by the charms of eloquence, or the weight of authority; by degrees they erect themselves into the guides and masters of the judgment of their followers; a new standard of right and wrong is set up; measures are looked upon not in regard of their intrinsic value but of the party by whom they are proposed; and a man's public virtue is esteemed, not in proportion to his integrity and zeal for the good of his country, but for his unscrupulous adherence to his party. Accordingly, measures of vital importance to the welfare of the state are rendered abortive by the stronger party, for no other reason than that they are proposed by the weaker; or such as are utterly destructive, carried with a similar recklessness. Often, too, when pressing evils are to be remedied, the requisite measures, instead of being adopted with alacrity and unanimity, become questions of party strength, and are either thwarted altogether, or delayed till too late to produce any beneficial effect; and when imminent danger is to be averted, party debates and contentions consume the time which should be otherwise occupied, and, ere either one or other has gained the desired ascendancy, the country is irretrievably ruined.

Corruption, likewise, the ordinary and deadly poison of free states, is less rife and less dangerous in those of an absolute or monarchical constitution. A monarchical government is naturally strong in itself; simple in its action, and easily comprehended both by those who cannot, and those who will not trouble themselves to examine and understand the more complicated machinery which a mixed or republican constitution requires, it finds the ignorant, the indolent,

1660 and the unthinking—a vast majority of mankind—amongst its advocates: it has therefore always the advantage of numbers on its side. A free government, on the contrary, habitually in the minority, is inherently weak, and hence is obliged to resort to means of corruption to gain partisans; to encourage venality in order to support itself; it has therefore a natural temptation towards this vice by which the former is unassailed. Corruption is also less mischievous in a monarchical government, inasmuch as the wealth and honours a monarch has to bestow tend chiefly to confirm his subjects in their loyalty to his person and their zeal for the support of his throne and the existing state of things; while the bribes administered in a free or republican state undermine the principles of integrity and public virtue absolutely essential to the existence of that state, and render the recipients subservient to those who may seek by these means to become its masters. All these evils we shall find exemplified in the course of the later history of Holland. We shall see party-spirit overbearing the principles of genuine patriotism, perverting the judgment, nay, it would almost appear, obumbrating the intellect of public men. We shall see them, when the very existence of their constitution is threatened, neglect the measures necessary for its re-invigoration, lest their adoption should throw power into the hands of their political opponents; we shall see them absorbed in questions of petty party-strife, when the enemy was close at hand who was to put an end to the debates of all parties by the destruction of all.

The evil of corruption will appear less glaringly to our view; the eminent heads of affairs preserving themselves wholly pure from its taint, the details of

its progress—creeping through the minor branches of 1660 the state—will escape the notice of general history; but its effects, none the less certain, will be visible in the incapacity of the subordinate members of government to fill the offices into which they had introduced themselves by surreptitious means; in the disinclination manifested by all ranks of persons to undertake the duties of such as were rather onerous than profitable; in the general increase of avarice and proportionable diminution of the high sense of honour and moral rectitude formerly observable in the people; and in the indifference of the whole nation to public affairs and to its own political condition. Yet to deduce from thence that it had been better for Holland, had she never possessed that freedom for which she struggled so long, would be as though one should desire the continuance of the feebleness and imbecility of childhood to avoid the trials and temptations of maturer growth; or to hasten on the period of the intellectual decay of age, in order to preserve the body from the exhaustion consequent on the action of the mind; to suspend, in fact, all the more noble and valuable functions of existence for the sake of prolonging its term. Neither is it permitted to Holland to make the choice between liberty and despotism an abstract question of political theory; the immense practical advantages that liberty has secured to her, greater perhaps than ever fell to the lot of any other nation, preclude her for ever from undervaluing the source from whence they were derived.

It is not, however, wholly to causes moral or internal that the fall of Holland is to be ascribed; a result which her geographical position and her political relations with the rest of Europe, and more especially with France and England, alike contributed to bring

1660 about. Situated between the two latter countries, an object at once of jealousy and desire to both, she was perpetually involved in their quarrels, whether with each other or with the different European nations. Seldom, indeed, did either France or England go to war without having made repeated attempts to entice or intimidate Holland into taking an active part; the smallest preference shown to one was generally a watchword for the commencement of hostilities by the other; while the endeavour to preserve an exact neutrality often exposed her to the resentment of both. The preservation of the Spanish Netherlands, moreover, which Spain was utterly unable to defend against the rapacious ambition of France, was a source of constant animosity between the United Provinces and this power; while the vacillating policy of the court of England, sometimes corrupt, sometimes shortsighted—sacrificing to private interests or commercial jealousies the true interests of the nation, and aiding to destroy that state which she should sedulously have protected as the firmest bulwark of her own religion and liberties—often threw her into the ranks of her enemies at the very moment when she most needed her alliance. By one or other of these two states the United Provinces were constantly engaged in wars which exhausted their finances, annihilated their navy, and caused the rapid decline of their trade, manufactures, and commerce; and thus by a destiny singularly untoward, a people guiltless of aggression or spoliation, who never, during the whole of their political existence, except upon one occasion, declared an offensive war—who, could their national wish have found expression, would have desired “peace on earth”—found themselves crushed by the weight of unprovoked and long continued hostilities.

Often too the friendship of England was scarcely 1660 less injurious to Holland than her enmity. In proportion as the one increased in strength and the other grew weaker, the confederacy between them became that of the giant and the dwarf; the stronger reaped alone the advantages, to obtain which the blood and treasure of the weaker had been lavished in undue proportion; and took occasion, from her dread of breaking the bonds of alliance with her, to commit acts of oppression and tyranny on her navigation and commerce, which she well knew the other was not in a situation to resent*. Nor were these all the evils that resulted to Holland from her alliance with England. The frequent marriages of the princes of Orange into the Royal families of that nation offered to the court a temptation and an opportunity to interfere in her domestic affairs, which it was never able to resist, and too often made use of to exasperate party-spirit and foment dissensions, with the view of forcing the Stadtholderal government upon the United Provinces, or, if the Stadtholder were already in office, obtaining for him a larger share of authority than the sovereign was willing to cede; and to this effect also a powerful engine was placed in its hands by the reluctance of the Dutch nation to expose itself to the

* In the details of the history which serve to exemplify this proposition it may be thought that the conduct of England is represented in too unfavourable a light; nothing, however, is advanced but what is supported on incontrovertible evidence; nothing but facts which it would be a dereliction of the duty of an historian to conceal; and perhaps the contemplation of the acts of a powerful state towards one whose comparatively feeble condition secured impunity to her aggressor, may afford a salutary though not agreeable lesson. "It is more useful," says an admirable writer, whose premature loss the literary world yet mourns, "to contemplate our own national faults and the worthy deeds of other nations, than to take the opposite course; for there can be no danger of our admiring our neighbours too much, or ourselves too little." Arnold's Lectures on Modern History, lect. iv., p. 222.

1660 hostility of England, or the discontents excited by the annoyances and vexations attendant on a state of actual war.

To describe the nature and operation of these several causes of the fall of Holland will occupy the attention of the historian through the following pages; yet, though constantly at work, many years will elapse before any marked traces of their action will appear; with the exception of one brief and sad interval—when she bowed her neck before the conqueror, and the brand-mark of innocent blood was on her forehead—Holland has long an illustrious part to perform on the theatre of events; she will still figure as the centre and mainspring of the negotiations of Europe, as the assertor of her liberties, the mediator of peace, the refuge of the distressed, the protector of the weak, the support of the oppressed.

For a time the relations of the United Provinces with England were in the highest degree satisfactory to all lovers of their country in both nations. The restoration of Charles II. to the throne, and the lively and unaffected sympathy with which the Dutch shared in the joy of the English on that event, seemed likely permanently to cement those bonds of ancient friendship, which since the conclusion of the last peace had been gradually re-uniting. Immediately on the arrival of the king at Breda, whither he hastened from Brussels on intelligence of the favourable dispositions of the English parliament and nation, he was greeted by a deputation both from the States-General and the States of Holland, with addresses of warm and respectful congratulation. His journey through Holland, in compliance with the invitation of the States, that

“he would grace that province with his royal presence,” was a species of triumphal procession. He was received in all the towns with shouts and acclamations, firing of cannon, illuminations, and other demonstrations of joy; his expenses were everywhere defrayed by the States; and himself and his suite, as well as the committee of lords and commons who met him at the Hague, entertained with a liberality and magnificence such as he had never before beheld, and befitting the most wealthy nation of Europe^{b*}. On his appearance in the assemblies of the States-General and States of Holland, each party vied with the other in the most flattering expressions of esteem. De Witt, pensionary of Holland, in an oration more remarkable for its style of adulation than for good taste, observed, that Providence had only deferred the restoration of the king to make it the more miraculous; and that, though their interests had constrained them to treat with the English commonwealth, they had, in so doing, done violence to their inclination; but, now, both interest and inclination prompted them to give His Majesty proofs of their ardent affection^c. Charles on his side declared that he loved the republic not only as the residence of his sister and nephew, but for reasons of state; and that he should feel jealous if they allowed any other sovereign a larger share of their friendship than himself, since he had more regard for them than all the princes of Europe together. In

^b Res. van de Staaten van Holland op't jaar 1660, May 24-29. Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 588—597.

^c Basnage, Ann. des Prov. Unies, tom. i., p. 606.

* Charles declared, that in all the courts he had visited, he had never seen anything to be compared in splendour and excellence with the entertainment given him by the States of Holland. Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 598.

1660 answer to the proposal of the States for the formation of a close and intimate alliance, he replied, that it was always his intention to maintain an inviolable peace with the United Provinces, who should experience the effects of his goodwill in a far higher degree than they had that of any of his predecessors. He ventured, in conclusion, to recommend to their care the interests of his sister and his nephew, the Prince of Orange; and even this unpalatable topic was graciously received by the States of Holland. They replied, through the mouth of De Witt, that the remembrance of the merits of the prince's ancestors, no less than his near relationship to the king, inclined them to gratify His Majesty's wishes; and, soon after, gave a proof of the reality of this disposition, by consenting, at the solicitation of the princess royal, to take charge of his education, and by granting a certain sum for the maintenance of his household^d. They likewise abrogated the act of exclusion, and in a mode as undignified as that in which it was framed was unjust; declaring, that they "had passed it at the demand of Cromwell, but that God and the nation having recalled Charles II. to the kingdom, and the English republic being extinct, they revoked the act unanimously, and regarded it as annulled^e."

It might have been supposed that the disposition thus manifested by the Dutch to gratify the wishes of the king, the unconstrained proofs of affection they had given him, and the magnificent hospitality with which he had been treated, would have effaced from his mind the remembrance of the slights he had previously received; proceeding chiefly from deference to

^d Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 601. Clarendon, vol. iii., b. 16, p. 599. Res. van de St., 1660, Jul. 30.

^e Res. van de St., 1660, Sept. 29.

Cromwell, a feeling shared, and betrayed in a still 1660 greater degree by the most powerful sovereigns of Europe. But the offences offered to princes are rarely forgiven; and Charles added to the dislike of the Dutch people, hereditary it would seem in his family, and inspired probably by their lax notions on the subject of the divine right of kings, a hatred springing from causes personal to himself. Their rigid opinions on points of morality and decorum, their deficiency alike in the agreeable vices and flattering arts of a court, as well as the strictness and simplicity of their religious worship, so strongly resembling that of the Scottish Church, of which he had in early youth received such disagreeable impressions as were never afterwards effaced, rendered them the object of his aversion, as their plain unsophisticated manners, and homely garb and style of living, of his ridicule.

A very short time, indeed, sufficed to prove, that the professions of gratitude and friendship towards the United Provinces, of which Charles had been so liberal, were either wholly insincere, or sprang from feelings as transitory as the circumstances that inspired them*. A source of open alienation soon arose in consequence of the will made by the princess royal, who dying in England appointed the king guardian of 1661 her son. The States apprehended that Charles would bring him up in the same despotic principles with which he had soon after his accession begun to evince that he himself was imbued; and that if he took upon himself, as guardian, to nominate to all the public

* The confidence in his flattering protestations was, however, by no means universal. During the debate in the States of Holland concerning the funds to be raised for the defrayal of his expenses, one Stellingwerf, deputy from Medemblick, observed, that "the money would be much better laid out in the purchase of cannon and ammunition, than in sumptuous feasts." Basnage, tom. i., p. 608.

1661 offices in the territories appertaining to the minor, his influence in the Provinces would ultimately become extremely formidable. On the other hand, Charles was violently irritated against the States of Holland for authorizing the Supreme Council to take possession of the papers belonging to the late Prince of Orange among the princess's effects.

Accordingly an embassy sent to propose a treaty of amity and commerce with England, found itself met on every point with coldness or hostility. All the most objectionable topics which had been brought forward by the government of Cromwell, when searching for a pretext for war, were now insisted on with the like pertinacity. The affair of Amboyna was raked up from its ashes; the claim of search insisted on in its utmost rigour; the right of the Dutch to fish within ten miles of the British coast was denied; the act of navigation was declared irrevocable; and the English demanded liberty to trade freely with all the sovereigns of India,—or in other words, that the Dutch, who now enjoyed the privilege of exclusive trade to many Indian States, should divest themselves of a large portion of their commerce in their favour. To a request made by the States of Holland that he would return the Act of Exclusion delivered to Cromwell, Charles replied, that he was determined to keep it as a monument of their infamy till the prince was established in the offices of his ancestors^f.

1662 The marriage of the king with the Infanta of Portugal, gave him occasion to exhibit still more unequivocally his unfriendly feelings towards the United Provinces. They had, since the refusal of the King of Portugal to restore Brazil, in 1657, been engaged in

^f De Witt's Brieven, deel iv., bl. 83, 159. Res. van de St., 1661, Ap. 1. Aitz., deel iv., bl. 742, 759.

warfare with that monarch; little more than nominal, 1662 however, and limited to the capture of a few merchant vessels on each side. Charles now hesitated not to declare that, in virtue of the alliance he had made with the King of Portugal, he could not avoid affording him active assistance against all his enemies. At the same time, he offered his mediation between the belligerents, which was accepted; but the States, finding that the interference of the English ambassador, Downing, served but to retard the negotiations, concluded a treaty without his participation, whereby the King of Portugal engaged to pay to the United Provinces 8,000,000 of guilders as an indemnity for the loss of Brazil, and to admit the Dutch to trade freely to all his possessions in the East and West Indies, conditions much more advantageous than they would have been able to obtain under the auspices of England^g.

But, notwithstanding these causes of mutual estrangement, the anxiety felt by the States for an alliance with England was still sufficiently strong to prompt them to conciliate the favour of Charles by every means in their power, and to effect this object, they carried their complaisance to an excess rather calculated to excite his contempt, than to mollify his dislike. At the period of the restoration, three of the late king's judges, Berkstead, Okey, and Corbet, had taken refuge at Amsterdam, but being warned by the magistrates of that city, that the English ambassador was in pursuit of them, they retired to the territory of the Count of Hanau. Unhappily it came to the knowledge of Downing, that they had returned to Rotterdam for the purpose of removing their families; and notwithstanding that Okey was his benefactor

^g Ait., deel iv., bl. 708, 774. De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 404, 416.

1662 and the chief promoter of his present fortunes, he was vehement in his importunities to the States of Holland for permission to arrest the fugitives, threatening them with the effects of the king's resentment if they refused. To the surprise of all, his demand was warmly supported by De Witt, who, if he proposed to himself by the sacrifice of the noble privilege his country had hitherto enjoyed of being the sanctuary for the distressed of all nations, to deprecate the animosity of the King of England towards him, was lamentably deceived. Several of the deputies, on the other hand, were strongly disposed to refuse compliance; and among the majority who yielded, some were ignorant of the return of the fugitives to Holland, and others hoped that the timely notice given them would ensure their escape. But Downing had taken his measures with so much activity and precaution, that he succeeded in securing the arrest of all three at Delft, whence they were sent to London, tried, and executed^b.

While the negotiations with England were pending, the States, convinced that no great reliance was to be placed on their favourable issue, took advantage of the occasion of an embassy sent to congratulate the young King of France on his marriage with the Infanta of Spain, to conclude such an alliance with that country as might ensure them her support in the event of a rupture with England. The contracting parties were to assist each other in maintaining all their possessions, rights, and privileges, that of the Dutch fishing being expressly named: and in case of either being attacked, the other was to declare war against the enemy before the end of four months. The ratification of this treaty was somewhat delayed

^b Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 896. Basnage, tom. i., p. 635.

by the reluctance of the States to comply with the 1662 condition insisted on by the King of France as a preliminary, that they should guarantee to him the possession of Dunkirk, the sale of which had been effected by Charles II. shortly after its conclusion¹.

After long contestations, the treaty with England also was accomplished, but on no foundation calculated to secure its long continuance. The vexed question of striking the flag was left still undecided, as if to afford matter of dispute whenever occasion should require. It was declared merely, that the Dutch vessels were to lower the flag and topsail to the ships of the King of England in the British seas, as had hitherto been the custom, without mention of whether a whole fleet was expected to strike to a single vessel, or of how far the British seas were considered to extend, the English affecting to comprise under this denomination the entire space between Cape Finisterre and Terneuse in Norway. The newly-cemented alliance, however, seemed at first to promise fair; the surrender of the regicides, the promptitude with which 1663 the Dutch East India Company restored the island of Poleron, and the admission of a separate article in the treaty engaging the States to cause any persons concerned in the death of the late king to be seized and sent in bonds to England, appeared to afford Charles extreme gratification. He observed, that if he yielded to the States the honour of being the first to execute the treaty, he would reserve to himself that of being the last to infringe it, and soon after paid the States of Holland the compliment of resigning to them the guardianship of the young Prince of Orange^k.

It is probable that the circumstances in which

¹ Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 863, 1131, 1133. De Witt's Brieven, passim.

^k Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 1111, 1114.

1663 Charles was now placed compelled him to pursue for a time this line of conduct. The first enthusiasm of the people of England on the restoration of their ancient government had now passed away; they had begun to discover that the engaging manners and agreeable conversation which had so enchanted them in their young monarch, were but a slender veil to a cold heart and inordinate selfishness; that he never for an instant put the good of his people in competition with the gratification of his private interests, or the indulgence of his dissolute pleasures; and that the anxiety with which he endeavoured to procure an universal religious toleration in his kingdom, proceeded rather from entire indifference to all religions, or a secret attachment to the Catholic faith, than from any enlightened views on the subject. Not wholly unaware of the change that had taken place in public opinion with regard to him, the king considered that it would give confirmation to the suspicions entertained as to the orthodoxy of his religious tenets, if he were now to appear desirous of a war with a nation justly esteemed the bulwark of the reformed religion in Europe; and the parliament might be little inclined to afford him that support in carrying it on which his heedless prodigality rendered indispensable, if they supposed it undertaken merely to gratify his personal prejudices or inclinations. Ere he could discover, therefore, the true nature of his feelings towards the Dutch republic, it was necessary to adopt some means of exciting the minds of the English nation into a hostile disposition against it, in order that, appearing to yield to, rather than direct, the popular impulse, he might be enabled to turn it to his own advantage. Topics suited to this purpose were easily found between two nations whose mutual rivalry in commerce might, if allowed to inter-

fere with higher and more important interests, afford 1663 frequent cause of dispute.

The rapidly extending possessions and power of the Dutch East India Company was daily becoming more invidious in the eyes of the English people, in proportion as they themselves became more engaged in these distant speculations, and more anxious to extend their commercial relations in that quarter. The Dutch had, indeed, sustained a severe reverse in the loss of the island of Formosa, which was wrested from them in the last year by the celebrated Chinese general, Coxinga; yet this was amply repaired by the conquest of Cowlan, Cananor, and Grand Canor, with about 150 miles of territory on the Malabar coast, from the Portuguese. The company likewise founded a flourishing colony at the Cape of Good Hope, of which they had deprived the Portuguese in 1653. But the possession of this, as well as of all the rest of the Dutch settlements on the coast of Africa, was disputed by the English company, who had, in the year 1661, sent one Robert Holmes to demand the surrender of the whole of that coast, as belonging solely to England, by virtue of a gift from the King of Portugal. Holmes attempted to expel the Dutch commander from Cape Verde, and captured some merchant vessels. He also cannonaded several ports belonging to the Dutch West India Company on the coast of Guinea. The Dutch, in consequence, forbade the vessels of the Royal Society of Merchant Adventurers to take in their cargoes on that coast; a proceeding which was bitterly complained of by the English ambassador¹. Contention became still more violent on the subject of two merchant ships, the Good-Hope and Bonaventura, taken by the Dutch from the English nearly twenty

¹ Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 756. Basnage, tom. i., p. 783.

1663 years before; and of which the first was seized in the straits of Malacca, laden with Portuguese soldiers and slaves; the other, having stranded on the Mauritius, and being abandoned by her crew, was taken possession of by the garrison of the fort there. Although the freight of these vessels was worth no more than 97,000 guilders, the English demanded 1,600,000 as an indemnity for their loss; alleging that the damage was to be estimated, not by the actual value of the ships, but the detriment suffered by the colony in consequence of their detention. The case was pending before the municipal court of Amsterdam at the time of the treaty concluded in the last year, by which it was understood to be provided that the affair should be adjudged in the ordinary manner. A verbal quibble was now raised by the English ambassador, who insisted that the terms of the treaty (*rem litem prosequi*) signified only, that the question was to be submitted to a judicial decision, and required that it should be withdrawn from the court of the sheriffs of Amsterdam, and placed under the cognizance of a commission appointed by both nations. The States offered to refer it to any one of the parliaments of France, the courts of Germany, or of any other neutral power, a mode of arrangement which was rejected by Downing, in terms of insolence and menace^m. This man, one of not the least active causes of the subsequent impolitic and ruinous war between his country and Holland, had been, as we have seen, ambassador to the States in the time of Cromwell, by whom he had been raised from the situation of a schoolmaster to this dignity. During the sojourn of Charles II. in Holland, immediately before his accession, he had been pardoned, and continued in his office at the special

^m Aitzema, deel v., bl. 78. Res. von de St., October 10.

recommendation of General Monk, to the infinite 1663
annoyance and inquietude of the States, to whom his insolence, rapacity, and entire want of integrity, had rendered him justly obnoxious. He had bought for a moderate sum the claims of the merchants to indemnification for the vessels *Good-Hope* and *Bonaventura*, and to revenge himself on the Dutch for their refusal to satisfy his exorbitant demands, left no device untried to widen the breach between them and England. He laboured unceasingly to exasperate the personal hatred of the king against De Witt, whom he represented as the determined enemy of the young Prince of Orange, and to foster a similar feeling against the States of Holland, the blind and willing tools, as he declared, of their pensionary^a.

Thus, hopeless of conciliating the friendship of England, De Witt was constrained to take refuge in the arms of France, and resolved to strengthen himself by effecting, if possible, a still closer union with that country. The ambassador from the French court, De Thou, had been recalled in 1662, and his post filled by the Count d'Estrades (minister to the United Provinces in the time of the Stadtholder, Frederic-Henry), whom De Witt soon contrived to imbue with the most profound admiration for his talents and affection to his person; and who on all occasions endeavoured with great success to inspire his sovereign with the same sentiments. The increase of empire on the side of the Spanish Netherlands was, as De Witt well knew, the favourite project of the French court; formed and diligently pursued by Richelieu, and passionately cherished by his successor, Cardinal Mazarin, who was now dead, it had been left by him a political legacy, as it were, to the young king, and became the object of

^a Aitzema, deel iv., bl. 593. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. ii., p. 435—474.

1663 his desires and the mainspring of his actions, through nearly the whole course of his prolonged reign. The pensionary, therefore, now proposed that France and the United Provinces should combine their efforts to induce the provinces of the Netherlands to declare themselves an independent state under their protection; Louis being put in possession of Cambray and the Cambresis, St. Omer, Aire, Furnes, Nieupoort, Mons, and Linke, with their dependencies, and the States-General of Ostend, Plassendale, Bruges, Damme, and some smaller places. The attempt was to be made before the death of the king, and to be renewed with more vigour in case the king and crown prince died without male heirs. If they refused, the treaty of partition of these provinces, made in 1635, between the King of France and the United Provinces, was to be renewed^o.

Whether De Witt really indulged the chimerical notion that the Spanish provinces would be able to sustain their independence, and thus form a more effectual barrier than at present against the encroachments of France, or whether under this semblance he intended to lead on the States to acquiesce in carrying the partition treaty of 1635 into effect, it is impossible to determine. But whatever his views or intentions, he was certainly little prepared for the discovery of the designs of Louis which this proposition elicited. The renunciation made by the Infanta, on the occasion of her marriage with the King of France, of all claim to the dominions of Spain, had been made both by her and Louis himself with all the solemnity with which it is possible for such an act to be fraught. Nevertheless, he now unequivocally manifested his

^o De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 387. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. ii., p. 167, 193, 269.

intention of considering the rights of his wife as 1663 undiminished by that renunciation, which he declared invalid on various pretexts. He refused to sanction the present rising of the Spanish provinces (which might in some measure foreclose his claim), alleging, that it would be a violation of the treaties entered into by both parties with Spain; but in the event of the king's death he offered to surrender the undoubted rights of the queen over the Spanish Netherlands, and to permit the provinces which were bound to acknowledge his sovereignty to form a free republic under his protection. This discovery of the French king's sentiments occasioned De Witt no small embarrassment. To acknowledge his pretensions would, as the pensionary justly feared, tend to the utter ruin of his own influence in the United Provinces; openly to oppose them, would be to convert Louis into an open and irreconcilable enemy. He therefore endeavoured to ward off the evil he could not prevent, by proposing that the king should bind himself not to carry arms into the Spanish Netherlands for any cause whatever till after the death of the king and crown prince, both of whom were, however, of a weakly constitution. At the same time, to render the king more eager for the alliance of the Provinces, he affected to listen to the proposals of the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, Don Estevan di Gamarra, for an alliance between the Spanish Netherlands and the United Provinces of a nature similar to the Pacification of Ghent in 1576, and having for its object resistance to the encroachments of France. But De Witt found in the young monarch more than his master in the arts of dissimulation and policy. Louis, though in reality both angry and alarmed, appeared to look with the utmost indif-

1663 ference on the negotiations between the ambassador
of Spain and the States-General; while he secretly
1664 instructed D'Estrades to thwart the measures of the
former by every means in his power, whether by
bribes or otherwise, and in the meantime to find
pretexts for delaying the proposed treaty between
himself and the States, in order that he might be
left at liberty to enforce on the first opportunity the
claims of his queen to the Netherlands, after the
death of the king, in opposition to those of the crown
prince. These he rested on the ground that the suc-
cession to the Netherland States followed the rule
whereby females of the first marriage inherited before
males of the second; a position which De Witt truly
affirmed to be contrary to all law and prescription, the
rule being applicable to the inheritance of private
estates in Brabant only^p.

Meanwhile war with England began to appear inevitable. The angry feelings of the people had been so diligently and so successfully excited, principally, it is said, through the agency of Sir Thomas Clifford, a Catholic and a bitter enemy of the Dutch republic, that both houses of parliament presented addresses to the king, praying that he would "take measures for the redress of the wrongs, dishonours, and indignities done to his majesty by the subjects of the United Provinces, by invading his rights in India, Africa, and elsewhere; and the damages, affronts, and injuries done by them to the merchants, which were the greatest obstructions of their foreign trade^q." But the resolutions of the English parliament, however marked by the haste and intemperance of passion, rather than the prudence of political calculation, were yet

^p Lett. d'Est., tom. ii., p. 288, 291, 332, 340, 417 ("Mém. du Roi.")

^q Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 292.

too slow and cautious for the impatience of the court. 1664
They had already been anticipated by the Duke of York, now chief director of the West India Company, who had given secret orders to Sir Robert Holmes to attack once more the Dutch settlements on the African coast. Holmes accordingly had, in the early part of the year, besides capturing several ships, conquered the island of Goeree, stormed the forts of Tacorari and St. George del Mina, and mastered a fort at Cape Corse. Thence he sailed to America for the purpose of attacking the Dutch settlements there. The United Provinces had, as it has been observed, planted a colony on that part of America discovered by Henry Hudson in 1609. About the year 1620, one Robinson, an Englishman, a leader of the sect of independents, had induced several families of that sect to settle in the territory now called New England, and, not long after, the Earl of Stirling obtained from James I. a grant of the whole of that territory, including New Holland. On this ground, although the Dutch West India Company had now been in the unmolested possession of New Holland for above fifty years, the English commander attacked New Amsterdam, which, unprepared for resistance, immediately capitulated; subsequently the islands of Tobago and St. Eustatius fell likewise into the hands of the English.

On intelligence of these acts, the States, at the same time that they issued orders for the equipment of thirty additional ships of war, despatched an ambassador, Van Goch, to make complaints to the court of England. Charles, desirous if possible of still lulling the Dutch into security, with the dissimulation in which he was so accomplished an adept, received Van Goch with the most flattering expressions of friendship towards the States. He affected entire ignorance of

1664 the proceedings of Holmes; appeared satisfied with the declaration of the ambassador that the increased armament was designed for no other purpose than the protection of their commerce; and even went so far as to imprison Holmes for a few days in the Tower, upon his return. As it soon, however, became evident that neither redress for the past, nor prevention for the future, was to be expected from England, the States resolved that a force of twelve vessels should be supplied for the defence of the West India Company's settlements. The evil being too pressing to admit of the delay that must be occasioned by their equipment, De Witt thought it advisable to send De Ruyter with his fleet thither from the Mediterranean; and in order to prevent the resolution to this effect from coming to the knowledge of the King of England, which must inevitably occur should it pass in the Assembly of the States-General in the regular manner, had recourse to a stratagem such as the necessity of the case could scarcely justify. Having obtained that himself and six other commissioners should be appointed to examine the despatches sent by De Ruyter from the Mediterranean, they added to their report thereupon, a resolution that secret orders should be given him to sail to the coast of Guinea with the twelve vessels under his command, to retake the forts which the English had seized, and to destroy all the English vessels which had inflicted any injury on the Dutch merchants. On the presentation of this report to the States-General, the commissioners contrived to engage the deputies in conversation in different parts of the room, while the registrar hastily read it through; and the circumstances being generally known, and not of much importance, it excited no attention. It was then placed before the president, who, as was frequently

the custom when the papers presented to him were 1664 too voluminous for examination, affixed his signature without a perusal of its contents. The secret orders, therefore, did not transpire beyond the members of the committee*; and, in conformity with the resolution thus obtained, were sent to De Ruyter to sail to the coast of Africa^r.

De Ruyter, having waited some time at Malaga and Cadiz for provisions and water, which he procured with extreme difficulty, directed his course to the island of Goeree, where he captured nine vessels belonging to the English, and retook the forts of Cape Verde, Orange, and Nassau. Early in the next year he recovered the forts of Takorari and St. George del Mina, and captured that of Coromantyn from the English. He likewise made an attempt on Barbadoes and St. Christopher, both of which, however, proved unsuccessful.

While the King of England was reiterating his expressions of desire for the preservation of peace, he had been carrying on his preparations for war with uncommon vigour. The parliament had been induced to vote him the enormous sum of 3,500,000*l.*, to be paid by twelve instalments, on the credit of which the merchants of London had advanced him 1,000,000*l.* in ready money, and with these funds a powerful fleet was soon equipped and placed under the command of the Duke of York. Without any formal declaration of war, he seized 130 Dutch merchant vessels, laden

^r Ait., deel v., bl. 86, 87. De Witt's Brieven, deel iv., bl. 324, 334. Res. van de St., Oct. 9. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 293.

* De Witt eluded the subsequent inquiries of Downing as to these orders with considerable dexterity. He declared that no resolution of that nature had passed the States of Holland; "and in the States-General," he added, "nothing passes but what comes to your knowledge." Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 318.

1664 with wine and brandy, from Bordeaux. A surmise of De Ruyter's voyage to Africa having arisen in England, the king laid an embargo upon all the vessels belonging to the Dutch in his ports^s.

The United Provinces now found themselves engaged in a war with a power immeasurably their superior, destitute of a single ally, except the King of France, upon whose support they placed so little dependence that he was suspected, though perhaps on insufficient grounds, of secretly instigating the English to hostilities^t. Both Sweden and Denmark manifested strong inclinations to enter into a triple alliance with England; the former, mindful of the disadvantageous treaty she had been forced to conclude with Denmark four years before^{*}; the latter in consequence of some disputes between her African Company and the Dutch West India Company, and concerning the indemnification for the losses sustained by the Dutch merchants in the last war^u. Such are the paltry considerations by which the counsels of nations are sometimes swayed! It was of the last importance to Sweden and Denmark that England should not become undisputed mistress of the seas; and yet, rather than forego these petty subjects of contention, they consented to look quietly on the destruction (as it might have proved) of the only maritime power calculated to maintain anything like a balance against her. Even Spain herself had taken umbrage, as well at the close connection of the United Provinces with France, as at their having declined to enter into the alliance proposed by her ambassador at the Hague; and manifested her unfriendly feelings by prohibiting the entrance of

^s Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 306. Res. van de St., Dec. 5.

^t De Witt's Brieven, deel i., bl. 689. ^u Ait., deel v., bl. 210, 233.

* Vide Vol. II., p. 742.

her ports to the Dutch vessels, while she granted it 1664 without reserve to those of England. The Emperor, indeed, whom the victory obtained by Montecuculi at the Raab had enabled to force the Turks to a peace, immediately after that event sent instructions to Friquet, his resident at the Hague, to declare his wishes for a close and intimate alliance with the republic. But, as one of the compliances in return for his faithless and hollow professions of friendship, Louis XIV. exacted of the States that they should not engage themselves in a treaty with any other power; and the influence of D'Estrades now prevailed with De Witt to reject the proffers of the Emperor, on the ground that it would involve the forfeiture of their friendship with France^v.

Thus left to contend singly against their powerful foe, the States endeavoured to supply, by the magnitude and celerity of their preparations, the deficiency of external support. The East India Company engaged, 1665 in return for the prolongation of their charter to the end of the century, to equip and maintain twenty men-of-war at their own charges; letters of reprisal were granted; an embargo was laid on all vessels in the ports; and in order to obtain the requisite supply of men, both the whale and herring-fisheries were suspended. The States voted an immediate subsidy of 14,000,000 of guilders, or 1,400,000^l. sterling, for the expenses of the fleet, and the improvement of the fortifications of the maritime towns; and the pensionary himself repaired to the Texel, in order to hasten the equipment of the vessels, and to inspire animation among the crews by his presence. The people, regarding the war as absolutely necessary to free their com-

^v Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 287. Lettres d'Estrades, tom. ii., p. 531, 544.

1665 merce from the injuries and oppressions exercised by the English, hailed its approach with joy and acclamation, and celebrated by anticipation the triumphs they hoped soon to gain. Nor did their hopes appear altogether chimerical. There were already 103 vessels, besides yachts and fire-ships, in their ports, in a forward state of preparation, and a force of 22,000 men collected for the service of the navy, when the King of England issued his formal declaration of war against the States-General. This manifesto, worded with considerable asperity, accused the States of being the aggressors, inasmuch as instead of making reparation for the insults and damages inflicted on the East and West India Companies, they had sent De Ruyter to commit new hostilities on the coast of Africa; and had equipped a large number of men-of-war, and granted letters of reprisal. It is difficult to conceive how the States could have acted otherwise, unless they had consented quietly to see themselves stripped of all their possessions in that quarter; and the equipment of additional ships, with the granting of reprisals, the English themselves had rendered absolutely necessary by their continual attacks on the Dutch merchantmen^w.

Mar.
4th.

Actual hostilities soon followed. Obdam van Wassenaar, admiral of the Dutch fleet, having received special directions to seek out and give battle to the enemy with all possible expedition, directed his course with this view towards the coast of England; and, near Leostoffe, in Suffolk, met the fleet of that nation of 114 sail, commanded by the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, and Montague, earl of Sandwich, with the Vice-Admirals Lawson, Mengs, and Ayscue. The

^w Res. van de St., 1665, Jan. 9, 31. Aitzema, deel v., bl. 369, 443. Basnage, tom. i., p. 736.

wind, which had been for the two previous days in 1665 favour of the Dutch, had now shifted, and it was deemed more prudent by the principal officers to delay the engagement. But the orders given to Obdam on that head were of so peremptory a nature, that he had no choice left but to obey them; and the battle accordingly commenced the next morning at day-break. But little regularity was observed in the mode of attack, the Dutch admiral running in among the enemy's vessels, which the Duke of York, instead of endeavouring to prevent, imitated by a similar manœuvre; and a considerable division was thus effected between the several portions of the fleets. The two admirals' ships cannonaded each other with great fury; on board that of the Duke of York, the Earl of Falmouth and Lord Muskerly were killed; and the head of Mr. Boyle was shot off by a cannon ball so close to the duke, that he received a wound in the hand from a portion of the skull. The contest appeared doubtful until two hours after mid-day, when the powder of Obdam's ship accidentally taking fire, it blew up with a terrific explosion; and the admiral, with the whole of the crew, 500 in number, among whom were volunteers of the noblest families in Holland, perished except five. The Vice-Admiral Kortenaar, who was to have taken the place of the Admiral-General in case of his death, had been killed in the commencement of the action. Soon after, two of the largest of the Dutch vessels having run foul of a third, and being unable to disengage themselves, fell a prey to the English. The discouragement occasioned by these disasters was rendered complete by the retreat of the Vice-Admiral of Zealand, John Evertson, who having sustained a continual fire during the whole day, and unable to keep the sea, retired towards the Meuse

1665 without hauling down his flag, which the rest imagining a signal for retreat, a great number followed his example, taking their course in different directions. The conduct of Corneliuson Tromp alone threw one gleam of brightness over the events of this mournful day. Being left with a few vessels, he gallantly sustained the combat until nightfall, against an infinitely superior number of the enemy, and brought off his little squadron, though much damaged, to the Texel. The Dutch fleet thus scattered, nothing would have been easier than to have attacked it in detail, and effected its utter destruction; but, happily, for some cause which has never yet been explained, orders were given to the English fleet to slacken sail in the pursuit, and the vanquished were thus allowed to escape in safety, while the conquerors lost all the fruit of their victory*. Nineteen vessels were destroyed or captured on the side of the Dutch, and above 2000 prisoners taken. The English lost but one ship; but two of their admirals, Lawson and Sampson, were killed. The return of Admiral Evertson to the Meuse being attributed by the populace of Briel to cowardice,

* Some say that the Duke of York was prevented from pursuing his advantage by the want of a sufficient number of fire-ships (*Mém. de Guiche*, p. 70); others, that he was advised by Pen, his captain, not to press the Dutch to extremities (*Burnet*, vol. i., p. 219); while another account, which has been adopted by Hume, states, that the order to slacken sail was given by Brounker, one of his bed-chamber, while the duke was asleep. Brounker was afterwards expelled the House of Commons, and orders were given for his impeachment for this delinquency. But the supposition that a commander should fall asleep in the moment of victory, or a man when his most intimate friends had just been slain by his side, is so highly improbable, as to induce the belief rather that Brounker was sacrificed to preserve the reputation of the duke, and that one of the former was the true cause; if it be not yet more likely, as has been also said, that the high admiral, when no longer assisted by the counsels of his vice-admiral, Lawson, who was desperately wounded in the action, was found unequal to the command, either as regarded conduct or courage. *Basnage*, tom. i., p. 743.

excited them to such a frenzy of rage, that they forth- 1665
with seized him, and threw him into the river, whence
he was extricated, not without considerable difficulty,
by some French soldiers. The States were obliged to
send a strong detachment of their guard to escort him
to the Hague; where he justified himself so well
before a commission appointed to examine into the
affair, or found such favourable judges, that he received
high commendation for his courage and conduct.
Several of the captains, however, were punished for
cowardice and neglect of duty*.

The consternation excited by the issue of this
battle in the United Provinces, though great, was but
momentary. Within two months, owing chiefly to
the unceasing exertions of De Witt, a fleet of ninety-
three vessels of war was ready to put to sea, of which
Tromp, who had conducted himself so admirably in the
last engagement, was appointed to the chief command
in conjunction with three deputies of the States-Gen-
eral. Shortly after, however, De Ruyter arrived with
his squadron at Delfzyl, from the West Indies, having
passed the English fleet unobserved during a thick
fog; an event which De Witt learned with extreme
joy, necessity alone having induced him to consent to
the elevation of Tromp, a man of intractable temper,
and a zealous partisan of the House of Orange. At
the solicitation of the States of Holland, the States-
General immediately superseded Tromp by appointing
De Ruyter Lieutenant-Admiral-General, an indignity
which Tromp, though he concealed his mortification
for the time, and even, in obedience to the order of

* Res. van de St., June 4. Mem. de Guiche, p. 69. Aitzema, deel
v., bl. 446—460.

Vide Note A. at the end.

1665 the States, consented with apparent cheerfulness to serve under the new commander, deeply resented; and the jealousy and hatred which this circumstance excited, or rather exasperated, between these two great captains, proved in the sequel of most baneful result to their country⁷.

The unfailing effect of every mischance in the United Provinces, was to give a violent shock to the stability of the party at present in power, and to add strength and numbers to the adherents of the House of Orange. The latter now became clamorous for the advancement of the young prince to the offices of his father, as the readiest mode of appeasing the hostility of England, and represented De Witt as involving the nation in the war merely for his own interests, and to gratify his personal animosities; the people, disappointed and alarmed, ascribed all the evils that had occurred to the misconduct of the present government; the preachers declaimed violently from the pulpit to the same purport, and indulged in bitter invectives against the persons of those by whom public affairs were conducted; while it was equally impossible to check, and invidious to punish, their excesses. The sailors also, refusing to do their duty except in the name of the Prince of Orange, broke out into open mutiny. Thus beset by difficulties and dangers, De Witt saw that some master-stroke of policy, or brilliant success, alone could save him from ruin. A victory over the English would, he considered, be the most certain means of turning the tide of popular feeling in his favour; and this he resolved, if possible, to achieve in spite of all hazards. He, therefore, procured himself to be nominated one of the three deputies of the fleet, and in opposition to the entreaties and remon-

⁷ Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 393, 398, 404.

stances of his friends, repaired on board without 1665 delay. He found the fleet lying idle in the ports waiting for a fair wind; the officers absent from their duty; and the men in a state of mutiny and disorganization. He soon suppressed the mutiny by prompt and decisive measures for the punishment of the ring-leaders; brought about several new and beneficial arrangements, conducive as well to the efficiency of the navy as to the health and comfort of the crews; and, taking the sounding-lead in his hand, conducted the whole fleet in safety through a channel hitherto deemed by the most experienced pilots impassable for ships of large burden, and with the wind in a quarter usually supposed to be contrary*. Receiving intelligence that the merchant-ships from the East Indies and Smyrna had taken refuge in the port of Bergen, in Norway, where they were attacked, though without success, by a squadron of English vessels, he made sail thither with all speed for the purpose of escorting them home. Scarcely, however, was the junction effected, when the ships were overtaken by a violent storm, and scattered in all directions, and several severely damaged; they came ultimately into harbour, but with the loss of four men of war, and about forty merchant vessels, which fell into the hands of the enemy. Having again left the ports in search of the English fleet, they were forced to put back by the tempestuous weather. A third attempt was equally unpropitious; and sickness appearing among the crews, De Witt found himself obliged to yield to his adverse fortune, and consent to

* The channel before called "De Spanjaard's gat," received from this circumstance the name of "Heer de Witt's diep." On this occasion De Witt incontestably proved that the wind prevented egress from the Texel at four points of the compass only, instead of twenty-two, which had heretofore been held an axiom among naval men.

1665 the fleet being withdrawn into the harbours for the winter^z.

De Witt, therefore, had met with no success to counterbalance the detriment occasioned to his affairs by his absence. His friends, deprived of his counsel and support, had become chilled and discouraged; the States of Holland had been accustomed to defer so entirely to his opinions, that none ventured to take the lead in their proceedings, which were now as hesitating and dilatory as they had been before remarkable for decision and energy; in the States-General, five of the provinces had already voted that an embassy, headed by the Prince of Orange, should be sent to England to solicit a peace from the king; and the appearance of things was so discouraging, that one of the most intimate and confidential friends of the pensionary, Beverning, the treasurer-general, persisted in resigning his office. It required, indeed, all the acuteness, tact, and resolution of which De Witt was master, to enable him to sustain himself in the present crisis^a.

The vexation which the disasters they suffered caused to the Dutch, received no small accession of bitterness from the triumphs obtained over them by an enemy, whom, except in such a juncture as the present, they would have viewed with the most entire contempt. Christopher von Galen, bishop of Munster, had long borne a grudge against the States in consequence of the support they had given to the burghers of that city in their frequent contests with him on the subject of their privileges, of a dispute concerning the possession of Borkelo, and some minor causes; and, considering the present a favourable opportunity for reven-

^z Lett. d'Est., tom. iii., p. 232. Aitzema, aeel v., bl. 477, 502, 504. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 399.

^a Lett. d'Est., tom. iii., p. 477.

ging the many affronts he conceived himself to have 1665 sustained, he proposed to the King of England to make war upon the United Provinces on payment of a certain subsidy. The conditions of a secret treaty were readily entered into by England, and an instalment of the subsidy immediately paid. With the funds thus obtained, the bishop raised an army of 18,000 men, invaded Zutphen, took possession of Lochem and some smaller places, and, marching into Overysse, which was totally unprepared for defence, captured Oldenzeel. The States, solely occupied with the naval war, had neglected the care of that frontier; and though their land forces were nominally above 60,000 strong, the troops actually in service, including those in garrison, amounted scarcely to one-half of that number; the English and Scottish soldiers, who formed a considerable portion of their army, had been disbanded on the breaking out of hostilities with England; and the choicest of the infantry had been placed on board the fleet. On discovering the purport of the bishop's preparations, the States had obtained permission of the Dukes of Brunswick-Luneburg to raise troops in their territory, and appointed Prince John Maurice of Nassau, General-in-Chief of the forces during the campaign. But, as he had no more than 8000 men under his command, he was unable to arrest the progress of the enemy, and forced to content himself with strengthening the garrisons of the principal towns along the Yssel. Fortunately for the United Provinces, both the bishop and his general, the Prince of Hesse Homburg, were profoundly ignorant of the art of war, and the desultory troops he had raised were unfit for any enterprise for which discipline and steadiness were required. Had it been otherwise, it is difficult to say how far he might have extended his

1665 conquests, since few, if any, of the garrisons were in a condition to offer effectual resistance. Being disappointed in a design he had formed to attack Delfzyl, in concert with some English vessels, the bishop overran Drent, and laid siege to Groningen. The stadtholder of Friezland and Groningen, Frederick William of Nassau, had been accidentally killed in the last year, leaving a son, to whom the States had previously granted the reversion of his offices; but as the prince was as yet too young to fulfil the duties, affairs were administered by his mother, daughter of Frederick Henry, Prince of Orange. This generous and heroic princess proved herself in this juncture worthy of the race from which she sprang. She pawned all her jewels and plate to raise funds for the levy of fresh troops; and, rejecting in terms of indignation the suggestions of her mother, the Princess Dowager of Orange, to abandon the Provinces to their fate, in order that the odium of their loss might fall upon the present government, she threw herself, with her young son, into Groningen, to animate the garrison by her presence to a resolute defence^b.

The misfortunes of the Provinces had at least the one good effect, of arousing into something like activity their uncertain and lukewarm ally, the King of France. By the treaty of 1662, he was bound, in case they were attacked, to assist them with a subsidy of 12,000 infantry, or an equivalent in money during the four months prior to his declaring war in their favour. But many causes rendered him reluctant to fulfil his engagements. The King of England had promised, if Louis forbore to interfere in his quarrel

^b Res. van de St., Mar. 10, 1663. Temple's Letters, Sept. 6, 1665. Mém. de Guiche, p. 156. Aitzema, deel v., bl. 635, 641, 658. Lett. d'Est., tom. iii., p. 439, 515.

with Holland, to offer no opposition to his views upon 1665
the Spanish Netherlands; and he feared lest, if he did
not show compliance in this respect, Charles might
form an alliance with Spain for the defence of these
provinces; nor was he unwilling that the affairs of the
States should be reduced to such a state of necessity
as to force them to purchase his assistance by an
engagement not only to oppose, but to support his
pretensions^c. Hitherto, therefore, Louis had responded
to the pressing instances of Van Beuninghen, the
ambassador sent to him from the States, by various
affected scruples, which Charles II. himself had sug-
gested to enable him to evade the fulfilment of the
treaty. He declared that his navy was yet in too
feeble a condition to cope with that of England; that
it was by no means clear whether the States were not
the aggressors, in which case the treaty was not
binding on him; that a premature commencement of
hostilities would put it out of his power to procure a
peace for them from England. On these pretexts, he
had confined himself to interposing his good offices,
which had, however, proved ineffectual; for though
the terms he proposed were extremely favourable to
Charles, that monarch persisted in demanding still
higher conditions. On the other hand, it was not the
interest of Louis to allow England to gain such advan-
tages over the Dutch as should leave her undisputed
mistress of the seas, or force the latter to accept a
peace of which the elevation to power of the Prince of
Orange should be a condition. The latter event,
which would give the King of England an unlimited
influence in the councils of the United Provinces, must
necessarily happen from the overthrow of the party

^c De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 19, et passim. Lett. d'Estrades, tom.
ii., p. 554, 567.

1665 now at the head of affairs; a consequence not unlikely to ensue from the continuance of the present disasters. For these reasons, the King of France now readily consented to fulfil in some measure the provisions of the treaty, by sending a force of 6000 men under the Sieur de Pradel to the assistance of the States against the Bishop of Munster. But they arrived too late in the year to admit of their effecting anything further than the capture of the small town of Lochem; and the miserable equipment of the infantry, the insufferable insolence of the officers, and the license and rapine of the troops, rendered them a burden and a terror to the people they were sent to defend. In a short time, the Dutch were no less anxious to be freed from their presence than they had before been for their arrival^d.

Of far more advantage to the United Provinces were the good offices of the King of France employed in their favour with foreign powers. Under the medi-
1666 ation of his ambassador D'Estrades, an alliance was concluded between the States-General and the Elector of Brandenburg, whereby the latter was to raise 12,000 men for the assistance of the United Provinces against the Bishop of Munster. The King of Denmark, also, was induced, by the solicitations of Louis, and the remission on the part of the States of the debts he owed them, to conclude a treaty with the latter, a secret article of which bound him to declare war against England, with whom he had just before made an alliance offensive and defensive; while Sweden, hitherto the close ally of England, was persuaded to promise an entire neutrality between the belligerents^e.

^d Mém. de Guiche, 153, 163. Temple's Letters, Nov. 20, 1665.

^e Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iv., p. 138. Res. van de St., Aug. 19, 1665; Feb. 13, 1666.

While the affairs of the Provinces were thus improving as regarded their external relations, the continuance in authority of the present government appeared to hang on a very slender thread. As the young Prince of Orange grew up, he began to discover symptoms of ability and prudence so far beyond his years, that his partisans were encouraged to press the more earnestly for his immediate establishment in the offices of his ancestors. The States of Zealand had, in 1660, restored, in favour of the young prince, the dignity of first noble, which they had abolished in 1650; and, together with Friezland, Guelderland, and Overyssel, had pressed the States-General to nominate him Stadtholder, Captain, and Admiral-General, to undertake the duties of these offices at the age of eighteen; and that, meanwhile, he should have a sitting in the Council of State, in order to make him acquainted with the business and interests of the nation. The influence of De Witt and the States of Holland had at that time impeded the progress of this measure. Now, however, some towns of Holland itself declared strongly in its favour; and Zealand even threatened, if it were refused, to secede from the Union, and effect a separate reconciliation with England. Conscious that he should not be able long to resist the efforts of his opponents, which had already been successful in seducing from him some of his most zealous supporters, and Van Beverning among the rest, De Witt applied himself to weaken, in some degree, their force; and this purpose he accomplished by a stroke of policy devised and executed with admirable skill. Having procured a reconciliation with the princess dowager, with whom he had long been on terms of coldness and estrangement, he employed the extraordinary influence he possessed over every one with

1666 whom he came in contact, to induce her to present a request to the States of Holland, that they would take charge of the education of her grandson, in order to fit him for the service of the republic. The States readily accepted of the proposal, naming De Witt himself, and some of his most devoted adherents, guardians of the young prince, and the Baron Van Gend (who was in the pay of France) as his tutor. They commenced the exercise of their functions in a somewhat arbitrary, though politic manner, by dismissing all the prince's household who were either English, or considered as favourable to English interests^f.

On this occasion the young William gave evidence of that singularly dissembling and calculating character which was afterwards developed under such various circumstances. He at first manifested the deepest chagrin at parting with his ancient domestics, and even begged with tears that his tutor, Zuytlestein, who had married an English woman, might be spared to him. But finding remonstrances useless, and that (as he expressed himself) he was henceforth to look to the States of Holland for advancement, he seemed to acquiesce quietly in the arrangements they had made; professed to regard the pensionary as his counsellor and father; held daily interviews with him, and declared his inclination to defer under all circumstances to his advice and that of the States of Holland*.

^f Mém. de Guiche, p. 219, 220, 224. De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 230. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iii., p. 505; iv., 146, 258. Aitzema, deel v., bl. 790—793.

* "This prince," writes D'Estrades, "possesses talent, and will prove deserving. He is very dissembling, and will neglect nothing to gain his ends." Lett., tom. iv., p. 245. At the time this most correct judgment was formed of his character, William was no more than sixteen.

The interests of De Witt thus apparently identified 1666 with those of his pupil, the zealous partisans of the House of Orange ventured no longer to display their hostility towards him; while the dispersion of the prince's household dissolved the nucleus of the most formidable cabals that had hitherto been raised against the government. De Witt on his side fulfilled the duties he had thus taken upon himself with exemplary fidelity. Contemplating the probability that the young prince would one day be elevated to the highest dignities of the state, he spared no pains to instruct him in the nature of its true interests, and the science of government in general; notwithstanding his numerous avocations, he never failed to devote several hours of every day to this employment; and, to his sedulous care and enlightened tuition, William was principally indebted for what he afterwards became⁶.

Another measure carried by De Witt at this period, equally successful for the present increase of his own influence, proved of sinister effect upon the liberties and welfare of his country. This was the procuring a commission to be appointed by the States-General, consisting of eight members, two from Holland, and one from each of the other provinces, who were empowered to deliberate, to decide, and to execute, in all matters referred to them by the States-General, without giving any account of their proceedings further than they themselves thought fit. Their resolutions were observed and obeyed in the same manner as those of the States-General. This body De Witt contrived should be composed entirely of his friends, as well as that all questions relative to war, peace, or foreign alliances, should be referred to its consideration by the States. Its establishment was an error, however, of

⁶ Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iv., pp. 222, 242.

1666 which the consequences were subsequently severely visited on his own party; since, on the restoration of the Stadtholderate, this commission became a permanent body, under the title of "Gecommitteerde Raaden," or "Commissioned Councillors," and being bound to consult the Stadtholder upon all the resolutions it passed, formed a species of privy council, by which, in conjunction with him, the whole power and management of affairs was absorbed^b.

A league now effected between the Kings of France and Denmark, the Elector of Brandenburg, the Dukes of Brunswick-Luneburg, and the States, was sufficiently formidable to induce the Bishop of Munster earnestly to desire a peace, to which the cessation of the subsidies from England had before inclined him. As the States were no less anxious to terminate so harassing a war, a treaty was soon concluded, whereby the bishop engaged to restore all his conquests in the Provinces; and his troops accordingly evacuated without delay the towns of which they held possession^c.

The peace of Munster, and the discomfiture of the Orange party, left De Witt at leisure to bestow his whole energies on the preparations for the naval war; the object of his administration on which his hopes, his fears, and his wishes were most earnestly bent. The King of France had at length been induced, by the considerations before touched upon, to make a public declaration of war against England; and had he vigorously seconded the efforts of the States, their united forces had been far more than a match for the power of the enemy. But in taking this step, it was no part of Louis's purpose to involve himself in actual hostilities with England, or to enable the Dutch to

^b Temple's Letters, Mar. 31, 1676.

^c Idem, May 10, 1666. Aitzema, deel v., bl. 905, 1023.

gain such advantages over their antagonist as should 1666 render them less dependent on himself, or less likely to tolerate his pretensions to the Spanish Netherlands; but to afford them rather just so much countenance and support as should encourage them to prolong the war until the ruin of the finances and commerce of both the belligerents should leave him to pursue his schemes of ambition without a rival or opponent. Consequently, although the fleet of forty vessels with which he had engaged to assist the United Provinces was now completely ready for service, it was detained in port, under different pretexts, until late in the autumn, and the promised junction was never effected¹.

Happily, so far as regarded maritime affairs, the Provinces were not obliged to depend on their ally for succour. In the month of May a gallant fleet set sail from the Texel of eighty-five vessels, divided into three squadrons, of which the first was commanded by De Ruyter with Vice-Admiral Van Nes; the squadron of Zealand and Friezland by John Evertson and Hiddes de Vries; and the third by Tromp and Meppel. The English were somewhat inferior in number, being no more than eighty sail, commanded by Monk, duke of Albemarle, and Prince Rupert*. On a false report that the French ships were approaching to unite with De Ruyter, Prince Rupert left the fleet with his squadron, twenty in number, for the purpose of preventing the junction. With his force thus diminished, Albemarle fell in with De Ruyter at the North Foreland, June when an engagement commenced, which, whether we 11th consider the skill displayed on both sides, the valour

¹ Lett. d'Estrades, passim.

* The English historians, following the old style, date the events of this war ten days earlier than the Dutch, who adopted the new.

1666 and obstinacy of the combatants, or the astonishing physical powers which enabled them to endure such prolonged and excessive fatigue, has never yet found a parallel in history*. Albemarle having gained the advantage of the wind, bore down with somewhat of rashness upon thirty-five vessels of the squadron of Tromp, which, out-sailing the others, had left them at some distance behind. These accordingly had to sustain the first brunt of the fight: the wind, which blew from the south-west with great violence, causing the English vessels to heel so much, that the lower tier of guns was under water. About two hours after the commencement of the battle, the squadron of Evertson, which had hitherto been kept at a distance by the wind, was enabled, owing to a change the English were obliged to make in the position of their vessels, to take part in the engagement. Three of the English ships, becoming separated from the rest in the movement, were captured, and the commander of one of them, Sir William Berkeley, was killed; but on the other hand, the vessels of Tromp and Van Nes were so damaged, that they were obliged to hoist their flags on board others, and two more of the Dutch caught fire and burned to the water's edge. The contest continued doubtful until evening, when the Dutch having succeeded in gaining the weather-gage of the enemy, victory appeared to incline in their favour. A vessel of the blue squadron of seventy guns, having sustained a sharp cannonade from De Ruyter's ship, foundered. At ten o'clock the firing ceased, and each side diligently employed the night in repairing the damages they had sustained.

* The celebrated painter, William van de Velde, was on board the fleet for the purpose of painting a representation of the battle from the life. *Leeven van de Ruyter*, bl. 476.

The next morning the attack was renewed with fifty vessels on each side. Tromp, with that daring and animated valour by which he was constantly distinguished, sailed into the midst of the enemy's fleet with about five or six vessels, which were quickly surrounded. The Vice-Admiral Van der Hulst was killed, with above sixty of his crew; the ship "Liefde" was burned by an English fire-ship; and eighty men were stretched dead or wounded on board of Tromp's vessel "The Province of Utrecht;" when De Ruyter, who had gained considerable advantage over the squadron with which he was engaged, and had given the signal to board, was warned by the firing of the imminent danger a portion of his fleet was in. With a part of his squadron he instantly broke through the enemy's line, and came to the assistance of his rival just in time to save him from certain destruction, four of his ships being utterly disabled. Foiling an attempt made by the English to surround him, De Ruyter again joined the remainder of his squadron, when the fight continued with renewed fury, but without further loss on the side of the Dutch. Several English vessels were sunk; and on the approach of evening, Albemarle having no more than twenty-eight ships fit for action, retired towards the Thames, to await the return of Prince Rupert. The next morning, having formed a line behind his most disabled vessels, which he ordered to stretch ahead, and having fired such as were too much damaged to escape capture, he continued his retreat, his own vessel hindmost of all. The Dutch, though they pursued under press of sail, were unable to advance within shot; but the Prince Royal, of ninety-two guns, commanded by Sir George Ayscue, having struck on the Galloper Sands, was abandoned by the rest, and forced to surrender. The crew was

1666
June
12th

13th

1666 distributed among the yachts of the Dutch, and the ship blown up. Towards evening, Prince Rupert effected a junction with the remains of the English fleet, in spite of the efforts made to prevent it by Evertson, with the squadron of Zealand. Thus reinforced, Albemarle determined to renew the engagement. De Ruyter on his side was no less willing.

June
14th At daybreak the next morning he called together his principal officers, whom he acquainted with his resolution in an animated and touching harangue. The English had now sixty vessels, the Dutch sixty-four; but of the former, the squadron of Prince Rupert, increased to twenty-five, was still fresh and entire, while all the Dutch were more or less damaged, and their crews exhausted by want of rest, and three days of continual fighting and pursuit. A combat more obstinate and terrible than that of either of the preceding days, was continued with doubtful success until about four in the afternoon, when symptoms of weariness began to appear on both sides. As a last effort, De Ruyter hoisted the red flag, the signal for a general attack; an order which was obeyed with such rapidity and vigour, that the English, unable to withstand the shock, began to give way. Some of their ships were taken, one or two others foundered, and those of Prince Rupert and Albemarle were considerably damaged. De Ruyter pursued the retreating enemy till late in the evening, when a fog arising concealed them from his view. "It is God," he exclaimed, "who delivers them; he wills but to chastise their presumption, not to destroy them utterly." The next morning not a single English vessel was to be seen from the masts-heads of the Dutch ships; and De Ruyter, finding that his fleet was much shattered and his ammunition nearly expended, returned to the port of Wielingen to

refit. The victory, scarcely more honourable than 1666 such a defeat, was celebrated with thanksgivings and rejoicings by the English, but awarded by every other nation in Europe to the Dutch*. They had, indeed, bought it dearly. Besides Van der Hulst, the Admirals Cornelius Evertson and Stakhouwer were killed, with 6 captains and 800 men, and the number of wounded was near 1200. But the loss of the English was considerably greater, amounting to no less than 5000 killed, besides 3000 prisoners. Only 4 vessels were destroyed on the side of the Dutch, and 17 of the English, besides 6 which were carried prizes into the ports of Holland; while, on the other hand, the English had but very few prisoners, and not a single captured ship to exhibit in token of their victory^k.

In less than three weeks De Ruyter, with the view of taking the enemy, who were not yet ready for sea, by surprise, again set sail towards the English coast. De Witt had been possessed by one Samuel Raven, an English refugee, with the idea that if a landing were made in England, the number of malcontents was so great that the entire overthrow of the present government would be easily accomplished; and, in consequence, the purport of his orders to De Ruyter were in conformity with these views. But the admiral very soon found that the project appeared far more easy of execution at the Hague than at the mouth of the Thames. A fleet of fifty vessels stationed at Queenborough rendered it impossible for the Dutch to advance, except at imminent risk of destruction, as well from the enemy's fire-ships as the dangers of a

^k Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 475—497. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iv., p. 322. Aitzema, bl. 698—704. Mém. de Guiche, p. 236—265.

* Chain-shot, the invention of which is ascribed to De Witt, was first used in this battle.

1666 navigation with which, as the English had removed the buoys and beacons, their pilots were unacquainted. Raven was, however, landed with some troops on the Isle of Thanet; but his appearance producing none of the expected results, the design was abandoned, and the troops sent back to Holland. After cruising for more than a month about the coast, De Ruyter was met between the North Foreland and Ostend by the English fleet of ninety sail, under the command of Albemarle, his own being eighty-eight in number.

Aug. 4th The van of the Dutch, under Evertson, first engaged with the white squadron of the English, commanded by Sir Thomas Allen; when in a short but brisk cannonade, Evertson, whose father, son, and four brothers had perished in the service of their country, was killed, with Hiddes de Vries and Admiral Bankert. The death of these officers spread such confusion and dismay through the whole squadron, that it fell into disorder, and began to retreat under press of sail. De Ruyter meanwhile had followed the van; but a calm, (as it was alleged,) preventing some of his ships from coming up, himself with a part only of his squadron, had to sustain the vigorous attack of Albemarle. Tromp, remaining about two miles in the rear, was engaged with Sir Jeremy Smith, when, after a sharp fire, the latter retreated; but, as it was supposed, only with the view of separating Tromp still farther from the middle squadron. Though strict orders had been issued to the whole of the fleet to keep as close as possible to the Admiral's flag, Tromp continued the pursuit, leaving De Ruyter with a few vessels to contend against the whole power of the enemy, whom, however, he kept at bay with incredible prowess until night.

5th At the dawn of day he found himself with no more

than seven ships remaining, which the English, in the 1666 firm expectation of capturing, surrounded twenty-two in number, in the form of a crescent, and opened upon them a terrific fire. Albemarle, determined, if possible, to grace his triumph with the capture or death of his gallant foe, pursued him with unremitting ardour. He first sent a fire-ship against his vessel, which De Ruyter avoided with admirable skill; when several English ships fired upon him together a tremendous broadside which threatened to shiver his vessel to atoms. Then, for a moment, this great man lost the equanimity which was never, before or after, seen to desert him; and in the bitterness of his anguish exclaimed, "Oh my God! how wretched am I, that among so many thousand balls not one will bring me death." But a proposal from his son-in-law, De Witt, that they should rush in among the enemy and sell their lives as dearly as possible, recalled him to himself. He felt how much his country yet required of him; and resuming his habitual composure, he sustained the fight with unmoved steadiness during the whole of his retreat to Walcheren, a retreat more glorious to him, as it was considered by his contemporaries, than the most brilliant victory¹. The loss was but trifling either on the side of the conquerors or the vanquished; many of the Dutch captains having retreated in the early part of the action. Of all those who thus misconducted themselves, one only was punished; the rest, protected by the magistrates of the towns, their friends and relatives, were not even deprived of their command^m. The most pernicious results felt from this defeat were in the open hostility

¹ Basnage, tom. i., bl. 780. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 512—521. Aitzema, deel v., bl. 806, 807.

^m Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iv., p. 413.

1666 into which it exasperated the animosity between the two great admirals, Tromp and De Ruyter, each of whom bitterly reproached the other as the cause of the calamity; in the divisions it occasioned in the fleet, nearly every individual siding with the one or the other; and the consequent loss of the services of the former to his country. The circumstance of Tromp's having, on the morning of the battle, held a long interview with the lord of Sommelsdyk, a zealous adherent of the Orange and English partyⁿ, excited a suspicion in the States of Holland that the motives of his conduct lay deeper than a personal enmity towards the admiral, and they therefore prevailed with the States-General to deprive him of his commission; a proceeding, however, unjust in the highest degree towards Tromp, if, as his partisans asserted, he was carried away in the pursuit of the English by the ardour of combat; a supposition far more conformable to his character than that he should have acted from any impulse of treachery^o.

The States, probably, were the more liable to be impressed with suspicions of this nature, in consequence of the discovery, about this time, of a plot formed by one Du Buat, together with two magistrates of Rotterdam, Kievit and Van der Horst, the former a member of the Council of State, for obtaining a peace with England, as the readiest means of procuring the elevation of the Prince of Orange to the office of Captain-General. Du Buat, a Frenchman, and a captain in the States' service, had been one of those lately dismissed from the prince's household, and, notwithstanding the discontent he might be supposed to feel on this account, had been imprudently trusted by De Witt with the management of his secret correspon-

Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 512.

^o Aitzema, deel v., bl. 730.

dence in England. He made use of this opportunity 1666 to carry on an interchange of letters on the above subject with the secretary of state, Lord Arlington, one of which, falling into the hands of De Witt, was delivered by him to the States of Holland. Du Buat was accused before the Supreme Court of Holland, and condemned to death; and, though he declared that he had taken no step in the matter but by the direction of Kievit and Van der Horst, executed, with an unjust severity of which it is impossible to speak except in terms of the strongest reprobation. None can deny that the carrying on of separate and secret negotiations with a foreign power, by a segregate portion of a state, is a proceeding highly inimical to the well-being of that state, and such as, under almost any other government than the Dutch, would merit the utmost rigour of punishment; but in the loosely-framed constitution of the United Provinces, which left to all the members a large independent sphere of action, correspondence of this nature, as carried on by separate towns, and even by individual members of the governments, was by no means without precedent, and had never yet been considered treason, or as anything approaching that crime. De Witt was no more justified in maintaining a correspondence in England without the privity of the States of Holland, than the magistrates of Rotterdam, under whose guidance Du Buat had acted; and either they did not deserve punishment, or he did in an equal degree. Kievit, who had fled, was condemned to death, and Van der Horst to perpetual banishment, with confiscation of their property. But the fact was, that the trial of the accused was neither more nor less than a party question. The King of France, affecting to consider that they had acted with the connivance of the States, insisted

1666 upon the punishment of Du Buat as the only mode by which the latter could clear themselves of the suspicion; while the most strenuous exertions to save him were made by the friends of England and the Orange party^p.

Within a short time after the last naval battle, a detachment of English ships under Holmes being conducted into the Vlie by one Lawrence Heemskerck, a pilot of Holland who had been banished his country for cowardice, set fire to a fleet of 160 merchantmen lying there; and, landing on the island of Schelling, burned above four hundred houses near the Brandaris lighthouse. The increase of discontent which this calamity excited against De Witt's administration determined the King of France to make a show at least of adopting more vigorous measures in support of his friend. It was now agreed, that the long-expected junction of the two fleets should be carried into effect, and that, when united, they were to give battle to the English. De Ruyter accordingly sailed for this purpose to Boulogne, whither he was followed by the English fleet; but the tempestuous state of the weather, prevented them from coming to an engagement. After a long period of delay, the French ships, under the Duc de Beaufort, arrived in the Channel; but by that time the Dutch fleet had suffered severely from storms; a contagious distemper had broken out among the crews; and De Ruyter himself lay dangerously sick of a fever. The States, therefore, fearing to expose their ships during the winter, recalled them into harbour about the middle of October; and the French king, complaining, somewhat unreasonably, that De Ruyter had neglected his orders, and thus prevented the

^p Aitzema, deel v., bl. 830—843. Res. van de St., Sept. 17. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iv., p. 454, 460, 486, 633.

desired junction, commanded Beaufort to retire to 1666 Brest⁹.

The war had now lasted two years without any decisive advantage gained on either side. The principal object for which it had been undertaken by the King of England, the advancement of his nephew to his paternal dignities, appeared, from the close connexion the United Provinces had been obliged to form with France, and the strengthening of the Louvestein party consequent thereupon, farther off than ever. The hopes which Charles had entertained of diverting some of the funds levied for the expenses of the navy to his private purposes, had been completely frustrated; while, on the other hand, the large subsidies the parliament had been constrained to vote, rendered it daily less disposed to endure with patience the increasing prodigality of the court. The people, likewise, began to perceive, that though the war had inflicted great damage on the commerce of the Dutch, it had by no means secured proportional advantages to their own; and that they could never reasonably expect to reduce their rivals to so low a condition as to force them to concede any important commercial privileges in their favour. Sufficient trade still remained to bring enormous wealth into the United Provinces, their credit was unbounded, and they were yet able to fit out a navy, which, if it were joined, as was probable, in the next summer by that of France and Denmark, must prove too powerful for the English to withstand. These considerations derived additional force from the calamities England had lately undergone in the plague* and the great fire of London.

⁹ Aitzema, deel v., bl. 731. De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 368. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. iv., p. 488.

* This distemper had visited the United Provinces also, though with very much less of severity.

1666 As regarded the Dutch, besides the natural repugnance of all commercial nations to war, the enormous sums their navy had cost, amounting in the present year to no less than 4,400,000 guilders, rendered them no less anxious for an accommodation. They knew, besides, far better than Charles, how little of active co-operation was to be expected on the part of either France or Denmark; the latter being deterred from fulfilling the article of the treaty binding her to declare war in favour of the States, by the fear of giving umbrage to Sweden, who manifested an excessive jealousy of her taking up arms. The States-General, therefore, met with alacrity the advances of the King of England. He had, after the battle of the 11th of June, in a letter of thanks to them for sending over the body of Sir William Berkely, declared that, notwithstanding the late victory, (as he was pleased to term it,) he was well inclined towards equitable conditions of peace. To this the States returned an answer expressive of a similar disposition, and the mediation of Sweden was accepted by both parties. Charles, however, insisted that the States should acknowledge his superiority by sending their ambassadors to London. But the States, particularly those of Holland, though they had yielded to a similar demand on the part of Cromwell, were little disposed to pay the same deference to a monarch whom they considered so infinitely inferior to him in every respect. They therefore evaded the question by observing that, however willing they themselves might be to pay the king this compliment, they could not expect that their allies, the Kings of France and Denmark, would consent so far to compromise their dignity. Somewhat chagrined at this slight, Charles dexterously turned it to the discomfiture of its author, by naming the Hague

as the place of conference. This was done, as De Witt well knew, with no other purpose than to afford an opportunity to the English ambassadors of exciting cabals in favour of the Prince of Orange, and using their influence to seduce the principal members of the government from the alliance with France. It was therefore of the utmost importance to himself and his party that this plan should be frustrated; but yet to preclude all hopes of accommodation by the rejection of a proposal so specious and flattering, and of which several of the Provinces had declared their approbation, would be in the highest degree invidious. From this dilemma De Witt extricated himself by the assistance of the King of France, whom he induced to refuse peremptorily to treat at the Hague, which the States at the same time represented to Charles as an unsafe residence for the ambassadors, in consequence of its being an open village. Breda accordingly was at length fixed on, where, after long preliminary negotiations, the conferences were openly commenced in the month of June, under the auspices of the ambassadors of Sweden, George Flemming, and the Count of Dhona, as mediators. The ambassadors from England were Lord Hollis and Sir Henry Coventry; and those nominated by the States, Jeronymo van Beverning, from Holland; Peter Huybert, from Zealand; and Peter Jongestal, from Friezland; the two latter strenuous partisans of the House of Orange, and, as such, favourable to a peace on any terms with England. The proposals of the Dutch, equitable in themselves, and such as the circumstances in which they were placed justified them in making, were, that each party should retain their present possessions, or that things should be restored to the same state as before the war. The former offer was acceded to by the English, except

1667 as regarded the island of Poleron, which, though surrendered according to the treaty of 1662, had been again occupied by the Dutch after the commencement of hostilities in that quarter, but before the actual declaration of war. At length, however, the English were induced to desist from this demand; and the only point which remained in dispute was the indemnity for the ships *Bonaventura* and *Good Hope*. The English insisted upon their former exorbitant requisition, with which the Dutch peremptorily refused compliance, alleging, that it would only serve as a pretext for future extortions on the part of England. Upon this trivial subject it seemed as though the pride of the one party and the obstinacy of the other would prolong negotiations to a rupture, when events happened which, though apparently calculated to renew the war with exasperated fury, served to hurry on affairs to a favourable conclusion*.

At the beginning of the conferences a truce had been proposed by the ambassadors of Sweden, and recommended by the King of France. But De Witt, well acquainted with every transaction that occurred in England, had ascertained that the money voted by parliament for the expenses of the war, had been squandered by the king on his private pleasures, and in presents to his courtiers and mistresses, and that the preparations for the equipment of the fleet were wholly suspended. The defenceless condition in which England was thus left offered a golden opportunity for striking a blow such as should at once retaliate the injuries the Dutch people had sustained, and gratify the pensionary's personal vengeance against Charles,

* *Lett. d'Est.*, tom. iv., p. 212, 244, 26, 42, 70; tom. v., p. 313 *et seq.* 332. Aitzema, deel v., bl. 732; deel vi., bl. 23, 28, 29. De Witt's *Brieven*, deel ii., bl. 443.

whom he cordially detested. He therefore persuaded 1667 the States of Holland to refuse the truce, the more easily, as it was offered only with respect to men of war, and offered no security for merchant-ships; and had pressed on with all the diligence which the severity of the winter permitted, the equipment of a large and powerful fleet. De Ruyter, now nearly recovered of his sickness, was placed in command; and, as affairs at home would not admit of De Witt's absence, he obtained the appointment of his brother, Cornelius de Witt, bailiff of Putten, as deputy of the States, to assist in the conduct of the proposed expedition. Such demonstrations on the part of the enemy were sufficient, it might have been supposed, to arouse the watchfulness of the most negligent. But Charles, if he gave the matter any consideration at all, persisted in flattering himself with the idea that the Dutch would not venture either to risk the rupture of the negotiations by the commission of any act of hostility, or to go counter to the wishes of their ally the French king, who strongly opposed their sending a fleet to sea. He accordingly omitted to take any precautions for the security of his kingdom, and left De Ruyter at the head of about seventy vessels, undisputed master of the British seas*.

The Dutch ships having cast anchor near the mouth of the Thames, Cornelius de Witt proceeded with a squadron to Sheerness, which was taken by ^{June} surprise. It was destroyed as untenable, and the fleet, ^{21st} reuniting, directed its course towards Chatham. The English had, on the alarm, adopted such measures of defence as the time and circumstances permitted, by sinking vessels to impede the passage of the Medway,

* Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 108. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. v., p. 80: Mém: de Guiche, p. 376.

1667 and throwing across it a strong chain protected from behind by four men-of-war and two frigates, and by a battery of eight guns on the shore on each side. A distant firing was kept up for some time between the Dutch and the vessels guarding the chain, the former not venturing to advance, on account of the narrowness of the passage, which admitted of only one vessel at a time; when the commander of a small frigate, named John Brakel, whom Cornelius de Witt had on the same morning placed under arrest for some breach of discipline, solicited permission to go on board his vessel. This being granted, he immediately passed the chain, and grappling with an English frigate, boarded and captured her. The chain was soon broken*; four ships were burnt, and the Royal Charles of 100 guns abandoned by her crew and taken. Advancing with seven vessels and some fire-ships up the river to Upnor Castle, De Witt and De Ruyter, who, with a zeal rather to be admired than approved of, took a personal share in this perilous enterprise, fired the Royal Oak, the Royal London, and the Great James, first-rate men-of-war. They then landed some sailors, who took possession of all the artillery and ammunition they could find; when, a fair wind springing up, De Ruyter resolved to take advantage of it for his return, and brought his ships safely out of the Medway with the loss of no more than fifty men. Shortly after, he entered the mouth of the Thames; but the English, by sinking ships at Woolwich and Blackwall, and planting artillery along the coast, had rendered the passage so dangerous, that it was thought unadvisable to proceed further. After an unsuccessful

* Some say that it was loosened by a party of sailors, who, landing under the fire of the troops on the shore, broke the bar to which it was fastened.

attempt upon Harwich, De Ruyter, leaving a squadron 1667 under Admiral van Nes to blockade the mouth of the Thames, sailed to Plymouth, but without achieving anything of importance. He then appeared before Torbay, and continued to cruise for some time about the Channel, keeping the whole coast in a state of perpetual ferment and consternation^t.

Friend and enemy combined to raise an outcry against De Witt on this occasion. The King of England complained that he had taken advantage of the faith reposed in the sincerity of the negotiations at Breda to wage against him cruel and unjustifiable hostilities; and the King of France, who was deeply anxious for the peace, and desirous of conciliating the favour of Charles to secure his acquiescence in the designs he entertained upon the Netherlands, expressed his fears lest these events might render all his efforts towards an accommodation useless, since an insult of such magnitude, offered to so haughty a nation as England, could be wiped out only by an obstinate and exterminating war. The expedition in itself was condemned as rash in the extreme. Had the north-east wind, it was said, which favoured the entrance of the ships into the Medway, blown with the least more violence, it might have driven them on the coast; or had it continued longer, have detained them in the river, at the imminent risk of their entire destruction. The populace, however, who usually judge of measures by the palpable test of success, viewed with unmingled approbation an act which had so effectually humbled the pride of their foe; and the beneficial influence which the results of the expedition exercised on the negotiations at Breda, silenced, ere long, the murmurs of severer critics.

1667 Scarcely had the tidings of these events become known, when the English ambassadors seceded at once from the obnoxious point of indemnification for the Bonaventura and Good Hope, the only obstacle to peace. The States on their side evinced as much moderation in the moment of success as firmness in adversity. They consented that the treaty of 1662 should form the basis of the present, each party retaining the possessions they held. New Holland was thus secured to the English; and the valuable colony of Surinam, which had been conquered during the war by the crews of some Zealand vessels, to the Dutch West-India Company. At the same time a treaty of peace was concluded by Great Britain with France and Denmark^a.

While the negotiations at Breda were yet pending, the proceedings of their ally, the King of France, had been such as to create a lasting cause of quarrel between him and the United Provinces, and threaten them with another and equally formidable war. Philip IV. of Spain was now dead, and by his testamentary disposition of his dominions had especially excluded the princes of the House of Bourbon from all claim to the inheritance in right of their mother the Queen of France. Louis XIV., therefore, seeing that no chance remained to him of making good his pretensions, except by arms, resolved upon a speedy invasion of the Netherlands. While he continued to make the queen-regent of Spain earnest protestations of his desire to maintain peace, and to the States-General reiterated assurances that he would undertake nothing in support of his queen's claims without previously consulting them, he collected an army of 50,000 men, and, taking the command in person,

^a De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 537. Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 55.

marched into the Netherlands, and laid siege to Char-1667
leroi almost at the same moment that his declaration
of war arrived at Madrid. The Marquis of Castel-
Rodrigo, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, had
placed such implicit reliance on the expectation that
both England and the United Provinces would offer a
vigorous opposition to the designs of Louis, that,
saving some repairs in the fortifications, he had wholly
neglected the necessary measures of defence. The
march of Louis, accordingly, through these provinces
was little else than a triumphal progression. Char-
leroi, Tournay, and Lisle, fell in an instant before his
arms; and Douay, Oudenarde, Furnes, Armentières,
and Courtray, with several smaller places, yielded with
scarcely any resistance^v.

Thus pressed, the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo
earnestly solicited the assistance of the States, offering
to place Bruges, Ostend, and Damme, with the forts
of St. Isabel and St. Donas, in their hands as security
for a loan of 1,000,000 of guilders, and a subsidy of
12,000 men. But notwithstanding De Witt's extreme
anxiety to arrest by any means the advance of Louis
in the Netherlands, matters were not as yet in a con-
dition to admit of his exposing the Provinces to a war
with France by an immediate compliance with this
proposition. Besides the invidious appearance it would
bear to enter at once into engagements hostile to the
only power who had afforded them his countenance, if
not support, in their late difficulties, the enfeebled
condition of Spain would render it inevitable that the
burden of a war undertaken in conjunction with her
must fall entirely on her allies. To England, indeed,
it was a point of as vital importance as to the United
Provinces themselves, that the King of France should

^v Lett. d'Estrades, tom. v., p. 198. Mém. de Guiche, p. 368.

1667 not achieve so wide a step towards the universal sovereignty at which he was accused of aiming, as the acquisition of the Netherlands. But the strong predilection of both Charles II. and his brother for the French alliance, and their personal dislike of himself, was well known to De Witt; and the latter doubted likewise whether the indignation excited in the great body of the English people by the late expedition to Chatham, was sufficiently appeased to admit of their entering into a cordial union with their newly-reconciled foes. At the same time, therefore, that he sent an ambassador to London to sound the views of that court, and concluded a treaty of mutual defence with Sweden, the pensionary continued to keep up an appearance of the closest amity with France. But, in the midst of his friendly professions, De Witt gave Louis clearly to understand that the States were in no wise disposed to remain quiescent, while he pushed his conquests close to their boundaries. Louis, accordingly, fearing that if he persisted in his designs, they would accept the offers of Spain, proposed to satisfy himself with the cession, on the part of that power, of Luxemburg, Cambray and the Cambresis, Douay, Aire, St. Omer, St. Wynoxbergen, and Furnes, in lieu of his claims. To this the States seemed to lend a favourable ear, and even engaged, if the queen-regent refused reasonable conditions of peace, to unite their arms with those of France in enforcing them. Under this pretext, they increased their land army to a considerable extent^w.

The levy of troops necessarily involved the appointment of a general-in-chief; a matter which, since the death of the Captain-General William II., had always

^w Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 316. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. v., p. 446; tom. vi., p. 41. De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 540.

been one of difficulty and debate. De Witt and his party were desirous that this office should be conferred on a foreigner, who might possess neither inclination nor opportunity to use the power wherewith he was entrusted, to purposes hostile to the liberties of the country. On the other hand, all the Provinces, except Holland and Utrecht, demanded the appointment of the young Prince William as captain-general, and that until he arrived at the age of eighteen, the duties of the office should be administered by John Maurice of Nassau. This measure the States of Holland contrived to postpone by obtaining the adoption of a resolution by the States-General that the matter should not be taken into consideration till the prince had actually attained the required age. But they were convinced, that as soon as that period arrived, it would be no longer in their power to persist in his exclusion. De Witt, therefore, hoping to prevent a recurrence of the evils that had hitherto resulted from the union of the two offices of captain-general and stadtholder, formed the scheme of separating them in such a manner that they should never more be held by the same individual. At his suggestion, the States of Holland proposed in the States-General, that the prince, John Maurice of Nassau, should be appointed captain-general, and that henceforward such as were chosen to this post, or who had the command of the States' troops, either by land or sea, should be disabled from exercising the office of stadtholder over any one or more Provinces; while, to render this resolution the less unpalatable, they signified their willingness that the Prince of Orange should have a sitting in the Council of State, in order that he may obtain the requisite knowledge to fit him for the command of the national forces. But all the States,

1667 except Utrecht, rejected at once the idea of separating these high dignities, and seemed equally determined to bestow them on no other than the Prince of Orange. The Province of Holland, therefore, resolved to provide for the security of its own liberties by passing an edict, which, with little prescience of its destiny, they termed the "Perpetual Edict." By this act, it was provided, "as an eternal and immutable law established for the protection of freedom and the maintenance of union and peace," that the States of Holland should never allow, and do all in their power to dissuade the other Provinces from allowing, any one chosen captain or admiral-general, to be nominated to, or remain in, the office of stadtholder of one or more of the Provinces; and that as far as regarded the Province of Holland, the office of stadtholder should be, and remain for ever, annulled. The edict was framed with every possible precaution. The members of the body of nobility, the councils of the towns, as well as the pensionary, were to swear to its observance; and the article disabling the captains and admirals-general from being stadtholders was to be inserted in the instructions given to these officers, who were likewise to bind themselves to refuse the dignity of stadtholder if solicited to accept it*. The astonishment and dissatisfaction which this proceeding excited among the members of the Orange party were excessive; and augmented to the highest pitch the already great unpopularity of De Witt. Though the advantage, and even necessity, of the measure to the security of the constitution and liberties of the United Provinces is undeniable, the prudence of pressing it forward at this precise juncture, and in opposition to the wishes of all the rest except Utrecht, may well be doubted. It,

* Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 144, 168, 169. Res. van de St., August 5.

however, temporarily suspended the discussions on the 1667 irritating question of the captain-generalship, and Prince John Maurice was appointed to the command of the troops.

The wily policy pursued by De Witt with the courts of England and France, proved, for a time at least, entirely successful. Louis stopped short in the midst of his conquests, professing that he was prompted to this course by regard for the States, and to give them an opportunity of prevailing with Spain to do justice to the claims of his queen. The English easily took the alarm that the present relations of the United Provinces with France tended to nothing less than the partition, between those two powers, of the Spanish Netherlands according to the treaty of 1635. The king had brought himself into considerable ill odour with his subjects by his conduct at the close of the last war, and being, as usual, under the most pressing necessities for money, he dared not run counter to the wishes of his parliament by siding with the French king as his inclinations prompted. He, therefore, appeared to participate strongly in the general desire evinced by the nation, that an union with Holland might be effected, so as to oppose a barrier to the ambitious projects of France; and sent orders to Sir William Temple, his resident at Brussels, to repair to the Hague for the purpose of inquiring into the opinions and dispositions of De Witt and the States on the subject. The report of Temple being favourable, he was commissioned to propose that the States should make with England an alliance offensive and 1668 defensive against all the world, and more especially for the protection of the Spanish Netherlands against the invasion of the King of France. But this was a measure far too bold and hazardous for De Witt to

1668 venture upon at the present juncture. He objected that it was a fundamental maxim of the republic never to enter into an offensive alliance with any power, as an act unjust in itself, and inconsistent with their engagements with other nations; more especially it would be the highest degree of ingratitude to enter into such an one against France, the old and faithful ally of the States.

With regard to a defensive alliance, such as should have for its object to arrest the progress of the French in the Netherlands, De Witt represented in vivid colours the risks which the Provinces would incur in taking this step. The weakness of Spain, he said, was such, that no reliance could be placed upon her for the defence of her provinces; and thus, in the highly probable event of a rupture with the King of France, Holland would lie entirely open to his vengeance; while, if the counsels of England, which for a long period of years had been constantly fluctuating, should again change, after having involved them in the war, their ruin would be inevitable. For these reasons De Witt was rather inclined to restrict their interference to a joint offer of mediation between France and Spain; but the representations of Temple of the inefficacy of such a proceeding, unless supported by some show of vigour; his protestations of the sincerity and steadiness of the dispositions of England, to which his own character for integrity and the ingenuous frankness of his manners, gave weight; and his declaration that the king, if driven by their coldness or hesitation to side with France, was prepared to assist Louis in the conquest of the Spanish Netherlands, in exchange for Nieupoort, Dunkirk, and Ostend, and of the United Provinces in exchange for Zealand, induced De Witt to consent to the proposed alliance. This he did with

an appearance of deep melancholy and irresolution. 1668
 But there was yet a fear that during the delay caused by the slow forms of the Dutch constitution, the plan might be rendered abortive by the machinations of the French ambassador, who possessed considerable influence in the United Provinces, and had been heard to boast, when informed of the negotiations pending, that "they would all pass away in smoke, and prove a mere jest for the king his master." An unwonted celerity was, therefore, used in the disposal of the business; the articles were agreed on in five days; and the treaty, drawn up in a single night, was presented the next morning to the States-General. Without reference to the States of the Provinces, their principals, they at once signed and ratified the treaty, to the excessive joy of Temple, who embracing De Witt exclaimed, "At Breda we met as friends, here as brothers." This course, De Witt, hurried on by the impetuosity of the English ambassador, prevailed with the States to pursue, though in so doing they violated one of the fundamental laws of the union, which renders the unanimous consent of all the Provinces necessary to the formation of alliances with foreign powers. The deputies hereby, as themselves affirmed, ran the risk of losing their heads; and most certainly they afforded a memorable warning to statesmen never on any occasion, be the apparent expediency or necessity what it might, to depart from the laws or principles of the constitution of their country. Had the treaty been proposed and discussed in the ancient and regular mode, which had never yet been found to obstruct any alliance of real value, the intervening time might have sufficed to discover the insincerity of the English court,

✓ Temple's Letters, January 2, 24, and 27, 1668. De Witt's Brieven, decl iv., bl. 609, 622.

1668 or something occurred to prevent the conclusion of this ill-starred treaty, of which the consequences proved fatal to De Witt himself, and had well nigh caused the utter ruin of the United Provinces.

By the terms of the treaty, the joint mediation of England and the States was to be offered to the belligerents, on condition that Spain should cede to France either all the conquests she had already made, or Franche Comté, Cambray, Douay, Aire, St. Omer, St. Wynoxbergen, Furnes, and Lincke; that the mediators should engage Spain to accept the arbitration; but that if she refused, the King of France was not to continue hostilities, but to leave it to the States and England to secure him in the possession of the places they had awarded to him. A secret article provided that if the King of France delayed the signature of the peace after the cession of the proposed places by Spain, or sought by subterfuges and evasions to prevent its execution, Great Britain and the States should make war upon him by land and sea. The accession of Sweden a few days afterwards gave to this confederacy the name of the "*Triple Alliance*."

The conclusion of the treaty, which was wholly unexpected by the King of France and his ministers, excited in them equal astonishment and indignation. Louis, finding an insurmountable barrier raised against a conquest he had hitherto deemed secure, and in a quarter where he least expected, vented his anger in bitter reproaches against De Witt and the States; who, to soften as much as possible the harshness of their proceeding, protested that, finding themselves unable to oblige Spain to give the king satisfaction of his demands, they had induced the King of England to join with them in procuring for him that which he

* Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 392—394.

desired, without the effusion of a drop of Christian blood^a. But, notwithstanding the plausible colouring thus given to the affair, the resentment of Louis continued unabated; while, on the other hand, the terms of the treaty were no less displeasing to the court of Madrid. Spain had indulged hopes that England and the United Provinces would have been prompted by a regard for their own interests to aid her in resisting with vigour the unjust claims of France, instead of uniting to wrest from her so large a portion of that inheritance to which Louis, unless he had a right to the whole, had no right at all. Castel-Rodrigo accordingly long delayed to accept either the truce or the alternative offered by the mediators, conceiving that the progress of the French arms would necessitate their active interference^{b*}.

^a Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 392. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. vi., p. 401.

^b Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 697, *et seq.* Temple's Letters, February 27.

* Though the policy of the object of this generally admired treaty does not admit of a doubt, the justice of the grounds on which it was framed, or the aptitude of its provisions to secure that object, are far more questionable. If the claims of the King of France were just, Spain should not have been supported in her resistance: if not,—as, if there is any validity in the most solemn engagements, they were not,—the States and Great Britain were not justified in forcing Spain to cede any part of her dominions as a bribe to induce him to abandon those claims. They had, indeed, a perfect right to deny Spain assistance, if they saw fit; but they had no right to make her purchase their protection at the price of submitting to violence and injustice. The only proper mode of interference was that proposed by the States of Utrecht, namely, to oblige France to restore the conquests she had made, and then refer the rights of both parties to arbitration. This plan was as feasible as that laid down by the treaty; for, to arrest a young and ambitious monarch in the midst of his victories, was a task scarcely less hazardous and invidious than to compel him to restore the fruits of those he had already achieved. Without doubt both Temple and De Witt felt the force of these considerations; but, unhappily, the English and Dutch by their mutual dissensions had placed themselves out of a condition to adopt the decisive and energetic measures suitable to the occasion. The expenses of the last war, com-

1668 Nothing, therefore, appeared less probable than the peace which the triple alliance was designed to procure, or than that its results would be other than a wide extension of hostilities. Scarcely was it concluded, when the conquest of Franche Comté by Louis XIV. aroused the attention of the German princes, who prepared to take up arms for the protection of the circle of Burgundy; an army of 100,000 men was ready in France to prosecute the conquest of the Netherlands in the next spring; while the Marquis of Castel-Rodrigo, destitute of money and troops, engaged Venloo, the upper quarter of Guelderland, Damme, and the forts of St. Donas and Isabelle, to the States for the loan of 4,000,000 of guilders; and the States prepared to give effect to their mediation by the levy of 12,000 troops, and the equipment of forty-eight vessels of war. But at length the firm determination evinced by Great Britain and the States to make no farther exertions in favour of Spain until she had accepted of the arbitration, and the conviction which forced itself upon the mind of Louis that it would be scarcely practicable to pursue his conquests in defiance of the formidable confederacy now opposed to him, induced the belligerents to consent to an accommodation on the terms proposed. The conferences were appointed to be held at Aix-la-Chapelle, whither Colbert was sent by the King of France, and the Baron de Bergeick on the part of Spain; of the three mediating powers, Van Beverning was minister

bined with the prodigality of the monarch, had reduced the finances of England so low as to disable her from making warlike preparations sufficient to give emphasis to her mediation; and the United Provinces, in addition to the like impediment, had been forced into such intimate relations with France, as to render any overt act hostile to her interests both unsafe and dishonourable.

for the United Provinces, Dhona for Sweden, and 1638 Temple for England^c.

Nevertheless, the discontent of the Spaniards displayed itself as well during the negotiations, which they contrived to retard by numerous vexatious difficulties, as in the acceptance of the alternative whereby they ceded to France all the conquests of which she was already in possession. As that of the cession of Franche Comté, Cambray, Aire, and St. Omer, would have been by far the more advantageous to Spain, the States had relied upon her making choice of it; in which case they would have had the satisfaction of seeing the King of France removed to a distance from their boundaries, and gratified with the possession of places so conveniently situated with respect to his dominions, as to render him anxious to secure his acquisition by the continuance of peace. Such, however, was not the purpose of Spain, who designed, by leaving Louis master of some of the most important towns in the very heart of the Netherlands, to create at once a constant source of anxiety and alarm to the United Provinces, and to impose upon them and England the necessity of taking up arms on the slightest symptom that he might betray of a disposition to extend his conquests^d.

While the conduct of Spain thus frustrated in great measure the beneficial results of the alliance with England on the external relations of the United Provinces, the effects of this alliance soon became apparent in the renewal of domestic uneasiness and dissension. Encouraged by the hopes of support from England, the partisans of the Prince of Orange

^c Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 509. Lettres d'Estrades, tom. vi., p. 381. Temple's Letters (Letter from De Witt), March 16.

^d Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 704. Temple's Letters, March 23, May 8.

1668 in Zealand invited him to take possession of his fiefs in that province, and to assume his seat in the States in the capacity of first noble, which dignity had been conferred on him in 1660. Evading the vigilance of his guardians the young prince, under the pretext of going to Breda to try some hounds sent him by the King of England, escaped to Zealand, where he was received with unbounded acclamations, and introduced into the assembly of the States. This proceeding the Princess Dowager followed up by a declaration of his majority and competency to manage his own affairs; movements which excited the most vivid alarm in the minds of De Witt and the States of Holland, who, anticipating his appointment to the stadtholderate of Zealand as an event not unlikely to ensue, passed a resolution that no stadtholder of a province should enjoy a sitting in the Council of State without their consent. The States of Utrecht also abolished the stadtholderate in their province. In Friesland, Groningen, and Overijssel, likewise party spirit ran very high, the States being divided into "Orangeists" and "Hollandists," as they were termed; and every measure proposed, instead of being discussed and examined with a view to its political tendency, was made a subject of cabal and strife, and a trial of party strength.

From the moment that the King of France found his hopes of conquering the Spanish Netherlands, which, as he truly asserted, another campaign would have sufficed to realize, frustrated by the agency of the Dutch, he determined upon the ruin of that republic. In this scheme he found a ready assistant in Charles II. of England, who had never been sincere in the triple alliance, to which he had become a party for no other purpose than that of gaining, on the one

* Aitzema, deel vi., bl. 607, 619, 632. Res. van de St., September 23.

band, the favour of the parliament, whose humour his 1668 necessitous condition compelled him to study, and on the other, of detaching De Witt from the French alliance, the principal stay of himself and his party in the United Provinces. Accordingly Colbert de Croissi, the ambassador whom Louis sent to England with the view of separating the king from his confederates, found on his arrival the object of his mission already half completed. He was received with marks of distinguished favour, and admitted to long and frequent audiences both of the king and the Duchess of Castlemaine, his favourite mistress, appearing in public with the former on all occasions. Unhappily, the want of stability towards the triple alliance on the part of De Witt himself, justified in great measure the infidelity of Charles. Either unable to control his dislike and contempt of the English court, or from a mistrust of the sincerity of the king, he, shortly after the conclusion of the treaty, made an attempt to recover the favour of Louis by proposing an alliance between France and the United Provinces, to resist in concert and by arms the pretensions of England to the honour of the flag; and that by an article in the treaty the contracting parties should, after the death of the King of Spain, unite to expel the Spaniards from the Netherlands, for which purpose Louis should be at liberty to carry his arms into any part of the Spanish empire^f.

The visit of the French ambassador to the court of England could not but be viewed by the Dutch with suspicion and alarm; and these feelings other circumstances soon contributed to heighten. Puffendorf, the resident of the court of Sweden at Paris, in

^f De Witt's Brieven, deel ii., bl. 592; deel iv., bl. 853. Lett. d'Estades, tom. vi., p. 415, 451, 452.

1669 returning through the Hague to his own country, communicated to De Witt the assurance he had received from the French ministers that England would certainly fail to the triple alliance, and had already changed measures; and added, that the Marshal de Turenne had shown him a letter written from Colbert in England, in which, speaking of the success of his negotiations with the king and his ministers, he observed of the latter, that he had "made them feel sensibly the effect of his majesty's bounty^g." At the same time, various frivolous complaints against the Dutch began to arise on the part of England. Temple was instructed to remonstrate with the States on the subject of a medal which had been struck in commemoration of the burning of Chatham, with the representation of that event on the one side, surrounded by the motto, "Procul hinc, mala bestia regnis;" of which, it was said, the evil-disposed applied the words, "mala bestia," to the king. The States expressed their astonishment that a matter so innocent in itself should give occasion of offence, since the objectionable words could be understood only to apply to war, envy, and strife. By way of a more popular cause of dissension also, the subject of the East India trade was introduced, of which the English renewed the demand of entire liberty in those countries where the Dutch had hitherto enjoyed exclusive privileges; and the restoration of the English to the kingdom of Macassar, whence the Dutch, on suspicion of treachery, had constrained the native sovereign to expel them, was required, as well as the permanent possession of Surinam, which had again been occupied by the English since the peace of Breda^h.

^g Temple's Letters, April 24., 1669.

^h Temple's Letters, October 2. Res. van de St., Ma: 19.

Although Louis could entertain no doubt of the 1669 favourable dispositions of the King of England, some apprehensions of his steadiness to which the conduct of the latter gave rise, induced him to employ the good offices of his sister, the Duchess of Orleans, a woman of beauty, talent, and address, and who possessed an unbounded influence over the mind of 1670 Charles. The better to conceal his purpose, he himself, with his whole court, accompanied her to the coast, under pretext of inspecting the fortifications of Dunkirk, whence he dispatched her to England as if on a visit of affection to her brother, who had repaired to Dover to meet her. She was empowered to promise, on the part of the French king, sufficient subsidies in troops and money, to ensure to Charles entire independence of his parliament, and absolute authority in his kingdom, and, to enable him to restore the Catholic religion in England, Scotland, and Ireland, provided he would coincide in the measures of the king for the conquest of the United Provinces. The King of England desired that their united arms should first be turned against his own subjects; but the duchess, on the other hand, urged that, while England was weakened by a civil war, the Dutch would take the opportunity of extending their commerce, and the consequent increase of their power would render their subjugation the more difficult; but the conquest of the Provinces once achieved, the rest would be comparatively easy. Where both parties were so well agreed, the matter encountered little difficulty; but, lest the counsels of the ambassadress should want anything of efficiency, they were supported by the blandishments of Mademoiselle de Querouaille, one of her suite, who became the mistress of Charles, and was soon after created Duchess of Portsmouth. The ten days of the duchess's

1670 stay in England were one continued scene of mirth and festivity; and thus it was, amid the smiles of courtizans and the riot of debauchery, that the ruin of a virtuous, useful, and unoffending people was resolved on¹.

The return of the Duchess of Orleans to Paris was followed almost immediately by her death, after an illness so sudden and short as to give rise to the strongest suspicions of poison. In her last moments she earnestly recommended to the English ambassador the maintenance of the alliance between France and England, accompanied by expressions of the tenderest affection for her brother. Whatever grief Charles might have felt at the event, he did not neglect to make use of it as a means of forwarding his purpose; and under pretext of condoling with the King of France, sent the Duke of Buckingham to put the finishing stroke to the treaty. It was now agreed that Charles should make war upon the United Provinces by sea, while Louis attacked them with a powerful army by land; that France should pay the King of England a subsidy of 350,000*l.* yearly for the expenses of his fleet; and that the United Provinces, when conquered, should be retained by the King of France, except Zealand, which was to be annexed to England; and Holland, which was to be given to the Prince of Orange if he became a party to the confederacy^k.

Meanwhile the United Provinces continued in entire unconsciousness of the storm that was gathering around them, though warned on all sides of its approach. The Elector of Brandenburg, who had firmly refused the solicitations of both France and England

¹ Basnage, tom. ii., p. 103, quoted from the *Hist. de la Guerre de 1672*, de l'Abbé Primi.

^k Basnage, tom. ii., p. 105. Burnet, vol. i., p. 304.

to take a share in the confederacy against them, sent 1670 ambassadors to inform the States of the overtures that had been made him by the former, and to advise them to offer satisfaction without delay for any offence they may have given that monarch. But as he desired at the same time that they would withdraw their garrisons from Cleves, his intelligence was received with incredulity and suspicion. The ambassador of the States at the court of Poland, also, sent information that he had heard the king mention the evil designs of Louis; but his letters were burned without further remark, lest, being made public, they should excite alarm among the people¹. De Witt was fully persuaded that France would never venture upon any enterprise against the United Provinces without the concurrence of England; and in the fidelity of that nation to her engagements he had entire and unshaken confidence. Notwithstanding that the embassies of Colbert de Croissi and the Duchess of Orleans combined with other appearances to inspire him with suspicion scarcely less strong than certainty as to the bent of the king's personal designs, he could not for a moment suppose that the monarch of a mighty and generous nation could consent to become the degraded stipendary of a foreign court; and still less could he conceive that a people, who but a few years before had thought it requisite to cement the fabric of their liberties with the blood of their sovereign, would sit tamely by and behold the interests of their religion endangered, the ties of national faith trampled under foot, and the welfare of the commonwealth sacrificed, to gratify the passions of an indolent voluptuary. In these sentiments the deceitful conduct of Charles himself contributed to fortify him. At the time of the

Basnage, tom. ii., p. 124, 126.

1670 treaty he had expressed, in the most unequivocal terms, to Meerman, the Dutch ambassador in London, the high personal gratification the alliance with the States afforded him; he declared that many reasons, more especially the strong tie of a common religion, tended to unite the two nations in the closest amity, and that he doubted not of the eternal duration of the present good understanding. He now affected to persevere entirely in the same sentiments; and succeeded in imposing upon Temple the belief that he did so. He had exchanged, without hesitation, the ratification of the treaty which he had already determined to break; he consented to an additional treaty of guarantee binding the contracting parties to assist Spain in case of the infraction by Louis of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle; and declared that he would join his solicitations to those of the States to induce the Emperor to become a party to the triple alliance^m.

His subsequent refusal to admit the emperor into that confederacy, and the invasion and conquest of Lorraine by Louis, completed in the space of a month, first opened the eyes of the States to the real state of affairs, of which the recall of Temple a short time after gave but too clear an evidence. So long as this able and upright statesman remained at his post, he seemed a pledge for the sincerity of England; and De Witt now began to look to the future with sentiments of dismal foreboding. "It is your king," said he to the ambassador, in their last interview, "who induced us to break the ancient friendship between France and the Republic, and now he will desert us." Temple, though he endeavoured to reassure him, could not but allow that he was infected with somewhat of the same

^m De Witt's Brieven, deel iv., bl. 640. Temple's Letters (Lett. of Lord Arlington), Mar. 22., 1670.

suspicious. "If I return," said he, "you shall know 1670 more; if not, you will guess more still." His reception at home was such as to confirm their fears. The lord-keeper Bridgeman, and the secretary Trevor, the chief supporters of the Dutch alliance, had now lost their credit at court, and the whole power of the administration lay in the hands of the "Cabal." From these ministers the integrity and zeal of Temple in the service of his country were likely to meet with but slight approbation. He found himself treated with neglect and contempt at court, and excluded from all participation in public affairs; the only person to whom he was permitted to give an account of his mission being Sir Thomas Clifford, who had from the first laboured incessantly to thwart the objects of the triple alliance. In the interview they held upon this subject, Clifford sharply reprehended him for not having brought the Dutch to reason on the matters of Surinam and the East India Company; and upon Temple's answering that he had done all in his power to this effect, he observed, that he ought then "to declare to the king and the whole world how basely and unworthily the States had used him; and that their ministers were a set of rogues and rascals, not fit for his Majesty or any other prince to have anything to do with." To this Temple coldly replied, that he should speak of the States and ministers as he thought of themⁿ; and scorning to become a party to the dishonourable proceedings of which he had been the dupe, he retired into private life^o.

Although De Witt could now no longer doubt that Louis XIV. had accomplished the separation of the King of England from the triple alliance, he still

ⁿ Temple's Letters, Nov. 22.

^o Res. van de St., Feb. 7, 1671. Temple's Letters, Sept.

1670 persisted in believing that the dissolution of that alliance was the extent of the evil, and that the warlike preparations of the former were directed against the Spanish Netherlands, and not against the United Provinces. The King of France he imagined would scarcely neglect the easy acquisition of these rich dominions to make war, at an enormous risk and expense, upon a country which the very act of conquest would render utterly valueless. He considered, also, that the same fear of raising the Orange party into power, which had prompted Louis to a rupture with England during the last war, would now operate to deter him from a measure likely to entail the ruin of the present government. But Louis, besides that he was determined to wreak his vengeance upon the Dutch at any sacrifice, had come to regard their subjugation as a necessary preliminary to that of the Spanish Netherlands; and his only motive for opposing the elevation of the Prince of Orange, the fear, namely, of the influence which the King of England would acquire in the Provinces, existed no longer, now that he was master of the actions of that monarch, a pensioner on his bounty*. A personal grudge, moreover, had arisen in the breast of the King of France against De Witt. In pursuance of his usual custom of distributing bribes to all those ministers of foreign nations whose support or neutrality he found necessary to the attainment of his views, he had instructed D'Estrades to buy De Witt at any price. Hitherto he had found men of all ranks, nobles, cardinals, senators, and even princes themselves, amenable to this influence; but the gold of France was of little worth to

* A Dutch author states, that, at this time, six millions of florins passed from France to England. Sylvius, *Hist. onses Tyds*, deel i., bl. 166.

the simple republican, whose whole train consisted of 1670 a single man-servant, whose dress differed in nothing from that of the most ordinary private gentleman, and whose frugal table sufficed for no more than his family or a friend. He refused firmly, though courteously, the proffered gifts. Louis complained of his obstinacy in terms of equal courtesy*; but that the servant of a petty state (as he esteemed it) should dare to assert his own and his country's independence, was an offence which he could not pardon. Nevertheless, anxious to lull the States into security till he should have threatened or subsidized every state in Europe into his alliance, or at least into neutrality, he spared no pains to confirm the delusion entertained by the pensionary and States. They had some time before dispatched Peter de Groot (son of Grotius) as ambassador to Paris, to ascertain the real sentiments of the French court. But, though penetrating and sagacious, the single-hearted Dutchman was no match for the duplicity and chicanery of those with whom he had to deal. Notwithstanding the alarming preparations which Louis was making, the ambassador was so far deceived by the professions of that monarch as to send home intelligence that the Spanish Netherlands only were aimed at, and that the king might be appeased by the renewal of the Partition Treaty^p.

In this dubious aspect of affairs, the sole hope of security lay in the immediate and vigorous adoption, on the part of the States, of the measures necessary to

* Temple's Observations on the United Provinces, p. 136. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. ii., pp. 54, 198. Basnage, tom. ii., p. 135.

* The only complaint (he writes in a letter to his ambassador) that he has to make against De Witt is, that he will not allow him to bestow upon him some substantial proofs of his esteem and affection. Lett. d'Estrades, tom. ii., p. 194.

1670 place them in a position of self-defence; but this, unhappily, the prevalence of party spirit rendered impossible. The government was reluctant to levy an army, unless unavoidably necessary, fearing that, as had nearly happened on the last occasion, it would entail the elevation of the Prince of Orange to the offices of his family; and the doubt was even raised whether it would not be as well to fall into the hands of the King of France as under the yoke of the prince. The time, therefore, which should have been far otherwise employed, was consumed in debates concerning the appointment of a captain-general, whether it should be annual or permanent; in discussing the questions of the prohibition of wares imported from France, and of the admission of the Prince of Orange into the Council of State. The States of Holland had agreed to grant him this privilege, so soon as the offices of stadtholder and captain-general should be separated by the States-General; and had gained over three of the Provinces to side with them in insisting upon the latter measure as a preliminary to the former. The other three, Zealand, Friezland, and Groningen, accordingly, convinced that the advancement of the prince would be impossible if they continued to act in opposition to the wishes of Holland, consented to the passing of a resolution, that the office of stadtholder should be for ever separate from that of captain-general. The States of Holland then granted the prince a seat in the council of state, but the manner of his introduction, his precedence, and the question whether he should have a decisive or merely deliberative voice, gave rise to lengthened cavil and disputation. He was at last invested with a decisive voice, but under certain restrictions^a.

^a Basnage, tom. ii., pp. 113—116, 134. Res. van de St., Mar. 25 and 28. Sylvius, Hist. onses Tyds, deel i., bl. 94.

Meanwhile, Louis suffered no engine to lie idle 1670 whose power could be turned to the destruction of this devoted country; and, unhappily, he found but too many ready to serve his purpose. The neighbouring states, both great and small, and the German princes in especial, were well pleased to behold the approaching humiliation of Holland; the latter, jealous that a country not superior to them in geographical extent, and inferior in natural resources, should become entitled to rank herself with the mighty of the earth; the great sovereigns of Europe, irritated to find the lustre of their ancient dignity, and the grandeur of their empire, eclipsed by the actual wealth and power of a republic of yesterday. The pride, too, of Holland had given them offence,—and it was true that she was proud. Proud, not of hosts which her conquering arm had stretched bleeding on the field of battle, nor of the lands and cities she had laid waste with fire and sword, but of her noble fleets, her mighty men-of-war, her merchant-vessels laden with treasure, peopling the ocean she kept at bay: proud of her smiling fields, where the husbandman pursued his labours in content, and enjoyed their fruits in security; of her fair cities, in whose streets crime and poverty were rare, and starvation unknown; of her peaceful dwellings, whose spotless purity seemed an emblem of the moral delicacy which reigned within: proud of her honourable name, synonymous throughout the world with industry and integrity; of her wise and just laws; of her race of hardy sons, who, when she had sent them to gather wealth and glory in all quarters of the globe, returned to her bosom with still abiding affection. Such an honest pride Holland had felt; and of such a pride it was that her rivals aimed to destroy the sources.

In Germany the Bishops of Munster and Strasburg 1671

1671 consented without hesitation to follow the example of the Archbishop of Cologne in allowing the French army a passage over their territories, and to promise auxiliaries to be used in the king's service when occasion should require. These princes now made diligent levies of troops, giving as a reason of their proceedings, their anxiety for the interests of their empire, and their desire to preserve peace. The emperor himself was induced by the influence of De Gremonville, the French ambassador at the court of Vienna, to conclude a treaty, binding himself not to afford assistance to either of the members of the triple alliance in case a war should arise between them and France. At the same time, Louis maintained a secret correspondence with the malcontents of Hungary, in order to give employment to the emperor on that side, should he betray symptoms of repenting of his engagement. A considerable subsidy, granted by Louis to Sweden, always needy and always open to the highest bidder, was sufficient to prevail with her also to abandon the triple alliance, and to promise that she would take up arms against the emperor or any of the German princes who should assist the United Provinces^r.

These alliances, which could not be wholly concealed from the States, contributed, together with the unfriendly feelings manifested by the king in prohibiting the importation of Dutch wares into France, to convince them of the reality of the evils with which they were now threatened. Still hoping to avert the danger, they addressed a letter to Louis, couched in respectful and submissive terms, reminding him of their ancient alliances with the Kings of France, his predecessors; offering prompt redress of all the grievances he had to complain of on the subject of

^r Sylvius, deel i., bl. 163—166.

their mutual commerce since 1662; and supplicating 1671 him to relieve them of the uneasiness into which they had been thrown by his preparations. The answer was well calculated to arouse them from the apathy they had hitherto indulged in. Louis declared that he was glad they acknowledged the benefits they had received from his ancestors; but he could have wished them to remember those that he himself had conferred on them, when they would have viewed their own conduct towards him in a less favourable light; and that his preparations were for the protection of his subjects against the invasion, which the levy of troops on the part of the States, the increase of their navy, and the solicitations they used to induce foreign powers to league against him, seemed to threaten; and when his armaments by land and sea were ready, he should employ them in the manner he should judge most suitable to his glory. To a similar application of De Groot, as to the object of his preparations, Louis made the insolent reply, that the States would know well enough in the next spring^a.

As the King of England was not, like the King of France, sufficiently independent of his people to involve them in a war merely to gratify his personal caprices, it was necessary that he should find such a pretext as, by appealing to their pride or prejudices, should give it the appearance of a national quarrel. This the long-standing dispute of the flag readily afforded. The captain of the *Merlin*, a royal yacht which was sent to convey Lady Temple from the Hague, received commands to make the Dutch fleet strike to him, and to fire upon them till they did so. Accordingly, sailing through a number of vessels lying at anchor a few

^a Sylvius, deel i., bl. 131. Holl. Mercur., A.D. 1671, bl. 175. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 642.

1671 miles from the shore at West Kapell, he answered the salute of the vice-admiral, Van Gend, by firing twice with ball into his ship. On inquiring the reason of this outrage, Van Gend was informed that it was because he had not lowered his flag to the royal standard. He answered, that he could not permit a whole fleet of the United Provinces to strike to a single yacht on their own coasts without express orders; but if the king claimed such a right the question must be decided between him and the States. This occurrence was magnified by the cabal ministry into a studied insult to the English flag. A report was spread that Van Gend had been furnished with instructions not to strike to the King of England's flag, or that of any other king in the world. The standard of England, it was declared, had been treated with contempt, and every true Englishman was bound to resent the indignity as personal to himself^t. At the same time, fearful of giving premature warning of his hostile intentions, the king delayed making complaints to the States on this subject for some months, and even carried his dissimulation so far as to deceive Boreel by a falsehood, such as the meanest of his subjects should have scorned to utter. He declared to the ambassador that he would use his utmost efforts to prevent the war with France; and if he were unable to accomplish this object, would assist the States with forty vessels; and that so far from having engaged to commit any act detrimental to them, he was determined to maintain inviolably the provisions of the triple alliance^u.

But at length Downing, whose appearance at the Hague was always the precursor of storms, as that of

^t Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 631. Temple's Letters, Sept. 14.

^u Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 638.

Sir William Temple was a token of fair weather, was 1671 commissioned to demand satisfaction for the affront offered to the king's flag in violation of the treaty of Breda; that exemplary punishment should be inflicted on Van Gend to deter others from the like misconduct; and that the States should recognise the sovereignty of England on the seas by striking to a single ship wherever, or in whatever number, their fleet may be. But lest the States might, as it was apprehended, grant the satisfaction required, Downing received instructions to insist upon a decision on these points within a shorter time than the forms of the constitution admitted. Accordingly, when the States presented their answer he declared he was no longer competent to receive it, his character as ambassador having ceased; and, shortly after, he suddenly and without orders from his court quitted the Hague. The States were little inclined to acquiesce in the pretensions of England to the sovereignty of the seas; they asserted that it was a novel claim first set up by the English 1672 commonwealth in order to oblige the Dutch to strike to their ships, a compliment they had before paid to the Kings of England as powerful friends and allies, but by no means as masters of the ocean. Nevertheless, to deprive the court of the opportunity of persuading the people of England that the war was undertaken, not at the desire of the King of France but to sustain the honour of the flag, the States, at the instigation of De Witt, resolved that "in the hope they conceived of his Majesty's observance of the triple alliance, and of the protection he would afford the republic against France," they consented that a whole fleet should strike to a single ship of war bearing the royal standard of England; but it was to be understood only as in testimony of their respect for so great

1672 a monarch and ally, and no precedent was to be drawn from it injurious to navigation and commerce. This resolution was sent to the court of England, where (though nothing could well be more perspicuous) it was pronounced by Arlington full of evasions and ambiguities; and the king declared, that he would not permit the slightest doubt to be cast on his perfect right to the sovereignty of the seas^v.

The near approach of hostilities now rendered the appointment of a Captain-General absolutely necessary; and no other person except the Prince of Orange could be found in the provinces of station and dignity fitted for this office. The present generals, John Maurice of Nassau, and Wurtz, a Swede, were not of sufficient authority to maintain discipline amongst the troops, and some of the Provinces had resolved to oppose any new levies, except such as were made in the name of the Prince of Orange. Five Provinces and a considerable portion of Holland had, in the last year, voted the appointment of William as Captain-General, to which the remaining towns of Holland, under the pressure of the present emergency, gave their consent. But instead of yielding with a good grace to what they could not prevent, and by a ready participation in the elevation of the prince, at once conciliating his party, and placing him in a situation to take measures for the defence of the country, De Witt and his adherents interposed cavils concerning his wanting a few months of the required age, which had been fixed at twenty-two, and contrived that a long period of time should be occupied in preparing his instructions. These were framed with the most jealous purpose of preventing his exercising any of the functions deemed more properly

^v Sylvius, deel i., bl. 180. Res. van de St., Jan. 23. Basnage, tom. ii., p. 190—192.

to belong to the office of stadtholder, or making use of 1672 his power to secure partisans, and his commission was restricted to a year. He was likewise bound to refuse the stadtholderate, if it were offered him, and not to confer any military offices, nor give orders for the removal of the troops. This instruction the prince took a solemn oath to obey^{w*}.

Thus, by an unavoidable necessity, were consigned to the management of an inexperienced youth, affairs sufficiently difficult and embarrassing to have baffled the skill of the most able and practised commanders. The Dutch, though, in defence of their religion and liberties, they had become the first soldiers in the world, were never essentially a military nation; and at this time a long interval of peace, and devotion to the pursuits of commerce, had rendered them quite unfit for warlike enterprises. The army was entirely disorganized; the officers, appointed by the magistrates of the towns on the score of relationship or party adherence, and without the slightest regard to their efficiency, were suffered, without fear of punishment, to keep the numbers of their regiments incomplete, in order that they might appropriate the pay of the vacancies; while the men, independent and undisciplined, were allowed to spend their time in the pursuit of some gainful trade or peaceful occupation, instead of practising military exercises. The disputes concerning the appointment of captain-general had impeded any fresh levies, the recruits refusing to take

* Holl. Mer., 1672, bl. 3, 13. Basnage, tom. ii., p. 170, 172. Res. van de St., Feb. 12, 17, 23.

* At the sitting of the States on this occasion, a deputy was observed cutting paper with a pen-knife, with a musing and abstracted air. On being asked by one near what he was thinking of, "I am considering," he replied, "that if it is so easy to cut paper with a knife, parchment will hardly resist a sword." Le Clerc, tom. ii., p. 264.

1672 the oath to the States, except in conjunction with the Prince of Orange, and had induced many of the best and most experienced officers to take service in the French army; the fortifications of the towns were in a dilapidated condition, and no measures had been adopted for the security of the frontier*.

While thus feeble within, the United Provinces were all but destitute of foreign allies. Negotiations were pending for a treaty with the Elector of Brandenburg for a subsidy of 20,000 troops; but in the fear of giving to the uncle of the Prince of Orange such an influence in the Provinces, the ruling party hesitated not to interpose studied and ruinous delays to its conclusion. Spain alone, the ancient enemy of Holland, but now united to her by the powerful ties of self-interest, remained faithful to her alliance, though neither solicitations nor menaces were spared by England to detach her from it. But governed by a female regent, torn by domestic cabals, and with a treasury utterly exhausted, she could prove but a very inefficient support in the time of peril.

Such was the state to which party spirit had reduced a nation filled with brave, intelligent, and virtuous inhabitants, and governed by statesmen as able and wise as the world ever saw, when the two most powerful sovereigns of Europe declared war against her. The manifestoes were both issued on the same day. That of the King of England is strongly marked by the duplicity which was the distinguishing characteristic both of himself, and of his court, as then constituted. From the style of the document, one might be led to suppose that he was forced into the war with extreme reluctance and regret, and only in consequence of the impossibility of obtaining redress by any other

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* Mém. de Guiche, p. 157.

means for the deep injuries he had sustained. He 1672 declared that, so far back as the year 1664, his parliament had complained of the wrongs and oppressions exercised by the Dutch on his subjects in the East Indies, and for which they had refused to make reparation by amicable means. These had caused the war which ended with the peace of Breda; and no sooner was that treaty concluded, than the Dutch renewed their outrages upon the English merchants. They had detained his subjects in Surinam, when surrendered to them according to the terms of that treaty. (To this the Dutch States replied, with truth, that the English who had remained there had done so voluntarily.) They had openly refused him the honour of the flag, one of the most ancient prerogatives of his crown; had sought to invite the King of France to hostilities against him; and had insulted his person and dignity by the abusive pictures and medals exposed in all their towns. This expression was understood to allude to the medal complained of by Temple three years before, and to a portrait of Cornelius De Witt, in the perspective of which was a representation of the burning of Chatham. Cornelius De Witt being an ex-burgomaster of Dordrecht, the council of that town had, with a natural pride, caused this picture to be painted and hung up in the council chamber. The extreme sensitiveness manifested by Charles on this point appeared to the States rather superfluous in a monarch whose own kingdom teemed with the most offensive truths relative to himself and his government^v.

As if determined that the mode of commencing hostilities should be as lawless and unjust as the war itself, the court of England, several days before the declaration was issued, had commanded Sir Robert

^v Basnage, tom. ii., pp. 119, 133. Holl. Mer., bl. 22.

1672 Holmes to attack the Dutch Smyrna fleet on its return. While cruising near the Isle of Wight, Holmes met the Admiral Sprague, by whom he was informed of the near approach of the vessels; but, anxious to secure to himself the whole of the booty, estimated at near a million and a half of guilders, he suffered Sprague to sail away in ignorance of his instructions, and leaving him with no more than nine frigates and three yachts. His covetousness, happily, proved the salvation of the fleet. After a sharp encounter of two days' duration, Holmes was forced to retire, having captured no more than three or four of the more inconsiderable ships, while the remainder gained their harbours in safety^z.

The King of France appeared, by the tenor of his declaration of war, to imagine that his power and dignity entitled him to set at nought alike the natural rights of mankind and the law of nations; it resembled, indeed, rather the threat of a predatory incursion on the part of a barbarian chief, than the justification of the taking up arms by a civilized government. Without adducing a single cause of complaint, he satisfied himself with declaring that the conduct of the States had been such as it was not consistent with his glory to endure any longer*. To testify further his contempt for the feeble enemy he looked forward speedily to subdue, he caused medals to be struck with the representation of the sun dispersing the vapours arising from a marsh, and the motto "Evexi sed discutiam," and others, with the moon shining on

^z Basnage, tom. i., p. 192. Holl. Mer., bl. 17.

* It was his "glory" which the king usually made the pretext of his acts of spoliation and aggression. But where the *glory* lay in the monarchs of two mighty empires, combining to destroy an unoffending nation of scarcely greater extent than one of their own provinces, it appears difficult to discover.

the sea, surrounded by the words "Mihi soli obtemperat 1672 æquor," the former alluding to himself, the latter to the King of England^a.

If anything, indeed, could justify the arrogant tone assumed by Louis, the circumstances in which he found himself would have done so. An army of 120,000 able and well-equipped troops, commanded by Condé and Turenne and numbering in its ranks volunteers of the noblest families in France eager to distinguish themselves under the eye of their sovereign; funds lavishly supplied by the able minister of finance, Colbert; with vast magazines of ammunition, and every other necessary collected, and winter quarters secured, in the neighbouring and friendly territories of Cologne and Munster; seemed means almost absurdly disproportioned in magnitude to the end to be attained. At the same time, he was but too well informed of the defenceless condition of the enemy. De Witt and the States conceived that his first attempt would be upon Maestricht, the possession of which he was known to have long coveted, and that the difficulties of its conquest would be sufficient to deter from further enterprise a monarch of whose military prowess no very high idea was entertained, and who was supposed to be far more enamoured of the pomp and circumstance of war than of its toils and dangers. They accordingly fortified and provided Maestricht with the utmost care, leaving the frontier towns on the Rhine in an utterly inefficient state of defence. Aware of this fact, Louis commenced his operations on the side of Cleves, and, separating his army into four divisions, laid siege simultaneously to as many places. He himself summoned Rhyneberg, the Duke of Orleans sat down before Orsay, Condé was commanded to reduce Wesel,

^a Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 643. Holl. Mer., bl. 29.

1672 and Turenne, Burick. All surrendered within a week. To give an account of the capture of the towns which followed, would be but to heap example upon example of cowardice or treachery, or—as they are generally found together—both. Nothing less than entire unanimity, and the most undaunted resolution, could have enabled the Dutch to resist the overwhelming force employed against them; whereas, the miserable effect of the internal dissensions of the republic had been to destroy for the time all mutual confidence. In some places the garrisons, despising their incapable commanders, refused to act, or the governors, mistrustful of their undisciplined troops, lost all hope of prolonging a defence; in others, the detestation entertained by the magistrates towards the Orange party was so great, that, preferring to submit to France rather than to a native stadtholder, they hastened to deliver up their towns to the invader; on the other hand, the friends of the House of Orange looked not without some complacency on the misfortunes which threatened the state, and which they hoped would reduce it to the necessity of raising the prince to the dignities of his family; while in those places where the Catholics were numerous, the populace, under the guidance of the priests, forced both garrisons and governments to open their gates to the sovereign whom they hailed as the restorer of their religion. With scarcely a show of opposition, therefore, Louis advanced to the Rhine^b. The drought of the summer was so excessive that this river had become fordable in three places, which being pointed out to the French by some peasants of Guelderland, the king determined on attempting the passage between Schenkenschans and Arnhem, near the Tollhuys, a village and tower about

^b Holl. Mer., bl. 69, *et seq.*

two miles distant from the separation of the branch of 1672 the river called the Wahal. The Prince of Orange, who was stationed with about 22,000 men at Arnhem, and along the banks of the Yssel, instead of concentrating his forces to oppose the passage of the enemy, contented himself with detaching De Montbas to guard the Betuwe, and to throw succours if requisite into Nimeguen. But this general, deeming the troops placed under his command insufficient for the purpose required, abandoned his post. He was arrested and sent to Utrecht, but afterwards allowed to escape. Immediately on the retreat of Montbas the prince dispatched General Wurtz, but still with a vastly inadequate force, to occupy the post at the Tollhuys. The French cuirassiers, led on by the Counts de Guiche and Revel, first waded into the ford under the fire of the artillery from the tower, which, however, as there were no more than seventeen men stationed in it, was not very formidable. They were followed by a number of volunteers, and in a short time the whole of the cavalry passed over with trifling loss. The Dutch troops, discouraged as well by the unexpectedness of the attempt as by their own inferiority in number, were driven back after a short skirmish. A bridge was then thrown across the river for the infantry, and thus this famous passage was accomplished with comparative ease and safety. As the position of the Prince of Orange on the Yssel, which in consequence of the drought was fordable throughout nearly the whole of its course, was now no longer tenable, he retired to Utrecht, abandoning Arnhem to the enemy, who soon after received the submission of Nimeguen and the whole of Guelderland, Thiel, and the Bommel. In order to put Utrecht into a state of defence, the prince considered it necessary to burn down all the suburbs;

1672 a measure which, when he proposed to the States of the Province, he found them reluctant to comply with. He therefore immediately quitted that city, and with the whole of his forces made a further retreat into Holland. Thus left wholly unprotected, the States of Utrecht conceived that the only resource which remained to them was to mollify the conqueror by a speedy submission; and accordingly, while Louis was yet at Doesburg, they sent deputies to tender to him the keys of the city and the submission of the whole Province. The king shortly after entered Utrecht in triumph^c.

While the good fortune rather than the arms of Louis subdued Guelderland and Utrecht, his allies, the Bishops of Cologne and Munster, found no more vigorous resistance in Overysseel. Oldenzeel, Entschede, and other smaller towns yielded at once to their summons; Deventer, though well garrisoned and amply provided, was surrendered at once by the municipal government; who, by their exhortations and example, induced that of Zwol to adopt a like disgraceful course of conduct. The easily-acquired spoil was divided among the captors; the King of France, who had furnished a subsidy of troops, placed garrisons in Campen and Elburg; the Archbishop of Cologne retained Deventer; Groll and Breevoort being allotted to the Bishop of Munster, while Zwol was held in common. The troops of these warlike prelates exercised everywhere unbounded license and cruelties. Numbers of unhappy families were driven from their homes, and taking refuge in Holland, added to the consternation which prevailed there^d.

^c De Guiche, "Passage du Rhin." Basnage, tom. ii., p. 234, 235. Sylvius, deel i., bl. 258, 304—309.

^d Holl. Mer., bl. 80, et seq.

This province was now in imminent danger. No barrier remained, as it appeared, to oppose the progress of the enemy; the army of the prince had dwindled to about 13,000 men; two of the frontier towns, Woerden and Oudewater, had solicited safeguards from the invaders; and Naarden was surprised by the Count of Rochefort. Had he marched on at once to Muyden he might have occupied that town also; a post of immense importance from its situation, as ships going to Amsterdam must come within reach of its cannon; and by means of a sluice there the surrounding country may at any time be inundated. It had been left destitute of a garrison; but the French commander remaining two or three days inactive at Naarden, time was afforded to John Maurice of Nassau to enter Muyden with a strong body of troops, and the chance, thus lost, was gone for ever^e.

Amazed at the rapid advances of the invader, and dispirited by the symptoms of daily increasing aversion which the great body of the people manifested to his government, the courage of De Witt at this crisis so entirely forsook him, that he took upon himself the disgrace of being the first to propose to the States of Holland that they should implore mercy from the conqueror. The resolution was immediately adopted, and by them proposed to the States-General, where it was passed with the dissentient voice only of Zealand, who was of opinion that they should treat simultaneously with England, from whence that Province had to apprehend the principal danger. A deputation was accordingly sent to Louis, at Keppel, near Doesburg, headed by De Groot, and commissioned to inquire upon what terms his majesty was inclined to grant peace to the republic. They were answered by Lou-

^e Sylvius, deel i., bl. 339—341.

1672 vojs, that the king was not disposed to restore any of the conquests he had made, or to enter into any negotiation, unless the deputies were furnished with full powers, and instructions as to what the States intended to offer. Returning to the Hague, De Groot made his report to the States of Holland, and representing the desperate condition of their affairs, recommended that Louis should be gratified with Maestricht and all the other towns of the generality; and that a sum should be offered him to defray the expenses of the war, provided the king would leave them in possession of their liberty and sovereignty. Leyden, Haarlem, and most of the other towns, followed the example of the nobles in receiving these pusillanimous counsels with approbation. Amsterdam, however, proved that the spirit of the "Gueux" was not yet utterly extinct in Holland. Prevailing with four towns of North Holland to follow their example, the council of Amsterdam refused to send deputies to debate upon the question of granting full powers to the ambassadors, and made vigorous preparations for the defence of their city. They repaired the fortifications, and strengthened them with considerable outworks, the magistrates themselves being the first to sacrifice their magnificent country-houses in the suburbs for this purpose; they assigned to each of the regiments of burgher guards (who were 10,000 in number) a portion of the city to watch; took into their pay as soldiers all those inhabitants whom the cessation of trade would throw out of employment; stationed outlyers in the Y, Amstel, Zuyderzee, and Pampus; and, cutting the dykes, laid the country to a great distance round under water. They likewise passed a resolution, that though all the rest of Holland should make terms with the conqueror, they would sustain the siege single-handed

till some friendly power should afford them assistance^f.

Encouraged probably by the example of Amsterdam, the remaining unconquered Provinces showed symptoms of more firmness. They refused to bear any part in granting the full powers to De Groot, and Holland was at length obliged to pass the resolution in the States-General by a nominal majority, consisting of that province, with Guelderland, Overysse, and Utrecht, already in subjection to the French monarch. The ambassadors were empowered to make such terms as they judged the necessity and welfare of the Provinces required; and De Groot accordingly proposed to cede Maestricht, and such towns of the generality as the king should choose, with a sum of six millions for the expenses of the war. Had such conditions been accepted, the possession of these towns, which laid open the United Provinces to invasion at any time, would have enabled France to hold them in entire subjection, and rendered their nationality and independence a mere name. Happily, however, the high-blown pride of Louis led him to reject them with derision, and to offer others too insulting for the States of Holland, even in their present dismay and degradation, to accept*. He demanded, that all prohibitions and duties lately imposed on articles imported from France, should be taken off; that the Catholics should enjoy the public exercise of their religion, and have

^f Sylvius, deel i., bl. 317—524, 378. Holl. Mer., bl. 85.

* It is said that Louis afterwards, when a great change had taken place in affairs, regretting on one occasion that he had not accepted the conditions offered, declared that the great and unexampled successes he had met with had turned his head. Le Clerc, tom. ii., p. 281. If he really had the courage and honesty to make such an avowal, it did him more credit than the conquest which so flattered his vanity.

1672 half the churches of the Provinces given up to them. In exchange for the three Provinces he had conquered, the king required all the territories of the generality except Sluys and Cadsand; also Nimeguen and its dependencies; the forts of Knodsenburg and Schenk, and all Guelderland to the left of the Rhine; the islands of Bommel and Voorne, with the forts of St. Andrew, Crevecœur, and Louvestein; Grave, and the county of Meurs; for the latter of which the Prince of Orange, to whom it belonged, should be indemnified by the States. The States were to pay twenty millions to the king for the expenses of the war; and "in acknowledgment of the peace he was pleased to grant them when he might so easily extend his conquests in their country," they were to send an extraordinary embassy every year to Paris, for the purpose of presenting to the king a medal of gold weighing a mark, and with an impression signifying that they were indebted to him for the preservation of that liberty which the assistance of his predecessors had enabled them to acquire. Ten days were allowed for the consideration of these terms, which, however, were unanimously rejected both by the States of Holland and the States-General.

The causes which combined to expose the United Provinces to these terrible disasters by land had, happily, no influence on their affairs by sea. The fleet, commanded by De Ruyter, an officer surpassed by none of any age or nation in ability and courage, and of devoted fidelity to the present government, had been increased to ninety-one ships and frigates of war, fifty-four fire-ships, and twenty-three yachts. That of the allies, commanded by the Duke of York, com-

† Holl. Mer., bl. 101. Sylvius, deel i., bl. 322. Res. van de St., Jul. 21.

prised, after the junction of the French squadron under 1672 the Count d'Etrées, 149 ships of war, besides smaller vessels. Sailing in quest of the enemy, De Ruyter discovered them lying in Solebay, evidently unprepared for his approach. On this occasion was felt the disadvantage of entrusting an officer with the chief command, without at the same time giving him sufficient authority to ensure its beneficial exercise. In consequence of the presence on board of Cornelius de Witt, the deputy of the States, De Ruyter, instead of ordering an immediate attack, was obliged to call a council of war, and thus gave the English time to arrange themselves in order of battle, which they did with astonishing celerity.

The Dutch advanced in three squadrons, nearly in a line with each other; the Admiral Bankert on the left to the attack of the French; Van Gend on the right, with the purpose of engaging the blue squadron commanded by Montague, earl of Sandwich; while De Ruyter in the middle directed his course towards the red flag of the English, and pointing with his finger to the Duke of York's vessel, said to his pilot, "There is our man." The pilot instantly steered the ship right down upon that of the duke, and a terrific broadside was returned with equal fury. After two hours' incessant firing, the English admiral retreated, his ship being so damaged that he was obliged to transfer his flag on board the London. At the same time Braakel (the captain who had so signaled himself in the enterprise at Chatham), with a vessel of 62 guns, attacked the Royal James, of 104 guns, the ship of the Earl of Sandwich, which he boarded and fired. Montague refusing to surrender, was drowned in the attempt to escape in a boat. On the other hand Van Gend, the admiral of the squadron

June
7th

1672 engaged with the earl's, was killed in the beginning of the action. The contest was maintained with the daring and steady valour characteristic of both nations, from seven in the morning until nightfall. The French had received instructions to keep aloof from the fight, and allow the two fleets to destroy each other; and these they took care to carry out to the full. Thus, the only assistance they afforded to the English was to prevent the Dutch squadron engaged in watching their movements from acting; an advantage more than counterbalanced by the discouragement their behaviour occasioned among their allies. Though both parties claimed the victory, it undoubtedly inclined in favour of the Dutch, who sustained a loss somewhat inferior to that of their antagonists, and had the satisfaction, moreover, of preventing a descent upon Zealand by the combined fleets, which was to have been the immediate consequence of a defeat. This was, however, attempted about a month after, when the disasters attending the arms of the States by land, having induced them to diminish the number of their ships, De Ruyter received commands to remain in the ports and avoid an engagement. The whole of the English fleet appeared in the Texel provided with small craft for the purpose of landing. But, by a singular coincidence, it happened that on the very day fixed for the attempt, the water continued, from some unknown cause, so low, as to render it impossible for the vessels to approach the shore, and to impress the people with the idea that the ebb of the tide lasted for the space of twelve hours. Immediately after, a violent storm arose, which drove the enemy entirely away from the coasts^b.

At the same time that the States had sent to

^b Holl. Mer., bl. 54. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 667—676, 697.

solicit peace from the French king, they had commis- 1672
sioned Boreel and others as ambassadors to the King
of England for the same purpose. But, on their
arrival, Charles, fearful of the effect their presence
might have on the nation, forbade them to come to
London, and detained them at Hampton Court in a
kind of honourable imprisonment. This reception,
and the entire subservience manifested by the king
and court to the interests of Louis, whose successes
they appeared to hail with as much gratification and
pride as though they had been their own, together
with the confidence with which it was evident that
Charles looked forward to the possession of Zealand,
gave them but small encouragement to hope for the
success of their mission. Their solicitations, however,
prevailed so far as to induce Charles to send over
Buckingham, Arlington, and Halifax to the French
king's camp at Zeist, without whose concurrence he
declared himself unable to treat with the States,—
though Louis had manifested no such deference with
regard to him. The appearance of the English ministers
at the Hague, on their way to Zeist, was looked upon
by the people as the sure forerunner of peace. They
were greeted on all sides with the most joyful accla-
mations, and cries of "God bless the King of England!
God bless the Prince of Orange! To the devil with
the States!" and it was believed that the first
tidings after their arrival at the camp would be that
the preliminaries were already in progress. But
instead of this, a fresh treaty, of no good omen to the
unfortunate republic, was concluded between France
and England; and the effect of their conferences was
soon apparent in the terms proposed by the English,
rivalling, if they did not equal, in haughtiness those of
the King of France. The demands now made were:

1672 that the whole fleet of the States should strike the flag and lower their topsails to any single vessel whatever bearing the flag of England, in all the British seas, even to the coast of Holland; that all subjects of the king accused of high treason, of publishing seditious libels, or otherwise conspiring against the peace of the kingdom, should be banished for ever from the United Provinces; that the States should indemnify the king for the expenses of the war to the amount of a million sterling, and pay 10,000*l.* annually for ever for the liberty of fishing on the coasts of Great Britain; that the English should have an equal share of the trade in the Indies; that the Prince of Orange and his descendants should possess either the sovereignty of the United Provinces, or the offices of stadtholder and captain-general in perpetuity, with all the advantages that any of his ancestors had ever enjoyed; and that the States should deliver Walcheren, Sluys, and the islands of Cadsand, Goeree, and Voorne, as a security for their performance of the treaty, which, however, was not to take effect until the King of France had received full satisfaction¹.

The internal condition of the United Provinces was at this time such as to incite the combined monarchs, no less than their own successes, to treat them with insolence and oppression. They beheld the inhabitants, instead of uniting with one generous sentiment of patriotism in a firm and strenuous defence of their fatherland, torn by dissensions, and turning against each other the rage which should have been directed against their enemies. The divisions in every province and town were daily becoming wider and more embittered. Though both parties had merited

¹ Holl. Mer., bl. 100, 103. Basnage, tom. ii., bl. 252. Sylvius, deel i., bl. 352.

an equal share of blame for the present miscarriages, 1672 the people imputed them exclusively to the government of De Witt and his adherents; who, they said, had betrayed and sold the country to France; and this accusation, to which their late pusillanimous counsels gave but too strong a colour of plausibility, the heads of the Orange party, though well aware of its untruth, diligently sustained and propagated. The ministers of the church, always influential and always on the alert, made the pulpits resound with declamations against the treachery and incapacity of the present government, as the cause of all the evils under which they groaned; and emphatically pointed to the elevation of the Prince of Orange to the dignities of his ancestors as the sole remedy now left them. To this measure De Witt and his brother were now regarded as the only obstacles; and, so perverted had the state of public feeling become, that the most atrocious crimes began to be looked upon as meritorious actions, provided only they tended to the desired object of removing these obnoxious ministers. On one occasion, the pensionary, having been employed at the chamber of the States to a late hour of the night, was returning home, attended by a single servant, according to his custom, when he was attacked by four assassins. He defended himself for a considerable time, till having received some severe wounds he fell, and his assailants decamped, leaving him for dead. One only, James van der Graaf, was arrested; the other three took refuge in the camp, where, though the States of Holland earnestly enjoined the Prince of Orange and the other generals to use diligent means for their discovery, they remained unmolested till the danger was passed. Van der Graaf was tried and condemned to death. The pensionary was strongly solicited by his friends to

1672 gratify the people by interceding for the pardon of the criminals; but he resolutely refused to adopt any such mode of gaining popularity. Impunity, he said, would but increase the number and boldness of such miscreants; nor would he attempt to appease the causeless hatred of the people against him, by an act which he considered would tend to endanger the life of every member of the government. The determination, however just, was imprudent. The criminal, an account of whose last moments was published by the minister who attended him, was regarded by the populace as a victim to the vengeance of De Witt, and a martyr to the good of his country. On the same day a similar attempt was made on the life of his brother, Cornelius De Witt, at Dordrecht, by a like number of assassins, who endeavoured to force their way into his house, but were prevented by the interference of a detachment of the burgher-guard^k. Cornelius had already, on his return from the fleet in consequence of impaired health, been greeted with the spectacle of his picture, which had given such umbrage to the King of England, cut into strips and stuck about the town, with the head hanging upon the gallows. These symptoms of tumult rapidly increased in violence. A mob assembling, with loud cries of "Oranje boven! de Witten onder!" (Long live the Prince of Orange! down with the De Witts!) surrounded the houses of the members of the council, whom they forced to send for the prince, and to pass an act, repealing the "Perpetual Edict," declaring him stadtholder, and releasing him from the oath he had taken not to accept that office while he was captain-general. Having been signed by all the other members of the council, this act was carried to the house of Cornelius de Witt, who

^k Res. van de St., Jun. 23. Sylvius, deel i., bl. 314—317.

was confined to his bed by sickness; the populace at 1672 the same time surrounding the house, and threatening him with death in case of refusal. He long resisted, observing, that he had had too many balls falling around him lately to fear death, which he would rather suffer than sign that paper; but the prayers and tears of his wife, and her threats, that if he delayed compliance she would throw herself and her children amongst the infuriated populace, in the end overcame his resolution. He added to his signature the letters V. C. (*vi coactus*), but the people, informed by a minister of their purport, obliged him to erase them. Similar commotions broke out at Rotterdam, Haarlem, Leyden, Amsterdam, and in other towns, both of Holland and Zealand, where the populace constrained the magistrates by menace and violence to the repeal of the Edict. Reluctant to have such a measure forced upon them by tumult and sedition, the States of Holland and Zealand now unanimously passed an act revoking the Perpetual Edict, and conferring on the Prince of Orange the dignity of stadtholder, captain and admiral-general of these Provinces. Friesland and Groningen had already a stadtholder in the person of William of Nassau, and the three remaining Provinces had now no States, as being subject to the enemy¹.

But this measure contributed little to appease the general disorders. The prince, indeed, issued a manifesto exculpating the municipal governments from the charge of treachery, but so ambiguously worded that it failed of producing any beneficial effect. He refused to promulgate an edict condemning the seditions in the towns, because, as he alleged, they were excited by the more considerable burghers, who were not to be

¹ Holl. Mer., bl. 89, et seq.

1672 coerced by decrees^m. The hatred of the people against the De Witts, far from being appeased by the overthrow of that party and the elevation of their own idol, appeared hourly to increase in virulence. Accusations, the most absurd and improbable, were industriously spread and received greedily. Besides the reiterated assertions that they had betrayed and sold their country to France, John De Witt was said to have embezzled a portion of the public funds set apart for maintaining foreign correspondence, although the mediocrity of his circumstances and the frugality of his habits were matters of public notoriety; and he proved, by the declarations of all the members of the Council of State, that not the smallest sum had even so much as passed through his hands. It was affirmed of Cornelius De Witt that he had been obliged to quit the fleet, not on account of sickness, as was reported, but in consequence of a wound he had received in a quarrel with De Ruyter; that he had refused to fight the French fleet, and had prevented the renewal of the engagement on the morning after the battle of Solebay. It was in vain that De Ruyter himself bore the most ample testimony to the cordial and uninterrupted friendship between them, and to the gallant behaviour of the deputy in that, as well as every other action in which he had borne a part; the populace refused to believe any evidence in his favour. Such was the state of fury to which they were excited, that at Amsterdam the house even of De Ruyter, who might justly be considered as the saviour of his country, and against whom his bitterest enemy could bring no other accusation than that of his attachment to the De Witts, was surrounded by a mob, and only rescued from pillage by the firmness and courage of a captain

^m Sylvius, deel i., bl. 358. Res. van de St., Jul. 12.

of the burgher-guard. De Ruyter subsequently found 1672 it necessary to apply to the Prince of Orange for a safeguard for the protection of his family^a.

Abandoning the hope of ridding themselves of the illustrious brothers by the method of assassination since the failure of the late attempts, their enemies were obliged to devise other means of effecting their ruin. One Tichelaar, a barber-surgeon, was now suborned to accuse Cornelius De Witt of offering bribes to induce him to put an end to the life of the Prince of Orange either by steel or poison. It happened that the whole conference in which he affirmed that this design was opened to him, and which was of only a quarter of an hour's duration, was overheard both by the servant and son of the bailiff, whom his wife, suspicious of an attempt similar to that which had been made to assassinate him shortly before, had, on the entrance of Tichelaar, stationed at the door of the room into which he was admitted. According to their evidence Tichelaar offered to confide some secret matter to the bailiff, when the latter replied, that if it were anything good he would willingly assist him, but if otherwise, he should be obliged to publish it. This, both the son and the servant repeated immediately to the other members of the family, and De Witt himself communicated the particulars of the interview to the secretary of the municipal court of Dordrecht. Though the accuser was a man of notoriously infamous character, and had been punished for some crime by the judicial tribunal of Putten, of which Cornelius De Witt was bailiff, his assertion was deemed sufficient to outweigh the strong and unexceptionable testimony on the other side. The bailiff was cited to appear before

^a Brief van de Ruyter im Leeven, bl. 718. Holl. Mer., bl. 112. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 744.

1672 the court of Holland, and arrested by its authority, in violation of his privileges as a citizen of Dordrecht. Unhappily, upon his trial he lost his presence of mind, and when confronted with his accuser denied ever having seen him^o; a course which gave his judges either a suspicion of his guilt or a pretext for affecting to believe in it. He was accordingly condemned to the torture, which was applied in its utmost severity. But he sustained his agonies with unshaken constancy, steadily refusing to make the slightest admission of guilt. "Though you should cut me in pieces," he answered to the exhortations addressed to him by his judges, "I cannot confess a crime, of which I had not even formed an idea. You yourselves well know that I am innocent." During the most excruciating sufferings he was still able to find consolation in the strength of a mind imbued with noble sentiments; and his richly fraught memory suggested to him the words of the poet so applicable to his present situation:

Justum et tenacem propositi virum
 Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
 Non vultus instantis tyranni
 Mente quatit solida, &c.—Hor. *Carm.*, Lib. iii., Ode 3.

Unable to prove his guilt, and not daring to provoke the anger of the populace by his acquittal, the judges adopted a middle course, more abhorrent, perhaps, to the principles of justice than if they had awarded him the punishment due to the offence on insufficient evidence. They condemned him to be deprived of all his offices, and banished for ever from the Province, and to pay all the costs of the suit, without any mention in the act of condemnation of the crime for which he was to suffer^p.

^o Basnage, tom. ii., p. 303.

^p Res. van de St., Jul. 29. Brief van de Witt im Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 716. Sylvius, deel i., bl. 397.

On the imprisonment of his brother, John De Witt 1672 had resigned the office he had filled so many years with credit to himself and advantage to his country. But neither the degradation of the one, nor the unjust severity exercised against the other, could satisfy foes who thirsted for their blood. From the time of the arrest of Cornelius De Witt, immense crowds had daily assembled before the doors of the prison at the Hague, threatening death to all concerned if he were permitted to escape. Within a few hours after the delivery of the sentence of the court, a person of distinction, whose name is not mentioned by historians, came to the keeper of the gaol where Cornelius De Witt was confined, ^{Aug. 22nd} desiring him to contrive a meeting between the brothers. In obedience to this mandate, the gaoler sent his servant to inform De Witt that his brother was acquitted, and that he earnestly desired to see him. His friends, fearful of some treachery, besought him to pause and inquire into the truth of the summons before he obeyed it; and his only daughter threw herself at his feet, and implored him with floods of tears not to risk unnecessarily a life so precious. But his anxiety for his brother, with whom he had ever lived on terms of the tenderest affection, proved stronger than their remonstrances; and setting out on foot*, attended by his servant and two secretaries, he hastened to the prison. On seeing him, Cornelius De Witt exclaimed in astonishment, "My brother, what do you here?" "Did you not then send for me?" he asked; and, receiving an answer in the negative, "Then," rejoined he, "we are lost."

* Sir William Temple mentions (vol. ii., p. 257) that John De Witt had gone to the prison in a coach and four to fetch away his brother, as if he had, by this appearance of defiance, in some measure provoked his fate; but he merely desired that a carriage should follow in order to bring him home, because he was too much enfeebled by his late sufferings to walk.

1672 During this time one of the judges sent for Tichelaar, and suggested to him that he should incite the people not to suffer a villain who had intended to murder the prince to go unpunished. True to his instructions, the miscreant spread among the crowd collected before the prison doors the report, that the torture inflicted on Cornelius De Witt was a mere pretence, and that he had only escaped the death he deserved because the judges favoured his crime. Then, entering the gaol, he presented himself at the window, and exclaimed to the crowd below, "The dog and his brother are going out of prison! Now is your time; revenge yourselves on these two knaves, and then on thirty more, their accomplices!" The populace received his address with shouts and cries of "To arms, to arms! Treason, treason!" and pressed in a still denser crowd towards the prison door. The States of Holland, immediately on information of the tumult, sent three troops of cavalry, in garrison at the Hague, for the protection of the gaol, and called out to arms six companies of burgher guards. But in the latter they only added fresh hosts to the enemies of the unfortunate captives. One company in especial, called the "Company of the blue flag," was animated with a spirit of deadly vengeance against them; its leader, Verhoef, having that morning loaded his musket with a determination either to kill the De Witts or perish in the attempt. They pressed forward towards the prison, but were driven back by the determined appearance of the cavalry, commanded by the Count de Tilly. So long as these troops remained, it was evident that the fell purpose of the rioters was impracticable. Accordingly, a report was raised that a band of peasants and sailors was coming to plunder the Hague; and two captains of the burgher guards took occasion from thence to demand of the Council

of State, that the soldiers should be drawn off from 1672 their station, in order to protect the houses from pillage. First a verbal order, and on Tilly's refusing obedience to such, a written one, was sent, commanding him to divide his troops into four detachments, and post them upon the bridges leading into the town. "I shall obey," said he, as he perused the mandate; "but it is the death-warrant of the brothers." His anticipations were too soon realized. No sooner had he departed than the rioters were supplied by some of those mysterious agents who were actively employed throughout the whole of these transactions, with wine, brandy, and other incitements to inflame their already maddening fury. Led on by Verhoef and one Van Bankhem, a sheriff of the Hague, they assailed the prison door with axes and sledge-hammers, threatening to kill all the inmates if it were not instantly opened. Terrified, or corrupted, the gaoler obeyed their behests. On gaining admittance they rushed to an upper room, where they found their victims, who had throughout the whole of the tumult maintained the greatest composure. The bailiff, reduced to a state of extreme debility by the torture, was reclining on his bed; his brother was seated near him, reading the Bible. They forced them to rise and follow them "to the place," as they said, "where criminals were executed." Having taken a tender leave of each other, they began to descend the stairs, Cornelius De Witt leaning on his brother for support. They had not advanced above two or three paces when a heavy blow on the head from behind precipitated the former to the bottom. He was then dragged a short distance towards the street, trampled under foot, and beaten to death. Meanwhile, John De Witt, after receiving a severe wound on the head with the butt-end of a musket, was brought by

1672 Verhoef, bleeding and bare-headed, before the furious multitude. One Van Soenen immediately thrust a pike into his face, while another of the miscreants shot him in the neck, exclaiming as he fell, "There goes down the Perpetual Edict." Raising himself on his knees, the sufferer lifted up his hands and eyes to heaven in deep and earnest prayer. At that moment, one Verhagen struck him with his musket. Hundreds followed his example, and the cruel massacre was completed. Barbarities too dreadful for utterance or contemplation, all that phrenzied passion or brutal ferocity could suggest, were perpetrated on the bodies of these noble and virtuous citizens; nor was it till night put an end to the butchery, that their friends were permitted to convey their mangled remains to a secret and obscure tomb⁹.

Thus closed the last scene of this terrific tragedy; a scene viewed by the historian and philosopher with no less of astonishment than horror; and which, as Sir William Temple quaintly observes, is "so unlike the appearance of the customs and dispositions of the people, living under the laws and orders of a settled state, that one must confess mankind to be a very various creature, and none to be known that has not been seen in his rage as well as his drink^r." But the utmost waywardness of human nature will scarcely account for the phenomenon of a people, usually quiet and humane, and whose gratitude and attachment to their rulers was the primary cause of their present discontents, being suddenly transported to such an excess of rage as to imbrue their hands in the blood of the best and wisest of their statesmen, with circumstances of atrocity more befitting a horde of savages than a

⁹ Vad. Hist., deel xiii., bl. 158, et seq. Holl. Mer., bl. 138.

^r Obs. on the Un. Prov., p. 168.

civilized nation. Somewhat may perhaps be urged in 1672 excuse for a populace whose passions, while smarting under supposed wrongs, indignant at the suspicion of treachery, and oppressed by calamities they feel to be undeserved, are easily lashed into madness; but fearful are the crimes they have to answer for, who, for their own selfish purposes, will instigate a deluded multitude by calumnies, of which they well know the falsehood, to deeds of violence which themselves have the will, but not the courage, to execute. The parasites of the Prince of Orange, they were, who, angry at being kept out of power by the De Witt party, and greedy of the profits and honours which had of late been shared solely by their opponents, were the inciters and fomenters of this revolting sedition. Whether or not the prince himself were guilty of a participation or cognizance of their acts, history has involved in an impenetrable veil of obscurity. But it requires more than the expressions of abhorrence with which he ever afterwards spoke of the massacre of the De Witts^s, to exculpate him from the imputation of, at least, the extreme of injudiciousness and imprudence; defects of which he never, before or after, betrayed the smallest symptom. At any period after the arrest of Cornelius De Witt, when the populace, fearful of his escape, constantly surrounded his prison, a proclamation from the prince would at once have sufficed to still the tumult; or had he complied with the earnest request of the States in sending some troops and a special guard for the safe-keeping of the bailiff's person^t, the people would have been satisfied, and the fate of the unhappy prisoner averted. Again, when the States of Holland besought him to lend his aid to discover and punish the authors

^s Burnet's Hist. of own Times, vol. i., p. 326.

^t Res. van de St., Aug. 20.

1672 of this "detestable crime," he replied that the number and quality of the guilty rendered all pursuit dangerous; and, shortly after, prevailed with them to grant an amnesty in the most ample terms to both principals and accessories in the murder^u. Nor was this all; honours and rewards awaited every one of those who had rendered themselves conspicuous in the transactions of that eventful day. But the hand of retribution was heavy on them. They found that when the angry passions of the people had subsided, their association was shunned by all men with contempt and aversion. Verhoef was some time after condemned for his crimes by the tribunal of Rhymland to be publicly whipped, and imprisoned for the remainder of his life; and the manes of the De Witts were avenged, when the unhappy miscreant, writhing under the lash of the executioner, heard the murmurs of the immense multitude around the scaffold applauding the justice of his sentence. Some squandering away their ill-gotten wealth, sank into the grave in loathsome poverty and disease; others, unable to stop in their career of iniquity, terminated their sinful lives immured in dungeons; Tichelaar himself, during the life of the Prince of Orange, enjoyed a liberal pension "for the services he had done the state;" of which, being deprived after his death, he was reduced to beggary, and lived to an extreme old age, preserved only by alms from perishing of starvation, and a prey to the bitterest remorse for having been, as he confessed, the cause of the murder of two innocent men^v.

^u Res. van de St., Sept. 27.

^v Vad. Hist., deel xiv., bl. 54.

CHAPTER IX.

Municipal governments of Holland changed. Stadtholder rejects the conditions of peace offered by France and England. State of defence of Holland. Capture of Zwammerdam and Bodegrave. The Elector of Brandenburg and the Emperor make alliance with the States. Speech of the Chancellor Shaftesbury to the English Parliament. Naval battle near Schooneveldt. Aversion of the English nation to the war. Sea-fight in the Texel. Maastricht taken by the French. Confederacy between the Emperor and States, and defensive alliance with Denmark. Spain declares war against the King of France. Naarden, Rhynbach, Nuys, and Bonn recovered by the allies. The French abandon the United Provinces. The Parliament of England forces the King to make peace with Holland. Peace with Munster and Cologne. Stadtholderate declared hereditary. Restoration of Utrecht, Guelderland, and Overijssel to the Union. Battle of Seneffe. Grave and Huy recovered. The King of England endeavours to procure a peace. Title of Duke of Guelderland offered to the Stadtholder. Efforts towards an accommodation fruitless. Campaign of 1675. Condé and Bouchain taken by the French. De Ruyter sent to the Mediterranean with an insufficient force. Battle of Stromboli, and death of De Ruyter. His character. Disputes between the Cocceians and Voetians. Stadtholder deposes the government of Middleburgh. Valenciennes and Cambray captured. Unsuccessful attempt upon Charleroi. Dispositions of the Belligerents towards peace. Conferences opened at Nimeguen. Marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess Mary of England. Treaty between England and the States. Ghent and Ypres taken by the French. Conditions offered by the King of France, accepted by the States. Skilful artifice of the French Ambassadors. Vacillating policy of England. Peace concluded at Nimeguen. Engagement at St. Denis. Death of Vondel.

IMMEDIATELY upon the death of De Witt, the 1672 Dutch, as though weary of the freedom for which he had so long maintained a painful and adverse struggle—as though that were associated with him in the sad history of their national misfortunes, proceeded with reckless eagerness to sacrifice it to the idol of the day,

1672 and raise upon its ruins the triumphs won by the Orange party in their fratricidal contests. The States of Holland, on the recommendation of the new pensionary, Gaspar Fagel, formerly one of the most strenuous advocates for the Perpetual Edict, but who of late years had espoused with equal zeal the interests of the Prince of Orange, passed a resolution that the Stadtholder should be commissioned to endeavour to restore confidence between the people and the magistrates, by admonishing the former to peace, or convincing them of the unreasonableness of their discontent; but if that were found impossible, either to induce the magistrates to resign, or to displace them, though without prejudice to the privileges of the towns in future, or to the character of those who were removed^a. That the municipal governments, filled chiefly with the partisans of De Witt, had in numerous instances incurred the hatred and suspicion of the people, was but too well evinced by the excesses in which they indulged; but it was equally certain that had the heads of the Orange party forborne to administer constant food for irritation, or the prince firmly declared his conviction of the untruth of the reports disseminated against them, the former injunction of the States might have been easily fulfilled, and the alternative they proposed, which was ever attended with a violent shock to the constitution, have been avoided. It was scarcely to be expected, however, that the prince, by the adoption of the more conciliatory course, would throw aside the fair opportunity which the States had thus afforded him of extending his influence in the municipal governments; the only quarter whence he had to expect any opposition to the ambitious projects he had long since begun to cherish.

^a Res. van de St., Aug. 26 and 27.

The members of the Councils were displaced in nearly 1672 all the towns of Holland, as well as in those of Zeeland, where they had shown themselves favourable to the Louvestein party; and others substituted, whose chief qualification was subservience to the interests of the house of Orange. From this time the authority of William became almost uncontrolled in the United Provinces. Most of the leaders of the Louvestein party, either convinced of the necessity of his elevation to power in the present emergency, or unwilling to encounter the vexation of a fruitless opposition, acquiesced in the present state of things; many were afterwards employed by him, and distinguished themselves by fidelity and zeal in his service. The constant co-operation, and participation in his views also of the pensionary Fagel, gave him an advantage which none of his predecessors had ever enjoyed; the influence of the pensionaries of Holland having hitherto been always opposed, and forming a counterpoise, to that of the Stadtholder*.

Unquestionably the Dutch, while thus parting with their liberties, reaped in some degree the benefits unusually attendant on such a sacrifice, in the increased firmness and activity of a government conducted by a sole responsible head. At the time of the embassy of Peter de Groot to solicit peace from the King of France, the prince had so far partaken of the general dejection, as to ask permission of the States to nominate a deputy to treat of his particular interests^b; but no sooner was he created Stadtholder than he began to adopt bolder and more spirited resolutions, for the safety of a country to which he

^b Res. van de St., Jun. 28.

* Vid. Note B. at the end of the Volume.

1672 felt himself attached by new and stronger ties. Being invited by the Assembly of the States to give his opinion on the terms offered by the allied monarchs, he declared, that their acceptance would entail upon them certain ruin, and that the very listening to such was pernicious in the highest degree to affairs, as tending to disunite and dispirit the people. He encouraged them to hope for speedy assistance from his allies; pointed out the resources which yet existed for the support of the war; and persuaded them rather to resolve, if they were driven to extremity, to embark on board their vessels and found a new nation in the East Indies, than accept the conditions. At the same time he spurned with indignation the flattering proposals made him both by the Kings of France and England; for—so singularly are men appointed to work out their own destiny—these monarchs now vied with each other, and were in fact principally instrumental in exalting the power and dignity of a prince, who, ere long, was to hurl the brother of the one from the throne of his ancestors, and prepare for the other an old age of vexation and disgrace, if not to lay the first foundation of the ruin of his kingdom in the next century.

Louis, upon the appointment of the prince to the office of Stadtholder, was liberal in offers of honour and advantages to his person and family, and among the rest was one which he considered could scarcely fail of its effect; that, namely, of making him sovereign of the Provinces under the protection of France and England. William, however, was found wholly immoveable on this point, declaring that he would rather retire to his lands in Germany, and spend his life in hunting, than sell his country and liberty to France. Nor were the dispiriting representations made by

the English ambassadors, that Holland was utterly lost 1672 unless he consented to the terms proposed, at all more influential; "I have thought of a means," he replied, "to avoid beholding the ruin of my country—to die in the last ditch."

Neither indeed was the state of the country, though sufficiently deplorable, such as to leave him no choice but to become the vassal of her haughty enemies. The progress of the invader in Holland was effectually arrested by the state of defence into which that province had been put. Imitating the noble example set them by Amsterdam, the other towns readily opened the sluices of the Lek, Meuse, Yssel, and Vecht, inundating by that means the whole of the intervening tracts of land; while the army was stationed at the five principal posts of the province; Prince Maurice John being placed at Muyden and Weesp; Field-Marshal Wurtz at Goreum; the Count of Hoorn at the Goejanverwellen Sluys; another detachment occupied Woerden; and the prince himself took up his head-quarters at Bodegrave and Nieuwerbrug. At length, finding his army increased by the addition of subsidies from Spain to 24,000 men, William determined to infuse new vigour into the public mind by the commencement of offensive hostilities. He first formed the design of surprising Naarden and Woerden, both which attempts, however, proved unsuccessful. He then marched towards Maestricht, captured and demolished the fort of Valckenburg, by which that town was straitened, and, with the view of diverting the force of the enemy by carrying the war into his own territory, advanced to the siege of Charleroi. But the middle of winter having already arrived before he commenced the enterprise, he was soon after compelled, by the severity of the weather, to abandon

1672 it and retire to Holland, which, during his absence, had, from the same cause, been exposed to imminent danger^c.

The Duke of Luxemburg, who had been left in command of the forces in Utrecht on the departure of the King of France for Paris, finding that the ice with which the land-water was covered, was sufficiently strong to bear the passage of cavalry, marched with a strong body of troops to Zwammerdam, and thence to Bodegrave, both of which were abandoned. The purpose of the French commander was to advance directly upon the Hague, and to force the States to acknowledge the sovereignty of the King of France; a measure which would, he conceived, involve the immediate submission of the whole of the Provinces. But, happily, his project was defeated by a sudden thaw, which obliged him to return to Utrecht; and had it not been that the fort of Nieuwerbrug, situated on the dyke which afforded the only passage thither, was deserted by the commander, Pain-et-Vin, his retreat must have been cut off, and his army exposed to almost certain destruction. Before his departure, Luxemburg revenged himself on the luckless villages he had captured, which he pillaged and burnt to the ground*. Pain-et-Vin was afterwards tried for breach of duty, and executed^d.

^c Holl. Mer., bl. 80, 188, 207, 208. ^d Holl. Mer., bl. 217—221.

* The accounts given by the Dutch historians of the revolting outrages and barbarities exercised by the invaders on this expedition, are strenuously denied by the writers on the French side; their conduct in Utrecht, however, which we shall have occasion hereafter to notice, affords but too ample evidence that there was some truth in the accusations. On the other hand, that the Dutch authors are guilty of exaggeration may be easily believed, since one of them gravely puts into the mouth of the Duke of Luxemburg the following address to his soldiers:—"Go, my children, plunder, murder, destroy, and if it be possible to commit yet greater cruelties; be not negligent therein, that I may see I am not deceived in my choice of the flower of the king's troops." Sylvius, deel i., bl. 502.

Though it might well have been feared that the 1672 failure of all the enterprises of the Prince of Orange would have renewed the discontents lately prevalent in the United Provinces, such an effect was in no degree produced. The very boldness of the designs, it seemed, had been the cause of their ill success, and argued a zeal and activity for the public good which inspired unbounded confidence in his future measures. The appearance of renovated vigour in the United Provinces, moreover, encouraged surrounding states to make some demonstrations in their favour. They had wished to see them humbled, but not destroyed. The Emperor and Princes of Germany, in especial, contemplated with dread the prospect of exchanging the neighbourhood of the inoffensive and industrious people, who rarely appeared to them in any other light than as the dispensers of abundance, wealth, and luxury, for that of an ambitious and unscrupulous monarch, whose glory was in destruction, and from whose encroachments their boundaries would be for not one moment safe. Though deeply imbued with these sentiments, the Elector of Brandenburg had hitherto been deterred from lending them any assistance, lest, should they be forced to make a peace with the King of France, the whole power and vengeance of that monarch might be directed against himself. He now induced the Emperor Leopold to enter into an alliance with him, by virtue of which he levied a force of 24,000 men, to be joined with an equal number furnished by himself, for the purpose of opposing the advances of Louis. Though the secret treaty which the emperor had made with France, binding himself not to afford aid to any member of the triple alliance, and of which the elector was in ignorance, limited the employment of the imperial army strictly to the protection of the

1672 empire, and consequently prevented it from marching at once to the support of the Provinces, its movement was of considerable advantage to their affairs, in 1673 calling off Turenne from Bois-le-Duc, to which he had laid siege, to the defence of the places on the Rhine. The Bishops of Munster and Cologne, also, whom the brave defence of the garrison of Groningen had forced to raise the siege, were under the necessity of abandoning both that province and Guelderland, and hastening to the protection of their own territories^e.

Among the benefits which the Dutch anticipated with the utmost confidence as the consequence of the elevation of the Prince of Orange to his paternal dignities, was the appeasing the hostility of his uncle, the King of England. In this, however, they were wholly deceived. On the meeting of parliament in this year, the Chancellor Shaftesbury addressed the two houses in a strain of hostile feeling to the Dutch nation, more bitter than the court had as yet ventured to express. He represented that, "besides the personal indignities in the way of pictures, medals, and other public affronts which the king received from the States, they came at last to such a height of insolence as to deny him the honour of the flag, though an undoubted jewel of the crown, and disputed the king's title to it in all the courts of Europe, making great offers to the French king if he would stand by them in this particular. But both kings, knowing their own interest, resolved to join against them, who were the common enemies of all monarchies, but especially of the English, their only competitor in commerce and naval power, and the chief obstacle to their attainment of the dominion they aimed at; a dominion as universal as that of Rome; and so intoxicated were they with that vast ambition, that under all their pre-

^e Holl. Mer., bl. 209.

sent distress and danger they haughtily rejected every 1673 overture for a treaty or a cessation of arms; that the war was a just and necessary measure, advised by the parliament itself from the conviction that, at any rate, *Delenda est Carthago*,—such a government must be destroyed; and that therefore the king may well say it was their war; which had never been begun, but that the States refused him satisfaction because they believed him to be in so great want of money that he must sit down under any affronts^f.” But the parliament, always disinclined to the war, had now begun to view it with absolute aversion; and though moved, by the king’s representations of the embarrassed condition he should be reduced to if the supply were refused, to yield a subsidy of 70,000*l.* a-month for eighteen months, they forced him to pay a high price for their complaisance by extorting his consent to the “Test Act^g.” By the operation of this act, the Duke of York, the inveterate enemy of the Dutch, and Sir Thomas Clifford, the minister who had the most zealously pushed forward the business of the war, were forced to resign their offices. With the funds granted him by parliament, Charles was enabled to complete the equipment of a fleet, which, when joined to a squadron of French ships under D’Estrées, numbered 150 sail.

The Prince of Orange had wisely continued De Ruyter in the command of the fleet as lieutenant-admiral of the Provinces, with almost unlimited instructions, and suffered himself to be wholly guided by him in naval affairs, interfering only so far as to reinstate Tromp in the office of admiral under the college of Amsterdam, and to effect a perfect reconciliation between him and De Ruyter,—a matter which the placable and magnanimous temper of the latter

^f Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 504.

^g Idem, col. 516.

1673 rendered of easy accomplishment. Having failed in a scheme of blocking up the Thames by means of sinking vessels in the bed of that river, De Ruyter stationed himself at Schooneveldt, with the purpose of protecting the coast of Zealand against a meditated descent of the enemy. While at anchor, he descried the hostile fleet approaching; but a calm, succeeded by rough weather, prevented them for some days from coming to an engagement. The Dutch were considerably inferior in strength to the allies, the number of their vessels being no more than fifty-two men-of-war, and twelve frigates, of which, moreover, the equipages were, owing to the scarcity of seamen, by no means complete. But this deficiency was more than compensated by the spirit and conduct of their great commander. "The weaker our fleet is," observed De Ruyter, in answer to some remark made to him on the subject, "the more confidently I expect a victory, not from our own strength, but from the arm of the Almighty^b." Under a favourable breeze, the French and English ships bore down upon their unequal antagonists, in the full expectation that they would avoid the encounter, by retiring behind the sand-banks of Flushing. The Dutch, however, firmly awaited the shock, commenced by the squadron of French ships which on this occasion had been placed in the van, to avoid the imputation cast upon them in the last battle. They engaged with that of Tromp, whose impetuous firing compelled the French admiral to retire for a time; but quickly rallying, he returned to the charge with such vigour, that Tromp was obliged to remove his flag on four different vessels successively. De Ruyter, meanwhile, had engaged the red squadron, commanded by Prince Rupert, which, after a sharp

June
7th

^b Res van de St. Aug. 4. Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 799.

contest, he threw into some disorder, and succeeded in 1673 cutting off a considerable number of ships from the remainder. Instead, however, of pursuing his advantage, De Ruyter, becoming aware of the danger of his rival, who was now entirely surrounded by the enemy, hastened to his rescue. On seeing him approach, Tromp exclaimed, "Comrades, here is our grandsire (a pet name given to De Ruyter among the sailors,) coming to help us; so long as I live I will never forsake him!" The generous aid was no less effectual than well-timed; since the enemy, astonished at his unexpected appearance, fell back. "I am pleased to see," he said, "that our enemies still fear the Seven Provinces," the name of the vessel which carried his flag. The fight was continued with unremitting obstinacy till darkness separated the combatants, when the Dutch found that they had gained about three miles upon their antagonists¹.

That the issue of such a contest should be doubtful was, in itself, equivalent to a victory on the side of the Dutch; a victory, of which they reaped all the advantages, as well as the glory, since, besides delivering their coasts from the intended invasion, their loss was so inconsiderable, that within a week the fleet was able to put to sea in its original numbers and strength. Another engagement, fought with less of June energy and resolution on the side of the English than 14th usually distinguished them, terminated in their retreat towards the Thames, which De Ruyter conceiving to be a feint to draw the Dutch fleet off their coasts, he declined the pursuit. The movement, however, had its origin in a far different cause. The English sailors fully participated in the feelings entertained by

¹ Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 801.

¹ Holl. Mer., bl. 82, et seq. Brieven van de Ruyter, en Tromp.

1673 the great body of the nation, who viewed the aggrandizement of their ally with jealousy, and the undeserved misfortunes of their enemy with pity, and considered every advantage gained over the Dutch as a step towards the completion of the sinister designs they suspected their own sovereign of harbouring against their religion and liberties. They accordingly made no concealment of their reluctance to fight longer in such a quarrel. It was now become evident to the government, that the only mode of reconciling the people in any degree to the present state of things, was the execution of some brilliant achievement, which should flatter their national vanity and kindle their ambition, or lead to the acquisition of spoil sufficiently considerable to afford some sensible assistance in supporting the war. A descent on Holland was therefore resolved on, or, if that were found impracticable, it was proposed to intercept the Indian fleet, whose arrival was hourly expected. With this view, a formidable fleet of 150 sail made its appearance in the Texel, and was met by De Ruyter about five miles from the village of the Helder. The Dutch, though far inferior in number, having only 75 vessels, convinced that this struggle was to be the most desperate and the last, prepared themselves for it as men who had everything at stake. After a short but inspiring harangue, De Ruyter gave the signal for attack. As if with a presentiment that long years would elapse before they should again try the strength of each other's arm, the English and Dutch seemed mutually determined to leave upon the minds of their foes an ineffaceable impression of their skill and prowess. All the resources which ability could suggest, or valour execute, were now employed. Each admiral engaged with the antagonist against whom it had before been

Aug.
21st

his fortune to contend. De Ruyter attached himself 1673 to the squadron of Prince Rupert. Tromp attacked Sprague, who commanded the blue flag, while Bankert was opposed to the French; the latter, however, after a short skirmish on the part of Rear-Admiral Martel, who was unacquainted with the secret orders given to the commander, D'Estrées, dropped off to a distance; nor could all the signals made by Prince Rupert induce them to take any further share in the fight. Bankert therefore joined De Ruyter, who was engaged in a terrific contest with the squadron of Prince Rupert. The firing was kept up for several hours without cessation; the discharges from the cannon of the Dutch vessels being, it was said, as rapid as those of musketry, and in the proportion of three to one to those of the enemy. Tromp, whose actions always reflected more honour on his courage than conduct, separated himself, as was his custom, from the remainder of the fleet, and pressed forward into the midst of the enemy. He had sustained a continued cannonading from the vessel of Sprague for upwards of three hours, without a single one of his crew being wounded, when De Ruyter, who had forced Prince Rupert to retire, came to his assistance. The prince, on the other side, joined Admiral Sprague, and the fight was renewed with increased ardour. The vessel of Tromp was so damaged, that he was obliged to remove his flag on board of another; Sprague was reduced to a similar necessity of quitting his ship, the Royal Prince, for the St. George, which, ere long, was so much disabled, that he was obliged to proceed to a third; but the boat in which he was passing being struck by a cannon-ball, sank, and himself and several others were drowned. Towards the close of evening one English man-of-war was on fire, and two foundered. Not a single ship-of-

1673 war was lost on the side of the Dutch, but both fleets were so much damaged, as to be unable to renew the engagement on the next morning. Each side, as usual, returned thanks for the victory, to which, however, the English failed to establish their claim, either by accomplishing the projected invasion, or intercepting the East India fleet, the whole of which, except one vessel, reached the ports in safety. In the more distant quarters of the world the war was carried on with various success. The French captured the ports of Trincomalee, in Ceylon, and St. Thomas, on the coast of Coromandel, (which were, however, recovered in the next year,) and made an unsuccessful attempt on Curacao. The English possessed themselves of the island of Tobago, and seized four merchant-men returning from India. But on the other hand, the States' admiral, Evertson, made himself master of New York, and, attacking the Newfoundland ships, took or destroyed no less than sixty-five, and returned to Holland laden with booty^k.

The King of France, meanwhile, well satisfied to have secured, at so easy a rate, a powerful diversion of the forces of Holland, and the mutual enfeebling of the two most formidable maritime powers of Europe, cared little how the affairs of his ally prospered, so that he had been enabled to pursue the career of his conquests on land. Marching in person at the head of his troops, he laid siege to Maestricht, a town famous for its gallant defence against the Duke of Parma in 1579, but which now, notwithstanding several brisk and murderous sallies, capitulated in less than a month^l. With this achievement, the campaign of

^k Holl. Mer., 88—91; Leeven van de Ruyter, 857—862; Sylvius, deel. i., bl. 583—660.

^l I have touched upon the events of the campaigns of this period, and even those of the ensuing years achieved by the Duke of Marl-

Louis ended. The progress of his arms, and the 1673 development of his schemes of ambition, had now raised him up a phalanx of enemies, such as not even his presumption could venture to despise. In the preceding winter, the King of Sweden, anxious to terminate a war that threatened to spread through the greater portion of Europe, had offered his mediation, which was accepted by all the belligerents, and Cologne fixed upon as the place of conference. But the partiality of the mediating power, who since the rupture of the triple alliance had been in the constant receipt of a stipend from France, soon became evident in the proposal of such terms as would have rendered the allies masters of the liberty, and even the very existence, of the United Provinces. Nevertheless, the conditions, however exorbitant, had failed to satisfy the King of France, who seized upon the pretext of the arrest by the Emperor of the Prince of Furstemburg, one of the most active agents in involving the princes of the Rhenish circles in the French alliance, for breaking up the conferences, after they had been prolonged till the following year. The invasion of the territories of the Elector of Brandenburg by Turenne, had obliged that prince to conclude a separate peace with France; an event, however, that instead of deterring the Emperor from continuing to take an active part in favour of the Provinces, had rather the effect of convincing him how nearly the

borough, with extreme brevity, because, the two parties being so nearly equal in strength no occasion is afforded for the display of any remarkable effort of patriotic devotion or heroism; and, not exhibiting any marked traits of national character, they can be interesting, except as regards their results, only in a point of view strictly military; and to this effect would require a circumstantiality of detail far exceeding the limits of the present work, and an extent of knowledge of military affairs to which (for a very sufficient reason) I cannot pretend.

1673 danger approached his own person. He now entered into a confederacy immediately with the States, engaging to support them with an army of 30,000 men. A defensive alliance was likewise formed with Denmark; and Spain was at length induced to make a strenuous effort to preserve the Netherlands,—the loss of which must have been the inevitable result of the conquest of the United Provinces,—by declaring war against France in concert with the States^m.

While the Imperial army was on its march from Egra towards the Rhine, the Prince of Orange secured the frontier of Holland by the recovery of Naarden. Then, marching to Herenthals, he united his forces with those assembled by the Count of Monterei, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and made himself master of Rhynbach. After the junction of the Imperial general, Montecuculi, who had captured Nuys and some other towns of Cologne, on his march, the allied forces sat down before Bonn, which, surrendering on the fourth day, secured a passage for troops and supplies from the empire to the Netherlandsⁿ.

The King of France had planned and executed his conquests in full reliance on the co-operation or neutrality of the neighbouring powers, and found himself in no condition to retain them in defiance of their actual hostility. He had, from the first, been strongly advised by Condé and Turenne to destroy the fortifications of the less important towns, retaining so many only of the larger as to ensure the subjection of the Provinces. He had, however, deemed it more consonant to his "glory," to follow the advice of Louvois in preserving all his conquests entire, and had thus been

^m Holl. Mer., bl. 94, 178, 215, A. D. 1674, bl. 85. Sylvius, deel i., bl. 632.

ⁿ Holl. Mer., bl. 172, 199, 233—236.

obliged to disperse a large portion of his army into 1673 garrisons, leaving the remainder, thinned moreover by sickness and desertion, wholly insufficient to make head against the increasing number of his opponents. He therefore came to the mortifying resolution of abandoning the United Provinces, the possession of which he had anticipated with so much pride. The French troops first evacuated Woerden, having previously obliged the inhabitants to pay a large sum of money to redeem themselves from pillage; notwithstanding which, they carried away all the ammunition and provisions they could find. The unhappy province of Utrecht had experienced the evils of conquest in their fullest extent. The stipulations which the States had made for the preservation of their government, religion, and privileges, had been violated in every possible manner. All the inhabitants were disarmed, and forbidden to leave their houses after nine in the evening, or to lock their doors; the villages were plundered, and the members of the reformed religion driven from their churches; in the city, persons were forced by the blows of the French soldiers to kneel to the host as it passed; the property of all those who had fled their homes was confiscated, and large sums besides were extorted from their relatives; and contributions were levied upon the people in general, which, in the present depressed state of trade, they were utterly unable to pay, but which, nevertheless, were insisted on with the utmost rigour. "History affords no example," observed the States, in one of their touching appeals to the Intendant of the King of France, "of so great a number of persons driven to perish from hunger, misery, and other dreadful causes." But, as if the oppression of the conquerors had as yet been too lenient, the French commander, Stoupe,

1673 previously to the evacuation of Utrecht, summoned the deputies of the States, and informed them, that in consequence of the misconduct of some of the members of the government in carrying on secret correspondence with Holland, and speaking in disparaging terms of the King of France, he had received commands to set fire to the town and inundate the province. By means of this threat, he wrung from the citizens a last exaction of 450,000 guilders. Laden with spoil, the French at length evacuated the town of Utrecht; and no sooner had they departed, than the inhabitants gave themselves up to the most immoderate transports of joy. They closed the gates, and hoisted the Orange standard on the walls, every one appearing in the street decorated with cockades of orange-coloured ribbon; they hastened to clear the churches of the images and other ornaments, and caused the Protestant ministers to perform divine service in the evening in those where mass had been held in the morning. The government likewise at once proceeded to annul the Perpetual Edict, and declare the Prince of Orange, Stadtholder. With the province of Utrecht, the towns of the Bommel, Harderwyk, and Elburg, were abandoned; and, early in the next year, the remainder of Guelderland and Overyssel were evacuated, as well by the garrisons of the Bishops of Cologne and Munster as those of the King of France. The troops were assembled at Maestricht by the Duke of Luxemburg, who, evading the attempts of the Prince of Orange and the Count of Montereil, to intercept his passage, conducted them to France in safety^o.

This auspicious dawn of better fortunes to the

^o Basnage, tom. ii., p. 352, 472. Res. van de St., Aug. 27, Sept. 22. Holl. Mer., A.D. 1672, bl. 156; 1673, bl. 247—251, 255—257; A.D. 1674, bl. 102, 103.

Provinces was followed by the long and ardently 1673 desired peace with England. The circumstances of the last battle, in which, as the English declared, "themselves and the Dutch had been made the gladiators for the French spectators*," had more than ever disgusted that nation with the alliance of an ambitious and selfish monarch, who, they perceived, was but gratifying his own rapacity at the expense of their blood and treasure. Spain had threatened a rupture with England, unless she would consent to a reasonable peace; and even Sweden herself had declared, during the conferences at Cologne, that she should be constrained to adopt a similar course if the King of France persisted in extending his conquests. Should a war with these nations occur, the English saw themselves deprived of the valuable commerce they carried on in their ports, to be transferred, most probably, to the United Provinces; in addition to which consideration, their navigation had already sustained excessive injury from the privateering of the Zealanders, who had captured, it is said, no less than 2700 English merchantships. These, and various other causes, had provoked the Parliament to use expressions of the highest indignation at the measures of the court; and to a peremptory refusal of further supplies for the war, unless the Dutch, by their obstinacy in rejecting terms of peace, should render its continuance unavoidable. Aware of this disposition, the States had addressed a letter to the king, which, with sufficient adroitness, they had contrived should arrive precisely at the meeting of par-

* Speech of Sir J. Monson, in Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 593. A pithy remark was made on the conduct of the French during the engagement, by a Dutch sailor, who observed, that "they had hired the English to fight for them, and were looking on to see that they earned their money." Sylvius, deel i., bl. 647.

1673 liament, offering the king restitution of all the places they had gained during the war, and satisfaction with respect to the flag, or "any other matter they had not already ordered according to his wishes." This communication, received with feelings of extreme irritation by the court, had all the effect intended on the House of Commons. It was in vain that the king complained of the personal insults offered him by the Dutch; in vain that the chancellor expatiated on their obstinacy, arrogance, and enmity to the English; and that the court party remonstrated against the imprudence of exposing England defenceless to the power of
1674 her haughty enemy. The Parliament persisted in refusing the solicited supply; voted the standing army a grievance; bitterly complained of the French alliance, and resolved that his majesty should be advised to proceed in a treaty with the States-General, in order to a speedy peace. They likewise drew up articles of impeachment against Buckingham and Arlington, who, with Lauderdale, were the members of the Cabal now remaining in the ministry. Thus constrained, Charles with extreme reluctance, and somewhat of ill humour, called Sir William Temple from the retirement he had remained in since the breaking out of the war, and employed him to negotiate the terms of peace with the Marquis del Fresno, the Spanish amdashador, who received from the States full powers to treat in their name. A few days sufficed to accomplish a treaty; the Dutch obviating the principal difficulty by yielding the honour of the flag in the most ample manner. They now agreed that all their ships should lower their topsails and strike the flag upon meeting one or more English vessels bearing the royal standard, within the compass of the four seas,

from Cape Finisterre to Staaten in Norway; and 1674 engaged to pay the king 2,000,000 guilders for the expenses of the war^p.

Shortly after, the Bishops of Munster and Cologne, alarmed at the probability of being abandoned by the French to the anger of the Emperor, who had threatened them with the ban of the Empire, consented to a treaty with the United Provinces, in virtue of which they restored all the places they had conquered^q.

As though the Prince of Orange were the sole cause and agent of this happy turn in their affairs, the States of the different Provinces vied with each other in loading him with benefits and honours. Those of Holland, formerly his most systematic opponents, but since the change he had made in the governments of the towns the foremost of his adulators, in order, as they alleged, "to avoid for the future the divisions and calamities they had suffered during the time they were deprived of a Stadtholder," declared that office, and those of captain and admiral-general, hereditary in the persons of the male descendants of the Prince of Orange. On the same day a similar resolution was passed by those of Zealand, and shortly after by the States-General, in respect of the captain and admiral-generalship of the Union. A flattering admonition, that the prince should ensure the beneficial effects of these salutary resolutions by a speedy marriage, was rendered yet more palatable by liberal presents in money; Zealand voting him a sum of 300,000 guilders, while the East India Company settled upon him and his heirs a thirty-third of all their profits for ever. The town of Amsterdam contrived to reconcile gene-

^p Le Clerc, tom. iii., p. 159. Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 586, 602, et seq. Holl. Mer., bl. 267, A.D. 1674, bl. 133. Temple's Mem., vol. ii., p. 249.

^q Holl. Mer., bl. 89, 204.

1674 rosity with thrift by inducing the States of Holland to take upon themselves a debt of 2,000,000 of guilders owing by the late Stadtholder, William II.; thus at the same time gratifying the prince and obtaining greater security for its own debt.

The mode, also, in which the conquered provinces of Guelderland, Overysse, and Utrecht, were readmitted to the Union, proved a vast accession to the stadtholderal authority. On the evacuation of these provinces by the French troops, it became a question, whether they were restored as of course to their original condition, or whether by submitting to the invader they had not forfeited all the privileges they before possessed. The States of Holland, desirous of retaining a portion of Utrecht on which they had built forts, were strong advocates of the latter opinion; the Stadtholder, on the other hand, professed that he should consider it the highest degree of injustice to punish the conquered provinces for a calamity which it was wholly out of their power to prevent, and from which a concurrence of fortunate accidents alone had preserved the remainder. In these sentiments he was supported by Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen; and it was at length resolved by the States-General (now limited to these four provinces), that the other three should be restored to the Union upon taking a new oath; the prince being empowered to change the governments in all their towns. This commission William carried out to an extent far greater, probably, than the authors contemplated. Repairing to Utrecht he not only changed the governments of the towns, but wholly altered the constitution of the States; to which he himself undertook to nominate the deputies-representatives of the ecclesiastical state, while he added a number of members to the body of the nobility, of

whom several individuals held military offices; a proceeding wholly at variance with the provisions of the constitution. Having by this means filled the States with his favourites and dependants, he readily obtained from them that the dignities of Stadtholder and Captain-General should be declared hereditary, and their consent to a new "regulation," confirming for the future the powers he had on this occasion exercised with respect to the ecclesiastical state and nobility, and securing to him the virtual appointment of the members of the senates and great councils of the towns, inasmuch as if he did not approve of the candidates nominated, he had power to choose others. By the present "regulation" also, he obtained the right of approving or rejecting the deputies sent by the Provinces to the States-General, the Council of State, and the Colleges of the Admiralty, and of deciding all the differences which should arise in the States of the Province. Similar regulations were afterwards adopted in the provinces of Guelderland and Overysse, where the appointment of none but the prince's partisans as members of the municipal governments, or deputies to the States, rendered him, under the modest title of Stadtholder, little less than absolute sovereign of these Provinces^r.

On the conclusion of the separate peace by England, the King of France, aware of the species of coercion under which his ally had acted, instead of wasting his anger in useless complaints of his desertion, determined to revenge himself upon Spain, whose influence had borne no small share in constraining Charles to this measure. Accordingly in this summer he brought into the field three powerful armies,

^r Holl. Mer., bl. 78—81, A.D. 1675, bl. 27, 28. Res. van de St., Jan. 24, Feb. 2. Sylvius, deel ii., bl. 181, 193.

1674 amounting together to 100,000 men. While Turenne, at the head of one, over-ran and cruelly ravaged the Palatinate, he himself invaded Franche Comté, which he conquered within a few weeks; and the third under Condé marching into the Netherlands, mastered Engelen, Argenteau, and Navaigne, and took up an advantageous position behind the small river Pieton. The Prince of Orange, having been appointed by the King of Spain generalissimo of his forces, joined the allied army above 60,000 strong near Louvain, and, in the hope of drawing out Condé to an engagement, marched to the village of Seneffe. Finding Condé determined to retain his advantage, and that it was impossible to force his entrenchments, he again broke up his camp and commenced his route in the direction of Binche. But in passing through the defiles leading from Seneffe, the flank of his army was unavoidably exposed to the enemy, who fell upon the rear-guard composed of Spaniards, and threw them into disorder. Some regiments of the States' troops, sent by the prince to their aid, were likewise routed; but William, having posted himself on a height near the village of St. Nicholas, and being, after some considerable delay, joined by the imperialists, succeeded in rallying the fugitives, when a series of desperate engagements followed, continuing from eight in the morning till past midnight. William, burning to signalize the commencement of his career in arms by the defeat of so renowned a captain, displayed all the skill and resources of an experienced commander; the veteran Condé, jealous lest his hardly-won laurels should be snatched from him by his youthful foe, exposed himself in every part of the field with reckless ardour. The troops on both sides sharing in the enthusiasm of their leaders performed prodigies of valour. As the

loss in killed and wounded was nearly equal, each 1674 claimed the victory. The French, indeed, had captured the larger portion of prisoners and baggage, but the allies marched forward to the place they had designed to reach, while Condé retired within his entrenchments. The Prince of Orange next undertook the siege of Oudenarde; an enterprise which was entirely defeated by the lukewarmness of the Imperial general, Souches; when, finding that no decisive measures were likely to be adopted in a camp where a number of commanders pursued each the private interests of their nation rather than one common object, he marched with a portion of his troops to Grave, which Rabenhaupt had invested a few weeks before. After a sharp cannonading and several brisk assaults, Grave was forced to capitulate; and William, being joined by a reinforcement of Spaniards, made himself master of Huy*.

The States having upon the peace with England considerably reduced their fleet, and the French remaining in their ports, the naval transactions of this year were wholly unimportant, being limited to an unsuccessful attempt upon Martinique by De Ruyter, and a fruitless landing in Belle-isle by a squadron of the Dutch fleet under Tromp*.

The King of England, chagrined at having been obliged to abandon his ally, was now anxious to make amends for his involuntary desertion by obtaining for him an advantageous peace, and to this end had offered his mediation to the belligerents, which was accepted by both sides. In order to obviate any suspicions that might be entertained of his partiality

* Holl. Mer., bl. 52, 113, 135, 150, 162, 192—196, 199. Mémoires Politiques et Historiques de Feuquières, tom. iii., p. 150.

† Holl. Mer., bl. 141, 197.

1674 towards France, he named as his ambassador Sir William Temple, who, from his known attachment to the alliance of the States, as well as the esteem and affection entertained by the Dutch for his person, was in the highest degree agreeable to them; while at the 1675 same time he privately dispatched Lord Arlington, a member of the late Cabal Ministry, to learn whether there were any possibility of bringing the Prince of Orange to consent to a peace on such terms as might be acceptable to Louis. Arlington was likewise instructed to engage the prince to reveal who among the disaffected in England had maintained correspondences in the United Provinces, during the last war; and to inspire him with hopes of an alliance with Mary, eldest daughter of the Duke of York. But the prince received all his advances with the utmost coldness; observing with respect to the latter subject, that his fortunes were not yet in a condition to permit him to think of a wife^a.

It has been supposed that by this expression concerning the uncertainty of his fortunes, the prince alluded to the success of a project then on foot for raising him to the dignity of Duke of Guelderland, under which title the hereditary sovereignty of that province had been offered him by the States, though with considerable limitations. Whether this scheme were the effect of a spontaneous movement on the part of the inhabitants of Guelderland, in the hope that their province would thereby obtain superior influence and dignity in the States-General, and an increased distribution of offices among the nobility,—a class more numerous and poorer than in any of the other Provinces; or whether it were the result of the intrigues of the prince himself and his courtiers, it is not easy

^a Temple's Mem., vol. ii., p. 294.

to decide*. Be this as it may, he was not so eagerly bent upon gratifying his ambition, as to forget his usual caution and prudence. On the offer being made him, he expressed considerable surprise, and delayed giving an answer till he should have consulted the States of the other Provinces upon the best course for him to adopt. During their deliberations, he appeared to be wholly absorbed in hunting at his country-houses, and affected entire indifference as to their result; yet he betrayed somewhat of his secret wishes by allowing his courtiers to drink to his health on several occasions as Duke of Guelderland. There is little doubt, indeed, that the prince imagined, from the unreservedness which the Provinces had lately shown in raising him to a high elevation of power, that they would think little of the single step to the pinnacle of greatness which yet remained for him to achieve. But he soon discovered how widely he was mistaken in the disposition of the singular people he had to deal with; who, though their complaisance to him as first minister of the state knew scarcely any bounds, were struck with terror at the bare idea of a sovereign, as inseparably connected in their minds with the entire loss of their liberties and prosperity. Nor was this so much straining at a shadow as may at first appear; since, so long as he was a minister only, however powerful, the States still retained in their own hands the right of removing him; which, though they might never have the opportunity, or even the inclination, to exercise, the consciousness of their possessing formed a considerable check to any illegal or violent exercise of autho-

* Sir William Temple, hints that Pensionary Fagel, foreseeing the result, had been the chief promoter of the business, in order to give the people the alarm, lest at some future time, by the successes and popularity of the prince, they might have been led on insensibly to gratify his wishes on this point. Temp. Cor., Feb. 26, 1675.

1675 rity on his part. The States of Utrecht, indeed, in which province, in consequence of the late regulation, all the members of the government were subservient to him, gave it as their advice that he should accept the offer of Guelderland without demur; Friezland and Groningen, of which William was not Stadtholder, were not consulted; but in Holland and Zealand he found, to his astonishment, that the very towns which had shewn themselves most zealous for his advancement to the dignities of his ancestors, evinced the greatest alarm at the proposed measure. While it was in agitation more than 3,000,000 of guilders were withdrawn from the bank of Amsterdam; the East India bonds fell above thirty per cent.; and the public funds twenty-five, which was five per cent. lower than at the most desperate crisis of the last war. Should the prince become sovereign of Guelderland, one of two consequences, it was conjectured, must follow: either his exclusive attachment to that province would prompt him to support its interests on all occasions, to the detriment of the remainder, or that they themselves should be obliged to conciliate his favour, by investing him with an equal title and authority. Several of the towns therefore urged, among various other objections, that he would receive no accession of power with the name of sovereign, nor the grandeur of the house of Orange any addition by the title of duke; but, on the contrary, he would have to bear the odium of all the imposts levied on the people; that the Provinces had become rich and flourishing under the stadtholders his predecessors, who had constantly abjured the idea of sovereignty; and that there was far more glory in rejecting than in accepting offers of this nature. The States of Zealand besought him, in terms yet more bold and energetic, to refuse peremp-

torily such proposals; by accepting which he would 1675 gain nothing more than an empty title in exchange for the love and confidence of his people. The peace and welfare of his country, they declared, no less than his own credit and honour, demanded that, "following the example of Gideon, who refused a similar offer made him by God's people, from gratitude for his having delivered them out of the hand of the Midianites," he should decline the offer of the States of Guelderland^v.

Perceiving from these emotions that the Provinces were not yet ripe for the realization of his ambitious hopes, the prince denied himself the proffered sovereignty, though in a manner which confirmed the sinister suspicions men had begun to entertain with regard to the moderation of his views and the rectitude of his intentions. In writing to inform the States of Utrecht of his determination, he thanked them for their advice, by which they testified, he said, the singular affection they bore his person; and stigmatized as vile calumniators those persons who drew the inference from what had occurred that he sought the increase of his own dignity and authority^w. His answer to the States of Zealand, on the other hand, was couched in terms of angry reproach. He reminded them of the benefits he had conferred on them by delivering the Provinces from the tyranny of a party which was on the point of forcing them into a disgraceful treaty with the enemy; repudiated with indignation the groundless and odious insinuations of those who reported that he aimed at the sovereignty: a suspicion, he affirmed, that could only arise in wicked and malevolent minds. Notwithstanding, he added, that many members of the other States, had urged him to accept the proposal of

^v Holl. Mer., 1675, bl. i., 5, 24, 25. Temp. Cor., Feb. 26, 1675.

^w Holl. Mer., bl. 27.

1675 Guelderland, yet, never having felt the smallest personal inclination to do so, he could the more easily, in order to avoid dissension, comply with the wishes of the majority, by a refusal. He did not know whether the example of Gideon were applicable to him, but he wished with all his heart he could with justice ascribe to them the title of God's people. He furthermore declared, that he had never employed any solicitations or other means to induce any one of the members of the States to offer him the dignity in question; but it is scarcely to be supposed that his friends would have mooted a point of so much importance, without having first ascertained that it would be perfectly agreeable to him^x. All the disclaimers of ambitious views, however, the prince could make, were unavailing to quiet the alarm that had taken possession of the public mind; he became suddenly an object of as much mistrust as he had formerly been of hope and confidence; and there arose a discontent so universal, and murmurs so violent, that the States-General published an edict prohibiting any person on pain of death from publishing that the Stadtholder had aimed to procure the sovereignty of the United Provinces, or that their High Mightinesses had entertained any purpose of conferring it on him^y. By affixing a punishment so wholly disproportioned to the offence, they at once gave themselves an appearance of unbounded zeal in the cause of the prince, and effectually prevented any real pursuit of the offenders.

The difficulties in accomplishing the object of his mission, which Sir William Temple had to encounter during his residence at the Hague, appeared almost insurmountable. The King of France, indeed, fearful that a victory gained by the allies would put them in

^x Holl. Mer., bl. 43.

^y Res. van de St., Sept. 26.

a situation to execute the design they had last year 1675 entertained of invading his kingdom, and embarrassed by symptoms of growing discontent at home, was sincerely desirous of a peace; but Spain and the Emperor, well aware of the continuance of the ill-humour of the English parliament, and the little favour with which it viewed the proposed peace, from an idea that the king would employ his mediation to secure the conquests and increase the power of France, entertained confident hopes that Charles would at length be driven by the temper of the nation to take an active part in their quarrel, as he had already been constrained to make peace with Holland. The people of the United Provinces, on the other hand, sighed for repose; but the prince, who had just begun to taste the sweets of command, was proportionably anxious to prolong the war, and manifested his determination to continue hostilities till France should restore to Spain all the places possessed by the latter at the treaty of the Pyrenees, except Aire and St. Omer. Nevertheless, he proposed as an alternative, that Louis should give Mademoiselle in marriage to the King of Spain, with all the places he had conquered in the Netherlands as her dowry, and that the King of England should have 200,000*l.* for his good offices. Though this mode appeared highly agreeable to Charles, it was rejected by the King of France, whose bribes and promises had now induced the court of Sweden to abandon the character of mediator for that of ally, by the invasion of the States of the Elector of Brandenburg; and thus a new war commenced, in which the States, being involved as allies by their treaty with the elector, afterwards found means to engage the King of Denmark^z.

Meanwhile the campaign was opened by the belli-

^z Temp. Mem., p. 285—296. Holl. Mer., bl. 1.

1675 gerents with redoubled vigour. The numbers and appointments of the armies, and the reputation of the generals on both sides, aroused in the minds of all men, feelings of mingled anxiety and hope. Turenne was opposed in Germany to the Imperial general, Montecuculi, who had superseded Souche; while the promising talents of the Prince of Orange were as yet unequally matched with the matured genius and experience of Condé; and the Swedish general, Wrangel, no less distinguished by all the qualities which adorn a great captain, was to maintain himself in Pomerania against the forces of the Elector of Brandenburg, universally esteemed one of the ablest and wisest princes of Europe. The troops of Lorraine and Luxemburg formed a fourth army on the Moselle, and those of Munster and Osnaburgh a fifth*. Events, however, by no means responded to the general expectation. The army of Condé, while the King of France who affected to serve as volunteer under him was present in the camp, mastered Dinant, Huy, and Limburg; but after his departure, the remainder of the season

* As the troops of the United Provinces were on their march to the place of rendezvous, the Prince of Orange was seized with the small-pox, the disease which had proved fatal to his father about the same age, and to his mother. During his illness, all the attention of the nation seemed absorbed in hopes and fears for his life. Business was suspended, and people waited day and night in crowds before his house to hear tidings of his condition. Though for a short time in imminent danger, his recovery was rapid, owing principally to the great calmness of his temper. From this event may be traced the rise of the noble family of Bentinck, whose ancestor, afterwards Duke of Portland, was chamberlain to the prince, and attended upon his master throughout the whole period of his sickness with such devoted attachment, that the prince told Sir William Temple he never, during sixteen days and nights, called without finding him awake. He was scarcely recovered when this faithful servant fell ill of the same disease in its most malignant form, and very narrowly escaped death. From this time, William conceived that tender attachment to him which remained unshaken to the end of his life. Temp. Mem., p. 302, 303.

was passed in fruitless attempts on the part of the 1675 Prince of Orange to bring the enemy to an engagement. In Germany, the affairs of Louis were less prosperous. Turenne had advanced to the other side of the Rhine, with a view of preventing the enemy's design of besieging Philipsburg, occupying Alsace, or entering Lorraine. The two generals having consumed a considerable time in marches and counter-marches, each seeking to take the other at disadvantage, Turenne was at length compelled by famine to repass the Rhine, for which purpose he attempted to force a strong post of the enemy near Saltzbach. He was slain by a cannon ball in the skirmish; an event which threatened the destruction of the French army, hemmed in as it was between that of the Imperialists and the Rhine. But the Marquis de Lorges, taking the command, executed a masterly retreat over that river into Alsace, where he was joined by Condé with a reinforcement of troops from the Netherlands. The allied army then sat down before Treves; and having inflicted a signal and disastrous defeat on the Marshal de Crequi, who came with a large force to its relief, forced the town to surrender, after a murderous siege of a month's duration. Having commenced the siege of Haguenau, Montecuculi suddenly broke it up and repassed the Rhine, leaving Alsace to the mercy of the French troops^a.

In the next spring, the King of France, finding 1676 himself unable to effect any considerable progress in Germany, determined to push his conquests in the Netherlands; and marching thither in person, with a numerous army, he reduced Condé, and forced Bouchain to capitulate in sight of the allied forces, 50,000 strong, under the command of the Prince of Orange.

^a Holl. Mer., bl. 69, 142, 162, et seq.

1676 In the hope to compensate for these losses, the prince undertook the siege of Maestricht, the only town belonging to the United Provinces still occupied by the French. He had carried his operations so far as to have effected a lodgement on the counterscarp, when the advance of the Marshal Schomberg with a large body of forces to its relief, and the failure of a promised succour of German troops, obliged him to commence a retreat to Waveren, which he executed with masterly skill.

On sea, the power of the Dutch nation had, from the time of the appointment of the Prince of Orange as admiral-general, gradually declined. Whether that the conduct of the French, during the late war, had inspired him with a contempt for the naval prowess of that nation, or from some less excusable motive, William had, in the last year, sent De Ruyter to the Mediterranean with an insufficient and miserably-equipped fleet of eighteen ships, to make head against an enemy whose force consisted of above thirty sail; while the aid of the Spaniards, who had already sustained a severe defeat, was utterly inefficient. In vain did De Ruyter remonstrate against the rashness of thus wantonly exposing the flag of the States to insult; the only answer he received, was an imputation that he began to grow timid in his old age; in vain, too, did his friends endeavour to persuade this noble-minded patriot to refuse peremptorily to put to sea with so inadequate a force. "It was his *duty*," he said, "to obey the commands of the States;" and having taken a last farewell of his family and friends, to whom he expressed his conviction that he should never return, he embarked at Helvoetsluys, and with the first fair wind set sail for his destination. He encountered the French fleet under the admiral Du

Quesne, between the islands of Stromboli and Salino, 1676 but without any decisive result. Having effected a junction with ten Spanish vessels, he came to a second engagement on the coast of Sicily, with Du Quesne, who had likewise received a reinforcement of twelve men-of-war and four frigates. Almost at the commencement of the battle, De Ruyter was struck by a cannon ball, which carried off the fore part of his left foot and broke two bones of the right leg. He continued, however, to give his orders with undiminished activity, and concealed the disaster so effectually, that neither friend nor enemy had the slightest suspicion of the truth. Both parties ascribed to themselves the victory; the relations on each side differing so widely, that it is scarcely possible to conceive they allude to the same event. The French declared that their fleet retained, during the night, the position they had occupied in the battle; but, according to the evidence of De Ruyter, contained in a letter he wrote to the States the day after the action, and which his well-known integrity renders incontrovertible, the enemy retreated, and could scarcely be discerned the next morning from the top of the masts. The most signal defeat, however, would have been a far less grievous calamity to the Dutch than that which they had to sustain in the loss of their great admiral, whose wounds proved fatal a few days after^b.

De Ruyter is one of those characters whose faultless excellence would, were we obliged to rely solely on the evidence of the biographer and panegyrist, almost create a doubt of its reality, as if beyond the scope of human nature to attain. But in his case, the highest eulogiums are confirmed to the full by the

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^b Leeven van de Ruyter, bl. 912, 976. Brief van de Ruyter en de Fransche Verhaal. Holl. Mer., bl. 31—33.

1676 concurring testimony of political opponents, and by the dry and impartial records of history. Exalted above the impulses of vanity and ambition common to vulgar heroes, he found in the firm principle of duty to his country an inspiration sufficient to guide him in the formation of the mightiest projects, to incite him to the most glorious achievements. As a commander, valour was his least qualification: his genius, judgment, and foresight, were equal to every emergency. In situations where temerity was wisdom, none could be more reckless and daring; when prudence dictated caution, none could incur more bravely the imputation of timidity. Never elated by success, nor cast down by reverses, he was accustomed to attribute the former solely to the goodness of God; and at the moment of defeat, he appeared sensible only of the misfortunes that threatened his country. He was one of the very few so privileged, that not a single action of his life requires explanation or justification. During the troubled times of the republic, when he often received orders so equivocal or contradictory, that whatever course he pursued could scarcely escape censure, he never failed to adopt such as both partisans and opponents agreed in pronouncing wisest and best. The strict discipline he maintained in the navy was softened by his perfect equanimity of temper, his strict regard to justice, his humanity and affability. The purest of republics, in the purest age of its existence, could never boast of a citizen of more incorruptible integrity, disinterestedness, or genuine simplicity of manners*. The honours and titles of nobility heaped upon him by nearly every prince of

* An amusing trait of this simplicity of character is given by the Count de Guiche, who tells us that, on the morning after the battle of four days (1666), he found him sweeping his cabin, and feeding his chickens. Mem., p. 269.

Europe, the consciousness that he was the object of 1676 the respect and admiration of the whole civilized world, never in the slightest degree overcame his innate modesty. He gratefully refused the numerous invitations he received to visit foreign courts, and retained unchanged through life the frugal establishment and quiet deportment of a burgher of the middling class. He felt not the slightest shame at the obscurity of his origin*, but was, on the contrary, accustomed frequently to mention it in the presence of the most exalted personages, and to hold up his own example to the sailors as an incentive to honourable exertion. The deficiency of his early education was compensated by the quickness of his apprehension, the clearness of his ideas, and the capacity and retentiveness of his memory. The latter faculty he possessed in such an extraordinary degree, that he was able to recall exactly every circumstance, even the most minute, that had occurred from the time of his first going to sea, and the christian and surname of every man who had sailed with him. From conversation, he rapidly acquired the Spanish, Portuguese, English, and French languages, so as to speak them with elegance and fluency. In private life, the virtues of a husband, father, friend, and citizen, shone out with a lustre softer, but not less brilliant, than that which adorned his public career. Without the slightest tincture of bigotry or superstition, he was deeply imbued with a spirit of ardent and unaffected piety, and never went into battle without spending some time in prayer and preparation for death. His time, when not employed in service, was spent chiefly in reading aloud books of a religious tendency to his family, and singing with a rich, melodious

* In early youth he worked in a rope-yard, at the wages of a penny a day, and was first sent to sea as a cabin-boy.

1676 voice and exquisite musical taste, lays of sacred harmony. Death, which he had so often looked upon with calmness, came to him stripped of its terrors, and terminated, without a pang or a struggle, his exalted and blameless career of nearly seventy years. His body was embalmed, and, on the return of the fleet, carried to Amsterdam to be interred, amidst the tears of his countrymen.

The suspicion which had insinuated itself among the people, that this excellent and esteemed servant of the republic, a staunch and faithful adherent of the De Witt party, had been sacrificed to the jealousy of the Stadtholder, contributed to diminish still further the unbounded popularity he had at first enjoyed, and which the discovery of his ambitious views upon the sovereignty of the Provinces, and the constant failure of his military enterprises, had already considerably undermined. He was now tempted to risk it still further, by involving himself in a quarrel with the city of Middleburg, proceeding from a cause somewhat similar to that which had distracted the Provinces in the early part of the century, and which, had his opponents shown an equal spirit of resistance, might have been productive of like baleful consequences.

The system of philosophy of Renaud Descartes, who had resided in Holland for some years before his death, in 1650, had become much known through the Provinces, and was received with approbation by many learned men, and some of the professors of the universities of Leyden and Utrecht; while by others it was unsparingly condemned as savouring of impiety and atheism. Among the former was Cocceius, appointed, in 1650, professor of theology at Leyden, and who entertained, moreover, some singular and novel opinions on several subjects, particularly the mystic inter-

pretation to be put upon the narrations of events in 1676 the Old Testament, which he conceived to be a series of types and allegories. The most distinguished of his opponents was Voetius, professor of theology at Utrecht, who had been a member of the synod of Dordrecht. The church rapidly divided into parties, espousing the opinions of these professors, each side seeking, as usual, to give substance and tangibility to their metaphysical speculations, by identifying them with the political questions which then agitated the State. The Cocceians, who professed entire submission to the civil government, were protected by De Witt and the States against their adversaries, who, far superior in number, and zealous partisans of the House of Orange, assumed the utmost license of animadversion upon the conduct of the party then in power.

In the year 1663 bitter contests had arisen in Holland concerning the precedence to be given to the States of that Province in the public prayers; the Cocceians readily admitting their right to be named, as sovereigns of the Province, before the States-General; the Voetians, on the other hand, refusing to abide by this form, and insisting that the name of the Prince of Orange should be introduced, though at that time he held no public office. But by suspending one or two of the most turbulent of the Voetian preachers from their functions, and procuring the richest benefices for the Cocceians, the States had succeeded in holding the former in check, and the warfare had from that time been confined chiefly to pamphlets and libels between Desmarets and Wittichius, the champions of the respective doctrines. By the course they had pursued, the Voetians had recommended themselves strongly to the Prince of Orange, who, though he regarded polemical disputes, in general, with consum-

1676 mate indifference, was no sooner elevated to his present dignity, than he began to inspire new life and activity among their party, by manifesting on all occasions the most decided symptoms of favour towards them. Such as had been silenced were restored to their cures, and their opponents sedulously kept out of the ministry. One Heydanus, a professor of theology at Leyden, was dismissed from his post for publishing a book in defence of Cocceius and Descartes; and the office of pastor becoming vacant in Middleburg, the Stadtholder wrote to warn the "class" (or assembly of the churches) of Walcheren, against allowing any one to enter upon that office suspected of introducing "novelties and disputes rather curious than edifying." But it happened that the so-called "qualified college," composed of deputies of the church and town council, in whom the nomination was vested, had already appointed one William Momma, a man of unimpeachable virtue, and deeply learned in the Greek, Hebrew, and Oriental languages. His election was, in obedience to the dictates of the Stadtholder, annulled by the "class" of Walcheren; whereupon the college applied to the magistrates of Middleburg, who took the affair under their protection, and authorized Momma to exercise the functions to which he had been appointed. Enraged at this proceeding, the Prince of Orange addressed a letter to the magistrates, in which he made use of expressions such as to demonstrate pretty clearly that he intended to carry matters in the ecclesiastical, as well as the other departments of the State, with a high hand. He forbade them to allow Momma to exercise the ministerial office either publicly or privately, and declared that he would not allow the smallest opposition to his orders, but was prepared to employ legitimate and efficacious means for the

correction of such as ventured to contravene them. 1676
Regardless of these menaces, the college proceeded to confirm Momma in his office. The prince then induced the class of Walcheren to cite both the minister and the college before it; but this proving equally ineffectual, he, at the conclusion of the campaign, repaired in person to Zeeland. From the States of that Province, in which, as Marquis of Veere and Flushing, he commanded two votes out of five, Middleburg being as an interested party reckoned absent, he obtained authority to correct and punish the magistrates and college of Middleburg, and to adopt such measures as he should think requisite for this purpose. Thus armed with full powers, the prince deposed the government, deprived of all offices, ecclesiastical or civil, those who had taken any share in the business; and cashiered a large number of officers of the burgher guard, who had shown themselves favourable to the cause of the new preacher. He likewise displaced Momma, and banished from Zeeland another minister, Van der Weyer, on account of his friendship to him. Polemical dissension and party spirit combined, soon rose to such a height as to threaten to create a general ferment in the nation; when, happily, the example of moderation set by the magistrates of Amsterdam stemmed the tide of religious controversy. Their city being threatened with similar commotions, 1677 they induced the clergy to hold an assembly, and to pass resolutions purporting that every effort should be used to prevent divisions; that none should profess to consider the points on which they differed from their brethren, as essential to salvation; and that in the election of ministers care should be taken to introduce such only as were of a pacific and conciliatory disposition. The experience of the good effects produced

1677 by this wise course of conduct, in securing the peace of the populous city of Amsterdam, tended greatly to diffuse a spirit of mutual forbearance in other places; and the evils that began reasonably to be dreaded were obviated^c.

The King of France, piqued at the loss of Philipsburg, which the allies had recovered in the last campaign, resolved to take the field in person early in the the spring, so as to achieve some considerable conquest in Flanders before the allied army left its winter quarters. In order to keep the Spaniards in suspense as to what point he would single out for his first attack, he filled with troops the whole line of country between Valenciennes, Cambray, and St. Omer. In this uncertainty, the Spaniards neglected to put either place in a sufficient state of defence. Commencing with Valenciennes, Louis obliged it to surrender in a few days, and then laid siege to Cambray, which offered little resistance, the garrison retreating into the citadel. At the same time, the Duke of Orleans invested St. Omer. The Prince of Orange, hastening to its relief, found the enemy, who had been reinforced by a fresh body of troops, drawn out to receive him on the heights of Cassel. An engagement commenced with the van of the allied army, composed of Dutch infantry, who, seized with terror at the impetuous attack of the French, fell into disorder and fled. The prince, after making several strenuous efforts to rally them, was at length forced back with the stream to the main body, which, standing firm, enabled him to effect a retreat so skilful that it wanted little of the honour of a victory. This defeat was followed by the surrender of St. Omer, and of the citadel of Cambray.

^c Holl. Mer., bl. 235—245, A.D. 1677, bl. 92.

Anxious to wipe out the memory of this affront, 1677 William sat down before Charleroi; but had scarcely begun to open the trenches, when an army of 40,000 men, under the Duke of Luxemburg, taking up a strong position between the villages of Seneff and Gerpine, cut off entirely the conveyance of supplies of provision and forage to his camp. He was thus obliged to raise the siege. No further event of moment occurred during this campaign in the Netherlands, except the capture of St. Guillain late in the season^d. Louis was probably induced to forego any additional enterprise, in consequence of the hostile feelings manifested towards him by the English parliament, which, on two several occasions in the late session, had presented addresses to the king, praying him to enter into a league offensive and defensive with the States-General, and make such other alliances as might tend to preserve the Netherlands, and prevent the dangers that threatened the nation from the too great power of the French King. As soon as these alliances were declared, they engaged to furnish sums sufficient to support them, but, until then, refused to pass any vote of supplies^e.

The fall of Cambray and St. Omer deprived Spain of all the frontier towns of the Netherlands, on the land side, except Namur and Mons; while on the coast, these provinces were defended only by Nieuport and Ostend. A single campaign would suffice for the conquest of these; and it was therefore evident that the only hope of preserving what remained was to hasten on a general peace, for which conferences had been appointed to be held at Nimeguen in 1675. But, hitherto, two only among the belligerent powers had manifested any disposition to enter upon the

^d Holl. Mer., 14, 16, 31, 49, 50. * Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 879.

1677 negotiations, on such terms as their adversaries might be likely to entertain. The Emperor had hoped to retrieve, in the campaign of the last year, a portion at least of the losses he had sustained; the Spaniards flattered themselves that the preservation of the Netherlands was a point of such vital interest to England, as well as the United Provinces, that the former would at length be brought to take a part in the war, and both continue in arms till a sufficient barrier were secured to the provinces; while the Elector of Brandenburg, and the King of Denmark, who, during the whole course of the war with Sweden, had been almost uniformly successful, looked forward with confidence to depriving that power of all the conquests she had made, either in Denmark or Germany.

On the other hand, Sweden, finding that her fleets were too weak to cope with those of Denmark and Holland united, as well as her armies with those of Denmark and Brandenburg, and that France was unable to afford her any assistance by sea, was willing to accept any tolerable conditions of peace. In the United Provinces the desire of peace was ardent and universal. Their commerce had rapidly decreased, a great portion of it being transferred to the hands of the English; their finances were reduced to so low a condition that it appeared nearly impossible to maintain them longer in any kind of order; and the people were taxed to the extent of their endurance. The States had carried on the war during the last campaign solely from gratitude, and a desire to fulfil their engagements to their allies, especially Spain, with whom they had bound themselves to continue hostilities jointly, till she could obtain from France the terms of the Pyrenean treaty. But they now conceived themselves sufficiently discharged from all their obliga-

tions by the conduct of the allies, which was such as 1677 to preclude all hopes of pursuing hostilities with any advantage. The Elector of Brandenburg, intent upon securing his advantages over Sweden, positively declined to give any aid to the allied army on the Rhine; whose movements, moreover, were constantly embarrassed by the dubious and contradictory orders of the court of Vienna, where several of the ministers were in the pay of the King of France. Spain, distracted by the cabals between the queen regent and Don John, natural brother of the king, neglected to provide the governor of the Netherlands (the Duke de Villa Hermosa) with the necessary means for their defence; the towns were ill-fortified and worse garrisoned; the insufficient army was inactive, and disorderly for want of pay; and no provisions were supplied to the Dutch or German troops on their march to relieve the besieged places. The Dutch accordingly perceived that they were ruining themselves by subsidies paid to foreign princes, for carrying on a war which, though commenced in their defence, was continued for no other purpose than to serve the private interests of the parties; and this conviction rendered them doubly anxious for a peace. The Prince of Orange, on the other hand, was desirous of prolonging the war; vehemently insisting upon the honour and good faith to be observed towards Spain, and that the treaty of the Pyrenees should be made the basis of any accommodation; a position which, in the present state of affairs, was little less than chimerical. In these sentiments he stood almost alone, being opposed even by his most intimate friend and counsellor, the Pensionary Fagel; nor had he sufficient influence to prevent the dispatch of the ambassadors from the States, Van Beverning and Odyk, who appeared at Nimeguen

1677 early in the last year, within a few days after the arrival of Sir Lionel Jenkins on the part of the King of England. The contradictory sentiments and clashing interests of the parties were scarcely likely to be reconciled by the mediator, whose movements were slow and vacillating; Charles being fearful on the one hand of offending the King of France, and thus losing the yearly stipend he enjoyed from that monarch; and on the other, of displeasing his parliament, to whom his necessities frequently obliged him to have recourse.

From this disposition of men's minds, the King of France augured the feasibility of obtaining a peace on the present footing of affairs by separating one or other of the allies, especially the Dutch, from the rest. As, therefore, the Emperor and Spain delayed sending their ambassadors to the place of congress, and several months were consumed in disputes concerning passports, titles, and other frivolous matters, the ministers of Louis, Colbert, D'Avaux, and D'Estrades, made diligent use of the time to persuade the States' ministers to agree upon a separate treaty. They declared that the King of France had no cause of quarrel remaining with the States, and desired nothing so much as to restore the mutual friendship that had so long subsisted between them; that he was content to deliver Maestricht, to ensure them such a frontier as they thought necessary for their safety, and to obtain indemnification for his cessions in the Netherlands from some other portion of the King of Spain's dominions. They likewise proposed to the English ambassador, Temple, who appeared at the conferences in the month of July of the last year, to negotiate a secret agreement with the Prince of Orange, by which they should, in concert, oblige the allies to accept such conditions as they might

agree upon; at the same time offering the prince carte-¹⁶⁷⁷ blanche to demand anything that concerned his own interests^f. These overtures were coldly received by the prince; but the States were prevailed with so far as to make a declaration of their resolution to enter upon a separate negotiation, unless the ministers of all the confederates should repair to Nimeguen by a certain day. This had the effect of bringing those of the Emperor and Spain to the congress, and the general negotiations were at length fairly entered upon. Still, ^{Nov. 10th 1676} the claims of the contending parties appeared wholly irreconcilable. ^{Feb.} The King of France required no more indeed of the Emperor than that the treaty of Westphalia should be restored; but of Spain he demanded that things should remain in the condition wherein the fortune of war had placed them, without prejudice to his own claims to the Netherlands; and from the Elector of Brandenburg and the King of Denmark, restitution of all the possessions of which they had deprived his ally, the King of Sweden. The Spaniards, on their side, proffered the absurd claim to restitution of all the towns conquered by France, and reparation for all the injuries they had sustained since 1665^g; the vanquished, in fact, sought to recover all they had lost, while the victors seemed determined to retain all they had conquered. It was not till a general peace appeared thus well nigh hopeless, that Van Beverning consented to enter upon a separate negotiation with the French ambassadors, to which the Prince of Orange himself, dispirited by the events of the last campaign, was induced to lend an ear^h. As France had already

^f Temp. Mem., p. 344, 362. Lett. d'Est., tom. vii., p. 321—337.

^g Temp. Mem., p. 363, 364. Lett. d'Est., tom. vii., p. 258. Mém. de la Paix de Nim., tom. ii., p. 1, 5, 35, 41, 49, 57.

^h Temp. Mem., p. 405. Lett. d'Est., tom. viii., p. 243.

1677 offered to restore Maestricht, the only requisition made by the Dutch, and to secure the interests of the Prince of Orange, it seemed as though no difficulty were to be anticipated in the settlement of the conditions, when the prince, unwilling to neglect the last chance of prolonging the war, or at least obtaining better terms of peace for the allies, resolved upon making one strenuous effort, either to engage the King of England as principal in the confederacy, or induce him to take a more active part as mediator.

He had before discovered to Sir William Temple an inclination to form a matrimonial alliance with Mary, eldest daughter of the Duke of York, and taking the opportunity of that minister's temporary return to the court of London, he now obtained, through his mediation, permission from the king to pay him a visit for the purpose of forwarding his suit to the princess. He was kindly received both by the king and Duke of York; but Charles, who was to the full as anxious to gratify France by a peace, as the prince to prolong the war, desired that this matter should first be taken into consideration. But the proposal met with a direct negative from William; as he feared lest the allies, who had already taken some alarm on the subject of his visit, should accuse him of having sacrificed their interests to his own ambition for this alliance; and though captivated with the charms of the Lady Mary, he expressed, with strong symptoms of disappointment and vexation, his determination of immediately taking his departure, unless the business of the marriage were first concluded; observing, that it was for the king to choose whether they were henceforth to live as the greatest friends or the greatest enemies. The solicitations of Temple and the lord-treasurer Danby at length induced Charles to yield this point, and within a few

days the marriage was celebrated, to the great and 1677 universal joy of the nation¹. The consideration of the peace was then proceeded with, and conditions laid down, which probably both parties were convinced that France would never hearken to. Louis was to restore all he had conquered from the Emperor and Empire, and from the United Provinces; the duchy of Lorraine to the duke; and to Spain, the towns of Ath, Charleroi, Oudenarde, Courtrai, Tournay, Condé, Valenciennes, St. Ghislain, and Binche. The prince engaged to use his endeavours to obtain the consent of the King of Spain, and Charles that of the King of France; for which latter purpose Duras, Lord Feversham, was immediately sent to Paris, with instructions to require an answer from Louis within two days. In case of the king's rejection of the conditions, Charles promised the Prince of Orange to become a party in the war. But though these proceedings, carried on without even the knowledge of Louis, seemed to all others a death-blow to his hopes of a separate treaty with the Dutch, he himself was far too well acquainted with the real dispositions of the English monarch, and his entire dependence upon him, to feel much disquietude on the subject. Without testifying the slightest irritation, either at the message itself, or the peremptory tone of its delivery, he affected to give a favourable answer as to the terms in general, excepting only against the restoration of Tournay, because of the large sums he had expended on its fortifications. The matter was thus drawn out into negotiation; and Louis, meanwhile, prevailed with the King of England to prorogue the parliament until late in the following spring, when there would be no longer time to make preparations

¹ Temp. Mem., p. 335, 420, 421. Lett. d'Est., tom. x., p. 229.

1677 for taking an active share with the allies in that campaign^k.

1678 Charles soon, however, found it necessary to appease the clamours of his people by a fresh show of vigour. He commissioned his ambassador at the Hague, Lawrence Hyde, to conclude a treaty with the States, of which the purpose should be to force both France and Spain to accept of the peace on the terms proposed; and summoning his parliament early in the year, notwithstanding the previous prorogation, obtained from them the vote of 1,000,000*l.*, for the levy of forces by land and sea. So great was the eagerness of the English for a war with France, that within a few weeks an army of above 20,000 men was on foot^l.

Though these measures flattered the hopes of the Prince of Orange and the allies, the Dutch nation had been too well taught by experience how little reliance was to be placed on present appearances. They knew that Charles affected to pursue this course for the mere purpose of soothing the parliament into granting supplies; and that the distrust between the king and the majority of both houses was deep and incurable. To persist in the war, therefore, on the confidence of efficient or steady support from that quarter, they regarded as little less than an act of madness. The emissaries of Louis had spared no pains in representing to the governments of the principal towns in Holland the marriage of the Prince of Orange as dangerous in the extreme to their liberties; and in instilling the belief that the prince had made himself a party to all the views of his uncles the king and Duke of York. Swayed by such fears, and by the danger that threatened Antwerp, the French having

^k Temp. Mem., 423—426. Lett. d'Est., tom. ix., p. 283, 293.

^l Parl. Hist., vol. iv., col. 943.

now captured Ghent and Ypres, Amsterdam, Delft, 1678 and Haarlem, with whom in opposition, a continuance in the war was impossible, resolved to accept, as regarded the allies, the conditions now offered by the King of France; namely, that he should retain all the conquests he had made upon Spain, except Charleroi, Limburg, Binche, Ath, Oudenarde, Courtrai, and Ghent, which places would, he conceived, suffice to form the barrier in the Spanish Netherlands, upon which Great Britain and the States insisted so strongly. He further desired that Sweden should receive satisfaction, and that the Emperor and Empire should re-establish the treaty of Westphalia. Louis granted to the States a truce of six months, which was afterwards prolonged to the end of the year, in order that they might induce the allies to consent to these terms; declaring at the same time, that if the Provinces renewed their alliance with him, he would engage to attack no more places in the Netherlands, whether or not a peace were brought about with Spain; and that their ancient amity once restored, he would readily co-operate in any measure conducive to their repose and liberty; intended, undoubtedly, as a significant hint to the Prince of Orange. If the conditions were refused, the States bound themselves to render no further assistance to the allies during the war. The Emperor, Denmark, and Brandenburg, poured out the bitterest invectives against the inconstancy and ingratitude of the States; but Spain, who was the chief object of consideration to the Dutch, was induced, though with some appearance of ill-humour, to acquiesce in the arrangement^m. As the negotiations advanced to a close, the French, fearing the allies might

^m *Mém. de la Paix de Nim.*, tom. ii., p. 346, 352, 356, 382, 408, 411, 415. *Temp. Mem.*, 426—434.

1678 interpose some obstacle, contrived by an artifice skillfully devised, to arouse general hopes among them that the whole would end in a rupture. Both the Dutch and Spanish ambassadors had proceeded with the understanding that the towns were to be restored to Spain on the ratification of the treaty. But the Marquis de Balbaces having, either casually, or from some doubt that sprung up in his mind, inquired as to the intentions of the King of France on this head, received for answer that his majesty could not permit the evacuation of the towns till entire restitution were made to Sweden of all she had lost in the war. Although it might well have occurred to the Dutch ministers that Louis could not have the slightest intention of insisting on this article, which would have been nothing less than ripping up the whole negotiation for the sake of an ally, towards whom, in the event, he manifested extremely little consideration, they fell with the rest into the snare; nor could the French ambassador venture to undeceive them, since their obligation to conceal nothing from their employers would have endangered the secrecy necessary to the success of the scheme. Accordingly, the States gave their deputies at Nimeguen peremptory orders to proceed no farther in the negotiation unless Louis should engage to deliver the towns at the ratification, and sent a formal message to acquaint the King of England with the circumstance of this unexpected impediment. Charles, and even the Duke of York, assumed an appearance of the greatest astonishment and indignation; and Temple was forthwith sent to the Hague to conclude a treaty with the States engaging England to declare war, in conjunction with the confederates, against France, unless that power consented to deliver up the towns in question within the time that Louis himself had appointed

for the acceptance of his terms. All those in the 1678 United Provinces who had hitherto been most eager in hurrying on the peace were now forward in acknowledging their error, and accusing Louis of having now, in addition to raising difficulties in the way of an accommodation, given further evidence of his insincerity by undertaking the blockade of Monsⁿ. Accordingly, preparations for the renewal of hostilities were made with the greatest activity. Ten thousand English arrived in Flanders, with orders to join the army of the prince, who hastened to the relief of Mons, with the confident hope that the continuance of the war was inevitable. But, meanwhile, the King of France had employed his unfailing influence over Charles to induce him to send one Ducros, a French renegade monk, to Nimueguen, with instructions to prevail with the Swedish ambassador to sacrifice the private interests of his master to the general peace of Europe, by forbearing to insist upon the conditions required by France. To this mission Ducros gave all possible publicity, as well as to the resolution he asserted the king had taken, not to come to a rupture with Louis. The effect was instantaneous. The mediation dropped at once from the hands of the English, and Charles forfeited the proud station he might have held as pacificator of Europe. Sweden desisted from her pretensions; and within four days of the expiration of the term fixed upon by the late treaty with England (August 10th), the French ambassadors declared they had received instructions no longer to withhold the king's consent to the evacuation of the towns. On the morning of the last day, therefore, the treaty between France and the States was finally agreed on, after five hours' debate; fair copies were made with incredible dispatch, and signed with-

ⁿ Temp. Mem., 438—444. Holl. Mer., bl. 157.

1678 out the participation of the mediating ambassadors, a few minutes before the expiration of the time limited. As neither party had any demands to satisfy, nor pretensions to adjust, the treaty was merely an ordinary one of amity and commerce between two equal powers, and presents nothing remarkable, except the contrast of its conditions to those offered by Louis six years before^o.

Scarcely was the peace concluded, when the politics of the court of England underwent another variation. The belief in the so-called Titus Oates' plot prevailing in the nation, had excited to a high degree the clamours of all ranks of men against popery and the French alliance; and Charles, whose resolutions swayed to and fro, according as he was under the influence of the hope or experience of the French king's liberality, on the one side, or awe of his parliament on the other, aimed at appeasing the suspicious of that body, by affecting excessive indignation at the peace concluded by the Dutch, and a determination to pursue warlike measures, if the States would disavow the acts of their ambassadors at Nimeguen. But all confidence in his professions was now utterly annihilated; even the Prince of Orange himself shrank from placing any further dependence on a support so hollow and fluctuating. "Will the king," he observed to Sir William Temple, "never learn a word that I shall never forget since my last passage [from England,] when, in a great storm, the captain was all night crying out to the man at the helm, 'Steady, steady, steady!' If this dispatch had come twenty days ago, it had changed the face of affairs in Christendom, and the war might have been carried on till France had

^o Temp. Mem., p. 445—450. Lett. Aug., 30. Paix de Nimègue, tom. ii., p. 501, 504, 513.

yielded to the treaty of the Pyrenees, and left the 1678 world in quiet for the rest of our lives; as it comes now, it will have no effect at all^p." The appearance of things hitherto had certainly tended in no degree to justify these sanguine prophecies of the prince; nevertheless, the king's offer was successfully employed to excite some dissatisfaction at the precipitation of which it was said Van Beverning had been guilty; and many talked of not only disavowing his acts, but of instituting a legal process against him for having gone beyond his instructions; but these murmurs were soon silenced by the instructions from the French king to his ambassadors, to give the States satisfaction in all points concerning which they had to complain of the conduct of their ministers, and the treaty was ratified with the unanimous consent of all the Provinces^q.

The disappointment and anger of the stadtholder, at the conclusion of the peace, or perhaps his hopes of being yet able to effect its rupture, impelled him to a course equally unprecedented and unjustifiable. Four days after the signature, he attacked the post of St. Denis, near Mons, where the army of the Duke of Luxemburg was reposing, in full security that the war was terminated, and a severe, though indecisive battle was fought. The courage and conduct of the prince in this enterprise are fully lauded; but his pretended ignorance of the treaty of peace, of the existence of which he was perfectly well aware, on the ground that it had not been officially communicated to him by the States^r, can be regarded in no other light than as a mean and unworthy subterfuge. Happily, Louis was in no way disposed to take advantage of this

^p Temp. Mem., p. 462.

^q Res. van de St., Sept. 14.

^r Basnage, vol. ii., p. 940. Holl. Mer., bl. 166.

1678 breach of faith*. The bonds of the confederacy thus loosened, each of the remaining powers laboured to be first in obtaining a separate treaty with France; the Dutch became the mediators of a peace with Spain, on 1679 the conditions previously offered by Louis; and at the end of a few months, Austria, Denmark, and the German princes, were fain to accept, though not without bitter complaints and violent contestations, pretty nearly such terms as France chose to dictate.

In this year died, at the age of ninety-one, the venerable Joost van Vondel, whom the Dutch reverence as the father of their language and poetry in their more refined state.

* Mr. Hallam is of opinion (Const. Hist. of Eng., vol. ii., p. 543, note,) that the Prince of Orange was unjustly charged on this occasion. But there seems no doubt whatever of his actual, though not official, knowledge of the conclusion of the peace. "The news," says the *Hollandsche Mercur*, "was spread on all sides, though no direct express from the States had reached the camp, either from not being sent in time, or some delay on the road." According to Basnage, William afterwards told Lord Albemarle that he received the dispatches of the States on the morning of the day of the battle, and that, guessing the nature of their contents, he put them into his pocket, without opening. From this circumstance, perhaps, he thought himself justified in declaring before God, (in a letter to Pensionary Fagel,) that he only knew of the conclusion of the peace the day after the battle.—Tom. ii., p. 942.

CHAPTER X.

Rivalry of France and England for the Alliance of Holland. Encroachments of Louis XIV. Association of the Princes of Europe formed by William III. Policy of England. Invasion of the Spanish Netherlands. The United Provinces are averse to War. Dissensions between the Government of Amsterdam and the Stadtholder. Opposition of Middleburg to the levy of troops. Truce for twenty years concluded between France and Spain. Compromise between the States of Holland and the Stadtholder. His views upon the Throne of England. His participation in the Invasion of Monmouth. Formation of the League of Augsburg. Burnet maintains the communication between the Stadtholder and the disaffected in England. James II. solicits the support of the Stadtholder in his measures. Dykvelt sent to London. Declaration drawn up by the Pensionary Fagel. Decree of the States-General against Monks and Jesuits. Measures pursued by William. Opposition of Amsterdam overcome. The States evade any explanation of the meaning of their preparations. King James's anger at the intelligence of the projected invasion. Injudicious conduct of Louis XIV. Prince of Orange takes leave of the States. Invasion of England. William obtains the Crown. His feelings upon that event. Effects of the connexion with England on the Affairs of the Dutch. Joint Declaration of War against France. States form the Grand Alliance. Disputes concerning the selection of the Senate of Amsterdam; and the sitting of the Earl of Portland in the States. Unsuccessful effort of Goes to uphold its Municipal Privileges. Campaign of 1690. Naval Engagement off Beachy Head. Congress at the Hague. The French capture Mons. Battle of La Hogue. Capture of Namur, and Battle of Steenkirk. Plot to assassinate the King of England. Battle of Landen. Loss of ships sustained by the Dutch. Offers of Peace from Louis XIV. rejected. Unimportant Campaign. Reduction of Namur. Grand Alliance renewed. Tumults at Amsterdam. France and the States desire peace. Conferences at Ryswick. Peace concluded. The Czar of Muscovy visits Holland. Intrigues of Louis XIV. at the Court of Spain. Disunion and weakness of the Grand Alliance. Will of King Charles III. of Spain. Accepted by the King of France. French Garrisons introduced into the Netherlands. States-General prepare for war. Alliances formed by France and the Emperor. Acknowledgment of James III. as King of England by France. Death of King William. His character.

1679 FROM the moment of the conclusion of the peace of Nimeguen the alliance of the States-General, usually an object of desire both to France and England, became one of animated rivalry and contention. Louis, still keeping his eye fixed upon the conquest of the Spanish Netherlands, the accomplishment of which he was now convinced the States had it always in their power to prevent, sought diligently to secure their neutrality for the future by the renewal of the treaty of 1662; while Charles, or rather the new ministers whom the national ferment consequent on the popish plot had forced him to take into his councils, beholding in the United Provinces the only barrier against the progress of Catholicism and the overwhelming power of France, proposed to engage them in a confederacy, having for its object the retaining that power within the limits she had affixed to herself by the late

1680 treaty. As each party declared that he should consider the formation of any new alliance with his rival an act of hostility against himself, such contradictory movements proceeding from two most powerful princes in Europe, threw the States into no slight perplexity. The remains of the De Witt or Louvestein party which, though now small in number, consisted of the most wealthy and intelligent of the inhabitants, had ever regarded with a favourable eye, the relations of amity between their country and France. On their side, it was urged that, having after the peace of 1674 entered into a defensive alliance with England, they could not in justice refuse the same to France; that Louis desired nothing more than the renewal of the treaty made in 1662, the most flourishing and glorious æra of the republic; that little confidence could be placed in the support of England, in consequence of the perpetual vacillation of her counsels, and the factions

by which the kingdom was torn asunder; whereas 1680 France, now in the zenith of her power, was able and willing to defend and protect them against the whole world. In answer to these arguments, it was objected by the Prince of Orange and his friends, that the States were indebted for the late peace solely to England; that she alone could sustain them against the increasing power of the King of France, who had already mastered so large a portion of the Spanish Netherlands and would easily subjugate the remainder, when the United Provinces must become the next prey of his ambition; that the promises and assurances of a mighty neighbour, who was able to ruin them at will, were of little value; and that France could not justly take umbrage at an alliance with England, the sole object of which was the maintenance of the treaties lately concluded by Louis with Spain and the States-General. For these ostensible reasons, the prince used his most strenuous efforts to engage the Provinces in a league with England, under the name of a treaty of guarantee of the peace of Nimeguen. But the States of Holland, fearful on the one hand of provoking a formidable enemy by an union with so uncertain an ally, and considering on the other, that the determination of the King of France to become master of the Spanish Netherlands precluded all hope of a cordial or lasting amity with him, induced the States of the other Provinces to reject both the alliances proposed, expressing at the same time their resolution to enter into no treaty inimical to that of Nimeguen^a.

But the conduct of Louis himself soon prompted, if it did not constrain them to abandon this neutral line of policy. At a congress held at Courtrai, for the

^a Res. van de St., Feb. 23. Holl. Mer., bl. 20, 21, 28.

1680 purpose of fixing the boundaries of the Netherlands, agreeably to the late treaty, he demanded that the King of Spain should desist from using the title of Duke of Burgundy, and that Alost, Ninhoven, and some other places which the French had conquered and subsequently abandoned, should again be delivered up to him. The governor refusing compliance with his requisitions, he seized a portion of the territories, 1681 to which he laid claim, sent a powerful body of troops to blockade Luxemburg, and threatened the invasion of Flanders. On the side of Germany, also, he took possession of the ten towns in Alsace, the claims to which had been left undecided by the treaty of Nimeguen; and having erected a species of court of justice at Brisach and Mentz, obtained in his own favour the award of a considerable portion both of Upper and Lower Alsace; he likewise occupied Strasburg, under the pretext that the inhabitants were in correspondence with Prince Charles of Lorraine, to introduce a body of imperial troops into the city. At the same time that, by these undisguised infractions of the peace, Louis afforded the Prince of Orange the pretext he so much desired for raising up a new league against him he discouraged and alienated the most ardent supporters of the French alliance in the United Provinces by the persecutions exercised against the Huguenots in his kingdom. Friezland and Groningen which, having a separate stadtholder, had hitherto not scrupled boldly and openly to oppose the measures of the prince, together with the city of Amsterdam, where numbers had before been friendly to Louis, were now possessed with the idea that he purposed to establish the Catholic religion wherever the terror of his victorious arms should enable him to do so. They, in consequence, wholly abandoned his interests, and used

their most strenuous efforts to promote a good understanding with England^b.

It was under the auspices thus afforded by the impolitic acts of the King of France himself, that William formed the design of proposing to the princes of Europe to enter into an association for the maintenance of the treaties of Westphalia and Nimeguen. Of this association the two principal provisions were to be, that if any of the parties committed an infraction of the treaties, he should submit to the arbitration of the rest; and, in case he refused, they were to unite their arms to compel him by force; and these provisions were to hold good against all such as, not having consented to enter into the confederacy, should disturb the repose of Christendom, or refuse the arbitration of the associates. The King of Sweden, so lately the ally of France, prompted by jealousy at the seizure of the duchy of Deux-Ponts by Louis after the death of the duke, was the first to enter into the confederacy. Hoping to include the King of England likewise as a party, William undertook a journey thither; but found that the constrained patriotism of that monarch had already evaporated, and that he was as ready as ever to sacrifice the interests of his own country and those of his allies to France. Ere long, the single hold he retained over the proceedings of that court, in the support of the House of Commons, was lost. The bill for excluding the Duke of York from the succession to the crown, which had been introduced in 1679, not, it was supposed, without the privity and encouragement of the prince himself^c, and had in the last year been passed by the Commons, but

^b Holl. Mer., A.D. 1680, 65, 124; A.D. 1681, 163, 165, 187, 188. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. i., p. 81.

^c See Nég. d'Avaux, tom. i., p. 22, 29, 32.

1681 thrown out by the Lords, was now again introduced by a new parliament, and read a first time, when the king arrested its progress by coming suddenly down to the House, and dissolving it in high anger; nor did he ever summon another parliament during the whole course of his reign. Thus he was left unrestrained to give himself up to the counsels of the French court, to which, from henceforth, he continued wholly subservient. Louis, therefore, more than ever secure of his cordial co-operation, was enabled without risk to assume
1682 a plausible appearance of anxiety for the continuation of peace, by referring all the disputes between himself and the King of Spain to the arbitration of England; and, in the mean time, consented to raise the siege of Luxemburg. But, justly mistrustful of the impartiality of such a judge, Spain expressed a desire to include the States also as arbitrators, who were perfectly willing to accept the office. Foreseeing that the peace, unless it were general, would prove of short duration, they besought the King of Great Britain to name a place of conference for the arrangement of the differences between all the contending parties, representing to him that the Emperor and Princes of Germany were prepared to send their ministers with the purpose of labouring in good earnest to procure a solid and durable peace on equitable conditions. With this request, so conducive to the repose of Europe, Charles positively refused compliance, nor would he deign to answer the question put to him by Van Beuninghen, ambassador of the States in London, as to whether, in case of war, he intended to abide by the late treaties made with the United Provinces. He declared, moreover, that there was no other hope of peace than in the consent of Spain to accept his arbitration singly and unconditionally. Finding that persuasions and remonstrances

were alike fruitless to induce Charles to take any 1682 measures even to retard a war he had it in his power wholly to prevent, the States prepared themselves for the worst by engaging the Emperor and King of Spain, who, with some of the German princes, had in the last year joined the Association, in a treaty with themselves and Sweden, whereby each party was bound to supply the other, on demand, with 6000 foot and 12 ships of 1683 war; the Emperor and Spain furnishing an equivalent in money instead of vessels. The States had already, on the ratification of the Association treaty, increased their land force by 12,000 men^d.

Undeterred by a confederacy rather imposing than formidable, the King of France, having secured the friendship of Brandenburg and Denmark, immediately on the termination of the period he had fixed for Spain to declare her acceptance of the arbitration of Charles II., dispatched the Marshal d'Humières, at the head of an army, to Flanders, to take possession of the remaining towns to which he laid claim. D'Humières accordingly occupied Courtrai and Dixmuyde. The declaration of war, by which this act was responded to on the part of the Marquis di Grana, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, accompanied by a demand made to the States for the subsidy agreed on by the late treaty, was hailed with the liveliest joy by the Prince of Orange, as conducive to the long-hoped-for renewal of general hostilities. Instead of confining the aid to the stipulated subsidy, he secretly dispatched to the Netherlands a force of 14,000 strong; and proposed, through the medium of the Council of State, that a further augmentation of 16,000 should be added to the army. His hopes, however, were frustrated, in conse-

^d Nég. d'Avaux, tom. i., p. 112. Res. van de St., A.D. 1682, Aug. 21. Holl. Mer., A.D. 1682, bl. 185, 216; 1683, bl. 7.

1683 quence of a serious quarrel in which the question itself involved him with the city of Amsterdam. Instead of meeting at once with the ready acquiescence he expected, his proposal had the effect of opening the eyes of the States to the fact of how nearly they had been hurried into a war which the state of their finances, together with many other causes, rendered peculiarly to be deprecated at this juncture. The most determined opposition, therefore, was offered, especially on the part of Amsterdam; the deputies of which city declared that it was impossible they could consent to the new levies proposed, since they would be no sooner resolved on than the King of France would seize the pretext for turning his hostile arms against the United Provinces. Groningen and Friesland also refused their consent in terms equally unequivocal. Sentiments became still further divided, when Louis offered, by the mouth of D'Avaux, his ambassador at the Hague, to satisfy himself with Courtrai, Dixmuyde, Bovignes, Beaumont, and Chimay, in lieu of Luxemburg, which Spain had declared she would never yield; or with some places in Catalonia, together with Pampeluna and Fontarabia. One of these alternatives the deputies of Amsterdam strongly urged in the States of Holland that Spain should be prevailed on to accept; since no better conditions could be hoped for at the end of a war commenced under present circumstances, when the Emperor was fully occupied in defending himself against the Turks, and would require the aid of the German princes, of whom the Electors of Bavaria and Saxony had not entered the confederacy, and the Dukes of Brunswick-Luneburg, though they had received a subsidy from Spain, constantly evaded sending any troops to the Netherlands. Neither did Sweden manifest any forwardness in supplying auxi-

liaries; while Spain herself neglected the defence of 1683 her Netherland dominions to bestow all her care on those of Italy^e.

As some other towns had been induced to give their consent to the levies, only on condition that the vote passed unanimously, the Prince of Orange prevailed with the States of Holland to send a deputation to Amsterdam, of which he placed himself at the head*. He was received with the utmost appearance of cordiality, and commissioners from the Great Council were appointed to confer with him. But the harangues of the Pensionary Fagel, and the mingled caresses, persuasions, and reproaches of the prince, were alike unavailing to move the council, which remained unanimous and firm in its determination. Their obstinacy so incensed the prince, that he loudly accused them of maintaining a separate correspondence with the French ambassador, D'Avaux; angry words passed on both sides; the burgomasters not only made no scruple to admit the fact, but strenuously insisted on the right possessed by themselves or any other town to treat with any foreign power not actually at war with the Provinces, as having been at all times the custom, and forbidden by no law. They retorted the accusation by declaring, that while they had always communicated the subject of their intercourse to the States, he, on the contrary, had maintained correspondences in several courts of Europe, of which the States knew nothing;

* Nég. d'Avaux, tom. i., p. 174, 188. Holl. Mer., 142, 143.

• He had already tried an expedient he had often found successful, that of continually sending back the deputies for fresh instructions, till they were induced to give their consent to what he desired from very weariness of going and returning. On this occasion, the deputies of Amsterdam were obliged to go back four times for fresh instructions, but they returned the fifth with the same answer as at first. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. i., p. 180.

1683 and concluded with a threat that they would one day call him to account for the same. Hereupon William entirely lost his customary self-possession. He rushed out of the guildhall in a fury of rage, swearing that he would make the council repent of their proceedings, and instantly quitted the city. On his return to the Hague, he proposed that the vote should pass, exclusive of Amsterdam; to which the deputies of the other towns consented, subject to the approbation of their principals. Several of the councils, however, disavowed this act of their deputies; a circumstance which still further inflamed the anger of the stadtholder, who resolved, if possible, to accomplish the ruin of the magistrates of Amsterdam.

1684 With this view he stationed a party of soldiers to plunder the courier sent from D'Avaux to the King of France, hoping to discover in the despatches he bore matters which might serve to fix on some at least of those persons a charge of treason. The letters being decyphered, their contents were communicated to the States of Holland, purporting that the deputies of Amsterdam had promised the ambassador they would use their utmost efforts to prevent the question of the new levies from being carried in the States, and had even employed bribes to secure the votes of the other towns; but that the authority of the prince and the dexterity of the pensionary were greatly to be dreaded. The deputies had also, he said, advised him to present to the States-General a written proposition of peace from the king, for the purpose of making his majesty's good intentions known to the people. Many expressions also were added from the ambassador himself, tending, as the prince thought, to his disparagement.

After the reading of the letters, the stadtholder insisted that the Pensionary of Amsterdam, Hop, and

Hooft, another of the deputies, whom he pointed 1684 out as the most guilty, should be arrested, and the papers belonging to the town and pensionary sealed and placed under one of the body of the nobility, till it was determined whether or not they should undergo an examination by the States. A resolution accordingly was passed in conformity with the latter demand. D'Avaux entered warmly into the defence of the government of Amsterdam, who were impelled, as he said, solely by a desire to preserve the peace of the United Provinces, and Europe in general; and published a copy of the letters in question, showing that all those parts which were considered to afford the strongest evidence of criminality against them, were either maliciously perverted or erroneously given by the decyphers. Having made repeated demands of the restoration of their papers without success, the council of Amsterdam signified their determination to send no more deputies to the States of Holland, leaving their business to be transacted by two secretaries.

The estrangement between the city and the Prince of Orange now daily increased. Bitter invectives were poured forth on each side, libels and lampoons circulated without number, accusing the latter of having formed schemes destructive to the liberties of his country; while, on the other hand, reports were industriously circulated among the populace, that the government of Amsterdam had sold themselves to France, and received the wages of their iniquity from D'Avaux; and that the Prince of Orange had discovered their treason. Persons were heard to say that they were traitors, who ought either to be tried by the laws or treated like the De Witts; and such discourses were held without scruple in the public

1684 streets and markets of the Hague. The burgomaster Van Beuninghen*, by whose influence chiefly the affairs of Amsterdam were directed, dreaded so much the effects of the prince's anger, that he dared not venture outside the walls; the watch of the city was doubled, 600 men were kept constantly employed in breaking the ice in the fosse, and every preparation was made against a surprise; the alarm which the government felt, or affected to feel, being augmented by a report that the prince designed to bombard the town, to which the stationing a garrison of 5000 men in Naarden was supposed to give confirmation. Matters were even carried so far, that it is said the question was debated of withdrawing the city from the allegiance of the stadtholder, and placing it in the hands of Henry Casimir, Stadtholder of Friezland and Groningen, as commandant^f.

It was not, indeed, without one or two sharp struggles that the stadtholder became, as he has been termed, "King of Holland." In Zealand, where for the most part his will was a law, he had to endure an opposition from the city of Middleburg equally mortifying with that of Amsterdam; the deputies of that city pertinaciously rejecting the vote of the levy in the States of Zealand, and insisting that Spain should be constrained to accept the conditions offered by the King of France. Conceiving that his personal influence would be of sufficient weight to induce the

^f Nég. d'Avaux, tom. ii., p. 1—6, 61, 62, 70, 98, 105, 107. Holl. Mer., bl. 24, 35, 73. Res. van de St., A.D. 1683, Nov. 6, 11, 24; 1684, Feb. 24, Mar. 6, 16, Jun. 6. Burnet's Hist. of Own Times, vol. i., p. 194.

* This magistrate was induced to concur in measures of opposition to the prince, solely from a feeling of animosity against the Pensionary Fagel; otherwise he was a zealous supporter of the stadtholderate and the English alliance. D'Avaux, tom. iv., p. 180, et passim.

deputies of Middleburg to pass the resolution, Wil-1684 liam repaired to the assembly of the States, where in a long oration he pressed upon them the absolute necessity of the proposed increase to the military force. He afterwards held interviews with the members of the town council separately, but found their pertinacity invincible. Irritated beyond measure, he commanded the Pensionary of Zealand to pass the resolution in the States by a majority; and on his objecting to this proceeding as inconsistent with his oath, the stadtholder adopted the extraordinary and unprecedented course of collecting the votes himself. But he committed this violation of the constitution of his country only to involve the business in still greater difficulty; since Goes, and subsequently Zierikzee, declared their disapprobation of a resolution passed in such a manner, and Middleburg entered an animated protest against it. Friezland and Groningen not only proved deaf to the expostulations of the Prince of Orange on the subject of the levy, but recalled the troops belonging to them from the army in Flanders; and even the States of Overyssel itself, where his authority was almost unbounded, were deterred from giving their consent by fear of the vengeance of the populace, whose sentiments in all the Provinces ran violently against a war^s.

Where obstinacy was so strong a characteristic of all parties, the attempts of the States-General (who were themselves willing to gratify the prince) to reconcile their views, were somewhat hopeless. Finding this, and also that the allies, though profuse of fair promises and warlike counsels, were by no means

^s Holl. Mer., bl. 74—92, 148, 149. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. ii., p. 135, 136, 139, 140. Res. van de St., Ju. 7.

1684 disposed to afford speedy or efficient aid*, they had no resource left but to act in entire opposition to the wishes of the stadtholder, in concluding a preliminary treaty with the French monarch. They engaged to recall their troops from the Netherlands, and to abstain from supplying further assistance to Spain, unless that power consented within six weeks to a truce for twenty years, proposed by Louis, and framed, with some exceptions advantageous to France, upon the basis of the treaty of Nimeguen. The hasty declaration of war on the part of Spain had been issued in full reliance on the support both of England and the United Provinces; but that of the former was from the first evidently hopeless, and that of the latter was rendered so by the present treaty, which bound the States not to afford any assistance to the enemies of the King of France. She, therefore, found herself under the necessity of concluding the truce on the terms proposed, to which the Emperor likewise acceded^b.

Matters were thus arranged entirely to the satisfaction of the government of Amsterdam, and a threat of ceasing to contribute to the public expenses, effected
1685 the release of their papers. Elated by this victory, and irritated by the continued animosity and disdain which the Prince of Orange evinced towards them, the council ventured again to oppose him on a still more tender point,—that of the diminution of the land forces,—a question which was brought under the consideration of the States-General soon after the conclusion of the late truce. The deputies of Amsterdam

^b Holl. Mer., bl. 237, 244, 247. Res. van de St., Jun. 25th.

* The army of the allies under the Prince of Waldek, which that general represented to amount to 30,000 men, was found on examination to consist of no more than 4500. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. iii., p. 61.

strongly represented to the States of Holland the ¹⁶⁸⁵ necessity of decreasing a standing army far above their ability to maintain, and adding to the strength of the navy, which, by the protection it would afford to commerce, would soon repay its own expenses. They urged the example of England, whose land force was comparatively insignificant, while her navy rendered her mistress of the seas; of Venice, whose power on sea was so vast, and who kept up no army at all; and that a paid soldiery was still less necessary in a nation such as the Dutch, whose warlike and well-armed burghers ought to be sufficient for the defence of their cities. But the estimate of 30,000, to which they proposed the army should be reduced, was thought by the nobility far too low, and grounded on the erroneous supposition that the Spaniards were able to defend the Netherlands, so as to form a barrier to the United Provinces; and though admitting the necessity of strengthening the navy, they insisted that a powerful land force was absolutely requisite to protect the United Provinces from disasters similar to those they had experienced in 1672. At length a species of compromise between the two parties was entered into, by which a resolution passed in 1682, for building thirty-six ships, was to be carried immediately into effect; and Holland, Friezland, and Groningen joined with the other provinces in consenting that the military force should remain on its present footing, as proposed by the Stadtholder and Council of State¹.

This termination was precisely such as William would most have desired; since, while bearing the appearance of a concession to the government of Amsterdam, whose favour it had now become his object to conciliate, he retained a large number of

¹ Res. van de St., Jun. 7 and 23. Holl. Mer., bl. 107—127.

1685 troops under his command, at the same time that the increase of the navy was, in fact, of no less importance to him than to his opponents. Events had already begun to pave the way for that great revolution which was to realize his fondest hopes in his elevation, as the representative of civil and religious liberty, to the throne of an enlightened and mighty nation.

On a short visit to England, in the last year, he had been much struck with an expression of the shrewd though giddy monarch of that country, that "whenever the Duke of York should come to reign, he would be so restless and violent, that he could not hold it four years to an end^k." From that moment those hopes were renewed which the failure of the Exclusion Bill had temporarily extinguished; and from that moment he began to labour for their attainment with undeviating diligence and steadiness of purpose. Yet, except to him and a few others of deep penetration and reflection, nothing could appear more improbable than the termination which actually occurred to a reign begun under the most promising auspices for the sovereign. The accession of James II. to the crown of England, on the death of his brother in this year, was hailed on all sides with expressions of joy and congratulation; the nation, wearied with the plots and cabals of the last reign, had run into the extreme of loyalty and subservience; the doctrine of passive obedience was zealously professed, and the divine right of kings unreservedly acknowledged. Laws were enacted, which placed enormous and inquisitorial power in the hands of the king's council; and an obsequious House of Commons, by granting him an ample revenue for life, exempted him from that dependence on parliament which had been the only

^k Burnet, vol. i., p. 575.

check on the arbitrary and lawless proceedings of his 1685 predecessor. As regarded the relations of his kingdom with France and Holland, the government of the new king seemed to give an earnest of considerable improvement. He declared his determination to maintain the balance of Europe with a more steady hand than had hitherto held it, and evinced his purpose of no longer acquiescing in the haughty pretensions Louis had constantly asserted, by his exactness in allowing no more honours to be paid his ambassador in London than were awarded to his own at Paris. He likewise professed his determination to live on terms of entire friendship and confidence with the Prince of Orange, and gratified him by the recal of Chudleigh, ambassador at the Hague, who was personally objectionable to William, substituting Skelton in his room. William, on his side, showed no less a disposition to be on the most amicable terms with the king. The Duke of Monmouth, natural son of Charles II., had, in the last year, in consequence of the discovery of the Rye-house Plot, in which he was implicated, retired into Holland, where, during his father's life, he was entertained by the Prince of Orange with marks of peculiar esteem and regard. William now not only anticipated the king's wishes, by desiring this nobleman to quit the United Provinces, but consented, at his request, to cashier all the officers who had waited upon Monmouth during his residence in Holland¹.

But it scarcely admits of a doubt that, even at this period, the prince was deceiving his unhappy father-in-law, and that, in order to try the humour of the people of England, he was privy to, if not participant in,

¹ Nég. d'Avaux, tom. iv., p. 8—17. Burnet, vol. i., p. 515, 627. Res. van de St., May 16.

1685 the subsequent enterprise of the Dukes of Monmouth and Argyle against England and Scotland. Certain it is, that the former soon returned to Holland, and that both lived for a considerable time in affected privacy at Amsterdam, where they collected, without impediment, the requisite arms, ammunition, and vessels; that Monmouth kept up a frequent correspondence by letter with the prince's favourite, Bentinck; and that though he was seen in various places in Holland, and even at the Hague itself, William constantly evaded the solicitations both of the English ambassador and the States for his arrest, as well as of the other suspected parties. The Pensionary Fagel likewise contrived that the order of the States-General for the detention of the ships in which the rebels were to set sail for England, should be delayed, till the time for its execution had passed away. But the assumption of the title of king by Monmouth was a step further than William either desired or expected; he therefore thought proper to disavow all knowledge of the enterprise, and readily coincided with the States in their compliance with the king's request for the loan of the three Scottish and three English regiments in their service, and even sent Bentinck to London to propose that he should take the command of the royalist army. This offer, however, the king, giving credence, probably, to the reports which were universally current, of the secret support he had afforded Monmouth, unhesitatingly rejected^m.

The insurrection, easily quelled, was attended with the usual results of similar rash and ill-concerted attempts,—that of confirming the power of the monarch

^m Le Clerc, *Hist. des Prov. Unies*, tom. ii., p. 401. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. iv., p. 158, 174; tom. v., p. 9, 26, 29, 42, 45. Miss. van Burgom. van Amst. MS. in *Vad. Hist.* gequot. b. Lix., No. 14, bl. 306.

against whom it was directed; and had James possessed but common prudence, and pursued his measures with anything like the requisite temper and caution, he might, perhaps, have accomplished, by degrees, the designs which he harboured of the restoration of the Catholic religion, and the establishment of arbitrary power. But the atrocious and wanton cruelties, exercised alike on the innocent and guilty, for which that rebellion afforded a pretext; the demand of a standing army; the efforts made to obtain from parliament a repeal of the Test Act, and the virtual abolition of that act, by the use of the dispensing power, and the bestowal of some of the most considerable offices of government on the Catholics, revealing at once his object, and the means he was prepared to employ for its attainment, excited the alarm and indignation of members of the reformed religion of all sects and persuasions, not only in England, but in foreign nations. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV., just at this time, inspired also a general suspicion that nothing less than the total extirpation of the Protestant religion was aimed at. The fierce and unrelenting persecution which preceded and followed that act, drove numbers of Protestant fugitives into England and Holland, where they were received with open arms, and filled the ears of all men with representations of the calamities they had to expect from the bigotry and cruelty of the Catholics, should they ever become the masters^a.

Every circumstance, therefore, seemed to combine to favour the views of the Prince of Orange, who, aware that the most formidable opposition to their attainment was to be expected from the King of France, laboured unceasingly to raise him up an host

^a Nég. d'Avaux, tom. v., p. 72, et passim.

1685 of enemies that should give him sufficient employment elsewhere. The Elector of Brandenburg, who had of late years espoused French interests, was moved by the danger that threatened the Protestant religion to renew his ancient bonds of friendship with the United Provinces. The powers hostile to France, feeling themselves but ill-secured by the late treaties against the ambition and encroachments of Louis, were easily
1686 induced to enter into a league at AUGSBURG for the maintenance of the peace of Europe; to which, besides the Emperor, the King of Spain, and the States, the King of Sweden, the Elector of Bavaria, and the circles of Franconia and Saxony, became parties.

Meanwhile, a medium of communication between William and the malcontents in England offered itself in the person of Gilbert Burnet, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, who was at this time at the Hague, having quitted England soon after the accession of James. Burnet, however, was cautious not to involve himself too deeply with the prince till he had ascertained his sentiments upon civil liberty and religious toleration; particularly the former, in regard to which his conduct hitherto had not been such as to inspire any great degree of confidence. In answer to his inquiries, William professed himself the advocate of a free government (not as tending to promote the happiness and civilization of the people, but) as the only one capable of resisting a powerful enemy, or of supplying resources for a protracted war; the only object, it appears, that he deemed worth his consideration. He likewise declared himself favourable to the liturgy and government of the church of England, though by no means disposed to condemn any other; nor, however anxious for their toleration, had he any wish to render the Calvinistic doctrines, professed by the Dutch

church, prevalent in England. Conceiving himself 1686 thus enabled to give a favourable account of the prince's sentiments in England, Burnet's next care was to obtain from the Princess Mary, a promise that in case she should ever become Queen of England, she would surrender the whole authority of government to her husband, and endeavour to procure it to be legally invested in him. He found little difficulty in engaging this obedient wife to make such a promise; to the great gratification of William, who though of so cold and reserved a temper that he returned not the slightest acknowledgment to Burnet for his good offices, afterwards observed to another, that in nine years of marriage he had never the confidence to press a matter which Burnet had concluded in a single day°.

Little suspecting the machinations that were at work against him, James incautiously supplied the Prince of Orange with a pretext for interfering openly in the affairs of England by sending over the celebrated William Penn, the quaker, as ambassador, to solicit his approbation of the measures he was adopting to procure the repeal of the Test Act and the penal laws against nonconformists, and which he hoped by this means to render more palatable to the nation. In the latter principle, William professed his entire acquiescence; but steadily refused to sanction the proposal for the repeal of the Test Act, which he regarded, he said, not as an engine of persecution, but as a necessary safeguard for the Protestant religion. The more eager the king was to press on the advancement of his schemes, the more necessary it was for him to keep up the appearance at least of a good understanding with his son-in-law. Accordingly, after the return of Penn, 1687 he invested one White, an Irishman, who bore the

° Burnet, vol. i., bl. 691—693.

1687 title of Marquis of Albeville, with the office of ambassador at the Hague, commissioned to assure the States that the preparations lately made by him on sea, had no other object than the maintenance of a secure peace; that he condemned the late persecutions of the Protestants in France, as his friendly reception of the fugitives sufficiently testified; and that his measures tended only to vindicate the prerogatives of the crown, and were such as would ultimately prove to the advantage of the Princess Mary herself^p.

Fearful that the communication between himself and his father-in-law would inspire the people of England with a suspicion that he might become a party to his views, the Prince of Orange obtained of the States-General that Dykveldt, a man of eminent talent and prudence, and who, from being a warm supporter of the Louvestein party, had become his zealous adherent, should be sent as ambassador extraordinary to London. While his ostensible duty was to assure the king of the pacific intentions of the States, and to endeavour to obviate any dissatisfaction that might have arisen in his mind against the prince, he had secret instructions from the latter (drawn up by Burnet) to inspire the people with a good opinion of him; to labour to eradicate the notions with which a great number were possessed, that he was a bigoted presbyterian, of an ambitious disposition, and fond of arbitrary power; to assure the church party that he would ever be firm to their interests, and to give the dissenters confident hopes of a larger measure of toleration than they could ever expect permanently to enjoy from the Catholics. Dykveldt acquitted himself of his arduous and delicate task with unexampled dexterity; while the unfavourable opinions which had

^p Burnet, vol. i., p. 694. Holl. Mer., bl. 118.

been entertained of the prince in England, vanished in 1687 proportion as the misunderstanding between him and the court became apparent. Many of the principal nobility began to hold meetings, to consider of the measures best to be pursued in order to restore the liberty and secure the religion of the nation, and oblige the king to govern according to the laws; the result of their deliberations being constantly transmitted to the prince. To but very few of them, however, did Dykveldt disclose the design cherished by William of possessing himself of the throne during the life of the king. Among those taken into his confidence was the Princess Anne, with whom at this early period Dykveldt agreed upon the settlement of the succession on pretty nearly the same foundation as it was afterwards fixed. During this time, in order to lull suspicion, the ambassador perpetually transmitted accounts to the States-General of the affection expressed by the king for them and the prince, and the long and confidential interviews he was permitted to hold with him^a.

While the prince was thus secretly undermining the throne of his father-in-law, James was no less assiduously endeavouring to obtain the support of his sanction to his measures. Finding that Albeville made no great progress in the matter, he employed for this purpose one Stewart, a Scotchman, and a zealous Presbyterian, upon whom, as a person very commonly supposed to have taken a part in the enterprise of Argyle, no suspicion could fall of any attachment to popery. This man, able and eloquent, gained during his residence at the Hague, much of the confidence both of the Prince of Orange and the Pensionary Fagel; and on his return to England, wrote several

^a Verhaal der Deputatie, MS. in Vad. Hist., b. 59, No. 26. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. vi., p. 24, 25.

1687 letters to an intimate friend of the latter, filled with exhortations that the pensionary would persuade the prince to embrace so fair an opportunity of conciliating the king and the larger and better portion of the English nation, by co-operating with the former in the abrogation of the Test Act and the penal laws against nonconformists; urging, that the Catholics were too few in number to give any cause of alarm, and expatiating on the severities to which those laws gave occasion against the numerous sects of the reformed religion. Several of these letters were allowed to pass unnoticed; until a report being spread that the prince was brought to concur in the sentiments of the court, an answer was published, drawn up by Fagel, as containing the opinions of the Prince and Princess of Orange on these subjects. In this document they expressed themselves in favour of a full and entire liberty of conscience to all religious sects, but averse to the repeal of the Test Act, as well as to the admission of Catholics into either house of parliament, or to civil and military offices. The Test Act, they said, was not to be considered as a measure of severity against the Catholics, but a condition requiring persons to declare themselves of the established religion as a qualification to fill a public office. If their number was so small as was represented, it was unreasonable to disturb public tranquillity for the advantage of a few persons only; if it were greater, there was the more cause to fear their influence. Even in the United Provinces they were excluded from political and judicial offices; they were admitted, it was true, to military employments; but the reason of this was, that having, on the foundation of the republic, joined with the Reformers in defence of their liberty, and rendered signal services during the long wars against Spain, it

would be too harsh a measure now to exclude them, 1687 especially as the smallness of their number in the army rendered it easy for the States to obviate any evils that might arise from their presence.

In proportion as this publication excited the anger 1688 of the king and court against the prince, so did it gain him the favour and confidence of the people; and a justification of its authenticity by Fagel, called forth by an attempt on the part of the former to impose upon it a supposititious character, as if framed without the knowledge of the prince, tended still farther to reassure the public mind. The churchmen, seeing that there was no reason to apprehend any attempt by William to intrude his own Calvinistic opinions, began to espouse his interests more openly; and the dissenters, convinced that the abolition of the Test Act would lay open the offices of law and government, not to them but to the Catholics, were inclined to be satisfied with an inferior measure of toleration, grounded, as they conceived, upon principles of justice and true policy^r.

A decree passed shortly before in the States-General, prohibiting the residence of Jesuits and monks in the United Provinces, although it appeared at first sight to militate against the maxims of toleration they so strongly professed, gave them an opportunity of asserting these maxims with considerable effect. The Catholic sovereigns, more especially the Emperor, loudly complained of this act as a far more grievous persecution than the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. If, it was said, the right of the King of France to withdraw a privilege granted by the favour of his predecessors to their subjects was denied, how much more unjustifiable must be the violation of those

^r Holl. Mer., A.D. 1687, bl. 92; 1688, bl. 152, 158, et seq.

1688 compacts which the Catholics and Reformers of the United Provinces had made with each other on equal terms. In answer, the States alleged, that the Jesuits and monks were emissaries of foreign powers, who bore no good-will to the country, out of which they yearly carried away large sums, levied from the pockets of the industrious inhabitants; and that it was for this reason alone they were expelled, not for any cause of religion or in revenge of the sufferings inflicted by the King of France on the Reformers. The Catholics, they said, were well provided with active priests of their own nation, and could easily dispense with the services of a number of monks, who, owing allegiance to a foreign power, never were other than troublesome and disaffected subjects, of whom the priests themselves were the most anxious to be rid. By this exposition, the States, while they speedily appeased the displeasure of the Catholic princes, laid down clearly the broad line of distinction between restrictive acts against sectarians framed on political, and those on religious, grounds.

Hitherto, though the people of England looked forward with impatience to the succession of the Princess of Orange, that event had never been contemplated by the greater number as likely to happen during the life of the present monarch; since the evils under which they laboured, whatever their magnitude, must, they supposed, terminate with that period. The birth of a Prince of Wales now deprived them of that consolation, and filled the whole nation, the few Catholics excepted, with grief and perplexity*. Unless

* The intelligence was received in Holland with equal dissatisfaction. The English consul at Amsterdam having caused bonfires to be lighted before his house, it was attacked by the mob, and with difficulty saved from destruction; and the clumsily-contrived fabrication of the supposititious birth of the infant was no less eagerly credited by the majority

some immediate remedy were provided, they beheld 1688 the present system of bigotry and violence perpetuated to their posterity, and accordingly the eyes of all began to turn for deliverance to the Prince of Orange. Conscious that the moment he had so long sighed for was at length arrived, William, on the return of the Lord of Zuylestein, with the invitation from the nobles to hasten to their assistance in defence of the liberty and laws of the nation, prepared himself with alacrity to obey the welcome summons.

Two formidable difficulties stood in the way of the execution of his project; the first, to collect a fleet and army sufficient to ensure success, without exciting the suspicions of England and France; the second, to secure the United Provinces against an invasion during his absence. The former difficulty was smoothed by a fortuitous and opportune circumstance. This was the dispute between the Emperor and King of France concerning the nomination to the archbishopric of Cologne; the latter having proposed to the chapter, Prince William of Furstemburg, and the Emperor, Joseph Clement, a prince of Bavaria, whose election was confirmed by the Pope. Each side prepared to support their pretensions by arms, and Louis occupied some of the towns of the diocese with French troops; whereupon the stadtholder and States, to whom it was notoriously a matter of vital importance that Cologne should be in the hands of an ally, declared their resolution of assisting the Prince of Bavaria.

An admirable pretext was thus afforded the Prince of Orange for levying troops, and forming alliances.

of the people than in England. The prince and princess behaved themselves on the occasion with the greatest decorum. They ordered prayers for the young prince to be said in their chapel, and sent the Lord of Zuylestein to congratulate the king and queen on the event. *Holl. Mer.*, bl. 175, 177.

1688 But in order to raise the requisite force, it was necessary to gain over to his interests the town of Amsterdam, whose opposition would have sufficed to render the whole scheme abortive,—a task, considering the angry feelings scarcely yet subsided between the parties, of apparently no very easy accomplishment. This delicate affair was entrusted to Dykvelt, the late ambassador in England, who managed it with equal skill and success. He had, before the birth of the Prince of Wales, sounded one of the burgomasters, Witsen, who has left on record an exact account of the whole transaction, as to the course the prince should pursue, if invited by the nobility of England to remedy the disorders of their country, when (the pregnancy of the queen being known) Witsen had observed that, “in case her Majesty should give birth to a son, the princess would no longer have any claim to the English crown, and therefore he was not called upon to interfere.” This, when reported to William, was extremely ill taken; and he replied, with some heat, that his “right would be just as good as ever.” Notwithstanding this discouraging commencement, Dykvelt now, under a promise of secrecy, opened the designs of the prince to Witsen, and two other burgomasters, named Hudde and Geelvinck, representing to them, in vivid colours, the danger to which both the Protestant religion and the United Provinces were exposed, from the threatened alliance of the monarchs of France and England; urging how much more advantageous it would be, rather to strike the first blow, than wait to be attacked by so powerful a coalition; and that the devotion of the principal nobility of England to the prince was such as to render the success of the enterprise scarcely less certain. But these advances were met with no more favourable dis-

position than at first. Alarmed at the idea of drawing 1688 on themselves another war with France, the burgomasters declared, with one accord, that they could never consent to any hostile measures against James II., and strongly recommended the prince to wait and see what changes time might bring about. Such a war, they said, would have the appearance of being undertaken solely on account of religion, and would provoke the enmity of all the Catholic powers of Europe; the Provinces, deprived of troops, would be exposed to the same dangers and internal commotions as in the year 1672, while the navy was in a far different condition from what it was at that time, being incalculably decreased in strength, and deprived of its most able commanders. William, on the other hand, affirmed that the enterprise would only be the work of a week or two; and even if a war with France were the consequence, it would, from their close union with England, be carried on with so much the more advantage to the United Provinces. In an interview with Witsen, he professed that, for himself, he expected nothing but his labour for his reward; a show of moderation, however, which failed to deceive the burgomaster, who, with characteristic bluntness, observed, that, "considering the proximity of the princess to the crown, he thought some richer reward than labour might be in store for him." At length the vivid representations and persuasions of Dykvelt prevailed with the burgomasters, so far as to induce them to promise that, though they would not advise the prince to the enterprise, they would, if it were undertaken without their participation, endeavour to obtain for him such support as might be consistent with their duty*.

* Verhaal van Witsen im Vad. Hist. gequot, b. 60, No. 11.

1688 Thus having secured the acquiescence, though not the cordial co-operation of Amsterdam, the prince easily obtained from the States, through the Pensionary Fagel, permission to raise a loan of four millions of guilders* for the repair of the fortifications of the Rhine and Yssel, and a fresh levy of troops. Three or four deputies were commissioned to confer with the prince on the mode of defending the frontier; to these, who it was contrived should be all his devoted partisans, he entrusted his secret, and in concert with them, made preparations for the invasion of England, under the appearance of being about to commence a war in Cologne. On the representation of the prince, also, that the affair of Cologne might involve them in hostilities with France, the States voted the immediate levy of 9000 seamen, and that the fleet should be put in readiness to go out to sea on receiving orders. A demand of the English and Scottish regiments in the service of the States by James II. was refused, on the plea that they were indispensable for the defence of the frontier, while it gave them the opportunity of ridding themselves of some Catholic officers whose fidelity they suspected. They granted their discharge to all such as demanded it; and about thirty-six having taken advantage of the permission, the prince remodelled the regiments in such a manner, that he was henceforth able to place the most entire dependence on them^t.

The next difficulty which the Prince of Orange had to overcome,—that of providing for the safety of

^t Holl. Mer., bl. 184—191. Res. van de St., Feb. 17, Mar. 31.

* Such was the abundance of money in the United Provinces, in consequence of the sums brought thither by the French Protestant refugees, that the whole amount was lodged in the coffers of the Receiver-general within eight days. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. vi., p. 67.

the Provinces in his absence,—was yet more perplexing. He could not resolve to undertake an enterprise so hazardous with a less force than 14,000 troops; and the withdrawal of such a number, would leave the frontier totally defenceless against the invasion of the King of France, which appeared the inevitable consequence. In this emergency he found an able and valuable ally in Frederick III., Elector of Brandenburg, who had succeeded his father, Frederic William, and though incomparably inferior to him in talent, was more constant to his engagements, and an ardent admirer of the prince. To him, first, Bentinck was empowered to communicate the secret of the design, and found no difficulty in engaging him to send a powerful body of troops to the assistance of the Provinces, in case they were attacked during William's absence. The Dukes of Lunenburg-Zelle, and Wirtemberg, with the Landgrave of Hesse, likewise were prompted by their anxiety for the interests of the Protestant religion to enter into secret treaties of a similar nature^a.

Meanwhile, the preparations were carried on with such extraordinary celerity, and the secret, though now in the keeping of a great number of persons both in England and Holland, so inviolably preserved, that a powerful army was assembled in the vicinity of Nimeguen, a fleet of fifty vessels stationed in the Meuse, and 500 transport-ships, hired by trusty merchants, were in different ports awaiting the orders for embarkation, before the slightest certainty was arrived at as to their destination; the suspicions which D'Avaux had repeatedly communicated to the French court of the designs of the Prince of Orange having hitherto gained not the slightest credence either there

^a Burnet, vol. i., p. 757. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. vi., p. 64.

1688 or at that of England. At length D'Avaux having been enabled to supply the King of France with undoubted intelligence of the fact, it was by him transmitted to James, accompanied by an offer of twelve or fourteen thousand troops, and a squadron of sixteen vessels, which that monarch, following the insidious advice of his minister Sunderland, rejected. He, however, immediately commissioned Albeville to inquire the meaning of the extraordinary preparations making by the States, and, at the same time, D'Avaux presented to them a memorial, declaring that his master was bound by his treaties with England, not only to assist King James, but to treat the first act of hostility committed against him as an infraction of the peace. The States evaded giving an answer to the demand of Albeville, by desiring to know what was the nature of the treaties to which the French ambassador alluded, since they were not aware that any such existed. Too proud to acknowledge that he stood in need of assistance from the King of France, James neutralized the intended good offices of D'Avaux, by denying that there was any treaty between the two crowns, except such as had been long publicly known. In order to create further delay, the Prince of Orange induced the States to demand a formal declaration to this purport in writing, hoping that, ere it could arrive, his scheme would be ripe for execution. He, meanwhile, discovered his intention of invading England to the States of Holland under an oath of secrecy; and a similar oath was exacted from the councils of the towns, on the question being referred for their consideration. In that of Amsterdam, it was resolved to "support his highness in his undertaking, as matters had now gone too far to recede." Upon such slight

* Verhaal van Witsen im Vad. Hist., gequot, b. 60, No. 12.

apparent threads do the destinies of nations hang! 1688
Had the council of Amsterdam opposed the prince at this critical juncture, which, considering their previous dissensions, was a circumstance highly probable, or had any other town hesitated to give him its support, the scheme would have been prematurely discovered, and a delay created, until the lateness of the season, or an invasion of the Provinces by the King of France, might have rendered it wholly abortive. Happily, however, all feelings of party spirit were absorbed in apprehension of the danger to which the Protestant religion would be exposed, if the measures of the King of England were allowed to prevail, and in the conviction of the necessity of rescuing that country out of the hands of a sovereign, from whose close alliance with France, they had nothing to expect but a combination to destroy them, similar to that entered into by his predecessor in 1671. The States of Holland passed an unanimous resolution to support the prince in his enterprise to the utmost of their power; and a similar resolution was afterwards passed in the States of the other Provinces, where, the influence of the prince being more extensive, less difficulty was anticipated. Fagel also obtained a vote that the four millions of guilders which had been raised for the repair of the fortifications, should, now that the occupation of Cleves and the city of Cologne by the troops of the Elector of Brandenburg, had secured their frontiers on the side of the Rhine and Yssel, be transferred as a loan to the prince^w.

Matters were thus advanced, when the King of England's written reply was received; and the States, in answer to the demand of Albeville, protested that

^w Nég. d'Avaux, tom. vi., p. 66, 68, 73, et passim, 119. Holl. Mer., bl. 192. Res van de St., Oct. 26.

1688 they had no intention of making war upon the king *and* people of England; an expression that could scarcely be misunderstood, as signifying that one or other was aimed at. James, therefore, could no longer doubt the reality of those designs he had hitherto persisted in disbelieving. On being made acquainted with the resolution of the States, he fell into a violent passion of anger, declaring to Van Citters, their ambassador in London, that he "blamed the States less than the prince, who was the basest of men, since he sought to deprive his own father-in-law of his throne^x." And in this impotent anger, he exhausted well-nigh all his energies. He refused to follow the advice of those of his ministers who recommended him to apply to France for assistance, choosing rather to attempt to ward off the evil by summoning some Catholic regiments from Ireland, and revoking a few of the most obnoxious of his late measures. But this conciliating course of conduct was adopted too late to be of any service, even had the people been disposed to put the slightest trust in his sincerity.

The firm and vigorous support of Louis could alone have saved the king at this crisis; a support which, notwithstanding the rejection of his offers, he had ample opportunities of affording. Had he immediately on suspicion of William's intentions, withdrawn his troops from Cologne, and arranged his differences with the Pope and Emperor, he would have deprived both him and the neighbouring princes of all pretext for keeping troops on foot, and obliged the former either to declare his purpose or to hasten prematurely to its execution. Had he created an alarm for their own safety in the United Provinces, by stationing his troops in the conquered towns of Flanders, he would, there is

^x Missive van Van Citters, MS. in Vad. Hist. gequot., b. 60, No. 12.

little doubt, have deterred them from incurring the 1688 risk of an invasion of England; or had that measure not proved effectual, he might, without offence to the English people, have co-operated with such portion of the fleet of that nation as remained firm in their loyalty, in intercepting the passage of the invaders. But, during the whole course of these events, we trace the effects of the influence of Madame de Maintenon, and of the less able advisers she had brought into the councils of Louis, in the total absence of that astute and skilful policy which, with a few exceptions, had marked all the previous actions of his political life. It was this critical moment for himself and his kingdom, when a prince, the governing passion of whose life was hostility to France, was about to be raised to the sovereignty of a nation, without whose alliance he had constantly acknowledged that all his schemes of ambition would have been chimerical,—it was this moment that he chose for declaring war against the Emperor on the most frivolous grounds, arousing by that act the hostility of the Duke of Hanover, the Elector of Saxony, and the most powerful German princes; while he at the same time set the United Provinces entirely at rest respecting their frontier, by employing his army at a distance in the reduction of Philipsburg, and the towns of the Palatinate. It was this moment, so important to the interests of the catholic religion, that, instead of endeavouring to unite the catholic sovereigns of Europe by one common tie of religion, and thus overawing the Prince of Orange into quiescence, he chose to make a hostile attack on the Pope for a cause in which he could have had no possible right to interfere—the appointment, namely, of a bishop to a see belonging to the Empire. At the same time, by the course he thought fit to pursue

1688 towards the United Provinces, he obviated any hesitation they may have felt from commercial views to expose themselves to his displeasure. At this moment, when it was of the last importance to him if he could not arouse their terror, at least to conciliate their good-will, as the only hope of raising up an opposition to the prince, he forbade the importation of their staple commodity, herrings, except when salted with French salt, and manufactured linen and woollen cloths from Holland, obliging the States in reprisal to prohibit the introduction of French brandy and sugars into the Provinces. The injury thus inflicted upon the commerce, and the diminution of the daily comforts of the people, was severely felt and deeply resented; especially, since while encouraging the citizens of Amsterdam in their opposition to the levy of troops in 1684, he had been profuse of the most flattering promises of the advantages that would accrue to them from his alliance. Scarcely, indeed, could Louis, had the enterprise been planned in concert with him, have contributed more to its success than he did by at once entirely alienating the party friendly to him in the United Provinces, and employing elsewhere both his own arms and those of the other catholic princes who might have been inclined, from religious motives, to oppose obstacles to its execution[†].

All things being now in readiness, the prince took leave of the States-General, thanking them for the friendship towards himself, and the zeal for the public good they had always evinced; and recommending the Prince of Waldek as the fittest person to take the command of the army in his absence. He knew not, he said, what might be the will of the Almighty in regard to him; but in case of his death, he committed

[†] Res. van de St., Oct. 16. Nég. d'Avaux, tom. iv., p. 10, 12.

the princess with confidence to their care. In conclusion, he exhorted them to unanimity, the more necessary, since they had to expect that the first and most cruel vengeance of the common enemy of England and Holland would fall upon them. The parting was mournful and tender. Though his cold and distant manner had rendered William little beloved, the deputies could not behold him depart on his anxious and perilous journey without feelings of the deepest emotion. Several attempted to address him, but were only able to utter a few sentences expressive of kindness and good wishes, broken by tears and sobs; William alone of all the assembly retained his customary imperturbable composure. The following day was observed as a general fast, prayers being offered up in all the churches for the success of the enterprise as involving the safety of the reformed religion. Even at the chapel of the Spanish ambassador at the Hague, grand mass and vespers were sung, and people exhorted to pray for prosperity to the arms of the Prince of Orange^s.

On the 29th of October (new style) the fleet, under the command of Lord Herbert, who, somewhat to the dissatisfaction of the States, had been created lieutenant-admiral of Holland, set sail from Helvoetsluys, but was obliged to put back by stress of weather; a circumstance which tended rather to the advantage than the detriment of the prince's affairs; since the Dutch, causing a report to be industriously spread that they had received so much damage as to be unable to put to sea again during the winter, the King of England was inspired with the belief that the danger was past, and not only neglected to adopt measures for his defence, but revoked the concessions he had shortly before

* Burnet, vol. i., p. 782. Holl. Mer., bl. 236.

1688 made, and which might have rendered the people, unless thus convinced of his insincerity, less willing to proceed to extremities against him. On the 11th of November the fleet again put to sea, when another fortuitous circumstance was attended with the most happy results. It had been purposed to attempt the landing in the north; but Van Esch, the captain of the prince's ship, allowing a tide to escape him through negligence, the other vessels were obliged to await his coming up, during which time the wind changed, and the fleet was finally compelled to direct its course towards the south-west coast, which was unprovided with troops; the king having marched his army towards the north in expectation of the attack in that quarter^a.

Passing the English fleet unmolested, the whole of the ships, above five hundred in number, anchored safely in Torbay. The detail of the events that followed,—the joyful reception given to the prince by all ranks of men,—his unopposed march to London,—the hasty flight of his adversary, deserted by his subjects, his soldiers, and his nearest and dearest kindred and friends,—and the remarkable and almost bloodless revolution which raised William to the throne of England, are familiar to every reader*.

Yet, scarcely was he seated on that throne, when he found in the enjoyment of his highest wishes a full portion of the "amari aliquid" which mingles itself in almost every species of earthly felicity. The restric-

^a Holl. Mer., bl. 288.

* The pensionary Fagel, to whose indefatigable zeal and dexterity the success of the enterprise may be in a great measure ascribed, lived not to behold its full accomplishment. The fatigue and anxiety he had undergone, proving too much for his feeble constitution, brought him to the grave about a month after the departure of the fleet.

tions placed on the royal authority by the terms of the 1689 Act of Settlement were unpalatable in the highest degree to his ambitious and arbitrary temper, inso-much that the Lord Bentinck absolutely rejected them on his behalf; and Witsen, the ambassador extraordinary from Holland, declined, for fear of giving him offence, to urge upon him their acceptance, to which he was ultimately persuaded with considerable difficulty by Dykveldt, whose influence over him was almost unbounded^b. How little confidence he felt in the stability of the affections of his new subjects, or of the sentiments of enthusiasm at first expressed towards him, was evident from the answer he made to the congratulations of the Dutch ambassadors: "Ay," he said, "it is Hosannah here, now! but very soon, perhaps, it will be, Crucify him! Crucify him!"^c Nor was this mistrust wholly without cause. The zeal of his most eager partisans began visibly to abate, even before he was proclaimed king; his cold and reserved manners were, as he could not but perceive, offensive in the extreme to the English, accustomed to the gaiety and freedom of the court of Charles II.; and his impaired health, consequent on the cessation of his usual habits of recreation and exercise, especially hunting, encouraged his disposition to seclusion, and occasioned a peevishness of temper which soon alienated from him even his immediate friends and courtiers of that nation.

On the other hand, the satisfaction which the Dutch experienced at having given a sovereign to so great and renowned a nation, an event calculated to add strength to the cause of the reformed religion, and permanently secure to themselves the English alliance, gave place

^b Verbaal der Ambassade van Witsen, in *Vad. Hist.*, gequot., B. 60, No. 30.

^c *Idem*, B. 61, No. 5

1689 in a great degree to the not groundless apprehension that the king would be tempted to sacrifice the interests of the weaker state, where his authority was undisputed, to those of the larger and more powerful, in order to conciliate the good-will of his subjects or preserve that popular favour to which he was indebted for his crown. Many, who considered the office of hereditary stadtholder incompatible with that of King of England, expected that he would resign the former; but this anticipation was disappointed in the receipt of his first message to the States, informing them of his elevation to the throne, and professing that this circumstance would in no wise lessen his care and affection for them, but enable him on the contrary to exercise the office he held in the United Provinces, for their greater service and advantage. But, notwithstanding these fair promises, it soon became evident how little they had to hope for either from him or the English nation, in return for the liberal and generous assistance afforded them in the late emergency. Their application for indemnification for the costs of the enterprise was treated with neglect; and although the king declared that himself and his kingdom were under the deepest obligation to the people of the United Provinces, who had risked their lives and fortunes in their service, and that he would rather sacrifice all in England and return to Holland, than not see justice done them, some months were allowed to elapse before any funds were set apart for the payment, which was not completed before the end of three years.

In debating the question of the combined fleet which the two nations had resolved to put to sea, the English insisted, not only that their admiral should have the sole command, but that all their officers should take precedence of those of the States in the councils of

war; so that the lowest English captain was to rank 1689 before the first admiral of the Dutch; and in this unreasonable and insulting demand they were supported not only by the king, but by his favourite, Bentinck; while of the three ambassadors from the States at his court, Odyk and Dykveldt offered but feeble opposition, and Witsen, by his bold remonstrances on the subject, incurred William's severe displeasure. The States ultimately found themselves obliged to acquiesce in the arrangement made on this footing. The English likewise required that the States should engage to carry on jointly the war now about to commence with France, and not to make peace except by common consent; and that they should seize all ships of what nation soever trading to France.

Both these demands were esteemed by the States equally objectionable. It was unreasonable to expect that the United Provinces, who had drawn the war on themselves merely for the sake of England, should be obliged to supply equal forces with that far more powerful nation, or to exhaust their resources in a struggle in which they had no immediate interest, for just so long a time as it might suit the purpose of Great Britain to continue it; and be precluded, meanwhile, from accepting even the most advantageous offers of a separate peace. The obligation to seize all vessels trading to France appeared no less burdensome to the Dutch who, as a commercial people depending for existence on their amicable relations with foreign powers, were averse to exciting the animosity of Denmark, Sweden, the Hanse Towns, and other neutral nations*. Yet the king pressed both points with such

* The fulfilment of this article did in fact subsequently involve them in many unpleasant disputes both with Sweden and Denmark, which invariably ended in the States restoring all the ships they had

1689 vivacity, that the States perceived they had no choice left but either to accede to a treaty proposed on these conditions, or come to an open rupture; they therefore adopted the former course as the least of two evils. In return for this complaisance, the States solicited the repeal, or at least the modification, of the Navigation Act, passed by Cromwell, with no other object than to injure their commerce. But their request was treated by the king with derision; and even the trifling privilege they asked of the free admission of Delft ware into England was refused. If on any occasion William appeared inclined to show favour to his old subjects, a crowd of jealous courtiers and functionaries stood ready to check or misdirect the current of kindly feeling. Having exempted some Dutch vessels lying in Plymouth from port dues, they were forced none the less to pay them, being told that the king had no right to grant any such remission; and the exactions and oppressions in many instances of the English aroused grievous complaints on the part of the Dutch merchants, who declared that they had never been so harshly treated as at the present time. These proceedings were the more vexatious as the commerce of the United Provinces had sustained considerable damage from the seizure by the King of France, in the last year, of their merchant-ships, whom the States had forbore to warn of their danger, lest they should discover the secret of the proposed expedition^d.

With one request only of the States, that he would declare war against the King of France, the King of taken. They refused to renew the treaty after the death of the king. Res. van de St., Aug. 16, A.D. 1702.

Tindal's Cont. of Rapin's Hist. of England, ad ann. 1689, p. 56, edit. Lond., 1744. Parl. Hist., vol. v., col. 175. Verbaal van Witsen, in Vad. Hist., B. 61, No. 6. Holl. Mer., bl. 143. Res. van de St., Sept. 16.

England was found perfectly willing to comply. The 1689 news of his successful landing in England had been received in the United Provinces almost simultaneously with a declaration of war on the part of the King of France, in which it is remarkable that the real cause of hostility, the invasion of England, was passed over without mention, the one adduced being merely the opposition offered by the States to the election of the Prince of Furstemburg to the see of Cologne; while, in a similar declaration issued shortly after against Spain, Louis gave as a principal reason, that the governor of the Spanish Netherlands had been accessory to the Prince of Orange's enterprises.

The army of the States, commanded by the Prince of Waldek, took the field, in conjunction with 5000 English, under the command of the Earl of Marlborough, and a considerable body of Spanish cavalry. The campaign in the Netherlands, however, passed without any event of moment, except a skirmish near Walcourt, in which the allies had the advantage, and the destruction of the enemy's lines about Ghent. In Germany, Mentz, Bonn, and some other places, were recovered by the French.

Louis XIV. having thus once more aroused against himself the hostility of the Emperor and King of Spain, every facility was afforded to the endeavours which the States, while the stadtholder was still occupied in his new kingdom, were actively employing towards the completion of a firm and close alliance of all those powers whose interests led them to oppose the ambitious projects of France. They readily induced the Emperor to conclude with them a treaty, which they termed the "Grand Alliance," whereby each party engaged not to make peace with France, except by

* Holl. Mer., 1688, bl. 196 ; 1689, bl. 161.

1689 common consent, nor before things were restored to the same state as by the treaties of Westphalia and the Pyrenees, with a secret article, binding the United Provinces to assist the Emperor in obtaining the succession to the dominions of the King of Spain, in case of his death without issue. England soon after acceded to the grand alliance, which was joined in the following year by the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy.

While the King of England unequivocally manifested his disposition to sacrifice the interests of the United Provinces to those of his English subjects, his absence was the cause of much disturbance in the towns, especially Amsterdam, where it gave rise to a difficulty which the jealousies constantly subsisting between that influential city and the stadtholders, aggravated into a subject of sharp contention. The councils of the towns were, it will be recollected, accustomed annually to nominate a double number, out of whom the stadtholder selected persons to serve the office of sheriffs for the year ensuing. In this year the council of Amsterdam, instead of transmitting their nomination to the King of England, delivered it to the court of Holland, on the ground of a privilege granted in 1581, which provided that the selection, in the absence of the stadtholder, should be made by that court. The court, without the knowledge of the council of Amsterdam, referred it to the king, and the sheriffs chosen by him took the oath, and served their term without opposition. The council, however, by no means satisfied with this arrangement, on the next
1690 nomination petitioned the States of Holland to enjoin the court to make the selection, without reference to the stadtholder, since, as their charter required that the sheriffs should be nominated on the 28th of

January, and sworn on the 2nd of February, the interval was not sufficiently long to admit of their sending to England, and resolved that the present sheriffs should remain in office till the court had complied with their requisition. But their petition was unsupported by a single member of the States, and the nobles, in particular, were vehement in their opposition to its demand. They alleged that the council of Amsterdam had acted in contravention of its own claims concerning the choice of sheriffs, by sending the nomination for the substitution of two sheriffs, who had died in the last year, to the King of England; and had obviated the objection arising from the shortness of the time allowed for the selection, by the resolution they had passed, that the sheriffs then in office should continue till new ones were appointed. Accordingly, together with all the towns except Purmerend, the nobles resolved, that the charter of 1581, on which Amsterdam grounded its pretensions was invalid, as given by the Prince of Orange, in the name of Philip III., by whom he had been proscribed; and the court of Holland, at the same time, refused to receive the nomination of sheriffs made by the council. Amsterdam, on the other hand, insisted that the proscription of William I. was repudiated by the States, as well as all orders of men in the United Provinces, and promulgated her intention of bearing no longer any share in the common burdens, unless she were assisted in the maintenance of her privileges, observing that, however much she had it at heart to abase the power and pride of France, that object, or even the conquest of the whole world, was as nothing in comparison with the preservation of her rights and liberties. After long and acrimonious debates on the subject between the States and the deputies of Amsterdam, the former

1690 came to a resolution to declare all the acts done by the sheriffs, from the expiration of their term of office, null and void; when the council, dreading the confusion that might arise if this resolution were carried into effect, consented to place their nomination in the hands of the States, who sent it to the King of England, and in this manner the sheriffs were appointed during the remainder of his life^f.

A cause of still more angry dispute between the stadtholder and council of Amsterdam arose out of a personal affront, which, as he conceived, they had offered to his beloved and trusted friend William Bentinck, whom he had immediately after his accession created a privy councillor, first lord of the bed-chamber, Baron Cirencester, Viscount Falconbridge, and Earl of Portland. Bentinck had been enrolled as Baron of Rhoon, in the body of the nobility of Holland, as far back as 1676; but the deputies of Amsterdam now protested, that his right of sitting in the States as one of that body was forfeited, on the ground of his owing allegiance to another sovereign, and having obtained naturalization in England, and a seat in the parliament of that nation. As many nobles heretofore, who held estates under foreign princes, had enjoyed undisturbed the privilege of sitting in the States of Holland, William manifested the deepest indignation at this cavil, which arose, he said, merely from the personal animosity cherished against himself by the citizens of Amsterdam. This question also, the deputies of Amsterdam, finding themselves opposed by the nobles, who resented their protest against Bentinck as an injustice to him, an insult to the King of England, and a wanton inter-

^f Holl. Mer., A.D. 1689, bl. 272; 1690, bl. 6, et seq. Res. van de St., Mar. 12, 28

ference in a matter which concerned themselves alone, 1690 as well as by the majority of the other towns, were obliged to yield*.

Thus the opposition of the most powerful city in the United Provinces served to no other purpose than to display and extend the already predominant authority of the stadtholder. Still less likely was it then, that an attempt made two years after by the 1692 small and feeble town of Goes to resist the shock given to the municipal liberties of their country by this authority, should have been attended with better success. In this town, the annual appointment of treasurers by the burgomasters and sheriffs usually involved a trial of strength between the so-called Orange and Louvestein parties; and on one occasion it happened that the numbers were equally divided; a burgomaster and four sheriffs, together with the bailiff, partisans of the Prince of Orange, having named Cornelius Lopsen and Luke Beisselaar as treasurers, while Nicholas Eversdyk and John van der Hille were chosen by the other burgomaster, Adolphus van Westerwyk, and five sheriffs, all of whom were noted as members of the Louvestein party, and strenuous supporters of their municipal privileges. These endeavoured to obtain a majority by denying the bailiff's right to vote, as contrary to the charter; the bailiff, on the other hand, asserting that the custom had been allowed for so long a time as to have grown into a prescriptive right. They insisted that the bailiff should nominate the treasurers elected by their party,

* The same question was, some years after the death of the king, mooted with respect to Keppel, Earl of Albemarle, who was finally allowed to sit as one of the body of nobility, but with the special permission of the States; he was likewise obliged to solicit their permission whenever he desired to go to England. Res. van de St., A.D. 1715, December 19.

1692 which he refusing, Westerwyk and his brother John, secretary of the town, with two sheriffs, proceeded to swear them in themselves. On the complaint of the bailiff, the stadtholder sent commissioners to inquire into the nature of the dispute; and having heard surmises that Westerwyk intended to obtain a final decision of the question in his favour by means of introducing his friends into the senate on the approaching annual change of members, desired that this act should be delayed till he had received the report of the commissioners. It happened that his letter was received on the very day when the election was usually made, and the council had already met together for that purpose. It was nevertheless resolved to accede to the wishes of the stadtholder, and postpone the nomination; but the burghers, who all zealously espoused the side of Westerwyk, surrounded the doors of the council-house, and obliged the members to proceed with the business for which they had met. The new government was accordingly named, and the persons being such as were agreeable to the burghers, they quietly dispersed.

William, then, at the camp near Genep, heard the intelligence of these doings with the most violent emotions of anger, and immediately despatched an order, signed only by himself and his secretary, to a large body of troops stationed at Veere and Flushing, to march to Goes and displace the new government by force. On their approach the chief burgomaster for the year, Eversdyk, caused the gates to be shut, the bar to be thrown across the harbour, and two companies of schuttery to be placed under arms. He then assembled the senate, which, having thanked him for the precautions he had taken, passed a resolution,—unanimous with the exception of two votes,

—to refuse entrance to the troops, on the ground 1692 that they were unprovided with the requisite order from the States of Zealand, and that the magistrates were exempted by their charter from any obligation to receive them, unless in such a case of necessity as did not then exist. Accordingly, Westerwyk and two others were deputed to admonish the soldiers to leave the island; but received for answer from Mauregnault, their commander, that he knew whose orders he was bound to obey. Mauregnault then proceeded to invest the approaches to the town, the troops meanwhile living at free quarters in the vicinity. In a short time the environs were so closely blockaded that no one was able to leave the town for the purpose of procuring food; and a messenger sent to solicit assistance from the other towns escaped with difficulty by swimming across the fosse. But, however dangerous the precedent which the discomfiture of Goes in this struggle would afford for the invasion of the municipal privileges of the other towns, none were found sufficiently courageous to incur the displeasure of the King of England, by making common cause with her; and the entreaties of the burghers for aid, met on all sides with a deaf ear.

Thus abandoned, they at length thought it advisable to try the experiment of sending a petition to the stadtholder, signed by the senate, the officers of the schuttery, and the deacons of the guilds, soliciting the recall of the troops. The only reply was an order to the latter to force their way into the town. This was accordingly done; when William, having obtained from the States of Zealand full powers to arrange the affair in any manner he should think best, made an entire change in the government, displacing all those who had given the slightest countenance to

1692 the late proceedings; the brothers Westerwyk, the burgomaster Matthew Eversdyk, and van der Hille, were thrown into prison, and kept in close confinement. Wholly subservient to the influence of the prince, the new sheriffs of Goes condemned Westerwyk to be beheaded, and the remainder to perpetual banishment. In the sentence of Westerwyk it was alleged against him that, instead of obeying the order of the stadtholder (who had not a shadow of right to give any such) to defer the change of the government, he had proceeded to the appointment of magistrates under pretext of being forced thereto by the burghers, when he himself had excited the popular mind by addressing to them a seditious language; and that, in a letter to the States of Zealand, he had inveighed against the sending of the troops as an act of open hostility, and an infraction of the rights and liberties of the town. Terrified at these violent proceedings, and despairing of the issue of so unequal a contest, the officers of the schuttery and deacons of the guilds had recourse to the most humble submission. They presented a petition to the king for a general amnesty, representing that they were no respectable burghers but a miserable rabble only, who had forced on the change of the government, and that the schuttery had taken arms only against the senate. Similar petitions for pardon were delivered by the prisoners, couched in terms expressive of deep repentance for their fault, and deprecating the idea that they had acted from "the detestable motive of lessening his authority and prerogative as stadtholder." While the warrants were sent for revisal to the king in England, the prisoners were detained during a period of several weeks in dungeons appropriated to the lowest malefactors.

William mitigated the sentence of Matthew Wes-

terwyk to imprisonment for life at Bois-le-Duc at his 1692 own cost; leaving the remainder of the sentences to take effect. But the popular feeling was so strong in favour of the prisoners as to render their removal from Goes difficult, and even dangerous. The magistrates, therefore, resolved to call in the aid of the troops and to take them out of prison by night, while, in order to quiet the minds of the people, they circulated a report that the king had granted a general amnesty, in which the captives were included. The precaution, however, was unavailing, as the news was quickly spread abroad that the prisoners were to be removed. An immense crowd assembled around the doors of the gaol to bid them farewell, and followed them to a considerable distance with tears and lamentations. On taking leave of the people the burgo-master Westerwyk exclaimed, "Farewell my fellow-citizens, if I have offended one of you let him forgive me now; we all suffer in a righteous cause; and since there is none on earth to whom I can look for justice, I will appeal to the judgment-seat of Christ, where my persecutors will be no more spared than myself!" This address renewed the clamorous grief of the multitude, who pressed around the exiles till the soldiers were forced to drive them back by blows.

The departure of the prisoners restored quiet to the town; but the severities which the king employed, merely, as it appeared, for the purpose of having the government moulded to his will, sank deep into the minds of the inhabitants, and inspired a dislike towards him never afterwards eradicated. The persons of the exiles were, for the most part, dear to the burghers, and the deacons and officers of the schuttery had been induced to humble themselves to the king, principally in the hope of softening him into granting an amnesty

1692 without reservation. But, his supremacy once established, and all opposition to his authority silenced, William manifested neither vindictiveness nor implacability. Eversdyk received permission to return to Goes at the expiration of a year, and the two Westerwyks were released from constraint in 1697. After his death, they were all elected again to the offices of government, and their honour declared unsullied by past events^g.

1690 The opening of the campaign in the Netherlands in this year was tardy, and its issue unprosperous. King William being engaged in the war in Ireland, the command of the States' troops was again committed to Waldek, who was forced by the Duke of Luxemburg to give battle near Fleurus, on terms of great disadvantage, and sustained a severe defeat. He retired, however, in good order to Mellé, and with the satisfaction of having inflicted so much damage on the enemy, that Luxemburg, during the remainder of the campaign, was unable to undertake anything of more importance than the burning a few villages in Brabant and Flanders.

On sea the disgraces of the allies were more severe and far harder to bear. However great the talents of the King of England in a military point of view, his incapacity for naval affairs was acknowledged; and to this cause it is chiefly to be ascribed that the navies of the two greatest maritime countries of the world now found themselves overmatched in strength by that of a nation which had only just made its appearance on the theatre of Europe as a maritime power. Instead of the superb fleets which the United Provinces were accustomed to send forth before the appointment of William as admiral-general, thirty ships only were

^g Vad. Hist., b. 62, No. 18.

now fitted out, some of which, with Cornelius Evertsen, 1690 joined the English, under the Earl of Torrington, who was invested with the sole command. They encountered De Tourville with the French fleet near Beachy Head, in Sussex, when the engagement commenced with the van, composed of Dutch vessels. As Torrington persisted in remaining at some distance in the rear, the squadron of Evertsen was surrounded and cruelly damaged, nearly every vessel being disabled. The fight being sustained by the Dutch against such fearful odds with undaunted resolution and steadiness, the number of killed and wounded was necessarily immense, and the loss in ships considerable. The combined fleets were forced to take shelter in the Thames, and the French behaved as masters of the sea, threatened the coast of England, and captured an immense number of English and Dutch merchantmen. Nor were the Dutch able even to protect their herring-fishery from the attacks of the French privateer Jean Bart, who destroyed several of their boats. The death of Cornelius Tromp, which happened in this 1691 year, seemed, as it were, the closing scene of the glories of the Dutch navy^b.

The conquest of Ireland, nearly completed by the victory of the Boyne, left King William at leisure to bestow all his energies towards promoting that which was now become the main object of his existence,—the abasement of the power of France. On the meeting of the ambassadors of the Emperor, of the Kings of Spain, Sweden, Denmark, and Poland, the Marquis Guastagna, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, and the most considerable princes of Germany, at the Hague, William, attended by the flower of the English nobility, repaired thither in the February of this year.

^b Burnet, vol. ii., p. 53. Holl. Mer., A.D. 1690, bl. 198.

1691 In an eloquent and animated address to this illustrious assembly he represented the dangers arising from the spirit of selfishness, procrastination, and dissension, which ruled among the allies; that now, when a mighty enemy was on the point of forcing whole provinces and nations to submit to his arms, was no time for complaints and useless remonstrances against aggression, but for powerful armies and a prompt and steady union of all the forces of the confederacy; it was by these means alone that limits could be set to the ambition of the foe, and the liberties of Europe wrested from his grasp. For himself he promised that he would spare neither his credit, his forces, nor his person in the cause. Inspired by his zeal, and convinced by his arguments, the allies resolved to oppose France with an army of 222,000 men, of which, England was to furnish 20,000 and the States 35,000; and these two powers, moreover, were to provide funds for the payment of a large number of troops belonging to the German princes¹.

But while the allies were debating on the means of raising their force, and King William had gone to divert himself with hunting at Loo, the King of France in person invested Mons. On the intelligence, William hastened with a powerful army to its relief; but the Duke of Luxemburg succeeded in covering the siege so completely that he was unable to produce the slightest effect, and Mons surrendered before his eyes. Unable to bring Luxemburg, who was invested with the chief command on the departure of the king, to an engagement, or to undertake any siege, since the country in the vicinity of the towns occupied by the French was totally ruined and the Spaniards had neglected to provide magazines, William, after spending

¹ Tindal, vol. iii., p. 164.

some time in marches and counter-marches, returned to 1691 Loo; when the Prince of Waldek was unexpectedly attacked by the enemy near Leuze; and a smart skirmish ended in the loss of 1000 men on the part of the allies. Soon after both parties retired into winter quarters^k.

During the winter and spring the States and Eng- 1692 land were busily employed in the equipment of a fleet sufficiently strong to repair their former disasters; and early in March William again appeared in the United Provinces to fulfil his duties as captain and admiral-general. During his absence from his kingdom a scheme was concerted between the French court and the partisans of James in Great Britain, to invade Ireland and restore the banished monarch to the throne. The fleet collected for the transport of an army for this purpose, consisting of forty-four men of war, besides transport-ships, was attacked by the combined squadrons of English and Dutch, eighty in number, between Cape La Hogue and Barfleur. This celebrated contest, sustained for two days with admirable courage and steadiness by the French, ended in the utter discomfiture of that fleet, which Louis had fitted out at such vast expense and with so much pride; and restored to the maritime powers for awhile their accustomed superiority at sea. The victory, however, was not followed up on the part of the allies by a descent on the French coast, as was expected^l.

On land the affairs of Louis were attended with the usual prosperity. The strong town of Namur, the siege of which was undertaken by the king in person and directed by Vauban, surrendered in eleven days

^k Sylvius, deel iv., bl. 66. Mémoires Hist. et Pol. de Feuquières, tom. iii., p. 82.

^l Sylvius, deel. iv., bl. 76, et seq.

1692 after the opening of the trenches, in spite of the adverse season and the efforts of the Prince of Orange. The attack of the citadel, situated on the other side the Meuse and strengthened by two forts, one of which was built and defended by the celebrated Koe-hoorn, immediately followed; when the allied army advanced, with the view of giving battle to the Duke of Luxemburg, who covered the siege with 70,000 men. But the passage of the small river Mehaigne, proved an insurmountable obstacle to their reaching the enemy, being so much swollen by the continued rains as to render every attempt to throw a bridge across it abortive. The forts, therefore, were obliged to capitulate; when the citadel was carried by storm.

The allied army being reinforced by 14,000 troops from the Duke of Hanover, whom the Emperor this year, in order to gain him over to the Grand Alliance, raised to the dignity of a ninth elector, King William thought it advisable to attack the French while strongly posted near a high hill at Steenkirk. Having discovered that there was a spy of the Duke of Luxemburg in his camp, he caused him to be seized, and forced him to write to the duke that a foraging party, protected by a considerable body of infantry, was to be sent the next day to the other side of the stream at Steenkirk. In consequence of this false information Luxemburg remained inactive in his encampment till tidings were brought him that the enemy's army had passed the defiles in front, and had already attacked the advanced brigade with a superior force of infantry. The brigade was thrown into some confusion and lost the greater portion of its artillery. But an error, into which the most prudent might have fallen, was speedily remedied by the master genius of Luxemburg. In a moment the whole of the troops

were under arms; and, while he sent effective succour 1692 to the broken battalions, he rapidly formed the remainder in front of the camp. On the other hand, the ground before the allied army was so broken and covered with brushwood as greatly to impede the movements of the cavalry, and prevent their making a general attack till the enemy were in a situation to offer a vigorous resistance. After a contest of several hours, in which the English, left unsupported by the Count of Solms with the Dutch, suffered severely, William commanded a retreat, leaving five pieces of artillery on the field. The allies lost above 5000 in killed and wounded; nor was the victory of the French purchased except at an almost equal expense of bloodshed. The unfavourable season obliged the two armies to separate early^m.

While engaged in the campaign William had escaped one of those murderous plots against his life which were scarcely ever at rest during the whole period of his reign. Two Frenchmen, Grandval and Dumont, had in the last year been in treaty with Louvois concerning a purpose they entertained of shooting the king as he was visiting the posts of his army; and after the death of that minister the plan was prosecuted by his son and successor Barbesieux. Grandval and Dumont afterwards took into their confidence one Leefdale, a Dutch catholic, who, upon some suspicion of the plot, had been purposely sent to Paris as a spy. This man, on the arrival of Grandval in Flanders, gave to the Earl of Athlone information of his purpose and of the place where he might be apprehended. He was tried by a court-martial and executed in the camp. Though in his confession he

^m Sylvius, deel iv., bl. 89, 97, 117. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 206. Mém. de Feuq., tom. iii., p. 206.

1692 accused many of the French ministers besides Barbesieux, together with Madame de Maintenon and King James, as privy to the conspiracy, that court never made the slightest attempt to remove the stigma thus cast upon it^a.

So vast were the resources of the kingdom of France, and so absolute the government of Louis, that notwithstanding the exhaustion attendant on the wars against nearly the whole of Europe in which he had been engaged, and the discontents arising from the continual and merciless imposts to which the people
1693 were subjected, he was able this year to raise an army of 119,700 strong, exceeding by nearly one-half that of the allies. After the capture of Furnes and Dixmuyde by the Marshal de Boufflers, a considerable portion of the troops were sent under that general and the dauphin to Germany, the remainder continuing in the Netherlands under the command of the Duke of Luxemburg. A successful attempt by the Prince of Wirtemberg on the enemy's lines, extending between the Scheldt and Leye to Dunkirk, was more than counterbalanced to the allies by the defeat of Count Tilly in a skirmish near Maestricht, and the loss of Huy. Having prevented the siege of Maestricht and Liege by throwing garrisons into those towns, King William posted himself at Neerhespen, between Tienen and St. Truy, whither he was followed by the French army. As the enemy was the stronger by 35,000 men, nearly all the officers of the allied army were of opinion that a retreat should be effected across the river Geete; but William, imagining that he had chosen an advantageous position, and unwilling to leave exposed the defenceless towns of Brabant, determined to await the attack. The right of his army

^a Sylvius, deel iv., bl. 113, et seq. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 209.

occupied the ground from Wangen on the Geete to 1693 Neerwinden, the centre stretched from that village to Landen, while the left occupied the banks of the stream of Landen to Dormal; and a strong detachment was stationed at Romsdorff. So weak, however, were the lines, and so ill contrived the encampment, that Luxemburg, on reconnoitring the army, is said to have exclaimed, "Now, indeed, I believe that Waldek is dead." Early on the morning of the 29th of July, the French attacked the post of Landen, from which, being bravely defended under the immediate command of King William, they were repulsed with loss. At Neerwinden they had better success, since, after two assaults, they gained possession of the post and penetrated into the midst of the camp of the allies. The Hanoverian cavalry was first completely routed. Then the main body of infantry, assailed in front and flank, were thrown into disorder. The Elector of Bavaria, governor of the Spanish Netherlands, retired across the Geete, and attempted in vain to rally his troops in hopes to cover the retreat. William, with the English cavalry, made a strenuous effort to support the left wing of the Dutch horse, which was sharply attacked in flank by the Duke de Montmorenci, but was unable to prevent their falling into confusion and giving way. The king then, seeing the battle irretrievably lost, commanded a retreat over the bridge at Neerhespen. This soon became a flight, and numbers were driven into the river and drowned. The English infantry alone drew off in some kind of order; but a portion even of them stopped not their march till they had placed themselves out of the reach of the enemy at Breda. Sixty pieces of artillery, nine mortars, and about 7000 men remained on the field of battle. The loss of the French, however, in killed and

1693 wounded, was nearly equal; and Luxemburg was so enfeebled by his victory that he was obliged to await the arrival of the Marshal de Boufflers with the troops from the Rhine before he could undertake the siege of Charleroi. This town, which had sustained a bombardment in the last year, was, though defended with great valour, obliged to capitulate; the surrounding country being laid so entirely bare as to render the sojourn of a relieving army in its environs utterly impossible^o.

The fortune of the allies on sea was no better than on land. A squadron of twenty-three English and Dutch vessels, commanded by Sir George Rooke, conveying an immense fleet of merchant-ships to the ports of Spain and the Levant, fell in with the French armada of eighty sail, under Tourville, near Cape St. Vincent. The former avoided the combat; but three of the hindmost of the States' men-of-war were attacked by eleven of the enemy, which they had the good fortune to get clear of, after a contest sustained with incredible valour; but seven others renewing the attack, they were at length captured at the end of five hours' hard fighting. Thirty of the Dutch merchantmen also were taken, and about fifty destroyed. Tourville afterwards burnt several ships in the harbours of the Mediterranean, and kept the coasts of Spain in perpetual alarm during the whole summer. Some privateers of St. Malo likewise made prizes of thirty-eight Dutch whalers. The injury which the privateers of this port inflicted on the commerce of England and the United Provinces determined them to attempt its destruction by a bombardment from the combined fleets; but the damage effected was very slight^p.

^o Sylvius, deel iv., bl. 59, 78, et seq. Mém. de Feuq., tom. ii., p. 252. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 238—241.

^p Burnet, vol. ii., p. 115.

Notwithstanding that the arms of Louis were victorious in every quarter, the internal condition of his kingdom, oppressed by famine and by the consequences of an unproductive vintage, rendered him solicitous to procure, under the name of a peace, such a cessation of hostilities as should give him time to recruit his exhausted resources. His ambassador at the court of Sweden had already entered into negotiation with the king as to the footing on which he was willing to treat with the allies. At the same time the Emperor and King of Spain were admonished by the Pope to make peace with the King of France; and the Danish ambassador in London now presented 1694 to King William a project for a general accommodation. It was rejected by him on the ground that Europe could never be at peace till France was entirely humbled; but, probably, his more cogent, though secret reason, was the circumstance of no mention being made of his acknowledgment as King of England by Louis; since he afterwards accepted far less favourable conditions, of which that acknowledgment formed one*. So great was his influence in the United Provinces, that the States were induced to reject the overtures of Louis, though there was scarcely an individual among the whole population who would not gladly have lent them a favourable ear. The preparations for the ensuing campaign, therefore, were made with undiminished alacrity; but, though distinguished by some very able marches, exe-

* Burnet states, (*Hist. of Own Times*, vol. ii., p. 114,) that the French king offered to acknowledge the present government of England; but this is not correct. The Danish ambassador only engaged that his master would procure from Louis the comprehension of Great Britain in the peace on that footing; D'Avaux, the French ambassador at the Court of Sweden, signified that his master expected some satisfaction for King James. *Mém. de Lamberti*, tom. i., p. 4.

1694 cuted by the Duke of Luxemburg with the view of subsisting his troops in the enemy's country, the events were on the whole unimportant, being limited to the recovery of Huy by the Duke of Holstein-Ploen, successor to the Prince of Waldek as field-marshal of the States' army.

On sea, the King of France being now determined to direct his attacks principally against Spain, no engagement occurred. The combined fleets were occupied during the summer of this and the following years in a descent upon Brest, and the bombardment of Dieppe and other maritime towns of France, which was attended with little other effect than to keep the coast in continual disquietude and terror; the injury done to the enemy not amounting to anything like an equivalent for the cost incurred in this useless and barbarous mode of warfare.

The annual visit of the king to Holland, was delayed in the next spring by the death of Queen Mary, of the small-pox, in the thirty-third year of her age. The intense grief which he suffered on the occasion, incapacitated him for several weeks from attending to any kind of business; and it was, therefore, late in the month of May before he arrived at the camp of the allies, near Ghent. The complaints of the people, both in England and the United Provinces, of the enormous expenses lavished in the war without any corresponding result, were now grown loud and general; and it became absolutely necessary to undertake some enterprise of importance, as the only means of appeasing their discontent. By the accession of the Bishop of Munster to the Grand Alliance, with an army of 7000 men, added to extensive levies made in the last year by the allies, their forces out-num-

Jan.
7th,
1695

^a Sylvius, deel iv., bl. 34, 108, 125.

bered those of the King of France, whose affairs, 1695 moreover, had sustained irreparable detriment in the death of his great general, the Duke of Luxemburg, and the substitution of a commander so infinitely inferior to him, in every respect, as the Marshal Villeroi. Under these favourable circumstances, William, having diverted the attention of the enemy by feint marches, sat down before Namur, separating his army into three divisions, of which, one of 23 battalions and 120 squadrons, commanded by himself, lay along the banks of the Meuse and Sambre, on the side of Brabant; another of 24 battalions and 20 squadrons, under the Elector of Bavaria, occupied the space between those two rivers; and the third of 10 battalions and 60 squadrons, under the Baron de Heide, was stationed on the side of the Meuse towards Liege; the Prince de Vaudemont with 30,000 men being employed to cover Flanders and Brabant. The communication between the several portions of the camp, was preserved by means of three bridges, one on the Sambre, and two on the Meuse; of which latter, one was above and the other below the town. The lines of circumvallation were formed under the direction of the celebrated Koehoorn.

During the time that Namur had been in the occupation of the French, the fortifications had been considerably improved by Vauban, though the works were yet scarcely complete. The garrison, commanded by the Count de Guiscard, 1200 in number, was reinforced after the commencement of the siege by the Marshal de Boufflers with the flower of the French engineers, artillerymen, and pioneers; and, being amply supplied with provisions for several months, prepared to resist to the last extremity. The approaches were begun on the Liege side, the trenches being success-

1695 fully opened under cover of the heavy artillery of two batteries. Meanwhile, the Prince of Vaudemont marching towards Namur, was intercepted between Grammen and Kaneghem by Villeroi, who, with double the number of troops, commanded Montal to take post behind the prince's army and attack him in the rear, while he himself commenced the engagement in front. Vaudemont, however, who had employed the previous night in throwing up entrenchments round his camp, commanded a retreat, concealing his purpose so successfully from the enemy, that Villeroi became aware of the movement too late to be able to overtake him, before he had placed his army in safety under the walls of Ghent^r.

During the continuance of the siege of Namur, the garrison made some vigorous sallies, but unattended with any considerable effect. The trenches were now advanced to within musket shot of the first counterscarp, which was carried by storm; and in spite of the heavy rains, the approaches were soon in sufficient forwardness to enable the besiegers to storm a bulwark at the Liege gate. The covered way was mastered with extraordinary valour by the English and States' troops; the second counterscarp was rapidly passed; several wide breaches were effected in the walls, and preparations were made for a general assault when the governor consented to a capitulation. The conquest of the fort of Koehoorn was achieved, principally, by the engineer of that name, who was now to prove the insufficiency of the works himself had planned and erected; and the citadel, being closely pressed, surrendered in a few days. During the siege, Dixmuyde and Deinze were disgracefully yielded to Villeroi. Before the termi-

^r Mém. de Feuq., tom. ii., p. 186.

nation of the campaign, the grand alliance was 1695 solemnly renewed at the Hague by the Bishop of Munster, the Electors of Hanover, Bavaria, and Brandenburg, the Duchess-Dowager of Lorraine, the Dukes of Savoy and Brunswick, and by the Kings of Spain and England; and early in the next year the Elector of Cologne, and the circles of Suabia and Franconia again became parties to the confederacy. It seemed, therefore, resolved on all sides, that hostilities should be continued, which, in the way they were carried on, served scarcely any other purpose, than by a show of resistance, to afford the enemy a pretext for continually extending his conquests.

The commencement of the year 1696 was marked 1696 by commotions in the large and wealthy city of Amsterdam, the origin and progress of which are so characteristic of the dispositions and habits of this singular people, as to be well worthy to turn aside our attention, for a moment, from events of greater magnitude, but perhaps of less curiosity and interest. The States of Holland, in order to find funds for the extraordinary quotas they had to furnish, had laid a tax on burials and marriages; whereupon, the government of Amsterdam, with the view of causing the payment to be the less felt, passed a kind of sumptuary law restricting the magnificence of funerals, and the great number of attendants usually employed; enacting, that those called "inviters," the bearers, and torch-bearers, should henceforth exercise their calling only in virtue of an appointment by the burgomasters. But this species of interference with their private affairs the populace were by no means disposed to endure; and the discontent was further augmented, as well by those "inviters" who were deprived of their trade, as those who were retained, and who considered

1696 themselves aggrieved that they were obliged to serve by rotation instead of being hired at the pleasure of their employers. These persons spread abroad the report, that the government intended to oblige the people to be buried in a plain deal coffin without a breastplate, and to have the arms of the city sewed upon their winding sheet; a notion which took such strong hold of the mind of the populace, that it was found impossible to eradicate, and exasperated them to fury. They loudly exclaimed, that they never would submit, after having lived a life of labour and sorrow, to be put under the earth in so shameful a manner. The day before the law was to take effect, they assembled in crowds on the Dam, in front of the Guildhall, insulting such as they suspected to have had a share in carrying it through the senate; and reproaching the members of the government, that their motive in making the law was only to have new offices at their disposal. The presence of the soldiers, sent thither by command of the burgomasters, far from intimidating, tendered rather to increase their insolence. The whole town was in movement: men, women, (remarkable in Holland for their activity on these occasions,) and boys paraded the streets under banners of aprons tied to poles, armed with pot-hooks, brushes, and brooms, and beating on beer and butter barrels by way of kettle-drums; while mock funerals were carried in procession before the ranks of soldiers and the houses of the magistrates.

The senate endeavoured to pacify the rioters, by declaring the law suspended for six weeks; but this symptom of complaisance only encouraged them to new excesses. They began to throw stones at the soldiers, and on two or three shots being fired, attacked them with such impetuosity that they forced

them to take to flight. They then proceeded to the house of one Jacob Boreel, whom they imagined the framer of the law, because it was signed by his son, the secretary Boreel, beat down the door with lamp-poles, and, rushing in, destroyed the whole of the magnificent furniture, which they broke to pieces and threw into the water. Yet, with a species of rude respect for the principles of honesty and justice, which rarely deserts the Dutch even in their most violent and lawless moods, they prevented any of their party from appropriating the smallest article, or even any portion of the gold and silver plate; and while in the act of sacking the houses of the obnoxious individuals, the mob, which remained below, perpetually called out to those who were throwing the things out of the windows, to take care they did no damage to the houses of the neighbours. The day following, the residence of Kirby, the English Consul, the original suggester of the tax, fell a prey to the violence of the rioters; and as he had taken the precaution to remove his valuable effects, they amused themselves with bruising to powder the superb tessellated pavements, destroying the fresco paintings on the walls, and pouring all the wine and beer they could find down the streets. At length, the council having called the whole body of the schuttery to arms, and ordered them to repel violence by force, they, with the assistance of some volunteers of the most influential families of the town, soon constrained the rioters to disperse, and took some of them prisoners, though not before several were severely wounded. The Jews also lent effective support to the authority of the magistrates, and the guild of turf-carriers volunteered their services, and were stationed, armed with half pikes, to guard the Dam. Two of the

1696 ringleaders were hanged the same evening from the windows of the "waage," or public weighing-house, and three more the next day. Peace was thus restored; but the law was wholly abrogated, nor did the senate ever venture to propose its renewal. It was supposed by some, that this tumult was secretly instigated by the partisans of the stadtholder, in order to afford him a pretext for changing the government, and appointing one more obsequious to his will; but the fact of his making no attempt of the kind seems to controvert the suspicion, which there exists, moreover, no proof to confirm^a.

The general exhaustion of finances consequent on the siege and defence of Namur, and the inclination that all parties now began to manifest for peace, occasioned the operations of the campaign, in this year, to be but languidly carried on; the commander of each army making it his principal object to maintain his troops on the territory of the enemy. Some advances had already been made in the last year towards a general accommodation, which the circumstances of the King of France prompted him more than any other of the belligerents to desire. The commerce of his kingdom had fallen into decay, and its population sensibly declined; the treasury was entirely empty, without any apparent means of replenishment, since even the sale of offices, formerly a fruitful source of revenue, was now becoming unproductive, the purchasers being daily fewer and less willing; and he had, at the same time, the mortification of knowing, that while he himself, the monarch of a mighty nation, was thus deficient in the sinews of war, the States-General, his formerly despised adversaries, were able to raise a loan of

^a Sylvius, deel iv., bl. 7—17.

five millions at four per cent. in less than a fortnight. 1696
The health of the King of Spain was now precarious in the extreme; and should his death occur at this juncture, Louis would find himself in no condition to prosecute his claims to his dominions. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance to him to procure a short interval of peace, in order to prepare for that event by recruiting his forces, and to renew the war with the advantage of having dissolved the grand alliance. The failure of another project of making a landing in England in this year, had determined him to embarrass himself no further with the affairs of King James, but to acknowledge William as sovereign of Great Britain; and thus, one of the most formidable obstacles to an accommodation with that monarch was removed. William, himself, in consequence of the heats and jealousies arising from the division of parties in his kingdom, the pecuniary embarrassments into which it had lately fallen from many causes, and more particularly the alteration of the coin, and the discontent of the people at the ill-conduct of maritime affairs, now began, even to long for that peace, the very mention of which he had before heard with aversion.

To the United Provinces, the close union with England, instead of producing the effect anticipated, of drawing the commerce of the whole world into the hands of these two nations, had, as it turned out, proved scarcely less injurious than their former hostilities. The movements of the Dutch fleets now depending on those of England, they reaped the baneful consequences of all the faults and errors committed both by the ministers and commanders of that nation, which were so glaring and numerous as to excite frequent complaints of treachery. The

1696 orders transmitted to the combined fleets were ambiguous and defective; and their execution was often equally reprehensible, either from neglect on the one hand, or too strict an adherence to the letter on the other, when circumstances required their modification. The disposition of the men of war was so ill-managed, as to render them insufficient for the protection of the merchant-ships; and those of the United Provinces were frequently obliged to remain so long in the English ports, waiting for a convoy, that the expenses of the voyage far exceeded its profits. They were accordingly not a little anxious for the cessation of those circumstances which rendered this too intimate alliance necessary.

The Duke of Savoy had already been seduced by the French king from the Grand Alliance, and prevailed with to make a separate peace. In this state of affairs, Great Britain and the States readily accepted the offered mediation of Charles XI., King of Sweden, who dying shortly after, it was carried on by the queen dowager. They, with some difficulty, induced the Emperor to accept it likewise; and the palace of Ryswick, near the Hague, was chosen as the place of conference. Of all the belligerents, indeed, the views of the Emperor were the least pacific. The succession to the throne of Spain, after the death of the present king would, if the claims of France were set aside, devolve to his daughter, married to the Elector of Bavaria; and he sought, therefore, the best means of providing for its security in the maintenance of the Grand Alliance. Spain, to whom the King of France offered the restoration of all he had taken since the peace of Nimeguen, could expect no proportionate advantage by continuing the war; but following her usual course

of policy, she endeavoured by an apparent slowness 1696 in advancing towards a conclusion, to obtain the best terms possible.

As Great Britain and the States had nothing to demand of France, except the acknowledgment of William, and a treaty of commerce and barrier in the Spanish Netherlands for the United Provinces, all of which Louis was perfectly willing to accede to, the negotiation, as far as regarded them, was attended with no difficulty. The treaties of Westphalia and Nimeguen had been agreed upon as the basis of the present negotiations; but when the ambassadors of Spain and the Emperor gave in their pro- 1697 positions to the mediator, they were found far to exceed the conditions contained in either of those treaties. As both powers appeared disposed to insist on their demands with some pertinacity, Louis conceived the readiest mode of reducing them to compliance was a speedy commencement of the campaign. He accordingly marched his army into the Netherlands and laid siege to Ath, which capitulated in a few days. On the side of Catalonia the French army besieged and took Barcelona. In the West Indies likewise, Carthagená was conquered from the Spaniards; while the English merchant-ships suffered greatly from the attacks of the French fleet, a portion of which also, under the command of Du Guai-Trouin, captured the whole of the Dutch trading vessels, together with three men of war, returning from Bilboa. But the successes of France, gained at the cost of his allies, had little effect on the Emperor, to whose affairs a favourable turn was now given by the elevation of Frederic Augustus, Elector of Saxony, to the throne of Poland, in opposition to the Prince of Conti, for whom the King of France

1697 had used strenuous efforts to procure the majority of votes in the Diet. Leopold had likewise made an alliance with the Czar of Muscovy, Peter I., whom he had engaged in a war with Turkey, and was thus enabled to turn the whole force of his arms against France. Louis, therefore, finding him unwilling to accept the favourable project of a general accommodation which he offered, adopted a similar line of conduct to that which he had found so available at Nimeguen, of opening separate negotiations with the different members of the confederacy.

The offer to restore Barcelona proved a sufficient lure for Spain; a secret promise that he would give no more assistance to King James, and would even cause him to quit France, entirely conciliated King William; and the States, to whom he offered an advantageous commercial treaty, were in no wise inclined to continue the war for the gratification of their German allies, of whose promises to bring powerful armies into the field they but too well knew the value. These three powers accordingly having waited for the accession of the Emperor till the last moment of the time limited by France for the acceptance of her proposals, signed each their separate treaty: another of navigation and commerce for twenty-five years being made with the States. A more advantageous barrier likewise, than that of the treaty of Nimeguen, was provided for the United Provinces by the cession to Spain of Ath, Courtrai, Mons, Charleroi, Chimay, and Luxemburg, with all the places conquered by France since the period of that treaty.

The Protestants, driven from France by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, had constantly dwelt upon the hope that neither William or the States

would ever make a peace, of which their restoration 1697 to their country were not a condition. Great was their disappointment, therefore, at finding the exertions of the allies in their favour limited to some intercessions, which were rejected by Louis as an indecent interference with the domestic affairs of his kingdom; while the peace, affording the court more leisure and opportunity to carry on the persecutions against those who remained in the country, placed them in a far worse condition than the war. The Emperor, deserted by all his allies, found himself obliged to come to terms with France, having reaped no other fruits of his delay than the loss of Strasburg, which Louis, after the conquest of Barcelona, declared himself unwilling to cede^t.

Thus did the able monarch of France once more terminate a skilfully-conducted and victorious war by politic and advantageous peace. It is true, he restored the greater portion of the conquests he had made during its continuance to Spain and Germany; but, with regard to the former, it cost him little to yield for the present those possessions which, if Spain were separated from her allies he well knew he could resume at pleasure; and, as an indemnity for his sacrifices to the latter, he retained Strasburg, the key to Germany on the Upper Rhine. He had succeeded in breaking up the confederacy of powers arrayed against him, and had sown the seeds of its final dissolution by obtaining the fourth article of the treaty, which provided, that in all the towns, ceded by the treaty, the Catholic religion should remain in the same state as at the period of their restoration. The Protestants were thus deprived of the toleration they had enjoyed before the conquest of the towns by Louis, and of

^t Tindal, vol. iii., p. 362.

1697 the possession of a considerable number of churches.

The German princes of that persuasion, therefore, considered this article a direct violation of the treaty of Westphalia, which they regarded as the bulwark of their religious liberty; while the Catholics, who thought that too large a measure of toleration was granted to the Reformers by that treaty, were zealous for the execution of the article; and thus a new and fruitful source of division arose between them^u.

In this year the Czar of Muscovy, Peter Alexowitz, better known as Peter the Great, who had formed the project of equipping a powerful fleet in the port of Azov, as the first step towards raising his country to the dignity of a maritime power, visited Holland for the purpose of becoming acquainted with the arts of navigation and ship-building. He had an interview with the King of England at Utrecht; and remained at Amsterdam or Saardam till the following year, labouring with his own hands at the trade he was desirous to learn, and living on the most familiar terms with the artisans, among whom he usually went by the name of "Piet."

As the peace of Ryswick had been procured by Louis XIV., principally that he might be left at leisure to adopt measures for securing to his family the succession to the Spanish monarchy, he immediately on the conclusion of the treaties commenced his intrigues in the different courts of Europe for that object, which he pursued with his usual policy and address. In order to lull into quiescence the vigilance and activity of the King of England and the States-General, he proposed and concluded with these powers the much-discussed and reprobated "partition treaties," for the equitable division, as it was said, of

^u Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 11. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 363.

the Spanish dominions between the claimants; one 1698 previously to the death of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, whom the King of Spain had declared his successor, and the other (in 1700) consequently upon that event^{v*}. He caused reports to be universally spread that he was wholly averse to war, and desirous of passing the remainder of his days in repose; that he dreaded the power of the King of England and the alliances he was able to form against him; and 1699 that he was willing to waive his pretensions to the monarchy of Spain if the house of Austria were likewise excluded from the succession.

So strongly did he impress his opponents with the belief of his sincerity, that when the sagacious Dykvelt ventured to observe, "that the French court sought to engage Great Britain and the States in a treaty only in order to amuse and disarm them," and "that the battles of Steenkirk and Lauden had effectually taught Louis what he had to fear from the King of England and his allies," he fell under the sharp displeasure of William, and was fain to make his peace by his activity in promoting the second treaty of partition^v.

At the same time Louis made use of the treaty to excite offence and mistrust in the Spanish court, where his ambassador constantly represented that the King of France had only entered into it in consequence of the disposition manifested by that court to

* Parl. Hist., vol. v., col. 1246. Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 12.

^v Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 97.

* By this division the Dauphin of France was to have Naples and Sicily, with the dependencies of Spain on the coast of Tuscany, the marquisate of Final, and the province of Guipuscoa; and the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, for whom, after his death, the Archduke Charles, second son of the Emperor, was substituted, was to be put in possession of Spain, the Indies, and the Netherland provinces.

1699 deprive the dauphin of his inheritance, in order to bestow it on the Archduke Charles; that the choice of the Duke of Anjou, second son of the dauphin, as king, would obtain for Spain the protection of the only power in Europe able or willing to prevent the dismemberment of the kingdom; that the danger of the union of France and Spain would thus be avoided, and a prince be seated on the Spanish throne, young, pliable, and easily moulded to suit the genius of the people; and that, by the late victories of the Emperor in Hungary the house of Austria threatened to become formidable to the liberties of Europe. He failed not, moreover, amply to supply his ambassador with infallible means of securing the favourable reception of these considerations among the needy and rapacious nobles of the Spanish court^x.

The measures of the allies, on the other hand, divested of unanimity, were far from being distinguished by similar sagacity or prudence. Immediately after the peace of Ryswick, Great Britain and the States had proposed to the Emperor and German princes a renewal of the Grand Alliance; which, however, they found it impossible to effect, as well from the umbrage the signing that peace had given the former, as by the jealousies and distrust excited between the Catholics and Protestants by the fourth 1700 article of the treaty. The second partition treaty, so insidiously entered into by France with the States and Great Britain, was rejected by all the other powers of Europe*.

^x *Mém de Torci*, tom. i., p. 17, 85. *Mém. du Comte de Harrach*, tom. ii., p. 138.

* It may be said of this treaty, that, however politic its object, its tendency was to render war inevitable; since, had the will, settling the succession to the Spanish dominions on the archduke, remained in force, he would scarcely have been found willing to yield the portion awarded

The Emperor, for whose advantage it was principally framed, but who had since obtained a will from the King of Spain in favour of his second son, the Archduke Charles, affected to regard the conduct of Great Britain and the States as an unnecessary interference with a matter in which they had no concern; at the same time that he himself had not 7,000 men on foot to support the pretensions of his son, and his finances were nearly thirty millions in arrear.

The King of Spain was deeply offended that foreign princes should undertake to parcel out his dominions in his lifetime, and gave his ambassadors, both at the Hague and London, instructions to make the most vivid remonstrances on the subject. Between the king and the nation of England also much ill humour, and even strong symptoms of mutual dislike, had arisen. The parliament insisted upon reducing the army to an extremely low scale, in opposition to the earnest recommendation and wishes of the king, or rather, as he conceived, for the purpose of working him vexation; and had forced him to part with his Dutch guards, which he begged as a personal favour to be allowed to retain. A large portion of both houses had set it up as a maxim (a very just one as the result proved), that it was entirely indifferent to England whether a French or an Austrian prince filled the throne of Spain, since either would soon become virtually a Spaniard, and learn to govern according to Spanish views and interests without regard to any other.

The States, in their haste to economize, had con-

to France; and in the case which actually happened, of the Duke of Anjou being acknowledged by the whole empire, a resort to arms was indispensable to enable the archduke to obtain possession of the states allotted to him.

1700 siderably reduced their military establishment; and thus, while Louis still kept his powerful army on foot, the allies were almost destitute of forces. When, therefore, the Spanish nobles in the interest of France took advantage of the state of weakness to which the unhappy king was reduced, to obtain from him in his last days a new will, declaring Philip, duke of Anjou, heir to all his dominions, none were prepared to oppose its execution. The will was kept secret till after the death of Charles II., when, immediately on the dispatch of a courier to the court of France from Madrid, the Duke of Anjou was proclaimed King of Spain by the name of Philip V., and early in the following year took possession of the throne^y.

The King of France had to the last moment made the most solemn assurances to the States-General of his determination to abide by the treaty of partition, notwithstanding any act or deed settling the succession in his family; and had even demanded subsidies to assist him in taking possession of his portion*. They were no less astonished than alarmed, therefore, when his ambassador, De Briord, declared that his master, seeing that the partition treaty had not been accepted by the Emperor, nor acceded to by the other sovereigns of Europe, was resolved, in order to prevent the war which must inevitably arise from any attempt to dismember the Spanish empire, to forego the advantages accruing to himself from that treaty, and to abide by the will of the late king. They

^y Parl. Hist., vol. v., col. 1191—1196, 1243—1246. Mém. de Lambert, tom. i., p. 21, 24, 113. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 415.

* There is little doubt that if his plan of obtaining the whole succession for the Duke of Anjou had proved unsuccessful, it was his purpose to have insisted on the execution of the articles of the treaty.—See Mém. de Torci, p. 69, et seq.

apprehended that the towns of the Netherlands would 1700 henceforward be garrisoned by French troops, and the barrier they had so long laboured to secure be thus at once annihilated; they feared, moreover, the restoration of the commerce of Antwerp by the opening of the Scheldt, which was now only closed in virtue of treaties with Spain, and that the new king would be wholly under the influence of the sovereign of France; proofs of whose animosity the United Provinces had often experienced.

The first of these anticipations was soon realized. The States-General manifesting a reluctance to acknowledge the King of Spain, under the plea that it was necessary to refer previously to their principals, and consult the stadtholder, Louis demanded of the Elector of Bavaria that garrisons of French troops 1701 should be introduced into the towns of the Netherlands. Several of the strongest places were, in pursuance of a treaty made between the elector and the King of England in 1698, occupied by the States' garrisons; but the elector, having acknowledged Philip V., and received commands from him to obey those of the King of France, executed this order with so much expedition and secrecy, that the Dutch officers were not aware of the approach of the French troops till the introduction was effected. Louis, then signifying to the States, that if they delayed any longer the required acknowledgment, their soldiers, who were considerably inferior in number to the new garrisons, should be retained prisoners of war, they found themselves constrained to comply with his demand; reserving, however, the right of hereafter explaining the conditions on which they did so. Soon after, their example was followed by the King of England; and the troops, being at length permitted

1701 to withdraw from the Spanish Netherlands, were stationed in Maestricht and the other frontier towns².

This violent measure on the part of the King of France obviated at once the strong desire entertained by the generality of the people of the United Provinces for the continuance of peace. The States accordingly began with diligence to place themselves in a posture of defence. They commanded new levies to be raised, the flat country around Lillo to be laid under water, and voted nine millions of guilders for military preparations. By reiterated instances, and vivid representations to England of the perilous condition of affairs, they at length aroused the parliament and nation from the supineness and apathy towards the general politics of Europe into which their party divisions had thrown them. Both houses of parliament at length adopted vigorous resolutions for the support of the States and the defence of the liberties of Europe; and petitioned the king to enter into such alliances with foreign nations as he should conceive likely to promote those objects.

By carrying on ostensible negotiations with D'Avaux, the French ambassador at the Hague, Great Britain and the States gained time, as well to make their preparations as to cement the desired alliances. Treaties of subsidy were concluded with the Kings of Denmark and Sweden, the Elector Palatine, and the Bishop of Munster; and one of mutual defence with the Elector of Brandenburg, who had assumed the title of King of Prussia. With the Emperor himself they entered into a league, engaging the parties to employ their combined efforts to gain possession of the Spanish Netherlands, the duchy of Milan, the

² *Mém. de Torci*, tom. i., p. 96. *Mém. de Lamberti*, tom. i., p. 192, 193, 228, 374.

kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, the islands of the 1701 Mediterranean and the provinces along the coast of Tuscany, and of the places belonging to Spain in the Indies, for the archduke; and to conclude neither peace nor truce, except jointly and by common consent. The King of France, on the other hand, meditated an alliance between the Kings of Spain and Portugal, and divided the empire by securing the neutrality of the Elector of Cologne, whom he induced to admit garrisons of French troops into his territory; and by engaging in a treaty of subsidy the Dukes of Wolfembuttel and Saxe-Gotha. In the next year the Elector of Bavaria consented to change his neutrality into an active co-operation with France; but, on the other hand, the Dukes of Wolfembuttel and Saxe-Gotha were forced, by an invasion of the troops of the Duke of Hanover, to espouse the side of the Emperor^a.

Such were the parties into which Europe was divided when hostilities commenced in Italy against the Emperor, whose forces, under the renowned Prince Eugene, twice inflicted a signal defeat on the French; and Louis now hastened on the war with England by the course he adopted of acknowledging the son of James II., upon the death of that monarch, as King of England, under the name of James III., and pressing a like acknowledgment on several other courts of Europe. This imprudent step on the part of Louis was in the highest degree favourable to the views of the States-General. As the parliament had just passed an act settling the succession in the line of Hanover, it was regarded as a wanton affront, and an insolent

^a Burnet, vol. ii., p. 263. Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 379. Parl. Hist., vol. v., col. 1250. Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 380, 474, 479, 517, 547, 624.

1701 attempt to force a sovereign upon the people; and had thus the effect of involving them, as principals, in a quarrel, in which they were yet scarce heartily engaged, and which they might otherwise, as having little concern in the issue, be ere long brought to view with indifference^b.

William, before he returned to England from his habitual summer sojourn in the Provinces, arranged with the allies the plan of the following campaign, which he was destined never to behold. He had, a short time before, been afflicted with a severe sickness, ascribed to the imprudent use of fruits, shell-fish, and other indigestible substances, and which lasted more than a month. So carefully, however, was the fact concealed, that it was suspected the report of his illness was purposely circulated to induce the States to appoint the young Prince William Friso of Nassau, successor to his offices. He had been long labouring for this object, and in order, probably, to facilitate its accomplishment, had, in the year 1695, made him sole heir to all his domains, and named the States-General executors to his will. He found, however, so little symptom of compliance in that body, that he was induced to abandon his purpose, observing, that they must wait till after his death to adopt a measure so salutary to the nation^c.

His health continued so rapidly to decline, that he communicated to the Duke of Portland his apprehensions that he should not live through another summer; adding a wish, that, if possible, none should be led to suspect the probability of his death, till it actually happened^d. After his return to England he appeared

^b Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 621. Mém. de Torci, tom. i., p. 104.

^c Mém. de Lamberti, tom. i., p. 699; tom. ii., p. 121.

^d Tindal, vol. iii., p. 496.

to rally, and the better, perhaps, to disguise his real 1701
weakness, continued to enjoy his favourite diversion
of hunting; but a fall from his horse, which broke his 1702
right collar-bone, proved the immediate exciting cause
of an increase of illness, that terminated fatally in a
few days. He died in the same firm and even temper
of mind he had preserved through the whole of his
troubled and eventful life; pressing tenderly to his
bosom the hand of his early and beloved friend, the
Duke of Portland.

William had to sustain a life of anxiety and
fatigue, under the disadvantage of a feeble constitu-
tion of body; betrayed by his slight and attenuated
frame, though in no degree in his countenance, which
was clear, animated, and sparkling. His character has
been so often delineated by the ablest pens, that it
seems presumptuous and even superfluous to dilate
upon it here; yet it may be permitted to observe that,
being for the most part viewed through the medium of
party affection or political prejudice, he has been as
often lauded by his panegyrists for qualifications which
he did not possess, as denied by his detractors the
credit of those virtues by which he was really distin-
guished.

In a military point of view, he presents the singular
phenomenon of a commander indebted for a high
reputation solely to reverses and defeats; his peculiar
constitution of mind being indeed such as to ensure
for him both the reverses and the reputation. Defi-
cient in inventive faculty, slow of comprehension,
hesitating and unready, without a sufficient degree of
confidence in his own opinions, and too proud to
endure contradiction, or adopt the suggestions of
others, he was unable immediately to perceive the
skilful combinations of the great generals opposed to

1702 him, or to cope with their rapid and masterly movements: and often allowed the opportunity for action to escape, or formed his plans in ignorance of some point which, if seized, would have occasioned them to be wholly different. In the field of battle, on the other hand, the discovery of errors previously committed caused in him neither vacillation nor apprehension. Roused to animation, full of unwonted fire and energy, he was present everywhere, and exposed himself with indifference to the most imminent dangers. In the hour of defeat, which too surely arrived, his real greatness displayed itself; it was then that his dauntless spirit and unshaken firmness of soul enabled him to take advantage of all the resources that were yet available; to give his orders with the same composure and precision as if advancing to certain victory; and to convert the most disastrous rout into a safe and orderly retreat.

Considered as a politician, his capacity for government appeared in a very different light in his native country, where he was surrounded by able and zealous ministers, and in England, where he was left to depend more upon his own resources. In Holland he had merely to express his opinions, however crude, and a Fagel, a Beverning, a Dykveldt, and a Heinsius—unquestionably the first statesmen and politicians in Europe—were ready to modify, to improve, and to render them suitable to the taste of the nation; in England, where he had few or none on whom he could depend for information and assistance, and where the slightest influence gained over him by one party excited the jealousy and animosity of the other, he betrays an extreme deficiency in penetration, dexterity, and temper; and we can scarcely recognise, in the peevish monarch, threatening constantly to

abandon his kingdom, and with it the noble cause 1702 he had espoused, the steady patriot who delivered his country from the miseries of foreign conquest and domestic sedition. Placed by circumstances in the position of a restorer and defender of liberty, never was absolute monarch more fond of arbitrary power, or more impatient of even the most legitimate control.

In Holland, where, at the time of his accession to the stadtholderate, the precarious condition of affairs rendered it necessary that unusual authority should be placed in his hands, we have seen him take advantage of it to introduce his dependents into every office of government without regard to their ability to fill them, and to trample under foot the ancient customs and privileges, interwoven in the welfare, almost in the very existence of his country. It may, indeed, be truly affirmed, that had he left a son, or succeeded in settling the inheritance on his relative William Friso, the liberties of Holland were gone for ever. In England, his anxiety to obtain a larger share of authority than the nation was willing to grant, led him to appear ungrateful to those who had set him on the throne, and to inflict incalculable injury on his affairs, by entrusting them to ministers of the Tory party, whose maxims of government, as more favourable to royal prerogative, were more acceptable to him than those of the Whigs; but whom he never could succeed in reconciling to his person, or engage to serve him with fidelity.

But though his self-will and arbitrary temper might have inclined him to be a despot, not even these dispositions could ever have induced him to become a tyrant. Too magnanimous at once, and too indolent, to commit acts of injustice or oppression, he would have obtained absolute power only with a

1702 view to its upright and beneficial use. His lofty and noble ambition, exempt from the slightest alloy of vanity, rapacity, or cupidity, was directed to none but the most praiseworthy ends; to the glory and happiness of the countries he governed, to the preservation of the liberties and balance of Europe, and to the abasement of the overgrown power of France. In steadiness of purpose he was unshaken; in scrupulous honour and integrity he was unsurpassed by any prince of the world; and forms, in this respect, a striking contrast, as well to the habitual insincerity of his predecessor Charles II., as to the duplicity and faithlessness of his contemporary of France; of him it might be truly affirmed, as it was erroneously observed of his father-in-law, that his word was never broken. So high was the esteem in which he was universally held on this account, that the Spanish minister, De Lyra, was accustomed to say, his master trusted more to the honour and constancy of the Prince of Orange, than to any treaties^e. A deep and fervent spirit of piety was in him united, in a remarkable manner, with sentiments of unbounded religious toleration; and, though he employed a portion of each day, however busy, in devout exercises, and regularly attended public worship, he was accustomed to attach so little importance to the external ceremonies of different churches, that he made no scruple of conforming, while in England, to those of the Anglican ritual on all points, except that of fasting on Good Friday; and allowed the sacrament to be administered to him on his death-bed by two English bishops^f.

Yet with many and great virtues, while he secured the esteem, he failed to gain the affections of mankind. Raised to the sovereign power over

^e Temp. Mem., p. 124.

Burnet, vol. ii., p. 203.

two great nations, by the mere force of popular opinion, and hailed by both as their preserver and defender, he died disliked and unlamented by the one, and rather respected than beloved by the other; a circumstance attributable chiefly to his cold and reserved manners and melancholy temperament, being but rarely excited to cheerfulness, and then only among a few of his most intimate friends. Too haughty for conciliation, and too sullen for affability, he took little pains to conceal his indifference to the generality of mankind; insensible to their love and admiration, he could never constrain himself so far as to court their favour on any occasion; and turned with contempt and loathing from flatteries similar to those which his contemporary, Louis XIV., swallowed with such indiscriminate and insatiate avidity. The symptoms of deep feeling he occasionally betrayed, far from inspiring sympathy as contrasting with his usual equanimity, served but to render him the more universally unpopular, as evincing that his indifference proceeded, not from his incapacity to feel strong affections, but from his opinion of the unworthiness of persons in general to excite them.

But if he took no pains to acquire the love of men, he was equally little affected by their malice and enmity. The numerous attempts to assassinate him, persisted in during the whole course of his reign, never excited in him the slightest emotion of anger, revenge, or fear; firm, in the belief of predestination instilled in his youth by his calvinistic teachers, and which he carried into every, even the smallest, circumstance of his life, and fully persuaded that not all the power and arts of enemies could hasten his destiny one single moment, he was literally, "not afraid of what man could do unto him." But though neither vindictive or cruel, it

1702 may be doubted whether he hesitated to sacrifice the principles of humanity and justice when they stood in the way of the advancement of his interests or the gratification of his ambition. The murder of the De Witts, and the massacre of Glencoe, have cast upon his memory a stain which his panegyrists have in vain laboured to efface.

The pretext usually put forth in excuse for such acts,—that they are done by ministers, without the participation of their sovereign,—is as unfair as it is idle. It is scarcely possible that any minister would venture upon a course which must expose him to the obloquy of mankind, at the risk also of losing the favour of the prince for whose service it was undertaken, or without having previously taken care to ascertain that his act would be acceptable to him; and, if such a case should occur, the prince can clear himself of suspicion only by the immediate disavowal and exemplary punishment of the offender. But in both the instances in question, the impunity that William secured to the perpetrators of the crime, and the friendship and countenance with which he afterwards treated them, offered almost incontrovertible evidence of his guilty participation; and in the minds of posterity, unhappily, the remembrance of the defender of the civil and religious liberty of Europe is inseparably interwoven with that of the abettor of the murder of the illustrious De Witts, and of the slaughter of the confiding Highlanders of Glencoe.

But, however exceptionable in some points the public character of William, in his domestic relations it shines out with a clear and undimmed lustre. His purity of morals, and general propriety of conduct, contributed much to infuse a new tone and spirit into the society of England; and, though the English had

reaped no other benefit from the change of dynasty, 1702 they owe him a debt of eternal gratitude for elevating that court, which, under his predecessors, had been a sink of licentiousness and vice, gradually spreading its corrupting influence through the kingdom, to an example of domestic virtue and decorum of manners. Under a cold and forbidding address and considerable defects of temper, he shrouded, but did not wholly conceal, a heart rich in the noblest sentiments and kindest affections. Constancy, tenderness, consideration, and gratitude, rare virtues in princes, mark all his commerce with his private friends; and his whole life affords not a single example of a confidence betrayed, or an intimacy abandoned. The few whom he loved, he loved entirely, and they returned his affection with equal constancy and ardour. His attachment to his wife was of that delicate and devoted character felt only by the more elevated order of minds; while the mingled tenderness and veneration with which he inspired a princess so wise and excellent, are calculated to inspire a favourable opinion of the qualities both of his heart and understanding.

* The grief they suffered at his loss was deep and unaffected. One of his personal attendants, Cornelius Ouwerkerke, on seeing him expire, fell down in a fit, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that his life, long in imminent danger, was preserved. *Mém. de Lamberti*, tom. ii., p. 68.

CHAPTER XI.

Fears of the States for the stability of the Grand Alliance. Reassured by Queen Anne. Overtures of France. Declaration of War against France by the Emperor, Great Britain, and the States. Retreat of the French Army before the Earl of Marlborough. Deputies of the States oppose an Engagement. Places in Guelderland recovered. Failure of the attempt on Cadiz. States consent to stop all intercourse with France and Spain. Rhyneberg, Gueldres, Bonn, and Tongres, recovered by the Allies. Misconduct of General Otdam at Ekeren. Marlborough captures Huy and Limburg. The Archduke Charles proclaimed King of Spain. Debates on the appointment of a Captain-General. Campaign in Germany and Battle of Blenheim. Influence of Marlborough in Holland. Conquest of Gibraltar. Siege of Saar-Louis frustrated. Successes of Marlborough in the Netherlands. Arrested by the interference of the States' Deputies. Battle of Ramillies. Towns of the Netherlands acknowledge Charles III. Inactive Campaign. Renewed preparations on both sides. Campaign of 1708. The King of France desires Peace. Fruitless Negotiations at the Hague. Battle of Malplaquet and reduction of Mons. Barrier Treaty between England and the States-General. Renewal of Negotiations at Geertruydenberg. Rupture of the Conferences. Campaign of 1710. Change of Ministry in England. Conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht. Satisfaction of the States at the Accession of George I. to the Throne of England. Their ready assistance in the Rebellion of 1715. Change in the relations of the United Provinces and France. The States withdraw themselves from the Political Affairs of Europe. Abortive attempt at internal reformation in the United Provinces. Tax on the Bonds of the Generality. Mississippi and South Sea schemes. Death of Pensionary Heinsius. Prince William Charles Henry Friso of Nassau, made Stadtholder of Guelderland. Establishment of an East India Company at Ostend. Formation of the Confederacies of Vienna and Hanover. Hostile appearances. Truce effected. Death of Pensionary Hornbeek. Conferences at Aix, and Treaties of Seville and Vienna.

1702 THE consternation which prevailed in the United Provinces on the death of William was excessive,

since, from the known prejudices of Queen Anne, 1702 his successor, against the Whigs, nothing less was expected, than that an immediate and entire change of measures in the English court and the dissolution of the Grand Alliance would leave them exposed to the whole vengeance of France. These fears were speedily relieved by the declaration of the views of the queen, who, within a week after her accession, dispatched the Earl of Marlborough to assure the States of her determination to preserve all the alliances formed by the late king for the maintenance of the liberties of Europe, and the reduction of the power of France within just limits; and to regard the interests of her own kingdom and the States as inseparable. The States of Holland, on their side, passed a resolution that, notwithstanding the lamented death of the King of England, they were determined to remain firm to their allies, and prosecute the war with their whole strength and vigour; and, appearing in full number in the States-General, induced them to adopt a similar resolution. The treaty between Great Britain and the States was accordingly renewed, and the plan of the campaign projected by William III. was concluded with the Earl of Marlborough, who had been appointed general-in-chief of the English forces before the death of that monarch^a.

Had the Dutch been inclined to forsake the grand alliance, a most favourable opportunity was now offered them by the King of France, who, affecting to consider their late hostile proceedings as adopted entirely under the coercion of the stadtholder, in consequence of his personal enmity towards

^a Mém. de Lamberti, tom. ii., p. 80—100. Res. van de St., Mar. 23, 25.

1702 himself, instructed Barré, his resident at the Hague, to represent to the States the long prosperity the Provinces had enjoyed during their close alliance with France, the preservation of which had formerly been one of the fundamental principles of their policy; he promised the unrestricted enjoyment of commerce; the renewal of the treaties of Munster, Nimeguen, and Ryswick; and that, as soon as peace should be ratified, the defence of the Spanish Netherlands should be left solely to Spanish troops. But even could the States have forgotten former wrongs, or trusted to the professions of one who had so often and so cruelly deceived them, they were too far involved with England and the Empire to admit of their listening, without a sacrifice of honour, to the flattering overtures of Louis; and they were unwilling, moreover, that the Netherlands should remain in the possession of any member of the House of Bourbon. They replied, therefore, that, notwithstanding their ardent desire for the continuance of peace, having been obliged by the hostile measures of the king to take up arms for their own defence, and to have recourse to the protection of their allies, it was impossible to enter into any negotiation without their concurrence^b.

Such being the result of the efforts of France, they tended in nothing to delay the declaration of war, which was issued on the same day by the
May
15th Emperor, Great Britain, and the States, against France and Spain; the former having already commenced hostilities by the investment of Keizerswaard. The causes of war, alleged by the States, were, the evident determination of France to achieve the conquest of the United Provinces; the impediments

^b Mém. de Lamberti, tom. ii., p. 90, 94.

offered to their commerce; the violation of the peace 1702 of Ryswick; the appropriation of the whole of the Spanish dominions, in spite of repeated and solemn treaties of equal partition with the Emperor; and the destruction of the barrier of the United Provinces, by the occupation of the towns in the Netherlands with French troops. Queen Anne complained that the King of France had acknowledged the titular Prince of Wales as sovereign of Great Britain, and induced the King of Spain to do likewise: while the Emperor asserted in plain terms, that the King of France had, in defiance of repeated treaties and oaths to the contrary, intruded his grandson, the Duke of Anjou, not only into the Spanish dominions, but also into some of the fiefs of the Empire; and this by virtue of a will obtained through the medium of faithless and corrupt ministers from the late king, at a moment when he was in so feeble a condition of mind and body that he could neither read nor understand, much less examine its contents.

Yet it was somewhat remarkable, that the effect of these manifestoes on the mind of Louis was exactly in inverse proportion to the irritating nature of their contents. That of the Emperor he regarded in the light of an ordinary and expected circumstance; he expressed astonishment, that the Queen of England should lay so much stress on a mere verbal acknowledgment of James III.; but the declaration of the States aroused his indignation to the highest pitch. He threw down the document in a passion of anger, exclaiming that "Messieurs the Dutch merchants should one day repent of their boldness in declaring war against so great a monarch." The answer of Louis was postponed, for some cause

^c Lamberti, tom. ii., p. 107, 113, 114, 208. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 546—550.

170 or other, till the month of July, though the campaign had previously commenced with an attempt to master Nimeguen by the Marshal Boufflers, which was prevented by the arrival of the Earl of Athlone under its walls. The Earl of Marlborough, who was now created commander-in-chief of the States' as well as the English troops, having joined Athlone, passed the Meuse at Grave and entered Spanish Guelderland; the Duke of Burgundy, with the French forces somewhat inferior in numbers, constantly retreating before him. Marlborough was strongly disposed to take advantage of his superior force, to bring the enemy to an engagement; from which purpose, however, he was deterred by the Pensionary Heinsius and the deputies of the States, who, reluctant to incur the risk of a battle, while the possession of so many large towns in the Netherlands by the enemy threatened their frontier, were desirous that it should first be secured by the recovery of the strong places in Spanish Guelderland*. He accordingly attacked in succession, Venloo, Stevenswaard, and Ruremonde, which rapidly surrendered to his arms; when, marching to Liege, he obliged the French garrison to evacuate that city. Meanwhile, the hereditary Prince of Hesse Cassel, whose father

* It was from a similar diversity of views, that, in the early part of the war, those dissensions sprung up between the Duke of Marlborough and the States' deputies in the camp, which have called forth the bitterest invectives against the Dutch from the English writers, more especially his biographer, Archdeacon Coxe. Marlborough was, for many reasons, anxious to make the Netherlands the principal scene of hostilities; while the States hoped, by acting chiefly on the defensive, and confining themselves to hindering the advance of the French troops, and to effecting the reduction of the towns which served best to protect the United Provinces against invasion, to impel the King of France to turn the strength of his arms to Germany, Italy, and Spain, and thus relieve provinces so near their own boundaries, in some measure, from the miseries of war.

had joined the grand alliance early in the year, 1702 reduced several places on the Rhine.

Although the preparations of the maritime powers for the war by sea fully kept pace with those on land, the results were by no means equally satisfactory. A plan, projected by the late stadtholder, for the surprise of Cadiz by the combined fleets, failed, that town being found, contrary to expectation, fully prepared against an attack; and the wanton pillage of the defenceless places, St. Maria and Rota, served but to create feelings of aversion in the Spanish people, both towards the allies and the sovereign whose cause they thus vindicated. In the destruction of the silver fleet in the harbour of Vigo, which followed, but a comparatively small share of the booty fell into the hands of the victors, the French commander, Chateau-Renaud, having caused the greater part of the vessels to be fired; while the principal loss was sustained by the Dutch merchants, to whom belonged a considerable portion of the property in the fleet, they being accustomed to carry on an extensive trade with America under the Spanish name and colours^d.

On the return of the Earl of Marlborough to England, at the conclusion of the campaign, the States earnestly importuned the queen to increase her forces in the Netherlands. But in the parliament summoned after the death of the king, the Tory party, who bore no good-will either to the war or the Dutch republic, had greatly the preponderance. Accordingly, though they were induced to consent to the levy of 1703 10,000 additional troops, they saddled the vote with a peremptory condition that the States should put an immediate stop to all traffic, or intercourse of any

^d Lamberti, tom. ii., p. 250—256.

1703 kind, with France and Spains. The States had as yet, notwithstanding the repeated instances of England and the Emperor, issued no express prohibition of this nature; and the French court had, in consequence, availed itself of the assistance of English, Dutch, and Genevese merchants, to transmit large sums to the Elector of Bavaria.

The interests of commerce—the life-blood of the United Provinces—had, during the last, as every other war, caused extensive connivance to be practised towards the trade constantly carried on with the enemy; yet the States, willing to propitiate the favour of England, now issued an edict, in compliance with the wishes of the parliament, to continue one year. The States of Holland, likewise, evinced their determination to fulfil to the utmost their engagements to their allies, by consenting, without hesitation, to the petition of the Council of State for the extraordinary subsidy of three millions of guilders, in addition to the estimate of the ordinary expenses, called the “State of war,” and six millions for the equipment of an additional naval armament; and by using their influence, now become predominant in the States-General, to obtain the concurrence of the remaining provinces in this resolution.

The ensuing campaign, unpropitious to the allies in Germany, was signalized, in the Netherlands and on the Lower Rhine, by the capture of Rhyneberg and Gueldres on the part of the Prussians, and the siege and reduction of Bonn under the Duke of Marlborough. After the surrender of Bonn, Marlborough advanced upon Tongres, which the enemy had, mean-

* Lamberti, tom. ii., p. 306, 313, 326. Parl. Hist., vol. vi., col. 99. Res. van de St., Feb. 13.

time, occupied, and obliged them to abandon that 1703 town, and retire to Hainault. Marlborough then formed the plan of attacking Antwerp and Ostend, which the enemy had connected by a strong line of fortifications.

Marching into Flanders in separate divisions, the Baron Spaar was commanded to penetrate the line at the villages of Steken and Steenbroek, a charge which he performed with equal ability and success; Koehoorn at the same time making himself master of the forts at Calloo and St. Anthony. Meanwhile, Obdam, successor to Athlone, as second in command of the Dutch troops, advanced to Ekeren, where he was surrounded and suddenly attacked by a detachment of Villeroi's army, under Boufflers, nearly double in number. The engagement commenced in some disorder on the part of the Dutch, and Obdam himself, being separated from the main of his army, retired, with only thirty horse, to Breda, whence he wrote to the States, that his troops had sustained a severe and entire defeat. The remainder, however, quickly rallied, and, under the generals Slangenburg and Hompesch, defended the post with extraordinary vigour, prolonging the contest until late at night. Both parties claimed the victory; but the commanders on neither side escaped censure on the occasion. The conduct of Obdam, in "deserting" the army, as it was said, was so severely commented upon, that he shortly after quitted the service; while that of Boufflers, in allowing the victory to be wrested from him by an enemy so greatly inferior in strength, excited such displeasure at the French court, that he was no longer entrusted with the command. Even the Duke of Marlborough himself was blamed for not having either sent a force to support Obdam, or attacked

1703 Villeroi while his army was weakened by the separation of Boufflers^f.

After the battle of Ekeren, Marlborough, reuniting the several divisions of the allied army, advanced close to the enemy's entrenchments between the Mehaigne and Leuwe, with the purpose of bringing Villeroi to an engagement; but this was cautiously avoided by the French general; and the proposal of Marlborough to force the lines was rejected by the deputies and commanders of the States, on the ground that, if the enemy were defeated, he would only be forced to retire to those of Judoigne or Rosbek, which were unassailable; while a reverse on their own side would lay the whole of the United Provinces open to invasion. Marlborough therefore was obliged to content himself with the less brilliant but far more useful achievements of the reduction of Huy and Limburg.

The Archduke Charles having been proclaimed King of Spain, at Vienna, by the title of Charles III., arrived, in the winter of this year, at the Hague, where he was received with royal honours by the States, and afterwards repairing to England, was conveyed thence by 1704 the combined fleets, under Admiral Rooke, to Portugal, the king of that country having, after long hesitation, become a member of the grand alliance.

While the preparations for the ensuing campaign were in progress, animated debates arose in the States-General on the subject of the appointment of a commander of the troops. The States of Friezland and Groningen insisted that their young stadtholder, John William Friso, should be created general of the infantry; a demand strenuously opposed by the remaining provinces, more especially Zealand, which,

^f Lamberti, tom. ii., p. 443—467. Sup., tom. ii., p. 167. Tindal, vol. iii., p. 619.

formerly conspicuous among all the rest for its advocacy of the interests of the family of Nassau, had been so much alienated by the transactions at Goes in 1692, and the arbitrary conduct of the late stadtholder, that it was now foremost in opposing any measure that might tend to the restoration of the stadtholderal authority. The States of this province, accordingly, objected that, in the present condition of affairs, it was necessary to have a general, not nominal only, such as the tender age of the prince would render him, but of mature years and experience; and that his advancement would be only the first step to the renewal of that form of government which neither themselves nor the other States would willingly see restored. A compromise was at length effected, according to which John William was appointed general of the infantry, jointly with Slangenburg and De Noyelles, but was not to exercise the duties, nor enjoy the emoluments of the office till he had completed his twentieth year. The Baron of Ouwerkerke was created field marshal, and Count Tilly general of cavalry.

The States were probably rendered the more reluctant to adopt any measure which might tend to advance Prince William Friso to the stadtholdership, from the circumstance of the will, by which William III. had appointed him his sole heir, being disputed by the King of Prussia, grandson by the mother's side of the stadtholder Frederic Henry, who had bequeathed the inheritance to the heirs of his daughter, in default of the issue of his son. In order, therefore, to prevent the indulgence of any hopes which the Orange party might conceive from this favour

† Lamberti, tom. iii., p. 47—52.

1704 shown to the prince, the States of Holland were the first to propose in the States-General, that those of the individual provinces should take an oath, each deputy separately, to preserve the union of the provinces without a stadtholder, and to maintain steadily all the alliances in which they were at present engaged.

On this occasion the States of Holland, instead of sending their deputies as usual, appeared in person, and in full number, in the States-General, a mode to which they constantly afterwards adhered, and which procured for them a weight and influence in the federal government superior even to that formerly enjoyed by the stadtholders. The senates and councils of the towns resumed the right of nominating their own members, a change which in Holland was effected without disturbance; but in Utrecht, Guelderland, and Overijssel, where "the regulations,"—the terms, that is, on which these provinces had been received back into the union after their conquest by the King of France,—were of such a nature, as to give the late stadtholder opportunities for the exercise of exorbitant power, the struggles between the party whom he had sedulously excluded from public offices, and those whom long possession had rendered doubly anxious to retain them, were frequent and severe.

Ultimately, however, the changes in the municipal bodies were almost universally favourable to the existing government, and the constitution of the five provinces settled itself on pretty nearly the same basis as after the death of William II. in 1650. The principal and most difficult duty of the stadtholder, that of persuading the Provinces to agree to the subsidies demanded by the Council

of State, was now fulfilled by the States of Holland 1704 through the medium of their pensionary, whose office thus acquired new dignity and importance, while his influence became more extensive in the States-General. The deliberations which, since the death of the stadtholder, had been tardy and vacillating, now gradually assumed a character of greater firmness and vigour; and never, perhaps, were the measures of the government more distinguished by wisdom, energy, and justice, than during the latter years of the war^b.

The dangers to which the Emperor was now exposed in consequence of the successes of the Elector of Bavaria, who was master of the towns commanding the Inn and Lech, and of a formidable revolt which had broken out in Hungary, determined the allies to employ their principal force in Germany, leaving a small body of troops only under Ouwerkerke to act on the defensive in the Netherlands. Marlborough, therefore, directed his course to the Upper Rhine, and uniting with the army of Prince Louis of Baden, proceeded by forced marches towards the Danube, to the attack of the Marquis d'Arco, who, with a powerful army of French and Bavarian troops, had entrenched himself at Schellenburg, near Donauwerth, for the purpose of preventing the passage of that river. After a sharp contest the enemy's lines were mastered, their tents and baggage captured, and the troops forced to retire, with the loss of 6000 men, to Donauwerth, which they abandoned next day. The elector likewise broke up the camp he had posted between Lauwenburg and Dillingen, and hastened to the Lech to cover his

^b Lamberti, *Affaires des Provinces Unies*, tom. xiii. passim, xiv. ditto.

1704 hereditary states. He was closely followed by Marlborough, who obliged him to surrender successively Rain, Nieuburg, Aiche, and Friedberg, with several other towns.

Being reinforced by a body of 22,000 French troops, under Tallard, the elector took up a position near Hochstedt, his right being covered by the Danube and the village of Blenheim, and his left protected by a large wood and the village of Lutzingen, with a stream and marsh in front. Marlborough, who was joined by the imperial troops under Prince Eugene, was less advantageously posted, and somewhat inferior in numbers¹; but learning that the design of Villeroi was to occupy Wirtemberg and cut off his communication with those towns of the Rhine whence alone he could receive his supplies, he resolved upon coming to an engagement at all hazards.

Early on the morning of the 13th of August, the allied army having passed the small river Kessel, which divided them from the enemy, the Duke of Marlborough sent forward Lord Cutts, with twenty battalions of foot and sixteen squadrons of horse, to the attack of the village of Blenheim, where twenty-four battalions of the flower of the French infantry, and twelve squadrons of horse were posted. The superior number of the enemy, and the strength of the position, rendered every attempt to force it ineffectual; and the assailants, after having performed prodigies of valour, were repulsed; but being reinforced by a fresh body of Hessian troops, they renewed the attack. Meanwhile the Duke of Marl-

¹ The army of the allies was 52,000 in number, with fifty-two pieces of artillery; that of the French and Bavarians 60,000, with ninety pieces. Le Clerc, tom. ii., p. 416.

borough had effected the passage of the stream and 1704 marsh in face of the enemy with unparalleled skill and bravery, and commenced a sharp attack on the right, commanded by Tallard, who had committed the capital error of forming his centre of the right and left wings of his cavalry, and neglecting to protect it by a strong body of infantry, the greater portion of which he had stationed in the villages. Marlborough, therefore, who had placed the principal force of his infantry in the centre, found little difficulty in penetrating his line of battle; the French were completely routed, and, flying in confusion, perished in numbers in the Danube. Tallard himself was taken prisoner. On the right, Prince Eugene, having engaged the left wing of the enemy commanded by the Elector of Bavaria, was thrice repulsed with some loss, and his cavalry thrown into disorder; but the admirable steadiness of his infantry enabled him to retrieve the fortune of the day, and the elector was at length obliged to retreat. The flight of the enemy enabled General Churchill to turn the post of Blenheim and attack the village in the rear. Thus beset, and having sustained a contest of six hours, the defenders yielded themselves prisoners of war.

The victory was not purchased without bloodshed on the part of the allies, 4500 of whom were killed, and near 8000 wounded and prisoners; but it was utter destruction to the French and Bavarian army, of which the loss is said to have amounted to 40,000 men. The whole of the enemy's artillery and baggage, and an immense number of standards, were the trophies of this celebrated victory, of which the more solid advantage was the laying the whole of Bavaria at the mercy of the conqueror. Augsburg,

1704 Ulm, and Memmingen, submitted with little resistance¹.

After the reduction of Landau and Traarbach, which employed the arms of the allies until late in the winter, Marlborough repaired to Berlin, with the purpose of prevailing with the King of Prussia to send an army to the assistance of the Duke of Savoy, who had in the last year abandoned the side of France to enter into the Grand Alliance. From Berlin he passed through Hanover to the Hague, where he was received with the liveliest demonstration of joy and affection, the successes of the campaign contributing not a little to augment the influence which his prudent and conciliating conduct had already begun to acquire for him. He had the good policy to maintain constantly the strictest friendship with the Pensionary Heinsius, and with the chief persons in the municipal government of Amsterdam, the leading member of the States of Holland. The deputies of that town, accordingly, supported his views and interests on all occasions, and seldom failed to persuade the States of Holland, and by their means the States-General, to adopt and execute his suggestions for the prosecution of the war^{k*}.

The combined fleets, under the admirals Rooke and Kallenberg, having landed Charles III., king of

¹ *Mém. Hist. et Pol. de Feuquières*, tom. iii., p. 266, et seq. *Mém. de Lambert*, tom: iii., p. 94—102. *Coxe's Life of Marlborough*, chap. 25, 26.

^k *Lamberti*, tom. iii., p. 124.

* The influence of the States of Holland in the States-General was obtained chiefly by a custom they had of advancing money to the poorer Provinces, when unable to pay their quotas to the generality; and, in the same way, Amsterdam was accustomed to exercise a preponderance over the smaller towns in the States of Holland.

Spain, safely at Lisbon, directed their course towards 1704 the Mediterranean, when, on entering the Straits of Gibraltar, a resolution was formed to attack that town. Eight hundred Dutch and English troops having occupied the neck of land which joins it to the continent, in order to cut off all hope of succour from that side, the whole fleet commenced a brisk cannonade, while a party, under the captains Hielker and Jamper, carried the mole sword in hand, and made themselves masters of a small bastion between it and the town, together with the artillery. The governor, therefore, was soon obliged to capitulate. The Queen of England at first appeared inclined to acknowledge a joint-possession with the States of this conquest, achieved by their united arms; but she afterwards changed her purpose, and the English finally assumed the sole occupation of Gibraltar, without any indemnification to the States, who, reluctant to alienate so valuable an ally by insisting on the share so justly due to them, quietly acquiesced in the usurpation. A subsequent engagement off Malaga with the French fleet, under the Count of Toulouse, terminated somewhat to the disadvantage of the latter, their ships being obliged to retire, much damaged, to the harbour of Toulon.

Gibraltar, left under the government of the Prince of Hesse, was soon after invested by a powerful force of French and Spaniards; but the besiegers, 1705 being unable to prevent the constant transmission of supplies from Lisbon to the town, were obliged at the end of four months to abandon the enterprise.

While the arms of the enemy were thus occupied, the allies gained considerable advantages in Spain, where, in the course of the summer, King Charles

1705 was acknowledged by the whole of Catalonia, except Rosas, and the greater portion of Valencia¹.

One of the most remarkable proofs of the extraordinary confidence with which Marlborough had inspired the Dutch was displayed by the fact that, though habitually pertinacious in their own opinions, and strongly averse to removing their army to a distance from their frontier, he was able to prevail with them to allow him almost to drain the Netherland provinces of troops, in order to transfer the scene of hostilities to the Moselle. It was resolved that the siege of Saar-Louis should be undertaken by Prince Louis of Baden, commander of the imperial forces, while Marlborough should cover the siege, or co-operate with him in any manner that might be found advisable. Having collected the English and States' troops at Maestricht, the duke marched to the Moselle, which he crossed without impediment, and advanced to Elft, in sight of Villars and the whole of the enemy's army, who lay at Link. But the success of the enterprise was entirely frustrated by the misconduct of the Prince of Baden, who only after repeated expostulations and entreaties consented to put himself in movement to join the allies, and had no sooner reached Kreutznach, with his troops in a very inefficient condition for want of horses and artillery, than he suddenly quitted the army under pretext of sickness.

Thus precluded from effecting anything of importance on the Moselle, Marlborough resolved to return to the Netherlands, where the slender force left under Ouwkerke had been unable to prevent the capture of Huy, and the investment of Liege by Villeroi.

¹ Cerisier, Tab. des Provinces Unies, tom. ix., p. 73. Vad. Hist., b. 66, No. 26.

He forced the enemy to raise the siege, recaptured Huy, and broke through the French lines which covered Brabant, entirely defeating the troops who defended them with the loss of only seven men on his own side. Tirlemont was taken, and Diest with several other places on the Diemer, abandoned by the French. Unhappily the career of victory thus commenced was arrested by the untimely interference of the deputies of the States-General in the camp. The allies had followed the retreating army close to Louvain, when, the falling of a heavy rain rendered the river Dyle impracticable for some days, and obliged them to attempt the passage over the Ysche, a small river flowing into the Dyle, which the enemy meanwhile, recovering from their consternation, had fortified by an advantageous post on the opposite side.

Marlborough was eager for an immediate attack, which, though bold and hazardous, would, there is little doubt, have proved successful, considering the dispirited condition of the French troops. But the deputies, persuaded by the General Slangenburg—who manifested his discontent at not obtaining promotion according to his expectations, by thwarting the views of the duke on every occasion—that the attack on the post was impracticable, and that a failure would expose the United Provinces to imminent danger, peremptorily refused to give their consent to the enterprise, which Marlborough was, therefore, to his great mortification compelled to abandon.

The discontent which this proceeding excited both in the United Provinces and England, was great and universal; the friends of the duke, in the latter country, were violent in their complaints of the States' generals and deputies; and the Tory party

1705 loudly exclaimed, that the States shifted the whole burden of the war on the queen; and that their deputies in the camp had purposely, and from jealousy of the English, given an unfavourable turn to the affairs of the allies.

The conduct of Marlborough himself on the occasion was highly to be applauded. In the first emotions of his anger he sent a letter to the States filled with bitter complaints against the generals and deputies; but, after a little reflection, he dispatched a second letter declaring, that though a brilliant victory had been snatched from him, yet, if their generals should form any project for the rest of the campaign, he was ready to second them to the utmost of his power. He likewise dissuaded the queen from the purpose she entertained of sending over Lord Pembroke to remonstrate with the States. Touched by this magnanimity, the States sent to him Paul Buys, pensionary of Amsterdam, with assurances of receiving all the satisfaction he desired; and that those persons who made it their business to thwart his views should be removed from the army. Slangenburg, in fact, anticipated his recall by retiring from the service. The moderation and temper displayed on both sides had the effect of setting this disagreeable matter happily at rest, and the States made a further step towards the renewal of friendly feelings, by passing shortly after a resolution, that they would employ their utmost efforts in the prosecution of a vigorous offensive warfare during the next year, notification of which they trans-
1706 mitted to the queen. With the view also of averting the like evils for the future, they framed a new instruction for their deputies in the camp, binding them to provide for the welfare of the nation at large without regard to the advantage or security of any parti-

cular province; they were to maintain a good under-1706 standing with the English commander-in-chief, as well as with the generalissimo of the States' troops and *Ouwerkerke*; and, in case of a difference between them, to give such orders to the latter as they should find expedient, communicating the contents of their resolutions to the registrar of the States-General; but, on all occasions, they were to support the authority of the commander-in-chief, and to give no orders to inferior generals, except through him. Entire obedience was paid to these injunctions, of which the beneficial effects were strongly marked in the course of the ensuing campaigns^m.

The Duke of Marlborough having joined the army together with a body of auxiliaries from the King of Denmark, at *Maestricht*, succeeded by a stratagem in drawing the French general *Villeroi*, out of his lines behind the *Deule*, when the latter took up an advantageous position at *Ramillies*, and the other villages between the *Mehaigne* and the lesser *Gheete*. Here he drew out his forces to receive Marlborough, who advanced directly to give him battle. The French army were somewhat superior in numbers, consisting of 80 battalions of foot, and 140 squadrons of horse; while the allies had no more than 75 battalions and 117 squadronsⁿ: in the centre of the French line was the strong post of *Ramillies* well defended by artillery, and their left was covered by the small river *Yause* and a morass.

The attack was commenced by the Swiss general

^m Lamberti, tom. iii., p. 447, 468, 470, 472, 473, 478, 493, 494. Corres. of Duke of Marl., Sept. 24, 1705. Coxe's *Life of Marl.*, chap. 37. *Groot Plakaatb. deel.*, v., bl. 66.

ⁿ Lamberti, tom. iv., p. 66. According to the estimate of Marlborough himself, 128 squadrons and 74 battalions to 123 squadrons and 73 battalions. *Lett. to Godolphin in Mem.*, vol. ii., p. 30.

1706 Wertmuller on the left wing, with four battalions of Dutch infantry, against the right of the enemy, posted at Tavieres, on the banks of the Mehaigne. He succeeded in dislodging them, when the flower of the French army coming up, Marlborough dispatched some Danish troops with the Dutch cavalry, under Ouwerkerke, to their succour. After a conflict of half an hour, the allies were repulsed in their turn and thrown into some disorder; but Marlborough at the head of twenty fresh squadrons of English horse, quickly rallied them, and forced their opponents to retreat. The General Schultz had, at the same time, assaulted the post of Ramillies with such vigour that the enemy, after a resolute defence, were compelled to abandon it, and being intercepted in their retreat by the Dutch and Danish horse, were all either slain or made prisoners. The flight, then, became general, and the pursuit eager. The Elector of Bavaria and Villeroi themselves narrowly escaped capture. Eight thousand of the French are said to have been left dead on the field, and their loss in wounded and prisoners was 12,000; that of the allies being estimated at no more than 1066 killed, and 2567 wounded, principally Dutch troops. The remnant of the defeated army retired to Brussels, which, however, together with Antwerp and most of the towns of Flanders and Brabant, opened their gates to the victors, and proclaimed Charles III. King of Spain, and sovereign of the Netherlands. Ostend, Menin, and Dendermonde fell before the arms of the allies, and Ath surrendered to Ouwerkerke after a short siege.

Thus terminated this brilliant and auspicious campaign, of which the result, in addition to depriving Louis of the footing he had gained in the Netherlands,

was to re-unite those bonds of alliance between 1706 England and Holland, which the occurrences of the preceding year had for a while threatened to dissolve. The affairs of the allies were equally prosperous in Spain and Italy; France gaining the advantage in Germany only, where the conduct of the war was entrusted, by the Emperor, to the indolent, or treacherous Prince Louis of Baden^o.

Such, however, were the resources, and such the resolute spirit of Louis, that he sent in the next 1707 summer a force into the Netherlands superior to that of the allies; so that, the Duke de Vendôme studiously avoiding an engagement, Marlborough was not in sufficient strength to force his entrenchments, and the campaign passed over in comparative inactivity. In Spain, the results of the victory gained by the Duke of Berwick over the army of Charles III., were to restore Valencia and Arragon to Philip; while the French recovered much of the ground they had lost in Germany. The failure also of a combined attack on Toulon by the fleet of the maritime powers and the troops under the Duke of Savoy and Prince Eugene, spread equal disappointment and dissatisfaction among the allies.

This return of prosperity encouraged the King France to put forth once more the whole of his strength against his foes. With the finances of his kingdom in a state of utter exhaustion, and the national credit threatened with bankruptcy, he found means to equip an army of 100,000 men to act in 1708 the Netherlands, under the command of his grandson the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of Vendôme. The Elector of Bavaria was to conduct affairs on the Rhine, while the direction of the war in Dauphiné

^o Lamberti, tom. iv., p. 66 et seq. Coxe's Life of Marl., chap. 45.

1708 was committed to the Marshal Villeroi. The States and Queen of England, on their side, were no less active. It was resolved to have on foot in the Netherlands an army of 70,000 infantry and 223 squadrons of horse, besides 50 battalions in garrison, ready to take the field; the States, notwithstanding the embarrassed condition of their finances, voting eight millions for the extraordinary expenses, in addition to the annual "state of war^p."

Far different, however, to the relative proportion of numerical strength was that of the moral force, or the wisdom and vigour of the councils, whether political or military, of the two parties. In France, the able ministry of a Louvois, and a Colbert in war and finance, had now given place to that of Chamillard, a man whose sole recommendation to office had been the favour of Madame de Maintenon, and who possessed little further qualification for its fulfilment than a sincere desire to perform his duty. The effects of his feeble administration were soon felt in every department of the state. The troops, whose equipments had been a few years before the admiration of Europe, were now ill-clothed, ill-fed, and provided with arms of inferior quality; the officers, composed chiefly of the relatives and creatures of the minister, indolent and incapable, were encouraged by his protection to relax discipline with impunity; and those armies, the plan of whose campaigns had heretofore been formed on the postulate of certain victory, were now frequently sent into the field with instructions to avoid an engagement. Of an army thus inefficient, jealousy and dissension reigned between the chiefs.

The Duke of Burgundy, invested with equal authority to the Duke of Vendôme, but able from his

birth and station to form a powerful party in the 1708 camp wholly devoted to himself, by thwarting the views of his rival on every occasion, and issuing contradictory orders in the most important crises, rendered all the skill and talents of that admirable commander absolutely unavailing. To such materials, ill-fitted to sustain the falling fortunes of a nation, were opposed the genius of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, no less distinguished as statesmen than warriors; the Pensionary Heinsius, who equalled either in prudence and sagacity; and the three members of the committee of secret affairs,—Hop, treasurer of the generality, Slingelandt, secretary of the Council of State, and the registrar Fagel, men, who though less known to fame, were worthy in every respect to rank as their associates. In the field, the entire union, undisturbed by envy or jealousy, subsisting between the two generals-in-chief and their able coadjutor, the gallant Ouwerkerke, counterbalanced in great measure the disadvantages arising from the differences of views and opinions inevitable among the members of a confederacy so heterogeneous as the Grand Alliance.

The results of the campaign, accordingly, were such as might be expected from the conduct of its affairs. Though the commencement was unfavourable to the allies from the surprisal of Ghent, Bruges, and Plassendale, by the French, in concert with some of the inhabitants of those towns, the victory of Oudenarde, the destruction of the enemy's lines in different parts of Flanders, the reduction of Lille and Ryssel, and the raising of the siege of Brussels, rendered the achievements of this summer entitled to rank among the most arduous and glorious ever recorded in the annals of war. Ghent and Bruges were likewise

1708 recovered. On sea the islands of Sardinia and Minorca were conquered by the combined fleets.

Defeated on almost every side; disappointed in the cherished object of ambition of his whole life,—the possession of the Spanish Netherlands; his veteran troops destroyed; his kingdom impoverished and discontented; and himself verging on dotage, Louis now sighed for that repose, which, in his strength and his pride, he had denied to the civilized world. He had two years previously, through the medium of the Marshal D'Allègre, a prisoner in Holland, and Helvetius, son of the celebrated physician of that name, a native of the Hague, made overtures to Heinsius, Buys, and some others of the government, offering to permit the Spanish Netherlands to form themselves into an independent state, with a sufficient barrier for the United Provinces, and a highly advantageous treaty of commerce to the latter. The States, whose finances were deeply embarrassed by the long war,—Holland alone being nearly four millions in arrear,—had evinced a strong inclination to lead a favourable ear to these advances; but the lord-treasurer of England, Godolphin, and Marlborough had now coalesced with the Whigs, the party zealously bent on the continuance of the war; and the latter was unwilling that the Spanish Netherlands should be left so much at the disposal of the States; more especially, since he had been obliged to decline an offer made him by the Emperor of the government of these provinces, in consequence of the violent opposition to its acceptance on the part of the States, who justly considered that this step would give to England a very much more powerful influence in their affairs than was consistent with their welfare or security. The English ministers, therefore, had contrived

to impede the progress of the negotiations until the 1708 events of the last year's campaign rendered France less inclined to the sacrifices she was before willing to make. But the reverses Louis now again sustained prompted him to renew his offers of accommodation to the States through the medium of one Petkum, resident of the Duke of Holstein at the Hague, proposing that Philip should deliver possession of the Netherland provinces, Spain, the Indies, and the Milanese, to Charles III., and retain Naples and Sicily, with Sardinia, and the places in Tuscany.

It was a proud moment for the republic, when she beheld the powerful and haughty foe, by whom she had been a few years before so wantonly oppressed, a suppliant at her feet to mediate his peace with offended Europe. Nor was she wanting to herself, in this crisis: neither inflated by success, nor swayed by self-interest, she made no concealment of her anxiety for peace, but steadily refused to separate her cause from that of her allies. The conferences, accordingly, carried on for some time in secret by Heinsius, Buys, and Van der Dussen, burgomaster of Gouda, were made public and general. The 1709 Emperor commissioned Prince Eugene and Count Zinzendorf to appear at the Hague in his name, Marlborough and Lord Townshend being sent thither on the part of England. After frequent and protracted discussions, the pensionary framed a preliminary treaty, which was signed by the ambassadors of the allies, on the basis, that Charles III. should, within two months, be put in possession of all the

* Lamberti, tom. iii., p. 551, et seq.; tom. iv., p. 314; tom. v., p. 104, 629. Coxe's *Life of Marl.*, chap. xlviij, l. *Mém. de Torcy*, tom. i., p. 124, 126.

1709 dominions of the late King of Spain, except such portions as the allies should award to the Duke of Savoy and the King of Portugal, the King of France withdrawing all his troops from the Spanish territory. As regarded the barrier for the United Provinces, it was proposed, that Louis should surrender Furnes and the fort of Knokke, Menin, Ypres, with Warneton Commines, Werwyk and Poperingen, Lille, Tournay, Condé and Maubeuge; and the commercial tariff of 1664 was also demanded. If the king obliged the Duke of Anjou to yield possession of the Spanish dominions, and performed the conditions of the preliminary treaty within the appointed time, a truce should be declared, to continue till the peace were concluded and ratified. These terms were unhesitatingly rejected by Louis; without, however, the negotiations being entirely dropped, but kept, as it were, in abeyance, through the medium of Petkum (familiarily termed the peace-broker), while the parties awaited what the events of the next campaign might bring forth^r.

Advancing constantly nearer to the boundaries of France, the allied army, under Marlborough and Eugene, invested Tournay, while the Prince of Orange-Nassau mastered Montagne and St. Amand; Tournay surrendered in less than a month, though the citadel held out till the beginning of September. On the reduction of the latter, the siege of Mons, in Hainault, was immediately commenced. Villars, whom Louis had been forced, by the disastrous state of his affairs, to nominate to the command in the Netherlands, with a view of relieving the town, broke

^r Mém. de Torcy, tom. i., p. 147—151, et seq.; tom. ii., p. 31, 51, 67, 117, 145, 182.

up his camp at the village of Lens, and entrenched 1709 himself among the inclosures of Blaquet, or Malplaquet, between the woods of Sart and Lagnières.

As it was impossible to carry on the siege with the enemy in this position, it was determined, after some opposition on the part of the States' deputies, to make a general and vigorous attack on their lines. The infantry of the States, commanded by Count Tilly and the Prince of Nassau, engaging with the right of the enemy at Lagnières, was received with a terrific fire, and in spite of the utmost valour and resolution was thrice repulsed, and unable to master the triple entrenchment with which Villars had fortified his camp; but the hereditary Prince of Hesse bringing up some fresh squadrons, they once more renewed the assault. Prince Eugene, on the right, had the good fortune to penetrate the left wing of the enemy, and to gain possession of the wood of Sart on which it rested. This was followed by a general and rapid charge, which soon turned the tide of battle decisively in favour of the allies. The French rallied several times, and fought with desperate courage and obstinacy; but finally retreated towards Bavay and Quesnoy, leaving the whole of their artillery behind. Had the victory in this battle, the sharpest and most destructive fought during the whole war, been estimated by the mutual loss in killed and wounded, it had been doubtful*; judged of by its results it rested wholly with the allied generals; since Villars, retreating to Valenciennes, gave them

* The number of Dutch killed was 3092, and of wounded 6969; that of the Imperialists, Danes, Hessians, Wirtembergers, English, Prussians, and Hanoverians, together, amounted to 2455 killed, and 5837 wounded. Tindal, vol. iv., p. 137.

1709 an opportunity of accomplishing their purpose of reducing Mons^s.

The maritime operations of the allies, after the capture of Gibraltar in 1704, were, with the exception of the conquest of Sardinia and Minorca in the last year, wholly insignificant; a result, as far as concerns the English, to be attributed rather to the incapacity of Prince George of Denmark to fulfil the duties of first lord of the admiralty, than to the treachery of which the English historians somewhat too freely accuse those who had the direction of affairs. The inactivity of France and the States, appears to have arisen from a kind of tacit mutual consent to remit their efforts on sea, in order, instead of wasting their resources in contests where all the results to be obtained were the loss of a few more ships on the one side or the other, to concentrate their whole force on their operations by land, where the territory, that each sought to gain or preserve, should be the reward.

The influence of the Whig party in the affairs of government in England, always irksome to the queen, had now began visibly to decline; and the partiality she was suspected of entertaining for her brother, with her known dislike of the house of Hanover, inspired them with alarm, lest the Tories might seek still further to propitiate her favour, by altering, in his favour, the line of succession as at present established. They had, accordingly, made it one of the preliminaries of the proposed treaty of peace, that the Protestant succession, in England, should be secured by a general guarantee, and now sought to

* Lamberti, tom. v., p. 334, 356. Lett. of Count Tilly, 368, 330. Lett. of Duke of Marl. in Corr. of Duchess, vol. ii., p. 364.

repair, as far as possible, the failure caused by the 1709 unsuccessful termination of the conferences, by entering into a treaty to that effect with the States. The Marquis Townshend, accordingly, repaired for this purpose to the Hague, when the States consented to enter into an engagement to maintain the present succession to the crown with their whole force, and to make the recognition of that succession, and the expulsion of the Pretender from France, an indispensable preliminary to any peace with that kingdom. In return for this important guarantee, England was to secure to the States a barrier, formed of the towns of Nieuport, Furnes and the fort of Knokke, Menin, Lille, Ryssel, Tournay, Condé, and Valenciennes, Maubeuge, Charleroi, Namur, Lier, Halle, and some forts, besides the citadels of Ghent and Dendermonde. It was afterwards asserted, in excuse for the dereliction from that treaty on the part of England, that Townshend had gone beyond his instructions; but it is quite certain that it was ratified without hesitation by the queen, whatever may have been her secret feelings regarding it^t.

Although the issue of hostilities in the last campaign was far more favourable to Louis in the other parts of Europe than in the Netherlands, it was not such as to encourage him to vary much in the nature of the offers he made to procure a peace. He even proceeded so far, as to empower the Marquis de Torcy to propose, through Petkum, a project 1710 similar in its provisions to that drawn up by Heinsius, except that he consented to give Charles III. possession of the Spanish dominions only after the signature of the treaty, instead of making that act

^t Actes d'Utrecht, tom. i., p. 36. Burnet, vol. ii., p. 596. Bolingbroke's Correspondence, Ap. 19, 1711.

1710 a preliminary^a. He proposed also, that Naples and Sicily, with the towns on the coast of Tuscany, should be ceded to the Duke of Anjou; but this apparently feasible and equitable partition did not fall in with the views of the allies, more particularly the Emperor, who loudly insisted on the indivisibility of the Spanish empire, and urged, that the King of France, by establishing his grandson in Naples or Sicily, would be master of the trade of the Mediterranean and Levant. Perceiving the pertinacity of the allies on this point, Louis at length declared, that the Duke of Anjou would be satisfied with Sicily and Sardinia only, and that he himself was willing, either to give Berghes, Douay, Charlemont, and Aire as security, or lodge a certain sum with the city of Amsterdam, to be applied towards the prosecution of the war against his grandson, if he refused to deliver possession of the Spanish dominions to Charles III. within four months.

He afterwards consented to forego both Sicily and Sardinia; but the allies, apparently resolved to make peace on no terms whatever, professed to consider the security insufficient, on the ground that Louis would gladly retain Spain and the Indies at the price of the cautionary towns; and constantly insisted upon the insupportable condition that Louis should, if Philip V. refused to surrender his kingdom, join the allies in the war against him. Such a proposal it was impossible for the King of France, however anxious for peace, to entertain. "Since I must make war," he observed in full council, "I would rather make it against my enemies than my children." The conferences, therefore, after some months' continuance at Geertruydenberg, were broken up with strong manifestations of

^a Mém. de Torey, tom. ii., p. 183.

ill-humour on both sides; and thus the opportunity of 1710 effecting a solid and advantageous peace was lost to the allies for ever. There is little doubt that, had the treaty been concluded, the King of France was prepared to abide by its provisions; not that any improvement had taken place in his character on the score of political integrity, but because his circumstances rendered it indispensable that he should do so*.

No sooner was it suspected how the negotiations would terminate, than extensive preparations were hastened forward for the ensuing campaign in the Netherlands; the success of which, under the conduct of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, could scarcely be doubtful. No general engagement, however, was fought, the encounters being limited to some short skirmishes which occurred during the sieges of Douay, Bethune, St. Venant, and Aire, all of which towns surrendered to the allied forces.

Yet events had long been preparing in England which were to change entirely the face of affairs on the Continent, and deprive the States, and even Great Britain herself, in some measure, of the fruits of their numerous and dearly-bought victories. The dismissal of the Whig ministers—a result brought about no less by their own imprudent conduct in many respects, than by the court intrigues and cabals for which the reign of Queen Anne was so noted—was a measure

* *Mém. de Torcy*, tom. ii., p. 189, 202—265. *Actes d'Utrecht*, tom. i., p. 81. *Lamberti*, tom. vi., p. 37, 42.

* It was asserted by the Whigs of that period, that Louis had no other object in making these offers than to amuse and divide the allies, and to pacify the clamours of his subjects; but the despatches between him and his minister De Torcy, published in the *Memoirs of the latter*, incontestably prove that the desire he expressed for peace was sincere, and that he was prepared to make considerable sacrifices in order to obtain it.

1710 regarded with as much dismay by the allies (of whom the Emperor and States ventured to petition the queen in earnest terms against it^w), as with secret triumph and exultation by France. Louis, indeed, had everything to hope from the new administration, composed entirely of Tories, whom all the glory of their country's arms failed to reconcile to the war, and who constantly viewed both the Dutch nation itself and the alliance of the States with jealousy and aversion.

Immediately on the appointment of the present ministry, a correspondence was opened with France, which, however carefully concealed, could not escape the notice of the States, who, justly mistrustful of their intentions, laboured diligently to discover the real position of affairs. But the flattering appearances kept up by the English ministers were sufficient to lead astray the most acute vision. They affected the utmost anxiety to maintain a good understanding with the republic, and a determination to adhere to all the engagements entered into by the queen. The secretary of state, St. John, wrote to Buys, to the effect, that the interests of the two countries could not be separated without injury to both; and laid it down as an invariable rule, that all the monarchs of England who had studied the welfare of the kingdom, had been friendly to Holland, and that none had ever been enemies to her but such as nourished designs as prejudicial to their own subjects as to the republic^x. Harley, the treasurer, declared, that if ever he became party to any clandestine negotiation, he should deserve to perish by the knife of the assassin^z; and the queen

^w Tindal, vol. iv., p. 190. ^x Bolingbroke's Corresp., Oct. 13, 1710.

^z His life had been attempted shortly before by one Guiscard, a Frenchman.

herself sent to demand a contingent of thirty ships 1710 from the States, as though determined to continue the war with increased vigour.

To these professions of amity and good faith, their actual proceedings formed a strange contrast. While they amused the States by proposing some vague preliminaries, which they never designed should be accepted, they despatched Matthew Prior, and one Gaultier, to Paris, with proposals on the part of the queen wholly advantageous to England, the interests of the allies being not so much as mentioned. These were to be kept secret, unless revealed by mutual consent; and it was, in fact, not until, the negotiations having been transferred to London, the preliminaries of a separate treaty were agreed upon and signed by St. John, and Nicholas Menager, on the part of England and France, that the English ministry made public a scheme of a general peace, through the medium of Raby, earl of Strafford, ambassador at the Hague. He was instructed, moreover, to admonish the States not to insist too pertinaciously on the barrier secured to them by the treaty with England in 1709, and to the speedy commencement of the negotiations which France had proposed to open either at Utrecht, Nimeguen, Aix, or Liege.

The death of the Emperor Joseph, in the April 1711 of this year, and the election of Charles III., king of Spain, to the throne of the Empire, afforded just ground, as the English ministers conceived, for departing from the main object of the grand alliance; nor were the States themselves any longer inclined to lavish blood and treasure for the purpose of placing the Imperial and Spanish crowns on one head; a con-

⁷ *Mém. de Torcy*, tom. iii., p. 31, 86, 95. *Bol. Cor.*, Oct. 12. *Lamberti*, tom. vi., p. 671, 674, 691.

1711 summation adverse to the terms of the partition treaty, and even more dangerous to the liberties of Europe than the possession of France and Spain by the different members of the family of Bourbon. A peace, therefore, appeared to the latter an object far more desirable and easy of attainment than it had hitherto been; but they were at the same time anxious that, by the display of a firm determination to continue the war, and the preservation of perfect union amongst themselves, the allies should be enabled to obtain equitable terms from France. Accordingly they refused to consent to the opening of the conferences, unless the French ministers would first explain their intentions with respect to the barrier, and the indemnity they expected for the demolition of Dunkirk, in a far more clear and specific manner than they had hitherto done. Nevertheless, the Queen of England declared to France her resolution to open the conferences on the basis proposed; and that, if the king would make known his views on the subject of the barrier, and the renewal of the tariff of 1664, she would answer for the acquiescence of the Dutch; and St. John, at the same time, wrote to Strafford at the Hague, that the States deceived themselves if they thought, by artifices or delays, to make her majesty change her opinion^z.

Thus assured of the open and avowed support of England, Louis assumed a still higher tone. In his private communication to the ministers of that country of the terms on which he was willing to treat, he made known his resolution to cede no barrier to the States unless on condition that the Elector of Bavaria, to whom Philip V. had now engaged to transfer the Netherlands, were secured in the possession of those provinces; and insisted upon other terms

^z Bol. Cor., Oct. 30. Res. van de St., Oct. 24. Lamberti, tom. vi., p. 697

far better suited to the conqueror of Holland, of 1711 twenty years before, than to the present reduced state of his fortunes. If the Dutch favoured the acceptance of the conditions he proposed to the other allies, he offered them the renewal of the advantageous commercial treaty of 1664; if they opposed the peace, their commerce was to be restricted by that of 1669. Though fully conscious that the reception of such terms was both dishonourable and injurious to the States, the English court obliged them, by threats of an entire separation in case of further refusal, to consent to the opening of the negotiations, in the January of the following year, at Utrecht^a.

But, notwithstanding that they yielded thus far, the States were importunate with the allies not to throw too hastily and heedlessly the arms from their hands which alone could enable them to bring France to equitable conditions. The annual petition of the Council of State to the States-General for supplies, of which an historical epitome of late events usually formed the preamble, drawn up this year by the treasurer Slingelandt, and esteemed one of the ablest productions of the kind that ever appeared on the page of history, set forth these considerations in a strong light. Taking a review of the state and interests of the nations of Europe, he enumerated the conquests made upon France since the commencement of the war; urged, the certainty, that if steadily persevered in, her exorbitant power would be soon reduced within its just and natural limits; that the allies being from their command of the rivers secure of plentiful supplies to subsist their army during the

^a *Mém. de Torcy*, tom., iii., p. 96, 97, 124 et seq. *Lamberti*, tom. vi., p. 698, 726.

1711 winter, which was impossible to the French, they might, with ease, make such advances, in the next spring, before the enemy could be brought into the field, as to enable them, if they judged it expedient, to reach the very gates of Paris in a single campaign; just as the Spaniards might have done after the battle of St. Quentin, in 1555, if human passions had not prevailed over the true interests of the state^b.

These sentiments, which the States adopted chiefly with the view of alarming Louis with the alternative of his refusing a reasonable peace, were warmly supported by the leaders of the Whig party in England; and, it is even said, that Marlborough designed to arouse the popular feeling in that country, in favour of a continuance of the war, by executing, during the winter, a scheme he had long contemplated, of invading France^c. If any such plan were actually formed, however, it was frustrated by the removal of the duke from the command of the army in the Netherlands; Butler, duke of Ormond, being now substituted in his room as generalissimo of the English forces. The last campaign, though not crowded with events, had been such as to set the seal on the fame of this great captain, by his masterly passage of the French lines near Bouchain, concerning which the general, Villars, had written to the king, that he had opposed the *ne plus ultra* to the Duke of Marlborough; and, by the subsequent capture of that town in sight of the superior army of the enemy^d.

The Queen of England, having sent circulars to the allied sovereigns, inviting them to the congress at

^b Actes d'Utrecht, tom. i., p. 139.

^c Bolingbroke's Letters on History, let. viii., p. 333, edit. 1770.

^d Lamberti, tom. vi., p. 543—545.

Utrecht, ambassadors from nearly all the courts of 1712 Europe appeared in that city early in the year 1712*. The instructions given to those of England, as regarded the United Provinces, seemed rather as though directed against enemies than in favour of allies whose interests she was bound to maintain equally with her own. The States were not to be permitted to place garrisons in Nieuport, Dendermonde, or the citadel of Ghent, all which places had been expressly guarantied to them by the treaty of 1709, since, it was said, they appeared intended rather as a barrier against England than France; and equally in contravention of that treaty, the ambassadors were commissioned to provide that the States should not be at liberty to place garrisons in any of the barrier towns unless they were attacked or threatened by France; and to obtain for them the renewal of the tariff of 1664, only in case the matter of the barrier were settled to the satisfaction of the ambassadors^c.

It was not without reason that the States dreaded the advantage the French king might take of the manifestation of these dispositions on the part of the English ministers. The terms offered by his ambassadors were such as to cause universal surprise and indignation amongst all the members of the congress. He proposed that Spain and the West Indies should

* Actes d'Utrecht, tom. i., p. 188. Lamberti, tom. vi., p. 739, 747, 748.

* The ambassadors from England were John Robinson, bishop of Bristol, and Raby, earl of Strafford; from the Emperor, the Count Zinzendorf, Don Diego Hurtado di Mendoza, and Caspar Cronsbruch; and from France, the Marquis d'Huxelles, the Abbé de Polignac, and the Chevalier Menager. The United Provinces sent nine deputies, of whom William Buys, pensionary of Amsterdam, and Van der Dussen, pensionary of Gouda, with Rechteren, deputy from Overysse, bore the active share in the business of the conferences. Actes d'Utrecht, tom. ii., p. 4.

1712 remain with King Philip, the dominions in Italy with the islands, except Sicily, being ceded to the Emperor. The frontier between France, the Empire, and Italy, was to be the same as before the war; Dunkirk was to be demolished, provided Lille and Tournay were given to the King of France as an indemnification for the expenses he had incurred in its fortifications.

The barrier offered to the States was utterly contemptible; comprehending no more than Furnes, Knokke, Ypres, and Menin, and these were to be ceded only after the acknowledgment of the Elector of Bavaria, as sovereign of the Netherlands; while France was to possess, under the name of a barrier, Aire, St. Venant, Bethune, and Douay. The English plenipotentiaries themselves were dissatisfied with these proposals, desiring that France should cede Tournay also to the States, and engage to demolish St. Venant; yet, the French, well knowing that the English ministry had compromised themselves too deeply to recede, so far from increasing their offers, were loud in their complaints that they did not fulfil the promises they had previously made. The demands of the allies on the other hand, which, though somewhat high, were scarcely more than their position entitled them to make, were so utterly at variance with the terms offered by France, that it appeared impossible ever to come to a conclusion*.

The conferences were, in fact, suspended for a considerable period; not, however, for this cause, but

* The States required the surrender into their hands of Menin, Ryssel, Lille, Douay and the fort of Scarpe, Outies, Tournay and the Tournesis, Aire, St. Venant, and Bethune, Furnes, Knokke, Loo and Dixmuyde, Bailleul, Merville, Warneton, Comines, Werwyk, Poperingen, Cassel, Valenciennes, Condé, and Maubeuge, in order to make an agreement afterwards with the Emperor concerning the barrier. *Actes d'Utrecht*, tom. i., p. 227.

until the private negotiations between France and 1712 England were concluded, for the purpose of ensuring the permanent separation of the crowns of France and Spain, the union of which, at no very distant period, was rendered probable by the recent deaths of the Dauphin, and the Dukes of Burgundy, and Brittany, his son and grandson, leaving only an infant of two years old before Philip V., in the order of succession to the French throne^f.

Meanwhile, the English ministers left no effort untried to justify their conduct in the eyes of the nation. The Tories having by the last election a large majority in the House of Commons, a resolution was obtained from them, complaining that the allies, the Emperor, Portugal, and the States in particular, had failed in their engagements, and that the latter had furnished the stipulated quotas neither on land nor sea. They voted that the barrier treaty of 1709 was dishonourable and injurious to England; that the Lord Townshend had gone beyond his instructions in making it, and that he and all those who had advised its ratification were enemies to the queen and kingdom; and adopted other resolutions framed by the ministers, of a purport similar to the instructions they had given their ambassadors. The States, in reply, drew up a memorial, setting forth the exact state of the forces on both sides, and proving the complaints of the English parliament to be no less unfounded than ungracious^{g*}.

^f Mém. de Torey, tom. iii., p. 165. Actes d'Utrecht, tom. i., p. 193. Lamberti, tom. vii., p. 23.

^g Parl. Hist., vol. vi., col. 1090, 1093, 1103. Bol. Cor., May 10. Lamberti, tom. vii., p. 410.

* By this memorial, it appeared that the States kept on foot 123,139 troops, and England 64,597.—Lamberti, tom. vii., p. 424. Being printed in an English periodical called the Daily Courant, it was voted by the

1712 The Dutch felt still more painfully the effects of the altered sentiments of England in the course of the campaign. Secret orders were sent to the Duke of Ormond, to take no part in any siege or battle; in pursuance of which, when Prince Eugene, now appointed by the States commander-in-chief of their troops, having passed the Scheldt, and finding Villars with the French army posted in such a manner that he could be attacked with the greatest advantage, applied to him for co-operation, he declared that he must wait for fresh instructions from England.

Sharp remonstrances and demands of explanations of his conduct were made by the States-General, of which Ormond took no further notice, than to observe, that he "had orders, and must obey them;" while to similar expostulations from the States' plenipotentiaries at Utrecht, the Bishop of Bristol replied, that "as the queen found the States so slow to second her advances towards peace, she should consider herself at liberty to adopt separately the measures tending to its attainment." A long memorial of remonstrance and justification of their own conduct, presented to the queen by the States, was answered in terms of mingled evasion and reproach.

Shortly after Quesnoy was invested by the Dutch general, Fagel, when Ormond, although he could not prevent the troops in the joint pay of the two nations from serving with the besiegers, assured Villars that he had nothing to apprehend from those immediately belonging to the queen. Quesnoy was, nevertheless,

House of Commons a false, scandalous, and malicious libel, and the printer was taken into the custody of the serjeant-at-arms.—*Parl. Hist.*, vol. vi., col. 1125. Ample testimony, however, is borne to the truth of its contents by Bolingbroke himself, when, above twenty years after, speaking in the character of an historian, he says, "It must be allowed that the Dutch put forth their whole strength, and they and we paid the whole charge of the war."—*Lett. on Hist.*, lett. viii., p. 304.

gained by the allies, before which event Ormond, 1712 declaring that a cessation of arms had been concluded between France and England, had entirely separated himself from the camp, though with the mortification of seeing nearly all the foreign troops under his command go over to the standards of Prince Eugene. Had they not thus acted, indeed, the army under the prince would have been left so greatly inferior in number to the enemy as to run imminent hazard of being attacked and cut in pieces; nevertheless, the pay of these troops was immediately stopped by the English ministry. Ormond afterwards occupied Dunkirk, which had been delivered up by France to the English, and possessed himself in a somewhat hostile manner of the citadel of Ghent and the town of Bruges.

Thus enfeebled by the desertion of the English, and dispirited by mistrust of their designs, a detachment of the allied army, under the Earl of Albemarle, sustained a severe defeat at Denain, Albemarle himself being taken prisoner. Marchienne, where the magazines and provisions for the troops were laid up, was captured by the French, who soon after made themselves masters of Douay, Quesnoy, and Bouchain. They likewise made an irruption into the island of Tholen in Zealand, which they laid under heavy contribution. Before the termination of the campaign, the truce between France and England was renewed for four months; and St. John, now created Viscount Bolingbroke, was sent to France with instructions to conclude a separate peace^h.

These events, more especially the possession of

^h Mém. de Torey, tom. iii., p. 210, 216, 232. Lamberti, tom. vii., p. 132, 135, 136—142, 148, 171, 176, 221, 222. Burnet, vol. ii., p. 607. Tindal, vol. iv., p. 288.

1712 Ghent by the English, which enabled them to stop the supplies to the allied camp, were attended with the effect which the ministers anticipated, of reducing the allies to submission to such terms as England and France might impose. The negotiations at Utrecht were resumed on the basis proposed by the queen in her speech to her parliament at the opening of the session. Herein she had declared that the barrier provided for the States should be the same as that of the treaty of 1709, with the exception of two or three places at most,—a point which gave rise to many and animated contests. The French insisted that Ryssel should be restored to them, besides Tournay, Maubeuge, and Condé, as the towns excepted by the queen. The States asserted that the expression, “two or three places at most,” could not possibly be supposed to comprehend four towns of such importance: a position supported, though in no very gracious manner, by the English ministers*.

At length the queen, having obtained from France the addition of Tournay to the barrier towns, the States were fain to receive peace upon such other
1713 conditions as were offered them. They signed a new treaty with England, annulling that of 1709, and providing that the Emperor Charles should be sovereign of the Netherlands, which, neither in the whole nor in part, should ever be possessed by France. The States, on their side, were bound to support, if required, the succession of the Electress of Hanover to the throne of England, after the death of the queen *and her heirs*;

* “If we have a mind,” writes Bolingbroke to Matthew Prior, “to have Nick Frog sign with us, we might, for he is ready to sign it for Tournay, which, if we sign together, we cannot well refuse him.” Tindal, vol. iv., p. 291. The chief cause of the anxiety of the States, that Tournay should not be united to France, was, that they procured from thence the clay used for making Delft-ware.

an expression which, as the queen was now a widow, 1713 and near fifty years old, and the ministers refused to give any explanation of it, confirmed the suspicions already existing in the minds of the Dutch, that they designed to place the son of James II. on the throne.

After the conclusion of this treaty, rapid advances were made towards a general peace. Italy was declared neutral; a truce was concluded by France and Spain with the Duke of Savoy and King of Portugal; Philip V. made a solemn renunciation of his right of succession to the crown of France; and the Dukes of Berri and Orleans of all claim to the Spanish monarchy; and the Assiento treaty, permitting England to carry on the slave trade for thirty years in the Spanish West Indies, was ratified.

Difficulties being thus smoothed, the declaration made by the English plenipotentiaries of their determination to sign on a certain day, whether with or without the allies, hastened the decision of the latter, with the exception of the Emperor. Portugal, Russia, and, last of all, the States, followed the example of England. By the treaty concluded between France and the States, it was agreed that the King of France should surrender to them the Spanish Netherlands, on behalf of the house of Austria, the Elector of Bavaria being reinstated in all the territories he possessed before the war. The towns of Menin, Tournay, Namur, Ypres, with Warneton, Poperingen, Comines and Werwyk, Furnes, Dixmuyde, and the fort of Knokke, were to be ceded to the States, as a barrier, to be held in such a manner as they should afterwards agree upon with the Emperor. France and the States mutually bound themselves to do no act which should tend to unite the crowns of Spain and France on one head; nor should the latter obtain any greater com-

1713 mercial advantages in the Spanish dominions than such as she had enjoyed in the reign of Charles II. The commercial treaty of 1664 was renewed, except so far as regarded whalebone and oil, woollen cloths, salted fish, and refined sugar, which were subjected to the same duties (of fifty livres per last) as in 1669¹.

The publication of the peace was received by the people in the United Provinces with coldness, and even aversion; they declared that the illuminations and bonfires, with which the States ordered the event to be celebrated, ought to be called, not "feux de joie," but "feu d'artifice;" and inveighed bitterly against the English ministry, whom the corrupt influence of France alone, according to the vulgar opinion, had prompted to conclude a war the most glorious and successful ever waged in Europe by a degrading and injurious peace^k.

Of the policy and even necessity of the peace itself, however, there could be no question; and as little, that it should have been the result of the conferences at the Hague, or, at least, of those at Geertruydenberg in 1710. Every object for which the war was begun was then attained. Spain was secured to the archduke; while Philip of Anjou, in the peaceful possession of Sicily and Sardinia would have been amply indemnified for the loss of his precarious throne; Louis was willing to satisfy all the reasonable demands of the allies, and in no condition to refuse the fulfilment of any of the stipulations he might have agreed to. Holland therefore cannot be exonerated from the blame of having then committed the error

¹ Parl. Hist., vol. vii., col. 1141. Mém. de Torey, tom. iii., p. 259. Bol. Cor., Mar. 19, 1713. Actes d'Utrecht, tom. ii., p. 330, 426, 470, 472, 495; tom. iii., p. 356.

^k Lamberti, tom. viii., p. 189.

(of which she was rarely guilty) of neglecting to 1713 procure the repose of Europe by not insisting, with sufficient firmness, on the accession of the allies to the terms offered by Louis. Neither was a secure and equitable peace less feasible at the present juncture, had not the English ministers, by the reckless precipitation with which they threw themselves at the feet of the King of France, and manifested their readiness to desert the interests of their allies, given him an advantage over them which he failed not to use to the utmost*. Consequently, instead of being able to obtain from him the restoration of his conquests to their lawful owners, which, had they preserved union with the allies, would have been comparatively easy, they found themselves obliged to leave him in possession of an advanced guard (so to speak) of fortifications on the Rhine and in Flanders, which would enable France to commence hostilities with advantage against the States, or Austria, wherever it might suit her purpose; and permanently secured to her the preponderance in Europe. Even in England itself the conditions obtained proved in the event anything rather than satisfactory to the bulk of the nation¹; the Duke of Savoy being the only one of the allies who reaped any solid benefit from the peace,—a result for which he was indebted to the support he had given to England in her late measures of continental policy^m.

¹ Bol. Cor., July 4, 1713.

^m See Bolingbroke's Correspondence, vol. iii., passim. Edit. 1770.

* In the very commencement of the negotiations, the Abbé Gaultier was empowered to assure the King of France that he would have reason to be satisfied with the English in the course of the negotiations, particularly on the question of the barrier, if he would ensure to England the free exercise of commerce in Spain, the Indies, and the ports of the Mediterranean. *Mém. de Torcy*, tom. iii., p. 27.

1714 The war between France and the Emperor was terminated by the treaties of Rastadt and Baden in the next year; and a reconciliation was likewise effected, through the intervention of France, between Spain and the United Provinces. The latter were, however, unable to obtain, by the treaty of Utrecht now concluded, the permission to deal in slaves in the Spanish West Indies, granted to the English by the Assiento treaty, and in which they earnestly desired to participate; in other respects, their commerce with Spain and the Indies was to continue as in the time of Charles II.

Though the States had thus attained the grand object for which they commenced the war,—that of preventing the Spanish (now Austrian) Netherlands from falling wholly under the dominion of the house of Bourbon,—the advantages they had reaped by the peace, both as regarded their barrier and commerce, were vastly disproportioned to the blood and treasure they had lavished, or to such as their successes and the virtual possession of the Netherlands by themselves and the English entitled them to demand. This reflection was the more mortifying, since, as events turned out, it appeared that, had they, disregarding the threats of England, persisted in the war but a short time longer, changes would have happened in affairs, such as to have placed them in a situation to dictate peace in concert with her on any terms they thought proper.

The declining health of Queen Anne towards the end of the last year, and the belief universally entertained, that the ministers had induced her to name the Pretender as her successor, aroused the vigilance and activity of the Whig party in England, and of the United Provinces—the no less anxious and zealous

friends to the succession of the house of Hanover. 1714 The States readily entered into a treaty, at the solicitation of the Whigs, with George Louis, Elector of Hanover, engaging themselves to assist him, if necessary, with ships and land forces, in gaining possession of his kingdom^a; and, upon the death of the queen, in the month of August, received the news of his peaceful accession to the throne with universal and unmingled joy. Still further was the feeling of restored confidence in the alliance of England augmented, when it was perceived that the new king placed himself entirely in the hands of the Whigs, and that the first measure of his government was the peremptory demand of the demolition of Dunkirk, as stipulated by the treaty of Utrecht; a work which the French king, under favour of the late ministry, had evaded with a negligence and bad faith vexatious to the States in proportion to their earnest desire of beholding it accomplished. Within a few days of the proclamation of George I., the States passed a resolution to maintain the present succession to the throne of England to the utmost of their power, as involving the welfare of the Protestant religion, the safety of their own State, and the liberty of all Europe; and despatched an embassy to London to give the king solemn assurances of this determination^o. Nor did they display less alacrity in the fulfilment than in the proffer of their promises.

On the first intelligence of the revolt which 1715 threatened to break out in England they commanded all the Scotch regiments in their service to hold themselves in readiness to go to the assistance of the king;

^a Vad. Hist., b. 69, No. 6.

^o Res. van de St., Aug. 15. Lamberti, tom. ix., p. 161.

1715 they seized several vessels in the Meuse laden with gunpowder for Ireland; and gave strict injunctions to the admiralty to take care that no supplies of arms or ammunition should be conveyed to suspected places. Horace Walpole being sent to the Hague to solicit auxiliaries in pursuance of the late treaty, the States passed on the same day a resolution to that effect; and the orders for its execution were so promptly issued and obeyed, that the whole of the troops were embarked within a month of his arrival^p. The addition of 6000 well-disciplined and well-appointed troops contributed much towards enabling the Duke of Argyle to effect the speedy suppression of the insurrection; of which the result was to confirm on the throne a prince who, to the end of his life, distinguished himself as the grateful and steady ally of the United Provinces.

While the States were thus cementing the ties of their ancient friendship with England, a change, equally propitious, took place in their relations with France. With the life of Louis XIV. had now terminated his long career of tyranny, spoliation, and bloodshed, leaving as heir to all his dominions and vast projects of ambition his great-grandson Louis XV., a feeble infant not yet six years old; and the interests of the Duke of Orleans, who had been declared regent by the Parliament of Paris in opposition to the will of the late king, prompted him to cultivate the friendship of the United Provinces and England. If the young king, who was of a weakly constitution, should die without issue, he himself, the Duke of Berri having died in the last year, was next heir to the throne of France, supposing that the renuncia-

^p Lamberti, tom. ix., p. 187, 188. Res. van de St., Oct. 22.

tion of Philip V. held good; should it be set aside, 1715 that monarch came before him in the order of succession. The French had often asserted that such an act, how solemn soever, was of its own nature illegal and invalid; Louis XIV. had himself in a similar case acted upon that principle, and the Duke of Orleans feared, not without cause, that the King of Spain would one day put forward his claim to the crown of France, if not immediately to the regency, during the minority of the present monarch. In either of these pretensions the Emperor would be inclined to support him, in the hope that their realization would involve the abdication of the throne of Spain; and it was only through the instrumentality of Great Britain and the States that the duke beheld the slightest chance of ensuring their frustration. He therefore sought diligently to engage France in relations of amity with those nations against whom she had for so many years breathed nothing but hostility and defiance.

The effects of the favourable dispositions of the court of England, and the altered sentiments of France towards the States, were soon perceptible in the negotiations with the Emperor concerning the regulation of the barrier, which, since the peace of Utrecht, had given rise to long and angry contestations. The Emperor had hitherto refused their demand of the demolition of fort Philip and the cession of Dendermonde; but now that he found they had the support of England and France he yielded so far as to consent that the States should keep a joint garrison with himself in that town; he abandoned his claim to Venloo and Stevenswaard, on which he had before insisted, and permitted the boundary on the side of Flanders to be fixed in a manner highly satisfactory to the States, who sought security rather

1715 than extent of dominion*. By the possession of Namur they commanded the passage of the Sambre and Meuse; Tournay ensured the navigation of the Scheldt; Menin and Warneton protected the Leye; while Ypres and the fort of Knokke kept open the communication with Furnes, Nieuport, and Dunkirk. We shall hereafter have occasion to remark, that events proved the barrier, so earnestly insisted on, to have been wholly insufficient as a means of defence to the United Provinces, and scarcely worth the labour and cost of its maintenance; yet its preservation was at this time considered indispensable to their safety, and the States were inclined to resort to any extremity rather than not receive contentment in this particular^q.

Henceforward, with the exception of a triple alliance concluded with France and England in the next year, the States during a considerable period interested themselves slightly, or not at all, in the numerous treaties† which the different powers of Europe, as if seized with the mania of diplomacy, were continually negotiating, often, it would seem, without any special cause or definite purpose. Neither did they take any share in the wars between Spain and France, or between Spain and Great Britain,—effects of the restless ambition of the Spanish minister, Cardinal Alberoni,—further than to furnish such subsidies to George I. as were expressly stipulated by treaty.

^q Lamberti, tom. ix., p. 1—24.

* The limits were determined by a line from Goteweege, through Heyst to Driehoek and Swartsluys, continued to the forts of St. Donaas and St. Job, thence along the Zydlingsdyk to the Eekelos sluice. Res. van de St., Nov. 21.

† They were named by Great Britain parties to the Quadruple Alliance concluded in 1718, between England, France, and the Emperor, but without their participation or consent.

It was in some measure in disgust at the treatment they had experienced at the hands of their more powerful allies during the negotiations at Utrecht that they thus withdrew themselves from the political affairs of Europe; and yet, more from their inability to sustain longer the high position among nations which had, by common consent, been awarded them. The efforts they had made to carry on the last long and expensive war had been far above their strength. The province of Holland alone had incurred a debt of nineteen millions of guilders, and most of the others were wholly unable to furnish their quotas to the generality. The pressure of their difficulties had induced the States of Zealand, Utrecht, Friesland, and Groningen, hastily to disband some regiments of troops without the intervention of either the States-General or the Council of State; a measure adopted on some previous occasions, but always considered detrimental to the integrity of the union, which appeared no less threatened by the failure of the provinces in the payment of their quotas. As well for this cause as to rectify some abuses existing in the constitution, among which, those of bribery and corruption stood predominant, it was determined to summon an extraordinary assembly of the States in 1716 the same manner as in the year 1651. But on this occasion an increasing supineness in the performance of their political duties, a deficiency both of ability and energy for self-government, and a decay of mutual confidence, first strikingly displayed themselves in the Dutch people.

A long time was suffered to elapse after the day appointed before the deputies appeared at the assembly; and when they did appear, it was without sufficient powers to decide on any question unless on reference

1716 to their principals; while Groningen, on account of some domestic disputes between the town and the Ommelande, sent no deputies at all. Accordingly, after protracted sittings they were able to effect little or nothing towards remedying the abuses complained of, which were allowed to spread and increase in unchecked license; and it is from this period that the visible decline of the United Provinces may be said to commence^r.

As even the business of providing funds to meet the present exigencies remained unattended to, the States-General found themselves obliged, by the exhausted state of their treasury, to make an infringement on public credit, comparatively slight indeed, but of ominous portent in a state so scrupulously exact on that point, in raising funds by means of a tax of a hundredth penny on the bonds of the generality for three years. The States attempted no other answer to the loud and general murmurs of the bondholders, than the plea of urgent and overwhelming necessity. They likewise reduced their military establishment to the number of 34,000 men; a force which would, probably, have proved too small for the safety of the Provinces, except for the favourable circumstances by which they were now surrounded^s.

The pressure of financial embarrassments in the countries engaged in the late wars, gave rise, about this time, to various wild schemes for creating funds; and these again, holding out to the people the lure of the rapid acquisition of wealth, were entered into with a reckless eagerness, excited and fostered by the governments, in proportion to the advantage to be reaped from the mingled cupidity and gullibility

^r Vad. Hist., b. 69, No. 32. Lamberti, tom. ix., p. 744, 745.

^s Lamberti, tom. ix., p. 755.

of their subjects. From this charge, however, the 1716 governments of the United Provinces must be exempted; since, though the nation was deeply infected with the prevalent spirit of speculation, they carefully abstained from giving it the slightest encouragement, or participating in any of the numerous commercial projects which took their rise from thence. Of these, the most celebrated was the Mississippi Company, established by the Scottish adventurer, John Law, who, in this year proposed to the Duke of Orleans, the formation of a national bank in France; and also a company, which, in process of time, should liquidate the public debt (of 200,000,000) out of the profits of an exclusive trade to the Mississippi, Senegal, and the Indies. He found in the regent a ready supporter of his schemes; in 1718 his bank was declared a royal bank; the shares, or "actions" as they were called, of the company, fixed at 60,000,000 of livres, were rapidly extended to the amount of 300,000,000, and rose in a short time from 100 to 2050 livres each; and, in the next year, its 1719 issues amounted to no less than 1,000,000,000 of livres. The extraordinary success of this project, and the immense fortunes realized by the sale of shares, had the effect of communicating a similar mania to England, where the celebrated South Sea Company purchased the public debt to the amount of 26,000,000*l*. In the United Provinces, from the absence of encouragement on the part of the public authorities, no national company was formed; but private associations for trade, and for assurance, and speculations of various kinds, were entered into with equal avidity and recklessness. The people, likewise, participated largely in the shares, both of the Mississippi and South Sea Companies; the

1720 latter being here as in England, even after those of the Mississippi Company in France began to decline, purchased at the enormous price of 1000 per cent. Their fall was equally sudden and rapid, and was followed by a decline in those of most of the new companies*. The directors became, as in that country, the objects of popular aversion; but with this difference, that instead of the threats of vengeance and clamours for condign punishment that were heard from the English, the angry passions of the Dutch exhaled themselves in scornful jests and ridicule, and in acting plays wherein they were represented in the characters of cheats and impostors. At Amsterdam, only, the mob attacked a coffee-house where these persons were accustomed to assemble, which was with difficulty saved from pillage. The mischief and ruin, though widely spread, was by no means comparable, in extent, to that suffered in France or England^t. That the French indeed, imperfectly acquainted as they then were with the principles of commerce, credulous, and eager for novelty, should have been led away by the flattering visions which the projects of Law opened to their view, is scarcely a matter of astonishment; but that the sober and reasoning Dutch, who well knew how slow and capricious is the growth of trade, should be made believe in the possibility of creating one suddenly, and at will, of sufficient value to return interest for so enormous an outlay of capital, is a fact for which it is difficult to account. Yet the evil was not without its concomitant good; the number of associations for trade,

^t Vad. Hist., b. 70, No. 20.

* The capital vested in the different kinds of this "air-traffic" as it is termed by the Dutch, was estimated at 280,000,000 of florins.

assurance, and loan, which were formed in almost 1720 every town of Holland and Zealand, occasioned the constitution and tendency of commercial companies to be more accurately studied; and many were, in consequence, founded on sound principles and with rational views, which turned out profitable to the shareholders, and beneficial to the community at large.

In this year died the celebrated Pensionary of Holland, Jacob Heinsius, having served that office for terms of five years consecutively since 1689; a man to whom friend and opponent have agreed in awarding the praise of consummate wisdom, indefatigable industry, ardent patriotism, and incorruptible integrity^a. It was, perhaps, the loss of this able and influential minister, which caused, among a portion of the people of the United Provinces, a renewed desire to behold the restoration of the stadtholderate. There was, however, at this time, no prince of the family of Nassau-Orange of an age to aspire to that office, the Prince John William Friso having been drowned in 1711 in crossing the ferry at Moerdyk. His son William Charles Henry Friso, born a few weeks after his death, was hereditary stadtholder of Friesland, and had, in 1718, at the age of seven, been created stadtholder of Groningen, on the same terms as his ancestors had enjoyed that dignity. He had scarcely attained his eleventh year 1722 when the partisans of the house of Orange in Guelderland, made strenuous efforts to procure his elevation to the stadtholdership of that province; and with so great success, that the States were summoned to consider of the question before the other provinces were aware of the existence of any such design.

^a Mém. de Torcy, tom. ii., p. 2.

1722 The States of Holland and Zealand quickly took the alarm, and, by earnest remonstrances and vivid representations of the evil consequences that must ensue from their surrendering any portion of their sovereignty, endeavoured to deter the States of Guelderland from their purpose. Their efforts were, however, fruitless. The States of Guelderland pleaded the advantages the Provinces had hitherto reaped from the authority of the stadtholder; the decreased estimation in which they were held by foreign powers when deprived of the lustre and dignity conferred by a sole ostensible head of the state; the necessity of such a head as a bond of union between so many provinces, divided by different and often opposing interests; the happiness and prosperity they had always enjoyed under the administration of the former stadtholders, and the disgraces and misfortunes to which they had been exposed when deprived of them; the decay into which their forces, both by land and sea, had fallen for want of the active and vigilant superintendence of a captain and admiral-general; and the low state of their finances and credit. But a motive yet stronger than all these, or than the natural bias of popular feeling towards a monarchical form of government, swayed the Guelderlanders in this instance.

In all disputes between the several quarters of the province*, or between the estates of the nobility and towns, they were, in default of a stadtholder, obliged to have recourse to the interference of the States-General. Hence that body, or rather the States of Holland, whose supremacy was tacitly admitted by the rest, took occasion to assume and exercise greater influence in their affairs than they were inclined either

* Guelderland was divided into four districts, called quarters.—See Vol. I., p. 437.

to admit or endure. Should they appoint a stadtholder all such differences must be submitted to his decision, and thus the States-General be excluded from intermeddling.

This consideration it was that induced many of the deputies to the Guelderland States to accede to a measure they might otherwise have been disposed to thwart; and they accordingly elected unanimously the young prince stadtholder, captain, and admiral-general of Guelderland. Yet they plainly evinced their dread lest the stadtholderal power should become as dangerous as it had before been to the liberties of their country, by the narrow limits within which they confined it by their instructions to its future possessor, depriving him of all power of interference in the disposal of offices, whether civil or military, and leaving him, in fact, little further authority than that of deciding such disputes as might occur between the members of the government. Shorn as it was of its lustre, the restoration of the stadtholderate in Guelderland was hailed with joy by the Orange party as the first step towards a return to a similar form of government in the remaining four provinces; yet some years elapsed, and a vast change of circumstances occurred, before they found themselves in sufficient strength to carry that measure^v.

The peace of Europe, disturbed by the short war carried on by France and Great Britain against Spain, had again been restored by a confederacy between these powers, when the Emperor resolved upon a step which seemed likely to rekindle once more the flames of discord. This was the establishment of an East India Company at Ostend; an act of which the States 1723 bitterly complained as injurious to their commerce

^v Vad. Hist., b. 70, No. 29, 30.

1723 and a direct violation of the treaty of Munster, the fifth and sixth articles of which providing that the commerce of both countries should continue on the previous footing, expressly excluded the inhabitants of the Spanish Netherlands from the trade to the Indies. These, on the other hand, contended that the prohibition to trade to the Indies at the time of their transfer to the Archduchess Isabella, in itself a violation of the law of nature and of nations, and an infraction of their rights and liberties, ceased, when, at her death, they reverted to Spain; and that the article of the treaty of Munster related to Spaniards only, not to Netherlanders, as was proved by Charles II. having granted to the latter a charter to trade to India; though the subsequent war, and the consideration they were obliged to show to the maritime powers, had prevented them from reaping the benefits of this permission.

The interests of Great Britain being also involved in the question, the demand of the States that the charter of the company should be immediately abrogated, was powerfully supported by that court, and 1724 favoured also by the Kings of Spain and France; the latter of whom, following the example of England, forbade his subjects to take any share in the company; and the ambassador of the former declared, without reserve, that the cession of the Netherlands to the house of Austria was made on no other than these conditions^w.

Yet circumstances soon caused Philip V. to change his opinion. On the conclusion of the peace between France and Spain, (1721,) the young king had been betrothed by the regent to the infanta Maria Anna, whose tender age rendered it impossible that the marriage should be completed for many years to come;

^w Rec. de Rousset, tom. ii., p. 5, 76, 91.

during which time the Duke of Orleans hoped that 1724 the death of the feeble monarch might lay open to him the succession to the throne. The princess had in the following year been sent into France; but, upon the decease of the duke himself, the providing for the succession of the crown in the direct line became a matter of pressing necessity; and a dangerous illness of the young king so greatly alarmed the 1725 court, that his immediate marriage with a consort of mature age was determined on, and the infanta was consequently sent back to Spain.

The effect of this insult was to confirm the resolution the King of Spain had already formed to cultivate the alliance of the Emperor, for which purpose he had dispatched as ambassador to the court of Vienna, John William van Ripperda, baron of Poelgeest, a Friezlander by birth, who, in 1715, had been named envoy-extraordinary to the court of Spain from the States-General. He had afterwards forfeited this dignity by his profession of the Catholic religion, and from the period of the fall of Cardinal Alberoni had insinuated himself deeply into the confidence of the king and queen. Immediately on the return of the infanta he received commands to conclude with the Emperor treaties of peace, of mutual defence, and of commerce, by which last the charter of the Ostend Company was confirmed. The conclusion of these treaties, therefore, gave excessive umbrage to the States; nor was it viewed with less alarm by France and England. George I. was fully persuaded that the placing the Pretender on the throne was one of the secret articles, as the price of which, Gibraltar and Port Mahon were to be ceded to Spain; an opinion which the imprudent revelations and boastings of Ripperda himself tended strongly to confirm.

1725 The King of France having on the dismissal of the infanta married Maria Leczińska, daughter of Stanislaus, titular King of Poland, apprehensions were for this cause entertained of a simultaneous rupture of the peace on the part of both Spain and the Emperor. Under such circumstances was concluded the treaty of Hanover, between Great Britain, France, and the King of Prussia, binding each of the contracting parties to defend and maintain the others in all the possessions, rights, and privileges, they then enjoyed, or might hereafter enjoy. The States hesitated long upon the question of becoming parties to this treaty, which, they considered, might involve them far more deeply in the affairs of foreign nations than was at all suitable to their present condition, or to their usually received maxims of policy. The defence of possessions and rights hereafter to be enjoyed might be interpreted into an obligation to guaranty all the future conquests, or to support all the pretensions of the contracting parties, and to carry on war as long as they should deem it requisite to that effect. Ultimately, 1726 however, commercial interests gained the preponderance, and they acceded to the alliance on condition that the abrogation of the charter of the Ostend Company should be considered as one of their rights, which the allies were bound to defend. The Emperor engaged in the treaty of Vienna, Catherine, 1727 empress of Russia, while Sweden became a party to that of Hanover, and the King of Denmark entered into the alliance of France and Great Britain. Among the German States, the Upper and Lower Palatinate, Suabia, and Franconia, declared their neutrality*.

Perceiving that the allies of the Vienna treaty were hastening their preparations for war, and that the

* *Rec. de Rousset*, tom. ii., p. 164, 189; tom. iii., p. 166. *Parl. Hist.*, vol. viii., col. 524.

King of Great Britain had already put a powerful fleet 1727 to sea, the States resolved to make a considerable addition to their land forces, and to equip eighteen vessels for the protection of their commerce. Lists were drawn up of the number of troops that the two confederacies could bring into the field, by which it appeared, that those of the Hanoverian league exceeded their opponents by 100,000 men; rumours were spread that France would speedily have three armies on foot destined for Catalonia, the Rhine, and the Netherlands; the English Colonel Armstrong, and Grovestins, commander of the States' troops, consulted with the French generals and ministers, upon the plan of the ensuing campaign; and it was generally believed, that hostilities were to commence with the siege of Luxemburg^γ.

Yet nothing could be further from the wishes or intentions of the different powers than actually to come to blows; each side seeking rather by the assumption of a formidable appearance to overawe its opponent into quiescence. The Emperor was well aware of the weakness of the confederacy of Vienna, and the little dependence that was to be placed on the support of Spain; Cardinal Fleury, now prime minister of France, looked upon peace as essential to the welfare of his country, in the present uncertain state of the king's health, and, did not, moreover, much relish the close alliances circumstances had constrained him to form with heretical nations; while the States, besides their inherent aversion to war, considered, that if the present one were attended with the success that might reasonably be expected, its results would, most probably, be to make the Hano-

^γ *Mém. de Montgon*, tom. iv., p. 16, 18, 158, 186, 304—307, 340.

1727 verian league more powerful than was consistent with the liberties of Europe, and cause the balance once more to preponderate too much in favour of France. Spain alone, who, for a long period of years, had formed her projects without the slightest reference to the strength she possessed for carrying them into execution, was eager for a war, by means of which she hoped to realize the acquisition of Gibraltar, the favourite object of her ambition. She, therefore, commenced hostilities singly, by the siege of that place; but scarcely was it formed, when negotiations for peace were opened at Vienna, through the medium of Grimaldi, nuncio of Pope Benedict XIII.

A draft of conditions proposed by the Emperor, appointing a limited time to examine whether the Charter of the Ostend Company were, or were not, repugnant to the provisions of the treaty of Munster, was refused by the States, France and England; when, at length, the Emperor consented to accept a project conceived by Cardinal Fleury, whereby a truce for six months was declared, the Ostend Company was suspended for seven years, and a meeting was fixed at Aix-la-Chapelle, for the final settlement of the pretensions of the contending parties. The preliminaries, to this effect, were soon after signed, to the great joy of the inhabitants of the United Provinces²; a joy, however, damped by the loss of their powerful and faithful ally, the King of Great Britain, who died the very day of the signature.

In this year, also, happened the death of Isaac Hornbeek, pensionary of Holland, who was succeeded in that honourable and important office by the treasurer-general, Simon van Slingelandt.

² Rec. de Rousset, tom. iii., p. 382 et seq., 399.

The conferences appointed to be held at Aix, were 1728 by desire of Cardinal Fleury opened at Soissons; but, owing to the impossibility of reconciling the conflicting claims and interests of the several powers, they were but languidly carried on for some time, and terminated, at last, in a separate treaty, concluded at Seville, between France, Great Britain, and Spain, to 1729 which the States became a party; the King of Spain engaging himself to co-operate with those two powers in obtaining for them the annihilation of the Ostend Company, and to redress all the grievances they had to complain of as affecting their trade in Europe, or the Indies. Finally, by a treaty, concluded in 1731, 1731 at Vienna, between the Emperor and Great Britain, in the name, though without the participation of the States, the former consented that all trade from the Austrian Netherlands to the Indies should cease, and that the Ostend Company should be abolished. But he insisted, in return, that the States should concur with Great Britain, in the engagement to uphold the "Pragmatic Sanction," whereby the succession to the Emperor's hereditary states, was settled on his eldest daughter, in case of the failure of male issue^a.

By their acceptance of this treaty the States obtained satisfaction on the much vexed question of the Ostend Company; but at a price far above its value. Sacrificing to comparatively unimportant mercantile interests, the sound and wholesome maxim of policy which forbid them to interfere further than was absolutely necessary, in the affairs of foreign nations, they adopted a measure which they had but too much reason to apprehend would give umbrage to France,

^a Rec. de Rousset, tom. v., p. 363; tom. vi., p. 13.

1731 and tend to involve them in a war, as well, with that country, as with those princes who considered themselves to possess claims to the succession of the Austrian States. The sequel will bring to light the ruinous consequences resulting from this somewhat hasty and ill-advised step.

CHAPTER XII.

Protection afforded by the States to the oppressed Protestants. Disputes with the Pope. Contentions of the Jansenists and Jesuits. Apprehended Destruction of the Dykes. Marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess-Royal of England. The States and England offer their mediation between France and the Empire. War between England and Spain. Privateering of the English. Death of the Emperor Charles VI. The Powers of Europe fail in their engagements to support the Pragmatic Sanction. Invasion of Silesia by the King of Prussia. War waged against the Queen of Hungary. Assistance afforded her by Great Britain and the States. Discussions in the States concerning the nature of the Subsidy. Neutrality of the United Provinces insisted on by France. France detaches the King of Prussia from the Alliance of Maria Theresa. Declares War against England and the Queen, and seizes the Dutch Barrier Towns. League of Frankfort. Quadruple Alliance. Grand Duke of Tuscany chosen Emperor. War in the Netherlands. Battle of Fontenoi. Loss of Towns in the Netherlands; of the Barrier Towns. Negotiations for Peace at Breda rendered abortive by the English Ambassadors. Invasion of Dutch Flanders by the French. Internal Commotions in the United Provinces consequent thereon. Prince of Orange declared Stadtholder at Veere; at Middleburg. Uproar at Zierikzee. Populace in the Towns of Holland force the Government to declare the Prince of Orange Stadtholder. Conquest of Dutch Flanders. Resistance of Bergen-op-Zoom. Catholics suspected of favouring the French. Dissensions between the People and the Municipal Governments. Stadtholderate declared hereditary in the Male and Female Line. Facility with which the Revolution was effected. Vicious constitution of the Stadtholderal Authority. Error of the Republican Party. Necessity of a more monarchical form of Government to the United Provinces. Deterioration of the Dutch National Character. Decay of the Influence of the Female Sex. Benevolence of the Dutch. Religious Toleration. Public Charities. Management of their Prisons. Their Liberality. Immense Amount of Public Expenditure they sustained. Endurance of Taxation. Decay of their Commerce. Proposal of a Duty on Corn. Ill Condition of the Dutch Colonies. Occurrences at Batavia. Learning and Science among the Dutch. Freedom of the Press.

1730 It rarely happened that the restoration of peace did not afford to one or other of the Catholic princes of Europe an opportunity for renewing the persecutions against their subjects of the reformed religion, which necessity or policy had, during the time of war, prompted them to remit; nor, on such occasions, were the United Provinces ever found negligent or unfaithful in the vocation they seemed to have taken upon themselves, of protectors and defenders of their reformed brethren throughout Europe.

The States had, in 1720, interfered with some success, in favour of the oppressed Protestants in the dominions of the Elector Palatine; and their attention was at this time again aroused by the complaints of 1731 the inhabitants of the valleys of Piedmont, who had been deprived by their sovereign, Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, of the freedom of religion secured to them by various compacts. The States endeavoured to put a stop to this course of proceeding by frequent and vivid remonstrances, which, however, proved of no avail; and the continued severities exercised against the Protestants at length compelled them to fly to Switzerland: but too numerous to find subsistence in that country, they afterwards took refuge in Holland, where, a collection of 100,000 guilders having been previously made for their support, they were located in the small towns and open country. Similar liberality was shown to the refugees driven for the same 1732 cause from the archbishopric of Saltzburg, who were transported at the expense of the States into the Provinces, and settled in the district called the Vrye of Sluys, where they had employment found for them, enjoyed the privileges of natives, and were provided with churches and ministers at the public charge. The colony, however, did not prove successful. A

large portion of the settlers reunited themselves to the 1732 Catholic Church soon after their arrival; others obtained permission to return home: some deserted altogether, and, ere long, their numbers were so decreased, that scarcely one hundred persons remained, for whom a church was built at the village of Groede, with an annual stipend of six hundred guilders to the minister^a.

While thus protecting the interests of the reformed Church, the States were involved on their own account in a long and somewhat vexatious contest with the Church of Rome. In the year 1728, Pope Benedict XIII. had instituted a new service in honour of Gregory VII., in which the excommunication of the Emperor Henry IV. of Germany, by that pontiff, and the absolving his subjects from the oath of allegiance, was mentioned in terms of laudation; and this service the Catholics of the United Provinces were now accustomed to have bound up with the breviary they generally used. But the States of Holland considering the reading of such a service derogatory to the authority of the civil sovereign, forbade the use of missals in which it was contained, or the printing of the service in any manner, under a penalty of one thousand guilders, and decreed that any priest who read it should be punished as a disturber of the public peace. They likewise imposed a new oath on all priests, containing an abjuration, in strong terms, of the doctrine that the Pope, or any ecclesiastical power, could absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance, under plea of heresy, or what other soever. By the same edict, the decree of 1687 was confirmed, prohibiting priests not born in the provinces, monks, and jesuits, from residing in the country. Nevertheless,

^a Res. van de St., 1731, Jun. 19; 1733, Jul. 9.

1732 the evasion of this law was constantly connived at as heretofore, and such persons as behaved themselves peaceably, and forbore to take any offensive part in the dissensions that now prevailed among the Catholics themselves, were permitted to remain unmolested.

The famous dispute of Jansenists and Jesuits, which had now been rife for so long a period in France, had extended to the United Provinces, where the opinions of Jansen were adopted by several, though far the lesser number of priests, and encouraged by the States, who were accustomed to permit no vicars apostolical of the Pope to reside in their territory, except such as were known to be favourable to the Jansenist doctrines. Perceiving this, the Popes had since transferred the office of ordaining priests to their nuncios residing at Cologne or Brussels. On the publication of the bull "*Unigenitus*," condemning the tenets professed by Jansen and his followers, the nuncio at Brussels did his best to procure its acceptance by the Catholics, and particularly the priests, of the United Provinces, and it was, in fact, received by the greater number of the latter. The bull was, as of course, universally rejected by the Jansenists; and accordingly its reception or rejection became a species of test to direct the nuncio in the future ordination of priests. The Jansenists, finding that none but their opponents were admitted into the holy office, and foreseeing the certain ruin of their party if such a course were persisted in, elected an Archbishop of Utrecht, from whom such candidates for the priesthood as rejected the bull, received ordination. The Pope refused to confirm those priests in their office; but the States permitted, notwithstanding, both them and the archbishop to exercise their functions.

Deeming, probably, that the influence of a sister 1732 republic would be the most likely to weigh with the States, Benedict XIII. had enlisted the services of the Doge of Venice in defence of the Holy See; and at his instigation, the Doge and Senate exhorted the States (1725), through their ambassador, to enforce the obedience of their subjects to the Pope the head of the Church. The States, in answer, gave an exposition of those principles of liberal and yet judicious toleration, which, made wise by experience, they had for more than a century professed and acted upon; neither, on the one hand, allowing any individual to be oppressed or interfered with for his religious opinions, nor, on the other, suffering religion to be made a pretext for disobedience to the laws, nor for creating plots and disturbances in the State. They could not, they said, constrain any one to obey a spiritual power without violating one of the fundamental principles of their constitution, namely, that conviction only, without the slightest constraint, must have place in matters of religious belief and ecclesiastical discipline; that every one was free to believe in such doctrines as he thought conducive to salvation, of which faith he must give an account, according to his light, to God alone; that the States, believing the religion they professed to be the best, wished all their subjects to profess the same; but left them at liberty, nevertheless, to adopt such as they thought fit, provided they behaved as good citizens and committed no act detrimental to the authority of the government, to the welfare of the community, to morals, or the public peace. In pursuance of this maxim they had tolerated the Roman Catholics, without concerning themselves about whom they acknowledged as their principal

1732 pastor, or what degree of spiritual authority he assumed over his functionaries; but it must be evident to the Doge himself that the States never could be justified in permitting the court of Rome to extend its influence in the United Provinces more widely than even in Catholic countries; or that their native priests should be robbed of their rights in order to fill the churches with foreign emissaries^b. As the Jansenist priests, under the episcopacy of the Bishop of Utrecht and the protection of the States, continued to increase in number, the Jesuits (more properly, perhaps, Jesuitists,) petitioned for liberty to appoint a vicar-apostolical as formerly, which the States granted on condition that the person chosen for this office should be submitted to the approval of a committee of their body, and should engage to obey their edicts in matters of ordination, and not to interfere with the churches, or "stations," served by priests ordained by the Archbishop of Utrecht.

But this healing measure created a new difficulty in the opposition of the more zealous of the reformed clergy, who inveighed loudly against the recognition of a vicar-apostolical of the church of Rome by the States on any terms, and scrupled not publicly to accuse the latter of indifference to the reformed religion. The vicar chosen by Jesuitists would, they urged, inevitably become the leader of that party, the most dangerous inhabitants of the United Provinces. The States replied, that it was more prudent to admit a vicar-apostolical, who would be appointed for three years only, and be under the jurisdiction of the civil power, than to leave the direction of the Catholics in the hands of the papal nuncio at Brussels, an Italian, over whom they could have no control what-

^b Vad. Hist., b. 73, No. 23.

ever. Yet these wise and wholesome maxims of 1732 policy failed to reconcile the minds of the ministers to the appointment of a papal vicegerent in the provinces; and the States, fearful they might excite some commotion in the towns, allowed the ordination of the priests to be continued as formerly by the nuncio at Brussels. They, however, took care that no Catholics within the limits of their jurisdiction should be forced to accept the bull "Unigenitus".

About this time the destruction of a large portion, at least, of the wealthy and populous provinces of Holland and Zeeland, which Louis XIV., in the zenith of his power, had been unable to effect, was well nigh brought about by a very tiny agent. The dykes, which for three centuries had been formed of beams and pile-work*, were discovered in Walcheren and North Holland to be in a state of complete decay, in consequence of the attacks of the small marine worm, called the "Pholas," supposed to have been brought in the ships from the East and West Indies. This insect, by means of the horny shell of its head, furnished with a sharp edge like a saw, is able to hollow out the hardest wood, and even stone, and had been for some time committing its destructive ravages unperceived. The dread that the storms of winter would arrive while the dykes were thus incapable of resistance, and the country be overwhelmed by the sea, was so great in the minds of all men, that public prayers were offered up in the churches to the Almighty to avert the evil. Their alarms, however, proved groundless; and the danger to which they had been exposed was, by the ingenuity and industry of the people, pro-

* Res. van de St., A.D. 1725, Aug. 11; 1732, Ap. 30; Jun. 26.

* See Vol. I., p. 253.

1732 ductive of a permanent benefit; since it gave rise to the discovery of a mode of covering the pile-work with a facing of earth, and flint and granite stones, which not only protected it from the worm, but rendered the dyke firmer against the assaults of the waves^d.

In this year the long-pending suit between the King of Prussia and the Prince of Orange Nassau, concerning the inheritance of William III., was compromised*; the cession of the principality of Orange made to the King of France at the peace of Utrecht was confirmed, the prince being at liberty to give the name of Orange to any one of his estates, and continue to bear the title and arms of that principality. So soon as these affairs were arranged the prince entered into negotiations for a marriage with Anne, 1733 eldest daughter of George II., king of Great Britain, a circumstance which excited the greatest disquietude in the States of Holland. The pernicious effects resulting from the marriage of the stadtholders into royal families have already been touched upon†; and though the prince was not now in the enjoyment of that office in more than three provinces, it was feared that the king might seek to procure his elevation to the same dignity in the remainder, by reviving the activity of the Orange party in the state, or make it a condition of the continuance of his alliance.

Accordingly, on receiving from their ambassador in London intelligence of the report that such a marriage was in contemplation, the States of Holland passed a resolution, that in order, if possible, to prevent, without making any unseasonable “*éclat*,” an event so highly prejudicial to the nation, and to the

^d Vad. Hist., b. 73, No. 24.

* See p. 273.

† See Vol. II., p. 618.

province of Holland in particular, it should be communicated to the lord Finch, plenipotentiary of the King of Great Britain at the Hague, that the States of Holland, being determined to preserve their present form of government, entertained great and just fears that the marriage of the Prince of Orange with the Princess-royal of England might give occasion to a diminution of the good understanding between the king and the United Provinces, and to dissensions between the Provinces themselves; and that for this cause, they hoped and expected from his long friendship towards them, that he would reject the proposed alliance. This interference, however, the king repudiated, with some symptoms of anger, as an intrusive meddling in his family affairs; and declared that the matter was too far advanced to retreat. Despairing, therefore, of arresting the marriage, and deeming it impolitic to alienate the mind of George II. at this juncture, the States acquiesced in the arrangement with an apparent satisfaction, controverting, at the same time, the position, that an union, in which the welfare of their country was so deeply involved, was to be regarded solely as a domestic matter.

The marriage was solemnized in the next year; when the king, in a letter to the States-General, giving them information of that event, observed, that his predecessors on the English throne had always cemented their alliances with the United Provinces by the marriage of their daughters to the Princes of Orange, and that he was desirous of following their example in this respect; the principal reasons which induced him to consent to the present union being, the promotion of the interests of the Protestant religion, the security of the succession to the crown in his family, and the increase of confidence and amity

1734 between himself and the States; and he felt convinced that their reception of his daughter would be conformable to the high opinion he had always entertained of their commonwealth.

Doubtful of the meaning which might be implied by the latter sentence, the States replied, that as his majesty had chosen a free republic, such as theirs, for the residence of his daughter, they hoped she would find all the satisfaction which the nature of the country and the present form of government,—the conservation of which they had much at heart,—would admit of. But however the States may have purposed by this answer to obviate from the mind of the king all idea of beholding his son-in-law Stadtholder of the Provinces, their own, as well as those of all the other members of the government, were, not without cause, filled with mistrust and alarm. It was apprehended that the partisans of the house of Orange would take occasion to excite commotions in the towns similar to those of 1672, in order to force the municipal governments to the nomination of William as stadtholder. Every precaution, therefore, was taken to prevent the expected tumults. The burgher-guards were frequently called out; in many places the watch was doubled; and several suspected persons were arrested. Whether these measures had the desired effect, or that the Orange party did not think affairs as yet ripe for a movement, the present constitution still held on for some years, though from henceforward, by a very precarious tenure^e.

But however sinister the effect on their domestic affairs, the anticipations of George II., whether genuine or fictitious, that his connexion with the Prince of

^e Recueil de Rousset, tom. viii., p. 408. Res. van de St., Ma. 22, Jun. 10. Vad: Hist., b. 74, No. 8.

Orange would tend to cement more closely the alliance between Great Britain and the States, seemed to be realized; since they shortly after appeared hand in hand in the honourable character of mediators of peace to Europe, throughout nearly the whole of which the flames of war had again been kindled in the last year by the disputed election to the throne of Poland on the death of the late king, Augustus, elector of Saxony. In this war the States had, notwithstanding the solicitations of the Emperor, declined to interfere, as not falling within the scope of the treaty of Vienna, and had obtained from the King of France a declaration of neutrality in favour of the Netherland provinces. But fearing at length that the balance of Europe would be lost unless the Emperor, who, with the assistance of the Empress of Russia, and Frederic Augustus II., king of Poland, had to wage war against the more united and more active power of France, Spain, and Sardinia, were efficiently supported, the States prevailed upon Great Britain to concur with them in offering their joint mediation to the belligerents.

The terms which they proposed being met with 1735 objections by the Emperor, and proving wholly unacceptable to France, Spain, and Sardinia, the mediators next applied their efforts to procure a truce; but the conditions offered by them to this effect were in like manner rejected by the Emperor, who unceasingly exhorted the States to adopt more vigorous measures to oblige France to accept a peace. The King of England, also, pressed them strongly to increase their forces by land and sea, as he himself had already done on observing the backwardness of France and her allies in the negotiations. But the States were in nowise inclined to carry their friendship so far. The

1735 war, entered into by the Emperor without consulting them, he had, as they conceived, drawn upon himself by his uncalled-for interference in the affairs of Poland, and might have speedily brought to a conclusion had he consented to abide by their friendly counsel. They therefore refused with firmness, though with courtesy, all the demands of the court of Vienna for subsidies.

In fine, discord and distrust accomplished that which the friendly offices of the mediators had been unable to effect. Each of the allied powers suspected the others of a design to make a separate peace, and was eager to obtain the advantage of forestalling his competitors; while the King of France was heartily weary of a war of which his allies, the Kings of Spain and Sardinia, only, reaped the more solid benefits. Disembarrassing themselves, therefore, of the intervention of the mediators, the Emperor and King of France secretly agreed upon conditions of a general peace, whereby Stanislaus Leczinzky, the competitor of Augustus for the crown of Poland, was to resign his pretensions, and Louis engaged to uphold the Pragmatic Sanction. Though the conclusion of this treaty without their participation was neither very complimentary nor gratifying to the maritime powers, they employed their good offices diligently and successfully to procure its acceptance by the Kings of Spain and Sardinia.

The peace thus restored was, however, of no long duration, being disturbed by hostilities in which the United Provinces had a far more sensible interest, and during the course of which England gave but slight proof of those friendly feelings that George II. had so liberally professed. Since the time that Holland and England had obtained a footing in the western hemi-

¹ Rec. de Rousset, tom. ix., p. 461; tom. x., p. 459, 469, 503, 519.

sphere, the merchants of those countries had been in 1735 the habit of carrying on a contraband traffic from the West India islands to the Spanish colonies of South America, in spite of the strict regulations forbidding all foreign nations to trade or navigate thither.

Both the States and England had, in different treaties with Spain, engaged not to protect their subjects in this species of smuggling; which, nevertheless, had been connived at in some measure by the former sovereigns of Spain, to whom the alliance of the maritime powers was of too much importance to admit of their risking its rupture by untimely expostulations on the subject. But the accession of Philip V. involved an entire change in the relations of the parties; and the wars in which he was engaged with England and Holland rendered him the less disposed to endure the continuance of a system of trading which was represented to him as prejudicial in the highest degree to the commerce of his own kingdom. Frequent complaints, therefore, of the violation of treaties were made, both at the court of London and at the Hague, which were as constantly evaded under the pretext that the government was not answerable for acts committed by private individuals. The King of Spain, in consequence, stationed a number of vessels, called "guarda-costas," to watch the coasts of America, giving instructions to the commanders to prevent the forbidden trade by force. This, instead of remedying, served to aggravate the evil. Some of the commanders were corrupted; and the greater number, exceeding their instructions, erected themselves into so many petty tyrants, or rather pirates, seizing vessels in the open sea which were not, or at least, could not be proved to be, engaged in the illicit traffic, and often with circumstances of outrage and cruelty.

- 1735 Accordingly, the complaints of England were now no less loud than those of Spain had been before; and met with equally little attention from the Spanish court, where the persuasion was strong that the government of England might easily have put a stop to the grievance, but was induced to connive at it on account of the large profits realized by the merchants. By the treaty of Utrecht, England was permitted to send a ship annually to New Spain, whose burden was restricted to 500 tons; it now constantly carried 1000 tons, and was, moreover, attended by a pinnace, which, under pretext of carrying provisions for its use, constantly sailed, to and fro, between that coast and the English colonies, whence it brought fresh supplies to the ship, which, by this manœuvre, was never unladen. On account of this evasion of the restriction, the King
- 1737 of Spain refused the passport both for that and the Assiento, or slave ship; whereupon, the South Sea Company, for whose profit it was equipped, joined the other merchants in clamorous petitions for reparation of the injuries, which, they asserted they had suffered from the Spanish guarda-costas. Sharp remonstrances were delivered at the court of Madrid, to which Horace Walpole, English ambassador at the Hague, sought to induce the States to become parties, and recommended them to grant letters of reprisal, as the King of England had already resolved to do.
- 1738 Meanwhile, the Dutch captains (usually somewhat independent in their proceedings) had taken justice into their own hands, having seized a Spanish vessel, which they sunk, with all on board, after they had cruelly tortured and put to death the captain and pilot; and made a landing on the coast of Caracca and Cumana, where they seized an immense quantity of valuable wares, and slew several of the inhabitants

in a skirmish. The States, far from supporting their 1738 subjects in these excesses, enjoined the directors of the West India Company, to visit the perpetrators with condign punishment; and to see that the commanders of their vessels on no occasion transgressed the bounds of a just self-defence.

England, on the other hand, who had equipped a fleet of fifty sail, was urgent in her solicitations to the States, to join with it a squadron of their vessels, for the purpose of obtaining redress by force. But, conscious that their subjects were greatly in the wrong, and that there was much to complain of on all sides, the States declared their determination to await the issue of the negotiations for an accommodation, now pending at Madrid, before they proceeded to any hostile measure.

At length, the appearance of an English fleet in the Mediterranean, induced the King of Spain to listen to the proposals of the court of London, and a convention was entered into, that plenipotentiaries should meet at Madrid, to regulate the respective 1739 pretensions of the two crowns, and that his Catholic Majesty should pay to the King of Great Britain the sum of 95,000*l.* sterling, as the balance due to him, after deduction made of the demands of Spain.

No sooner was this agreement known in England, than a violent popular ferment was raised, which, drowning the voice of the moderate and the wise in its clamour, plunged the nation into a long and ruinous war. The States, reluctant to rush into strife and bloodshed, or to risk, for so inadequate a cause, the chances of a contest, of which the expense would soon absorb more treasure than the disputed trade could ever be worth, determined upon a strict neutrality, so long as France forbore to unite her arms with

1739 those of Spain; a course at which Philip V. was so highly gratified that he caused four out of five ships, they had demanded, as illegally detained, to be restored to them.

But though not active participators in the war, the Dutch were sufferers from it to a considerable extent; since the commanders of the vessels of both the belligerents scrupled not to seize their merchantmen wherever they found them, and, under pretext of searching for contraband goods, to overhaul and plunder their cargoes, and, often, to carry them into port as prizes. By dint of loud and frequent remonstrances they obtained some satisfaction from the King of Spain; but, in England, their complaints remained unheeded, notwithstanding the intimate alliance of which the king had so boasted the advantages; and the outrages continued undiminished to the end of the war, with no other remedy than the tedious and uncertain one of suits in the English courts of justice, to which the sufferers seldom cared to have recourse. The losses sustained by the merchants of Amsterdam alone were said to have amounted to ten millions of guilders^g.

1740 While the commerce of the Dutch was thus embarrassed, the baneful consequences of the error the States had, in their too eager anxiety for its welfare, committed, by becoming guarantees of the Pragmatic Sanction*, were now fast approaching. The Emperor, Charles VI. of Germany, died in the October of this year. In order to secure the succession to his hereditary states to his eldest daughter Maria Theresa, as

^g Rec. de Rousset, tom. xii., p. 241 et seq., 316, 344; tom. xiv. p. 54, 56. Richesse de la Hollande, tom. i., p. 156.

* See p. 327.

settled by that act, he had obtained its confirmation 1740 by all the princes of Germany, with the exception of the Electors of Bavaria, and Palatine; and since the year 1724, had made no treaty with any of the powers of Europe, of which the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction, in the strongest terms, was not a condition. Spain had engaged to uphold it by the treaty which the Duke of Ripperda concluded with the Emperor, in 1725; the King of Prussia had made a promise to the same effect in the following year; Augustus, King of Poland, Elector of Saxony, had, in 1733, purchased the assistance of the Emperor in regaining that crown by a like obligation; Great Britain and the States had bound themselves to maintain it by the Vienna treaty, in 1731; and, finally, it was made an article of the treaty agreed upon between the Emperor and the King of France in 1735.

Nothing, therefore, as it appeared, could be more certain than the unmolested possession of her paternal inheritance by the young archduchess; yet, the sequel proved, how slight among princes are the restraints of honour and good faith, when opposed to the impulses of rapacity or ambition. Whether, indeed, the Pragmatic Sanction were not, in itself, an infraction of the fundamental principles of the Germanic constitution, which repudiates the succession of females in the states of the empire, may well be a question; but one which should have been considered before, and not after, the solemn engagements entered into by the different sovereigns of Europe, and which none of them, except the King of England, and the States-General, were found willing to fulfil. Several German princes now laid claim to the whole, or a part of the late Emperor's dominions; the Kings of Spain and Sardinia, followed their example; while the King of

1740 France, forbearing to advance his own pretensions, as well-grounded as either of the others*, declared, that as the Pragmatic Sanction robbed many princes of their rights, he could not lend his hand to support injustice, though he might before have been a consenting party. When, therefore, Maria-Theresa caused herself to be proclaimed Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, it was very evident, from the manner in which the intelligence was received in the different courts of Europe, that she had nothing to expect but a speedy attack on her states from several quarters.

The first blow, however, came not from either of the rival claimants, but from one of whom she was justified in entertaining not the smallest apprehension. Frederic III., king of Prussia, a prince whose unscrupulous rapacity and restless ambition were far from disqualifying him, in the opinion of the world, for the surname of Great, fearing that if he waited until others had put forward their pretensions he should come too late for a share of the spoil, sought occasion for war in the revival of some antiquated claims to a portion of Silesia, which he averred had been devised to the house of Brandenburg by its former possessors, the dukes of Lignitz. The court of Vienna, on the other hand, contended that the dukes of Lignitz had no right to make any such transfer, since the territories in question were fiefs which in default of heirs male reverted to the crown. But Frederic was neither of an age nor a temper to permit that to be made a question of law which he hoped to decide at once by the sword. Declaring that the pretensions of so many princes to the Austrian States obliged him to be speedy in his

* He was descended from the elder male branch of the House of Austria, through the wives of Louis XIII. and XIV.

operations, and that he had no designs hostile to 1740 the queen, whom he would defend against all her enemies, but merely to take possession of the states which belonged to him, he invaded Silesia in the depth of winter; made himself master of the principal towns of that province, and having defeated the Austrians in an obstinate battle fought near Moll- 1741 witz, caused himself to be proclaimed Duke of Lower Silesia before the end of the ensuing year.

The young queen now beheld foes rise up against her on every side. Philip V. of Spain declared his pretensions to her dominions on the ground of his being a descendant of Anne, wife of Philip II., the publication of which determined the King of Sardinia to establish the right he conceived himself to possess to the duchy of Milan. He prepared accordingly to invade that state with a powerful force, when the Queen of Hungary, anxious to diminish the number of her adversaries, availed herself of the mediation of Great Britain to effect a compromise with him, surrendering Milan on condition that he should defend it against the King of Spain and his allies. The King of Poland, also, did not scruple to assert that his engagement to uphold the Pragmatic Sanction had been made without prejudice to the rights of his wife, daughter of Joseph I., elder brother of the late Emperor, and prepared himself for the invasion of Bohemia.

But of all the competitors for the Austrian States, the most formidable was the Elector of Bavaria, who claimed as the descendant of Anne, daughter of Ferdinand I., that prince having settled the succession on his issue in the female line, and who had not engaged to uphold the Pragmatic Sanction. He was a candidate, likewise, for the Imperial crown, in opposition to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, whom the

1741 Queen of Hungary had now married, and on his behalf the King of France had raised two powerful armies, of which one, under the General d'Aubigné, was to join the Elector, while the other, of 44,000 strong, commanded by the Marshal de Maillebois, marched towards Keiserswaard, to watch the movements of the troops collected in Hanover by the King of Great Britain, with the view of promoting the election of the Grand Duke of Tuscany to the throne of the empire. Having possessed himself of some towns in Upper Austria, the Elector of Bavaria, at the head of the united forces, invaded Bohemia, and, in concert with the King of Poland, took Prague by surprise.

But the loss of this city, and the preference shown by the electors to the Bavarian prince, who 1742 was chosen Emperor by the name of Charles VII., was compensated in some degree by the recovery of the towns in Upper Austria and the conquest of a considerable portion of the new Emperor's hereditary States; and, shortly after, the victories of the King of Prussia were arrested by the peace of Breslau, purchased, however, at the cost of the cession, on the queen's part, of the whole of Upper and Lower Silesia and the county of Glatz. The Prussian troops having, in pursuance of this treaty, evacuated Moravia and Bohemia, Prague and all the other towns of that kingdom, except Egra, were recovered by Prince Charles of Lorraine, brother to the Grand Duke.

Before this fortunate turn took place in her affairs the queen had addressed to her allies, by whom she had hitherto been assisted with equivalents in money instead of the troops stipulated, a touching supplication for more effective aid. But Great

Britain, involved in a war with Spain, and apprehensive, not without reason, of a rupture with France, was less able than willing to engage actively in her support; and the States, though impressed with the obligation to fulfil the Vienna treaty, and solicitous to preserve the balance of Europe, dreaded to commence a war which must soon become general, and would probably entail upon them the most pernicious results. Both, therefore, had been inclined rather to adjust matters by amicable compromise than by arms; but finding their efforts to this end of none effect, they had prepared themselves to afford her firm and vigorous support.

The resolutions, however, of the States-General on the question, when they came to be ratified by the States of the Provinces, encountered considerable impediments. In the States of Holland, it was urged by the towns of Dordrecht and Briel, that the Emperor having neglected to abrogate the Charter of the Ostend Company, and permitting his Netherland subjects to trade to the East Indies, had rendered the obligation of the States to perform their part of the treaty of Vienna, at best doubtful; that, unless it were first ascertained to what terms of accommodation the Queen of Hungary might prove amenable, the United Provinces would be involved in an interminable war, the scene of which would be transferred to the Netherlands, if she should employ the auxiliaries it was proposed to afford her in hostilities against the French in those provinces; and that if the aid were continued in money, it would be less likely to give umbrage to the King of France.

In opposition to such arguments it was urged, that the question was now not one of expediency,

1742 but of the actual obligation of the treaty of Vienna, which bound them to assist the Queen of Hungary in the defence of her possessions to as great an extent as should be found necessary; that this treaty left it at the sole choice of the one who was attacked whether the subsidy required should be afforded in men or money; that it behoved the United Provinces, above all other nations of the world, to be exact and diligent in the fulfilment of their treaties; since, being surrounded by powerful neighbours, they depended for safety on the support of their allies, who would justly consider themselves released from all engagements with those who scrupled not to violate theirs in so signal a manner; that even if no treaty existed, it was their interest to take up arms in the cause of the Queen of Hungary, since the Austrian Netherlands would be worthless as a barrier, if she were so much enfeebled in her other dominions as to render her unable to defend them; and should she triumph over her enemies, it were much to be feared she would never forget the insensibility of the States towards her in the time of her distress; that if the King of France were inclined to take umbrage at their fulfilling their engagements, he would do so as well if they granted money as men; but were the fear of giving offence to any foreign prince to deter them from observing the faith of treaties, they must resign all right to be looked upon as a free nation, and no power then either would or could enter into alliance with them; and that to remain inactive at the present juncture, was not to avoid, but to provoke a war, the results of which would prove infinitely more dangerous to their own safety, if they waited till all their allies were either humbled or overcome.

The subject was discussed with no less vivacity ¹⁷⁴² among the people than in the States, the ambassadors of France and England striving to inspire them, each with mistrust of the designs of the other; the subject was made, in great measure, a party question; those who were favourable to the present government being desirous of conciliating the friendship of France, while the advocates of the stadtholderal authority were bent upon entering warmly into all the measures of Great Britain, and made use of the apprehensions of so powerful and dangerous an enemy as France appeared inclined to become, as an argument for giving renewed vigour and energy to the counsels of the nation, by the restoration of a single head to the government. The events of 1672, and the circumstances of the elevation of William III., were recalled to memory, not without hints of motives prejudicial to their country, by which those who now, as well as those who at that time, conducted the affairs of government were actuated. Such as feared a war with France—as desired to support the Queen of Hungary with aids in money only—or to declare the neutrality of the United Provinces, after the example of Hanover and other German States, were held up to public view as violators of treaties, pusillanimous, corrupt, and envious of him whom the great majority would gladly behold elevated to the dignity of stadtholder. Yet many, who were by no means favourable to the stadtholderal form of government, and who dreaded the consequences of involving themselves in the war, were of opinion, that the honour of the nation peremptorily demanded the punctual observance of the treaty of Vienna at any sacrifice and at all hazards.

The States of Holland, in especial, resolved on

1743 a subsidy of 20,000 men in aid of the queen, notwithstanding the opposition of Dordrecht and Briel, and sent a circular to the States of the other Provinces, earnestly pressing their speedy concurrence in the measure. Utrecht, however, pertinaciously insisted that, even had not the United Provinces been released from their obligation to fulfil the treaty of Vienna by the violation of its conditions on the part of the Emperor, no state was bound to abide by an agreement, to the imminent peril of its own safety. Finding it impossible to reconcile the dissentients, the States of Holland obtained that the resolution should be passed by a majority in the States-General; a mode rarely yet adopted in an affair of such importance. Count Maurice of Nassau, son of the late Field-Marshal Ouwerkerke, was placed in command of the troops, who were to be employed in any service the queen thought fit except in Italy^b.

The apprehension of the hostile light in which this step would be regarded by France, proved but too well founded. Cardinal Fleury, the advocate of peace and steady friend of the Republic, was now dead; and after that event, the court no longer appeared to reckon upon the amicable dispositions of the States. The French ambassador at the Hague was commissioned by Louis XV. to notify to the States that their resolution, if carried into effect, would oblige him to direct the principal force of his arms against the Austrian Netherlands, which had nothing to fear if they would consent to promise a neutrality. In answer to this species of threat,

^b Rec. de Rousset, tom. xvi., p. 132, 149, 379; tom. xviii., p. 112, 203, 316, 333, 396, 407, 446, 485; tom. xix., p. 193. Res. van de St., 1742, Jan. 24, 26, Feb. 8, Mar. 8, Nov. 2, 9; 1743, Feb. 2, 6, 27, Ap. 25, May 21. Vad. Hist., b. 75, No. 25.

the States declared their determination to abide 1743 by the treaties they had long ago concluded with the knowledge of the King of France; but probably it contributed, together with the delay of the Queen of Hungary in giving them satisfaction on the subject of the Ostend company, to the tardiness of some of the Provinces in issuing orders for the march of their troops. They arrived, in consequence, too late to share the victory obtained by the King of Great Britain, in person, over the French army at Dettingen¹.

This victory, which entailed the conquest of Bavaria, and the expulsion of the French from the frontiers of Germany, together with the recovery of the town of Egra, and with it the whole of Bohemia, added to the treaty of peace and alliance concluded this year with the King of Poland, gave so flattering an appearance to the affairs of Maria Theresa, that all men looked forward to her speedy release from her embarrassments, and to the conclusion of an equitable and secure peace; hopes which were soon destined to disappointment.

The Cardinal de Tencin, who had succeeded Fleury in the administration of affairs in France, conscious that, assisted by the Emperor and the King of Spain only, he should prove an unequal match for the queen, backed by her present confederates, formed the project of detaching from her alliance the King of Prussia, who had viewed, with extreme jealousy the late peace between the courts of Vienna and Dresden, and of inducing him to unite with the Emperor in renewing the war in Bohemia. At the same time he designed, by effecting a landing of

¹ Vad. Hist., b. 76, No. 1.

1743 troops in England, in favour of the Pretender, while he himself declared war against George II., to give that monarch full employment in his own kingdom, and thus oblige him to withdraw his troops from the Austrian Netherlands; and to prevent the States from sending auxiliaries to the Queen of Hungary by the attack of those provinces.

1744 The attempt on England was prevented by a storm, which destroyed a great number of transport vessels before they had yet left the port of Dunkirk. On the declaration of war against that country, the States readily afforded the subsidies stipulated by the treaty of 1678, but hesitated to engage as parties, before they had employed the two months allowed by that treaty in endeavours to bring about an accommodation between the belligerents. They were soon, however, constrained to depart from this temporizing course of policy. The King of France, without a pretext for his meditated attack on the Austrian Netherlands, while acting as a mere auxiliary to the Emperor who had no concern in these Provinces, now made the apprehension of an invasion of his dominions by the foreign troops stationed there, the ostensible ground of a declaration of war against the Queen of Hungary as principal; and dispatched the Marquis of Fenelon to the Hague, for the purpose of making one more effort to prevail with the States to assert their neutrality.

All the topics that ingenuity could suggest to this effect—the backwardness of Austria, in the execution of her treaties, and the many tokens she had given of her unfriendly feelings towards the United Provinces—the commercial jealousy of England—her insolent assumption of the sovereignty of the seas—her invariable custom of promoting her own interests under

colour of maintaining the common cause of the liberty 1744 of Europe—were displayed by the ambassador, with singular force and dexterity. But, notwithstanding that these representations, from the large portion of truth they contained, could not be without their effect on the States, they failed to shake their fidelity to their engagements. They answered, merely, by a request, that if his majesty sincerely desired peace, as he professed, he would devise some conditions agreeable to the courts of Vienna and London; and sent the Count of Wassenaar Twickelo, to the abbey of Cisoing, where the king was at that moment residing, to proffer their good offices towards the restoration of tranquillity. This, however, was by no means so large a measure of complaisance as the king desired or expected; and, accordingly, declaring that he had delayed the war long enough, he commenced hostilities, the very day after the arrival of the ambassador, by the capture of Warneton, one of the barrier towns, in which about fifty Dutch soldiers were in garrison. The other barrier towns followed in its train¹.

But though the rapid fall of these places caused the most vivid disquietude to the States, it did not have the effect anticipated by the King of France, of preventing them from sending the promised subsidy of 20,000 men to the Queen of Hungary, and which, under the general, Smissart, happily evading the French army, posted between Ghent and Bruges, joined the camp of the allies near Oudenarde. The passage of the Rhine, and the invasion of Alsace, by Prince Charles of Lorraine, obliging Louis to withdraw the greater portion of his troops from the Netherlands, arrested the progress of his conquests in that quarter.

¹ Rec. de Rousset, tom. xix., 304 and seq., 334. Res. van de St., Ap. 8, 14, 23.

1744 The allies then advanced as far as Ryssel, but, being unable to bring the French general, de Saxe, to an engagement, they effected nothing further than to lay the environs of Ryssel, Douay, and Orchies, under contribution.

The third project of Louis, that, namely, of procuring for the Emperor the co-operation of the King of Prussia, was more successful; a confederacy being formed under his mediation at Frankfort, between the Emperor, the King of Prussia, as Elector of Brandenburg, the Elector Palatine, and the King of Sweden, as Landgrave of Hesse, of which the principal object was to force the Queen of Hungary to acknowledge Charles VII. as Emperor. In pursuance of this compact, Frederic, immediately on the intelligence that Prince Charles had crossed the Rhine, placed himself at the head of a force of 80,000 men, to which he gave the denomination of Imperial auxiliaries, and, marching into Bohemia, invested Prague. This movement caused Prince Charles to quit hastily the left bank of the Rhine, and march to the relief of Prague, which though he arrived too late to effect, he ultimately obliged the King of Prussia to abandon the town, together with all the conquests he had subsequently made along the banks of the Moldau, and added to these triumphs, the recovery of Upper Silesia. On the Rhine, after the departure of the prince, the French army, under the Marquis de Coigny, mastered Friburg, Constance, and some places of less importance.

In order to oppose the power of the Frankfort league, the Queen of Hungary and her allies formed, between themselves, a more intimate confederacy, to which, under the name of the Quadruple Alliance, the Queen, Great Britain, the Elector of Saxony, and the States-General, became parties. The King of Poland,

in his quality of elector, bound himself anew to support 1745 the Pragmatic Sanction, and to march an army of 30,000 men to the assistance of the queen, in Bohemia; for the maintenance of which Great Britain was to furnish, annually, 100,000*l.*, and the States, 50,000*l.*, sterling. But a few days elapsed after the conclusion of this treaty, so auspicious to the Queen of Hungary, when another event, highly favourable to her fortunes, occurred, in the death of the Emperor; and this, again, was followed by a signal victory which her troops gained over the French and Bavarians at Pfaffenhofen. The new Elector of Bavaria, too young to aspire to the imperial throne, even had his destitute circumstances not forbidden it, readily accepted the queen's offer of the restoration of his hereditary states, on condition that he would uphold the Pragmatic Sanction, and give his vote for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, at the ensuing election of an emperor. The grand duke was subsequently declared emperor, by the unanimous voice of the Electoral Diet, under the name of Francis II.

Yet these advantages were counterbalanced by the terrible reverses which the combined armies of Austria and Saxony sustained in Bohemia, at the hands of the King of Prussia, in the battles of Friedberg, Prausnitz, and Hennersdorf, and the loss of Leipzig, Misnia, and Torgau, which laid open the whole of the dominions of the Elector of Saxony, to the conquering arms of Frederic. Another victory gained at Kesseldorf, brought the Prussian monarch to Dresden, thence to dictate terms of peace to the courts of Saxony and Vienna, far more moderate than his position might have encouraged them to hope, and of which the consequence was, the restoration of some degree of tranquillity to Germany, and the transfer of

1745 the war with redoubled strength and fury to the Netherlands.

Early in the spring there appeared, in these unhappy provinces, an army such as it was the peculiar boast of France to send forth; numerous, brave, disciplined, commanded by able officers, well equipped, and well provided. Tournay was first invested, when the allied forces consisting of English, Hanoverians, and Dutch, with eight squadrons only of Austrians, and commanded by the Duke of Cumberland, the Count Koningsek, and the Prince of Waldek, approached the town with the purpose of venturing an engagement for its relief. The King of France, himself, commanding in the camp before Tournay, drew out his troops in order of battle, behind a line, extending in the form of a triangle from the village of Antoine, through Fontenoi, to the wood of Bari, and strengthened with five redoubts well provided with artillery, besides the fortified village of Rumignies.

The battle commenced with the assault of Fontenoi by the English and Hanoverians, who, advancing in a dense column, under a rolling fire, bore down all opposition, and succeeded after a fearful struggle in driving the enemy to three hundred paces beyond the village. Here, however, they had to sustain the fire of some pieces of artillery, which the enemy had brought to the front of their line, while a brisk and simultaneous assault was made on both flanks.

The Dutch, meanwhile, had attacked the fort of Antoine, but were twice repulsed with severe slaughter. The misconduct of a regiment of Hessian cavalry in their pay, who, with their commander, Hayko Appius*, in the heat of action, fled from the field and retreated to Ath, has given occasion to the

* He was for this delinquency banished the United Provinces.

English historians to cast stigmas on them, as if guilty 1745 of cowardice or treachery; an accusation from which they are wholly exonerated by the best of all testimony, that of the Marshal de Saxe himself, who, in a letter to one of his friends, speaks in high terms of their courage and steadiness in the midst of the hottest fire of the French troops^k. But, broken by the loss they had sustained, and discouraged by the desertion of their companions, they were unable, however willing, to advance to the assistance of the English, who were at length obliged to retreat, which they did in good order. The number of killed was estimated by some at 10,000, by others at 8000 men, the victory being dearly purchased by the French with the loss of above 6000. The melancholy defeat of Fontenoi involved the loss of Tournay. The allied army on their retreat took up a position at Lessines, whence they retired behind the canal between Brussels and Vilvoorden, leaving the whole of Flanders open to the ravages of the enemy. Ghent, Bruges, Deinze, Damme, Alost, Oudenarde, and Dendermonde, fell into their hands with incredible facility. Ostend, defended by a garrison of English, surrendered in ten days after the opening of the trenches; Nieuport, which was next attacked, held out only till the fifth day.

The French king having taken his departure, shortly before, for Paris, it was supposed that the campaign would now be brought to a close; but it was soon evident that the Marshal de Saxe, whom he had left in command, entertained no such purpose. He assaulted Ath, which he bombarded so heavily that a great portion of the town was destroyed; and with it gained the last place that yet remained to the

^k Brief van Van Hoey, May 24, 1745.

1745 Empress-queen between the Dender and the sea. It was at this critical juncture for the affairs of the allies that the King of Great Britain found himself obliged to recall his troops, together with 5000 Dutch auxiliaries, for the defence of his kingdom against the invasion of Charles Edward, son of the Pretender. The capture of Brussels, where, though miserably
1746 fortified, immense stores of provision and ammunition for the allied army had been laid up, being achieved by de Saxe in the depth of winter, completed the dismay caused by these calamitous occurrences.

In the next summer the progress of the campaign was attended with similar results. The Empress-queen, applying the greater portion of her forces to the prosecution of the war in Italy, left the defence of the Austrian Netherlands to her allies; who, in consequence of the diversion caused by the insurrection in Great Britain, were unable to furnish troops sufficient for the extended line of country they had to cover. Accordingly, while their army, considerably weaker than that of the enemy, lay encamped on the heath of Breda, the Count of Löwenthal mastered Louvain and Mechlin; occupied Lier, Herenthals, and Aarschot, which were abandoned; forced Antwerp to open her gates; and reduced Mons after a short siege.

At length, a reinforcement of Austrian troops joined the main army, Prince Charles of Lorraine himself taking the chief command. But even his presence was now ineffectual to arrest the successes of the French arms. Charleroi capitulated soon after his arrival; and the formerly strong and celebrated town of Namur yielded on the ninth day, the citadel holding out only six days longer. With Namur, the States lost the last of their barrier towns, the only

fruits they had reaped from all the blood and treasure 1746 lavished in the course of a twelve years' war. The disastrous events of the campaign were concluded by a severe defeat inflicted on the allies, at Raucoux, near Liege.

The desire of the States to free themselves from a situation of so much peril and vexation, as that in which their relations with the Empress-queen had involved them, was now become intense. They dispatched the Lord of Wassenaar, a second time to Paris, accompanied by Jacob Giles, one of the registrars of the States-General, to propose terms of a general accommodation. They found the king strongly disposed towards peace, and inclined to offer reasonable conditions, as well to Great Britain as the States. Conferences, accordingly, were appointed to be held at Breda, between the ministers of the three powers; but no sooner were they opened than it became evident that the English had no sincere desire to put an end to the war, and had only consented to be parties to the negotiations from a fear lest the States might otherwise proceed to make a separate treaty with France. Their ministers, the Earl of Sandwich at Breda, and Sir H. Trevor at the Hague, without proffering any special demands of their own, brought forward innumerable difficulties in opposition to every project devised by the other parties; and insisted that information of their proceedings should be transmitted to the courts of Vienna and Turin, which could have no other effect than to prolong the conferences, and embarrass matters still further; while, at the same time, they ceased not to expatiate on the immense force which the king was resolved to send into the Netherlands, for the next campaign, in order to wipe out the memory of past disasters.

1746 It was in vain that the deputies of the States represented the dangers to which their country was exposed; that it was, undoubtedly, the intention of the King of France, to march 130,000 men towards their frontier, while the allies could muster, at most, but 110,000 to oppose them; and the ruin that must inevitably ensue, if Louis, after another campaign, such as had occurred hitherto, year after year, should invade the United Provinces, at the head of his victorious army. The English court, which, since the marriage of the Prince of Nassau-Orange with the Princess Anne, had never lost sight of the project of bringing about his elevation to the stadtholderate, had resolved upon making the present war a means to
1747 that effect. The ministers, therefore, turned a deaf ear to their remonstrances, and used every effort to render the negotiations abortive; while the prevalence of party faction rendered the States destitute of the requisite unanimity and resolution to pursue the only safe course left to them under the circumstances, that of treating separately with France for a neutrality.

Perceiving these dispositions on the part of both powers, Louis, whether seizing with avidity a long-desired pretext for invading the United Provinces, or hoping to terrify the States into the conclusion of a separate peace, declared his resolution, since they persisted in siding with his enemies, to carry on hostilities within their boundaries¹. The execution soon followed the threat. Without any formal declaration of war the Count of Löwenthal at the head of about 20,000 French troops invaded Dutch Flanders, which, ill-provided against such an unexpected irruption, was scarcely able to offer resistance. Isendyk,

¹ Rec. de Rousset, tom. xxi., p. 5.

and a number of other forts, surrendered almost 1747 without a blow; and Sluys, and the Sas de Gand, were invested. The defenceless condition of this territory was to be attributed as well to the embarrassed condition of the finances of the generality, under whose administration it lay, as to the disunion prevailing among the different provinces, more particularly concerning the appointment of a commander-in-chief, and which impeded all their resolutions in military affairs. Holland, and the majority of the States of Zealand, desired that this office should be continued to the Prince of Waldek, during the ensuing campaign while, Friesland, Groningen, and Guelderland, insisted with equal pertinacity that it should be conferred on the Prince of Nassau-Orange, their Stadtholder^m.

It soon, therefore, appeared, that the English, when purposely prolonging the war, had not calculated the consequences upon erroneous or doubtful premises. The consternation occasioned by the invasion of the French fired at once the train that had long lain prepared. The friends of the Orange party, when out of power, had ever hailed a war as the certain prognostic of their own advancement. The popular aristocracy—the form which the constitution of the United Provinces naturally assumed when deprived of a stadtholder, whose authority mingled with it some of the essential principles of monarchy—easy and somewhat inefficient, was, in time of peace, not ill-adapted to the genius of a people habituated to self-government, impatient on the one hand of any strict control, and on the other, neither restless for innovation, nor apt to break out into excesses; but in a state of war, when the exigencies of public

^m Vqd. Hist., b. 77, No. 13.

1747 affairs require in the government a promptness, decision, and secrecy, rarely to be met with except in that of a single head, the evils arising from the slowness of its forms, the vacillation consequent on the diversity of opinions among so many members, and the unavoidable publicity of its proceedings, were severely felt, and would have been still more so, had they not been, in some degree, remedied by the influence of the able and upright statesmen usually chosen to fill the office of Pensionary of Holland.

It was not difficult, therefore, for the Orange party, at this juncture, to inflame the sentiments of weariness and disgust which the people, not altogether without reason, had begun to entertain towards the present government, into actual disaffection and a vivid desire of change. So far back as the year 1742, publications were secretly, but widely disseminated, accusing some members of the government of a traitorous correspondence with France, and of being corrupted by French gold. In proportion as the successes of the enemy increased, these charges obtained additional credence with the people, who gradually became impressed with the belief, that the present dangers and misfortunes of the country were to be attributed solely to the misconduct of the existing government, and that their last hope of deliverance lay in the appointment of a stadtholder. Tradition had kept fresh in their minds, the lesson they had been taught in 1672, of the practicability of attaining their ends by means of violence and intimidation; and, ere long, the general dissatisfaction broke out, in those places most exposed to the enemy, into open tumult and sedition.

On the siege of Sluys, and the invasion of

Cadsand, a number of the inhabitants of that dis- 1747
trict retreated to Veere, in Zeeland, where their
presence spread equal astonishment and perturbation
among the citizens; feelings which were dexterously
turned to advantage by the partisans of the house of
Orange. Very soon, the schuttery on guard, insti-
gated as it was supposed by some persons in authority,
began to talk of the necessity of appointing a stadtholder and captain-general in the present emergency.
On the night of the 24th of April, they repaired
to the house of one of the burgomasters named
Verelst, of whose favourable dispositions towards the
stadtholderal government they were well aware, and
demanded from him a promise that he would propose
to the States, on the part of the town, the Prince
of Orange as Stadtholder of Zeeland. Yielding to
the welcome coercion, Verelst summoned to the
council-house before five in the morning, the govern-
ing and ex-burgomasters of the town, when the burgo-
master Huyssen, who had entertained the schuttery
at intervals during the night with food and drink,
made known their wishes to the assembly. A reso-
lution was, therefore, speedily and unanimously passed,
that the danger to which the whole nation, and
Zeeland in particular, was exposed, did not admit
of their being longer deterred by the other members
of the States, from the salutary and necessary
measure of nominating William Charles Henry Friso
to be stadtholder, captain, and admiral-general of
Zeeland, with such powers, privileges, and emolu-
ments, as were most conducive to the integrity and
welfare of the province. The deputies to the States
were commanded, on the same day, to inform them
of this resolution, which was, likewise, immediately
made known to the crowd collected outside the

1747 council-house. In an instant Orange flags were raised in all parts of the town, and, as if by magic, every one appeared with ribbon knots of the same colour. Thus adorned, a large troop of people marched to Middleburgh, and being joined by the shipwrights of that place, proceeded to the court-house, where the municipal council were assembled, and tumultuously demanded the Prince of Orange as stadtholder, so far as regarded the city. The council remaining some time in deliberation, the mob outside undertook to hasten their decision, by sending two or three of the knives they carried by way of arms, through the windows of the apartment where they were sitting. This hint produced the desired effect. Two of the members, suddenly discovering that the majority were inclined to the appointment of a stadtholder, went out and informed the populace, that their wishes were complied with; intelligence which they received with shouts and every manifestation of joy and exultation.

In the other towns of Zealand similar movements were attended with the like results; but at Zierikzee disturbances assumed a more formidable character. No sooner did the tidings arrive of the nomination of a stadtholder at Veere, and the surrender of Sluys, than the populace assembled in the streets, disarmed the officers of the guard, who were destitute of the requisite orders from the Senate to disperse them by force, and, marching to the council-house, threatened all the members with death if they did not instantly proclaim the Prince of Orange stadtholder. In this state of affairs, the deliberations on the subject were not very protracted; and the mob, elated at their easy victory, proceeded towards the harbour for the purpose of expressing their joy by firing the artillery.

Unfortunately they found nothing in the powder chest 1747 but sand, and that the cannon were filled with small stones. Considering the imminent danger of invasion that at this moment threatened Zealand, and that it was the bounden duty of the burgomasters to maintain the city constantly in a state of defence, it is scarcely a matter of astonishment that suspicions of treason exasperated them to a pitch of fury. They loudly reviled the government as a band of traitors and knaves; rang the alarm-bell, which brought the peasantry in great numbers into the town; and insulted and maltreated two of the oldest and most respectable members of the Senate. The announcement, by one of the principal ministers of the church, that the Prince of Orange was created stadtholder by the States of Zealand, restored something like tranquillity; which, however, was of no long duration. Some fresh excitement being secretly administered to the populace, they rushed to the council-house, of which they took possession, rummaged all the charters and documents of the town, to discover, as they thought, the treasonable correspondence of the government with France; while the shipwrights, armed with sharpened axes, threatened the houses of the principal magistrates with pillage. The Senate, in terror and disgust, resigned their offices, when a provisional government was appointed by two of the clergy. One of the burgomasters, who was a member of the States-General, happening to return from the Hague at this juncture, was seized by the mob, deprived of his sword, and decorated with an Orange cockade, in which guise he was taken to prison, where the provisional government thought it advisable to detain him, during a month, in order to shield him from the effects of the popular vengeance.

1747 The presence of a troop of soldiers at length restored quiet. The consent of the different towns being obtained in this manner, the ceremony of the election of the Prince of Nassau-Orange, to the stadtholderate, was gone through in the States of Zealand, and the notification sent to him in Friezland, on the very day, as it happened, that he had sent a courteous letter to them containing an offer of his servicesⁿ.

The report of the doings in Zealand reached the Hague on the night of the 25th of April, and shortly after break of day, the streets were filled with a rabble decked out in knots and crowns of Orange-coloured ribbon or paper. The States of Holland vainly hoped to avert the impending storm, by the publication of a vigorous resolution to oppose the attack of the enemy to the utmost of their power, and to hazard their all in defence of their country, of liberty, and religion; and that the Council of State should be required to make an estimate of the arrears owing by the different Provinces, since the commencement of the present war, so that they might be constrained to make good the defalcation^o. The people were possessed with the idea, that the government entertained the purpose of concluding a neutrality with France, of which the towns in Dutch Flanders were to be given as a pledge; a suspicion confirmed by the unresisting surrender of those towns*.

ⁿ Vad. Hist., b. 77, No. 15. Rec. de Rousset, tom. xxi., p. 84.

^o Res. van de St., Ap. 27.

* The chief promoter of such reports was John Rousset de Missy, to whom we are indebted for the invaluable collection of treaties and public acts published under his name. He was thrown into prison for exciting a disturbance in the State, by means of malicious reports, and on suspicion of having revealed to the Court of England, some negotiations of the Dutch ambassadors at Breda, on the subject of

In Holland, as in Zealand, the populace of the 1747 different towns assembled before the doors of the council-house, demanding, with clamour and threats, the appointment of the Prince as stadtholder. The governments, destitute of any means of quelling the tumults, since they knew not upon whom, among the schuttery, they could place dependence, forbore to attempt an useless resistance. The change, completed within a week, was unattended by bloodshed; and the Prince of Orange, having been proclaimed by the towns separately, was unanimously declared by the States of Holland, "in consideration of the troubled state of affairs, and in order, by the blessing of God, to deliver the country from the difficult and dangerous situation in which it was placed, Stadtholder, Captain and Admiral-general of the Province." The Orange flag was hoisted on all the public buildings in the voting towns, and the event was celebrated with bell-ringing, illuminations, the discharge of artillery, and every demonstration of the most extravagant joy.

The manner in which the prince received the notification of his appointment, contributed much to confirm the good opinion entertained of him, by a large number of the inhabitants of the United Provinces. He declared, that he congratulated himself on his advancement, which appeared to tend to the honour of God, and the welfare of his beloved country; and that it gave him the greatest satisfaction to reflect, that it had pleased the Almighty to permit a work, whereon he appeared to have set his seal, to be concluded as it began, without being

the neutrality. He remained in confinement for several weeks, until the arrival of the Prince of Orange at the Hague, who released, and subsequently created him his "Councillor extraordinary and historian." *Vad. Hist.*, b. 77, bl. 85.

1747 defiled by a single drop of blood. He immediately, on the invitation of the States, repaired to the Hague, where, on his arrival, he found himself already appointed Captain and Admiral-general of the Union. Utrecht and Overyssel quickly followed the example of Holland and Zealand; and thus, William IV. became stadtholder of all the seven provinces, a dignity never yet enjoyed by any of his predecessors^p.

The invasion of the French, fraught with such important consequences to Holland, had the additional effect of suddenly breaking off the conferences at Breda, and giving renewed activity to hostilities. The Sas de Gand and Fort Philippine, the latter having undergone a terrible cannonade, were forced to capitulate; and Hulst, Axel, and Terneuse surrendered, before the allied army, which had advanced to the vicinity of Antwerp, could come up to their relief. The conquest of Dutch Flanders being thus achieved, De Saxe, with the French army, made a movement as if to besiege Maestricht, when the allies, in order to cover the town, took up a position between the villages of Rosmeer and Lafeld. Here they were attacked by the French and defeated after a severe encounter, though with a loss said to be scarcely greater than that of the enemy. At length, in the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom, the only town they had yet encountered, in the Dutch territory, provided with anything like available means of defence, the invaders met with a resistance, to them both new and unexpected. For eight weeks the besieged withstood a perpetual bombardment, and assaults without number, the latter of which they constantly repelled with loss to the enemy; until by the negligence or insufficiency of the guard stationed at one of the

^p Res. van de St., May 3, 4, 6, 12. Rec. de Rousset, tom. xxi., p. 91—93. Vad. Hist., b. 77, No. 16.

breaches, the assailants were enabled to enter during 1747 the night and carry the town by surprise^a.

But, notwithstanding the brave defence of Bergen-op-Zoom, and that it had employed the French arms till so late in the season, as to oblige them to abandon a design they had formed of invading Zealand, its surrender excited the greatest discontent in the United Provinces. Suspicions of treachery again became rife; the popular resentment being directed, for a time, against the Catholics, who, it was imagined, secretly rejoiced in the misfortunes of their country, and desired the success of the French. At several places their houses were plundered, and themselves very roughly handled; but at length, the admonitions of the Stadtholder and municipal governments put a stop to these excesses. While the perturbation and mistrust of the public mind were yet unappeased, the body of the nobility in the States of Holland, always favourable to the interests of the house of Orange, took occasion to propose, that "the republic having constantly fallen into similar critical circumstances to the present, when deprived of a stadtholder, it appeared that nothing could tend more to preserve the country from such dangers for the future, than to declare the dignities of stadtholder, and captain and admiral-general, hereditary in the family of their present possessor in the male and female line."

The deputies having no powers to deliberate on so extraordinary and unexpected a proposition, referred to their principals, the councils of the towns. The question, as may be supposed, increased still further the prevailing disorder, and added one more to the subjects of contention, unhappily existing between the people and their governments. Of these, not the

^a Vad. Hist., b. 77, No. 23, 24.

1747 least was the disposal of the municipal offices, which the members of the councils were accused, with too much truth, of bestowing upon their partisans and relations, and even foreigners, to the exclusion of deserving and capable burghers, and of keeping back a portion of the salary to put into their own pockets. All the municipal governments, except Amsterdam, had, in order to conciliate the people, placed the most profitable offices in their gift, that of post-masters, in the hand of the stadtholder, who transferred it to the States. With respect to the others, the burghers devised the singular expedient of correcting existing abuses, by setting them openly to sale; and presented petitions to this effect to the councils, in some places, particularly Amsterdam and Rotterdam, couched in terms of menace and insolence. They likewise demanded that the Orange flag should be kept constantly flying on the council-house; that the proposition of the nobles, as to the hereditary stadtholderate, should be acceded to, in its fullest extent; that the captains of the burgher-guards should be chosen from among the burghers, instead of members of the government; and that the guilds should be restored to their ancient privileges.

Feeble, humbled, and dismayed, the States of Holland found themselves constrained to pass a resolution derogatory, in the highest degree, to their principals, as conveying a distrust of their integrity, that no office should be given to any but such as fulfilled the duties in person; that no money be paid for them, nor any part of the profits reserved to the givers; and that the burgomasters should be bound to deliver an exact account of all the offices in their respective cities, and of the salaries attached to them. This resolution was soon followed by the more impor-

tant one, which wholly deprived the States of their 1747 ancient dignity and lustre, and left the constitution of the United Provinces a republic in little else but the name. The States of Holland now took the lead in passing the decree that the offices of stadtholder, captain, and admiral-general, should be continued in the direct heirs of the Prince of Orange, for ever, in the male and female line, professing the reformed religion, as taught in the churches of the United Provinces; except in case, as regarded male heirs, they should become possessed of royal or electoral dignity. If the succession devolved on a female, she was to exercise the office of stadtholder, under the name of governess, and to enjoy likewise those of captain and admiral-general, with a sitting in the Council of State, and the colleges of the Admiralty, and to be empowered to name an efficient commander of the troops in time of war; she was bound not to marry but with the consent of the States, otherwise, her issue was ineligible to inherit. During the minority of the stadtholder, the provinces were to be governed by the mother of the infant. The hereditary stadtholderate was soon after conferred by the States of the other provinces on William, with the same authority as it had been held by William III., except in Friezland and Groningen, where this measure was not carried till a subsequent period^r.

In this revolution we may remark the effects of the strong natural bias by which the populace of Holland, in common with that of every nation in every age, has constantly been inclined towards the government of a single head. Here, as ever, the

^r Rec. de Rousset, tom. xxi., p. 95. Vad. Hist., b. 77, No. 26, 27. Res. van de St., Oct. 7, Nov. 26.

1747 advocates of a more liberal constitution were found among the wealthy, the educated, and the reflecting portion of the community; and it was upon this comparatively small class of persons that the States and municipal governments had to rely chiefly for support; the majority having been induced to acquiesce in the existing order of things, only in proportion as they enjoyed personal ease and happiness under it. No sooner, therefore, did the hour of adversity and privation arrive, than the municipal governments found numbers and physical strength arrayed against them; while their sole arm of defence lay in the schuttery, or burgher-guard, which, though nominally under their command, was composed, in so large a proportion, of a class of persons favourable to the opposite party, as to render it, if not hostile, at best, little to be depended on. Accordingly, on the first appearance of actual force or violence, the municipal governments, destitute of all means of resisting such, at once, and necessarily fell; and this serves to account, as well for the rapidity with which changes were effected in Holland, as for the absence of bloodshed which usually marked their progress.

We have, already, had occasion to observe on the anomalies existing in the office of stadtholder, as combined with those of captain and admiral-general*. Still more striking did these anomalies become when offices, so essentially incompatible, were virtually incorporated by being made hereditary in the same individual; and when functions so important and multifarious as to be duly fulfilled by none but a man of mature age and experience, and possessed of more than common skill in military and political affairs, were liable to fall into the hands of a female

* See Vol. II., p. 699.

or an infant; and, when no provision was made to 1747 prevent an authority, which, if administered unfaithfully, might be used to the destruction of the liberties of the nation, and if inefficiently, involved danger to its very existence, from coming into the possession of a tyrant, a madman, or an idiot.

Another capital error into which the States had allowed themselves to be hurried by the violence of popular commotion, was, that with the virtually royal authority they conferred on their minister, they permitted him, also, many of the insignia of royalty. As captain-general, he issued the "patents" or orders of march to the troops, and the soldiers took an oath of obedience to him, as well as to the States; in his name were pronounced the sentences of the courts martial, which he annulled or modified at his pleasure; his arms were on the military standards; he alone received the salute, which was paid neither to the Provincial States, to the States-General, nor even to the president of the week himself; he was constantly surrounded by a military guard, and had the privilege of giving the watchword to the garrison of the Hague. The stadtholder and his family were prayed for in the churches; his birth-day was celebrated with public rejoicings; he received every morning from the president of the States-General, an account of the matters to be deliberated in that assembly, and, from the Pensionary of Holland, the like with regard to the States of the Provinces; and a particular gate at the Hague, leading to the court-house, was reserved for him and his family, through which the members of the States themselves never ventured to pass. Thus the name and right of sovereignty alone remained with the States, the power and dignities were lodged in their subject. Hence arose a perpetual and dangerous

1747 confusion in the public mind, as to which was, in fact, the sovereign.

The soldiery, especially the foreign troops, were accustomed to look up to him alone as their real master, who had the distribution of offices, and rewards and punishments at his disposal, and to whom they saw military honours paid; and were inclined to obey him, rather than the States to whom they really belonged. The captain-general had thus the power of turning the forces of the state against the state itself, and subjugating it with its own army. The populace also readily adopted the error of imagining that he who was adorned with the outward trappings, enjoyed the reality of sovereignty, and were led to consider every instance of its exercise on the part of the States as an assumption of powers which did not belong to them, and to resent such as an injury committed against their lawful ruler; while foreign nations, falling into the same mistake, were apt to look on the attempts made at different times to restrain the exorbitant authority of the stadtholder, not as a withdrawal by the sovereign of powers from a subject that had become dangerous to the state, but as acts of rebellion, and encroachments on a legitimate prerogative, royal in everything but the name. On such occasions, therefore, the cause of the stadtholder became the common cause of kings; and the neighbouring monarchs were always found ready to assist him in crushing his opponents, and regaining all the privileges he claimed, no matter how unconstitutional, or however glaringly usurped.

Such were the evils which resulted from the fault committed by the republican government in allowing a measure to be forced upon them, of which, if they had not been blinded by the love of rule, and party

spirit, they must have seen the inevitable necessity. 1747
It was the expressed opinion of one of the wisest of their statesmen, the pensionary Slingelandt, that the abuses then existing in the constitution would, if suffered to continue, tend to give the stadtholder absolute power; and that they ought to be reformed, either by substituting a majority, or two-thirds in the States, in place of the unanimity required in public measures; or by entering into an amicable treaty with the Prince of Orange to confer on him the stadtholderate, with strict limitations for the security of public liberty*. Had the passions and prejudices of the opponents of the prince been less strong, or could they have resolved to sacrifice their party spirit to the welfare of their country so far as to follow this advice, they might have found in the office of stadtholder a source of benefit, and a principle of stability to the constitution.

That some such modification of the government had long been absolutely requisite to the prosperity and happiness of the United Provinces was a fact beyond all question. Selfish, luxurious, and intent upon gain, as the Dutch had become, it was impossible to deny that they were no longer fitted for the difficult task of sustaining a free constitution; that the labour, watchfulness, and self-denial it requires had now grown irksome to them; that they no longer considered what kind of government was most conducive to virtue, to the strength and glory of their country, or most likely to transmit liberty and happiness to their posterity, but what would procure for them the largest share of security and ease in the acquisition or enjoyment of their wealth. The integrity by which the Dutch had formerly, in every

* Chesterfield's Miscellaneous Pieces, vol. ii., p. 544, of his Works.

1747 relation of life, obtained such honourable distinction, was now no more; and corruption, the inherent and fatal vice of free constitutions, had spread among nearly all ranks of men. Bribes were offered and taken without compunction and without shame; public offices, as well under the municipal governments as in the state, were bestowed, not according to the capability or just claims of the candidates, but upon the highest bidder, or the relative or partisan of the giver; while such as were chosen exerted themselves little to fulfil the duties of that which they no longer regarded as a public trust, but as a vested right.

Hence arose a general incapacity and indolence in the execution of public duties; the business of the state was neglected, the secrets of the government were betrayed, and its most important measures thwarted; while the evil had been allowed to spread in so much the more unchecked rankness, as the exemplary probity and disinterestedness of those most conspicuous in public affairs had blinded the eyes of men in some measure to its existence. They beheld De Witt, resisting all the bribes and caresses of the powerful Louis XIV. of France; De Ruyter, insensible to the wealth and honours proffered him by nearly all the courts of Europe, and desiring no more than the humble dwelling and frugal fare of an ordinary citizen; and Heinsius, content with the modest salary of 2400*l.* a year for the execution of numerous public offices, and the fulfilment of duties the most arduous and responsible that ever fell to the lot of any man. Dazzled by these and many more such brilliant examples of integrity and virtue, the government omitted to observe the conduct of their more obscure agents, till loud and general murmurs aroused their attention and astonishment.

“Whereas evil and scandalous reports,”—such are 1747 the indignant terms of one of the earliest proclamations issued by the States of Holland on the subject,—“whether spread abroad by evil-disposed and designing men and enemies to the State, or whether (which yet does not appear) founded on good grounds—are current to the effect, that some of those who have a sitting in our assembly or other colleges, have been capable of so far forgetting themselves, as to be induced, not only to give places and offices for money or money’s worth; but in matters of justice, of finance, yea even of state, have given their votes, or regulated their opinions for the sake of some private advantage; if any one, contrary to expectation, has incurred the guilt of so detestable an action, he shall, *ipso facto*, be deprived of his offices and declared incapable of ever again serving his country.” A reward of one hundred guilders was offered to any one who should prove a public officer guilty of any such crime[†]. But similar edicts had little chance of execution, where those who alone could give information of the facts were interested in their concealment. They proved utterly powerless to arrest the mischief; and hence arose a decay of that confidence between the different members of the State, which we have before remarked* as an absolutely necessary bond of union, and without which, it was impossible that affairs could be carried on in a government, the machinery of which, heavy, complicated, and deficient in impellent power, could move only by the entire harmony and full activity of all its parts.

The domestic manners of the Dutch people had

[†] Res. van de St., A.D. 1715, Dec. 18,

• See Vol. II., p. 654.

1747 undergone a change as great as that of their public morals, and one which tended no less to create the desire, than the latter, the necessity for a more monarchical form of government. The constant intercourse with foreigners during the late continental wars, and their alliances with France, had engrafted many of the habits and customs of those nations on their republican simplicity of character. The nobles, in place of their former plain and patriarchal mode of life, and frank familiarity of manner, had adopted the luxurious habits, the polite dissimulation, and the courtly airs, though destitute of the graces, of their Gallic neighbours; while the middle ranks, aping their superiors, began to despise the homely callings and frugal style of living of their fathers, and, reluctant to incur the labour of mercantile pursuits, looked to the military and civil offices which the stadtholder had to bestow, as a means of supporting their expenses; and, as well as the nobles, longed for the splendour, the pleasures, and the amusements of a court.

Among other effects of the change of manners of the Dutch nation, was the decay of the empire of the fair sex; an empire hitherto unbounded, but which some authors go so far as to assert, was no greater than their beauty, sense, chastity, and devoted affection to their husbands and families, well entitled them to^a. However this may be, certain it is, that the Dutch (a "stomachful people," as Sir William Temple calls them,) who were scarce able to bear the restraint of the mildest government, bowed their necks to the yoke matrimonial in silent and contented submission. If they are justly accused of being cold and phlegmatic lovers, they might be thought

^a Lett. sur la Hollande de Beaumarchais, No. 25.

to compensate amply for that defect, by their respectful adoration as husbands; their persons, their fortunes, their actions, and opinions, were all placed at the disposal of their wives. To be master in his own house is an idea which seems never to have occurred to the mind of a genuine Dutchman*; nor did he often commence any undertaking, whether public or private, without first consulting the partner of his cares; and it is even said, that some of the statesmen most distinguished for their influence in the affairs of their own country and Europe in general, were accustomed to receive instructions at home to which they ventured not to go counter. But the dominion of these lordly dames, all despotic though it were, was ever exerted for the benefit of those who obeyed. It was the earnest and undaunted spirit of their women, which encouraged the Dutch to dare, and their calm fortitude to endure, the toils, privations, and sufferings, of the first years of the war of independence against Spain; it was their activity and thrift in the management of their private incomes, that supplied them with the means of defraying an amount of national expenditure wholly unexampled in history; and to their influence is to be ascribed, above all, the decorum of manners, and the purity of morals, for which the society of Holland has at all times been remarkable. But though they preserved their virtue and modesty uncontaminated amid the general corruption, they were no longer able to maintain their sway. The habit which the Dutch youth had acquired, among other foreign customs, of seeking amusement abroad, rendered them less dependent for happiness on the comforts of a married life; while, accustomed to the more

* Vide Note C., at end.

1747 dazzling allurements of the women of France and Italy, they were apt to overlook or despise the quiet and unobtrusive beauties of those of their own country. Whether they did not better consult their own dignity in emancipating themselves from this subjection may be a question; but the fact, that the decline of the power of the republic and of the female sex went hand in hand, is indubitable.

But in the deterioration of the Dutch national character, great and lamentable as it was, one virtue, that of benevolence, still flourished in its pristine vigour and excellence; displaying itself, whether in the unlimited toleration of all sects of religion, in the judicious and humane management of their prisons, in the sedulous care of their own poor, or the readiness with which they responded to all solicitations for charity, from what quarter soever they might come. The striking contrast which the sentiments of the Dutch, on religious toleration, presented to those of nearly all the nations of Europe, has exposed them to the accusation made by a celebrated writer of the last century—the flashes of whose brilliant imagination, however, must not be mistaken for emanations of the light of truth—of carrying their docility on this point, so far as to defer entirely to the sovereign in matters of belief^v. The contrary, however, is the fact. The Dutch were a people essentially religious, rather prone to enthusiasm than indifference in this respect, of which their history has afforded many proofs, and deeply imbued with the conviction of the truth of what they professed. But in proportion to the depth of their own conviction, was their confidence in the inherent force of that truth, to carry conviction to

^v Raynal, *Hist. du Stadthouderat*, p. 214.

the minds of others; it required only, they considered, 1747 to be clearly understood to be irresistible: and if it failed, they attributed the failure solely to a defect of ability in the expounder, or of understanding in the listener, which it were vain to hope to amend by reviling and persecution. On the single occasion when they had been induced to depart from this maxim, during the early contests, namely, between the Gomarists and Arminians, the consequences had been such as to afford them a memorable warning never again to fall into similar errors. From that time, accordingly, the suggestions of bigotry and intolerance, sometimes urged by the more zealous of the clergy, had remained unheeded; and the innumerable sects and persuasions which existed in the United Provinces, were allowed to follow each its peculiar mode of worship, without hindrance or observation, except that the civil magistrate was bound to see that there was nothing in their opinions or conduct prejudicial to civil society or the constitution of the state. It was no rare occurrence to meet with a Catholic firmly persuaded that a conscientious Lutheran or Calvinist was in a fair way of salvation; the Protestant forbore to term the head of the Catholic Church, Antichrist, or its members, idolaters; the Calvinist passed over in silence the errors of the Lutheran; and even the Jew himself forgot his bigotry and exclusiveness, and in Holland became an attached subject and patriotic citizen.

We have before had occasion to notice at what a comparatively early period of their history, the Dutch obtained an honourable distinction among civilized nations, by their regulations for the maintenance and comfort of their poor. Besides the numerous institutions for the aged and infirm, and

1747 for orphans, hospitals for the sick and insane, and for decayed soldiers and seamen, there were in every town chambers of almoners, whose business it was to distribute gifts to the poor in case of any exigency, and provide for the support of needy travellers of all nations for the space of three days^{*.} That this apparently indiscriminate charity was not liable to abuse, and that a number of able-bodied persons were not supported in idleness by public contributions, to the great detriment of the state, it is hard to affirm.

The same kindly spirit was visible in the treatment of criminals in Holland. Of those confined in the public gaols for men, or "Rasphuys," the inmates were subject to no other labour than that of sawing a certain, and by no means excessive, quantity of wood in the day; such, however, as burned the wood, or proved otherwise unruly, were shut up in a court, where a pump was so contrived that they were obliged to keep it constantly at work, to prevent the water rising high enough to drown them. They subsisted on the same food as was provided for seamen, with beer. The women were placed in a separate prison ("Spinhuys") where they were employed in sewing, or spinning, well fed, and not obliged to sleep more than two in a room; the whole having more the appearance of a school for instructing the common people in work, than a gaol. That this leniency did not have the effect of encouraging crime is argued from the fact that on the inspection of the prison at Amsterdam, on one occasion, it was found, that there were only forty-

* Janicon, *Etat des Prov. Unies*, tom. i., p. 37.

* In a village near Amsterdam, the poor-box was so well supplied, that any one having recourse to it would come into the immediate enjoyment of six or eight hundred florins a year. *Richesse de la Hollande*, tom. i., p. 305.

nine persons in the "Rasphuys," of whom, the majority 1747 were Frenchmen*. The most high-bred and delicate ladies did not disdain to perform the duties of matrons of the female prisons, of hospitals, orphan asylums, or other charitable foundations[†].

Neither did the Dutch restrict their bounty to those of their own people, or their own religion. Fugitives, of all nations, driven from their country by persecution, or oppression, were received into the United Provinces, and supported either by liberal subscriptions, or at the public expense, till some creditable way of living could be found for them. Seldom, indeed, notwithstanding the accusations of avarice so freely, and sometimes perhaps justly, brought against them, did they grudge to bestow in a good cause, the wealth which their active industry had won. Whether troops were to be subsidized, assistance were to be afforded to the feeble and impoverished against the strong, or the accession of needy sovereigns to be purchased in support of alliances, these princely merchants were ever found ready to scatter their gold with a generous, though not prodigal hand.

Hence, foreign nations conceived the idea that Holland was an inexhaustible mine of wealth, to which they might, on all occasions, have recourse; a conclusion they might easily be induced to draw, as well from the circumstance of their finding the national purse so constantly open, whether in the way of gift or loan, as from the contemplation of the enormous load of public expenditure and debt it sustained. Mention has been made of the immense fleets the United Provinces equipped, during the wars waged

* Schlözer's Briefwechsel Theil, ii., bl. 235.

* The number of executions throughout the United Provinces averaged from four to six annually.

1747 against them by Charles II., and Louis XIV.; and we have seen that in the war of the succession, they maintained on foot an army of nearly 124,000 strong; and, that during that war, the province of Holland, alone, had incurred a debt of nineteen millions of guilders*. In the year 1670, a time of peace, and when the government being without a stadtholder, their military force was comparatively small, it cost them the sum of 6,119,000 guilders a year, while the annual expense of the ordinary fleet of men-of-war, before the navy was suffered to fall into decay, was about 6,000,000. In addition to the ordinary charges of the state, that of keeping the dykes in repair was onerous in the extreme; more persons being employed in this work, as we have had occasion to observe†, than all the corn in the province could maintain.

In order to provide funds for this vast outlay it was found necessary to impose an amount of taxes so excessive, that the astonishment of politicians was excited at the fact, that any people, but more especially one so impatient of restraint, and possessing so few natural resources, should have been found willing or able to endure them. In 1685 the public expenses defrayed by the province of Holland were triple in amount to the value of the whole produce of the land‡. An excise was levied on bread, meat, wine, beer, salt, and, in short, on all the necessaries of life; that on the former, as well as on turf, amounting, during the latter years of the republic, to one-third of

‡ Holl. Mer., A.D. 1685, bl. 107.

* During its continuance the United Provinces had paid one-third as their share of all the subsidies granted by England to the other allies, a vast disproportion, when the geographical extent and natural resources of the two nations are considered.

† See Vol. I., p. 3, note *.

the original cost; and it was reckoned that the poorest 1747 man paid on exciseable articles absolutely necessary for his subsistence, no less than fifty florins, or about 5*l.* annually^z. The stamp duty was another profitable source of revenue; citations, petitions, leases, patents, grants, letters of grace, acts of majority, contracts of marriage, and wills, being obliged to be executed on stamped paper of various prices. Assessments were laid on houses, lands, hearths, servants, and horses and carriages; on horned cattle, and on ships or boats of every kind, whether kept for profit or amusement; besides a duty called the "Bezaaygeld," payable in some parts on seeds put in the ground. A tax of a fortieth was paid on the sale or mortgage of real property, on that on ships, and on collateral successions; and, if all this proved insufficient, a general property-tax of a hundredth, a two hundredth, and, sometimes, of a fiftieth, was imposed*. In addition to these, were the port dues and customs, and the other payments, that under the names of tonnage, freightage, licenses, and convoys, belonged to the admiralty^a.

Yet the Dutch sustained these burdens under which any other nation would have been driven to rebellion, or plunged in ruin, with scarcely a murmur, and for a long period with little perceptible inconvenience. Their remarkable willingness to pay taxes is attributed, by Sir William Temple, chiefly to the certainty they entertained of the due application of

^z Janiçon, *Etat des Prov. Unies*, tom. i., p. 40. *Mém. de Lamberti*, tom. viii., p. 534.

^a Janiçon, *Etat des Prov. Unies*, *passim*. *Richesse de la Hollande*, tom. ii., p. 36, 37.

* By the returns of a property-tax, levied in 1794, it appeared that the annual revenue of the province of Holland amounted to 1,345,000,000 of florins; in Friezland, to little more than one-tenth of that sum, or 125,031,000.

1747 their money to the purposes for which it was levied. "No great riches," he says, "are seen to enter by public payments into private purses, either to raise families, or to feed the prodigal expenses of vain, extravagant, and luxurious men; but all public monies are applied to the safety, greatness, or honour of the state, and the magistrates themselves bear an equal share in the burdens they impose^b." Their continued ability to pay was the fruit, as much of the discretion and skill used in the repartition of taxes, as of the prudent and frugal habits of the people. The excise, which the statesmen of the United Provinces always considered the most productive and the least grievous of imposts, was, as mentioned above, levied on almost every article of consumption; at first, in so small a proportion as to be scarcely felt by the consumer, when included in the cost of the article; and being afterwards raised by equally imperceptible gradations, it continued to be confounded with the price of provisions, to which every one so proportioned his expenses as to leave a surplus of income. "In the United Provinces," says Sir William Temple, "every man spent less than he had coming in, be that what it would; and he would be thought to have lived a year to no purpose, who had not realized a sum to lay by at the end of it^c."

At length, however, this perpetual drain began to exhaust the sources from whence it was supplied; and the wealth of Holland, at once her glory and her bane, was now fast failing her. From the time of the peace of Utrecht, the commerce of the Dutch had been gradually, but steadily, declining; some even date the commencement of that decline at a period long antecedent. In answer to an inquiry instituted by

^b Observations on the United Provinces, p. 136. ^c Idem, p. 158.

the present stadtholder, as to the causes of the former 1747 prosperity, and present decay of commerce, a memorial was drawn up by the principal merchants of the country; wherein it was stated, that the causes of its ancient prosperity were of three kinds, natural, moral, and incidental. Among the natural causes, was reckoned, the situation of the United Provinces between the north and south of Europe, which rendered them a convenient place of exchange for the commodities of each, and thus obtained for them an extensive and profitable carrying-trade; 2ndly, the sterility of their soil, which obliged the inhabitants to draw their subsistence from foreign countries; and the abundance of fish in the neighbouring seas, which not only compensated for the deficiency in terrestrial productions, but furnished a lucrative branch of foreign trade. As moral causes, they considered, the liberty of religion allowed, and the protection afforded, to refugees from all countries, which attracted thither a number of foreigners, who brought with them, money, skill, and industry; the free constitution of the state, and the prompt and incorruptible administration of justice, making no distinction between high and low, rich and poor, citizen and foreigner, and providing for every individual, security of person, property, and honour, and the certain enjoyment of the fruits of his labour; the wisdom of the political government, its fidelity in observing treaties, and sedulous avoidance of all unnecessary wars, which no less than the former reasons induced merchants to settle there. The natural and moral causes it was said still continued in full force, except that, as regarded the former, the harbours, by the accumulation of sand, had become shallower and more difficult of access, and the fisheries were less profitable from the partici-

1747 pation of other nations, who now applied themselves to that branch of trade.

The present decay of commerce was, therefore, principally to be attributed to a change in adventitious circumstances. The religious persecutions which the sovereigns of most other countries had carried on, had now, in a great degree, ceased; and those who before despised commerce, fishery, and manufactures, now vied with each other in promoting these sources of wealth; England, especially, had for the last century made a series of commercial regulations, the tendency of every one of which was to draw to themselves the trade formerly monopolized by the United Provinces; while from Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy, wares were now carried directly to the north, and thence back again, instead of being brought as formerly to the United Provinces, as a general storehouse. They adduced also the heavy duties levied in various ways on importation and exportation^d; which alone, in fact, rendered the competition of other nations fatal to the commerce of Holland. So long as the port and freightage dues were moderate, the low interest of money, the superior skill and industry, and the frugal habits of the people, would effectually have secured them from all danger arising from the rivalry of less able and experienced enterprisers; but the expense of freightage was now become so high, that merchants no longer found the profits equal to the risks; and in order to avoid it, the countries of the north carried on their trade immediately with those of the south, instead of having recourse as formerly to the intervention of the Dutch.

In Germany, for instance, where they had formerly enjoyed almost a monopoly in the commerce of wares

^d Vad. Hist., b. 80, No. 13.

from the south, insomuch that refined sugar, coffee, 1747 and indigo, was exported in the proportion of three-fourths to Holland, and one-fourth to Hamburgh, that proportion was now exactly reversed^e. The excise, moreover, on every article of consumption had occasioned the price of labour to be raised to an excessive height in order to enable the artisan to live; and hence the manufacturers were no longer able to undersell foreigners in the market, and were thus reduced to depend chiefly upon home consumption; or if they did enter into competition, were obliged to indemnify themselves for the lowness of price by making goods of an inferior quality, which, when discovered, ceased to find purchasers. The smuggling and frauds, moreover, to which the imposition of exorbitant excise and custom duties obliged the Dutch trader to have recourse if he would enjoy the fair profits of his capital and labour, corrupted the sentiments of probity which had formerly obtained for him the confidence of the whole commercial world, and degraded the mercantile character. Foreign merchants were thus deterred from dealing with him; while persons of credit and respectability, reluctant to engage in pursuits wherein they could not realise a competency by means of honest industry, were induced to withdraw their capital wholly from commercial speculations.

Much of the capital thus abstracted from commerce was invested in foreign loans, the amount of which, about thirty years after this period is stated to have been no less than 250,000,000 of florins^f; and this, in its turn, enhanced the value of money at home and deprived the merchant of the advantage of borrowing at the low rate of interest to which he had

^e Richesse de la Hollande, tom. ii., p. 126.

^f Rech. sur le Com., tom. ii. pa. ii. p. 216.

1747 been accustomed. On the other hand, the deficiencies created in the revenue by the system of illicit trading, necessitated the imposition of new taxes; and in this manner, causes and effects continued to react upon each other, and to accelerate the decline of commerce, with a rapid and constantly increasing motion. In proportion as trade and commerce declined, strong efforts were made to raise up an agricultural interest, as it was supposed, in their stead, by placing some limitations on the importation of corn. These efforts, however, were constantly and firmly resisted; and the opinions of the statesmen of the United Provinces on the subject, the best practical political economists the world ever saw, can hardly be without their value to those of other nations.

The provinces of Guelderland, Zealand, and Friesland, having on one occasion demanded either the prohibition, or the imposition of a duty on the importation of foreign corn, on the grounds that in consequence of the low price at which they were obliged to sell the corn they produced they should be unable to furnish their contingent towards the general expenses, and that the money which usually found its way into foreign countries in payment of their corn would be saved to the nation, their proposal was treated by the States as nothing less than an absurdity. The petitioners must, it was said, be in a state of the profoundest ignorance of the first principles of the government of a civilized nation; an occasional prohibition to export corn during periods of famine was indeed permissible; but in no case ought its importation to be checked; that neither in ancient nor modern history could an example of a similar unreasonable prohibition be found; but, on the contrary, the care of all wise rulers has ever been to secure an abundance of food to the

people; and that to comply with the desire of the 1747 petitioners would be to establish a mischievous monopoly dishonourable to a civilized state^g.

Not only the commerce of the United Provinces, but their colonies likewise, had fallen into a lamentable state of decay. They were now in a condition similar to that which had favoured the Dutch in wresting them from the hands of the Spaniards and Portuguese a century and a half before. The long enjoyment of uncontrolled power had produced its never-failing effect, in rendering the masters insolent and tyrannical, the subjects disaffected and treacherous; a result that must necessarily follow in the course of things. Where no restraint or check on men's actions exists, the example of one licentious, domineering, or rapacious individual, is sufficient to spread a system of illegality and abuses through the whole community. His acts of oppression and injustice meeting with neither resistance nor appeal, are repeated until by degrees they become ordinary practices; and as the novelty wears off, and the minds of men are accustomed to behold their perpetration, the idea of their iniquity is lost in that of the advantages that may be reaped from them. Accordingly, in process of time such acts come to be imitated by the best and mildest; and, handed down to posterity with all the authority of prescription, to be regarded as customs which, though condemnable in themselves, were not adopted without some good reason, and could not be abolished without danger.

Unhappily, the Dutch, though remarkable for their benevolence of character, and enjoying, in a pre-eminent degree, the happiness of a mild and civilized government, have signally failed in generosity and

^g Mém. de Lamberti, tom. iii., p. 430.

1747 humanity as masters of colonial subjects. And perhaps it is this very happiness which may be adduced as in a great measure the cause of the fact. In a country affording abundance of food and employment, where the career of creditable industry was open to all, few were found willing to banish themselves to the colonies, except such as from some deficiency of talent, integrity, or diligence, were unable to find employment at home; insomuch that it was the invariable custom of fathers of families to send those of their sons whom they could not reclaim from a course of idleness and vice, to the Indies^b. So reluctant, indeed, were the generality of the people on this point, that it was found necessary to recruit the colonial population though the disgraceful instrumentality of a class of men familiarly called "traders in souls" (zielenverkoopers); persons who, by promises of a free passage to the colonies, and the enjoyment of a life of wealth and ease, seduced the unwary to allow themselves to be transported thither. Hence these settlements became in process of time filled with worthless and discontented persons, who, regarding their new abode not as a permanent residence, but as a place where wealth was to be amassed with the view of returning to spend it in the mother-country, were generally inclined to commit any act of turpitude which might lead to its acquisition. Their anxiety to realize profit, by extorting the largest possible amount of labour at the smallest cost of sustenance, led them to adopt a course of cruelty and oppression towards the natives, which made themselves in their turn the objects of the hatred and vengeance of the latter. From this state of things sprang fre-

^b History of Holland, (Anon.,) vol. ii. p. 72.

¹ Schlözer's Staats-anzeigen, thiel vi., bl. 217.

quent revolts, for which the only remedies devised 1747 were measures of additional severity.

The most tragical occurrence of this kind was that which happened in 1740, at Batavia, the seat of the Dutch empire in the East; where the discontent that had betrayed itself amongst the inhabitants, principally Chinese, against the government, gave rise to apprehensions that an insurrection was contemplated. Accordingly all vagabonds and suspicious persons were expelled the city; but a considerable number remained in the outskirts, concerning whom information was given that they designed to surprise the town, and having massacred the Christians, to take possession of their property. This intelligence was taken as confirmation of the suspicions before entertained by the government of their secret understanding with those within the walls; and the Chinese in the town were commanded to put out their lights at sunset, and not to look out of window, much less appear in the streets. After the lapse of some time spent in mutual mistrust, the fugitives advanced in a somewhat hostile manner to within reach of the artillery of the town, whence they were soon driven by the firing of a few rounds. But their appearance had a fatal effect on the destiny of their unhappy countrymen within. On the ground that they would not have ventured on such a demonstration without some encouragement from the latter, the soldiers and armed burghers, by the command, as they said, of the governor, Adrian Valkenier, broke into the houses of the defenceless Chinese, murdered the inhabitants, and pillaged all they could lay their hands on. Amid these horrors, fires, kindled, it was affirmed, by the sufferers in their desperation, broke out in various places; and had they not been promptly extinguished,

1747 the town in a few hours would have presented nothing but a mass of ruins. As it was, the spectacle of the half-burnt houses, bestrewed with the dead and dying, heaped together as they had offered themselves unresistingly to slaughter, or singly as they had fought the last agonizing struggle for life, was sufficiently appalling. The pillage continued two or three days before the hand of authority was interposed to arrest it. The Chinese in the suburbs were all either massacred or forced to take flight. By degrees order was restored, and those who had fled or concealed themselves were allowed to return and resume their avocations on condition of their submission to the government; and, extraordinary as it may appear, numbers were found ready to avail themselves of the permission. The governor, Valkenier, was afterwards imprisoned.

The innumerable abuses which, principally owing to the same spirit of cupidity, had crept into every department of the colonial government, will hereafter come under our notice^l.

The same author who has accused the Dutch of indifference on the subject of religion, has likewise done them the injustice of propagating the error, which has condemned them as destitute of capacity or taste for the arts, sciences, or literature^k. How great is this error—induced principally by the ignorance which prevailed, and still does prevail, of their rich and difficult language—it has been before attempted to prove*. Neither is the century that has elapsed since the subject was last touched upon, less fertile in brilliant examples to refute such a position than the preceding; and a living writer,

^l *Vad. Hist.*, b. lxxv., No. 6. ^k *Raynal, Hist. du Stadthoud.*, p. 210.

• See Vol. II., p. 667.

himself a Colossus of literature, has awarded Holland 1747 no more than her due, when he pronounces her, the "peculiarly learned state of Europe through the seventeenth century¹." Scarcely, indeed, is there a branch of literature or science of which Dutchmen have not been the distinguished ornaments.

Amongst the first of the exalted in intellectual attainments and moral excellence, is the place of Herman Boerhaave. This eminent physician, naturalist, botanist, and chymist, owed to the innate force of his genius alone, the glorious and prosperous career of life he enjoyed. At the age of sixteen he was deprived of his parents; and, left alone in the world, pennyless, and friendless, he obtained a scanty provision of the necessaries of life, by giving lessons in the mathematics. He was originally intended for the ecclesiastical profession, but his mind turning strongly to the pursuits of science, he obtained, in his twentieth year, his diploma as doctor of medicine, from which period he rose rapidly into practice and fame. Seldom, indeed, has it been the lot of any man to enjoy a reputation more extensive among his contemporaries, or a more certain immortality conferred by the unanimous voice of posterity. From all the nations and courts of Europe pupils were sent, not only to receive his instructions in science, but to imitate the example of his eminent virtues. The Czar of Russia, Peter the Great, when in Holland for the purpose of improving himself in the knowledge of maritime affairs, attended the lessons of Boerhaave; and so great was his fame, even in the most distant quarters of the globe, that a mandarin of China wrote to consult him, inscribing his letter "To the illustrious Boerhaave, physician, in Europe;"

¹ Hallam's *Introd. to the Lit. of Europe*, vol. iv., p. 101.

1747 the letter was punctually delivered. The city of Leyden boasts the honour of his birth in 1668; he died at the age of seventy, having accumulated the immense sum of 200,000*l.* By his side may be placed, though scarcely a contemporary, since he died in 1695, Huygens van Zuylichem, the discoverer of Saturn's ring, and a third satellite belonging to that planet; the perfector of telescopes, and author of many useful inventions and admirable works; he was likewise secretary to King William III. for the affairs of the United Provinces. His father, van Zuylichem, who had served, as secretary, and president of the Council of Finance, the three stadtholders, Maurice, Frederic-Henry, and William II., for a period sixty-two years, was also celebrated for the learned and able productions of his pen. Scarcely less illustrious are the names of Hartzoeker, Zwammerdam, Leeuwenhoek, De Graaf, Musschenbroek, and Cunæus, as the authors of useful and brilliant discoveries and improvements, in medicine, science, and experimental philosophy.

Koehoorn, the rival and equal of the celebrated Vauban, was a native of Friesland, born near Leeuwarden in 1648. His treatise on fortification is still the handbook of military men; but, as if written under the influence of the prevailing spirit of his countrymen, the averseness to offensive warfare, it is said to be more calculated to teach the art of defence than that of attack.

In the art of poetry, Vondel and Katz acknowledged no unworthy successors in Hoogvliet, Vollenhoven, Van Moonen, Brandt, Dekker, Antonides, (celebrated for his beautiful poem on the Y,) and Poot. Some individuals of the female sex also shone conspicuous in this department; and among them

Lucretia van Winter, (born Merken,) whose poem 1747 on the *Use of Adversity*, tragedies, and heroic poems, particularly those of *David* and *Germanicus*, are spoken of in terms of high estimation.

To enumerate the divines, metaphysicians, and moral philosophers of Holland who have enlightened their countrymen by their deductions, or astonished them with their paradoxes, would be an endless task. Yet it is not permitted to pass over in entire silence, the name of the celebrated Jew of Amsterdam, Benedict Spinoza; that singular philosopher who, while denying the individuality of the Deity, lived as though every act were under his immediate governance; while rendering good and evil subservient to the fatality of the irresistible appetites and passions of men, kept his own within the strictest bounds of order and decorum; and while denying the truth of revelation, was himself exalted to an eminence of moral virtue, which very few of the best Christians have been able to attain. His most famous works are his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, in which he denies the authenticity of the historical portions of the Bible, and rejects the claim of the prophets to peculiar divine inspiration; and his *Ethica More Geometrico demonstrata*, published (1677) among his *Opera Posthuma*, after his death, wherein he attempts to prove, by deductions in geometrical method, that "there is but one substance of infinite extension and thought, of which all created beings are but the modes; that the existing order of things is of absolute necessity, and can, by no possibility, be otherwise; that final causes are a mere chimæra, and that the world is governed by a blind fatality." To doctrines so pernicious the States wisely forbore to attract general attention, by any attempt to suppress

1747 their publication; and the consequences were such as to vindicate their discretion. Spinoza formed no sect; his opinions exercised but slight influence among his countrymen; and his works, untranslated from their original abstruse Latin, soon became little else than an object of curiosity to the learned. He was born in 1632, and forsaking the Jewish religion at an early age, devoted himself wholly to the pursuits of literature till his death, which happened in his forty-eighth year.

In the department of history we perceive a very sensible decline; as though, with the cessation of the stirring events of the sixteenth and early part the seventeenth centuries, had arisen the deficiency of historians worthy to relate them. The animated and striking narrations of Hooft, Bor, and Meteren, are but poorly compensated for by the tedious and petty details of an Aitzema, the yet more wearisome lengthiness of his continuator Sylvius, or the scarcely less dull though exact pages of the *Hollandsche Mercur*. Periodical publications, registers, and the resolutions of the States, must now stand in lieu of, instead of serving as accompaniments to, regular and connected histories. Such as exist have been written by foreigners, Wiquefort, Basnage, and Le Clerc. From this charge of ineptitude, however, must be excepted Gerard Brandt, whose *History of the Reformation*, and *Lives of De Groot and De Ruyter*, though somewhat tedious in detail, entitle him to rank high as an historian and biographer.

But a work was at this period in the course of publication, of sufficient excellence to redeem by its single merits the character of the historical literature of Holland. This was the *Vaderlandsche Historie* of John Wagenaar, whom his countrymen have held

in such high esteem as to confer on him the title of 1747
“Great.” Profound, exact, comprehensive, and impartial, this admirable writer is the safe and necessary guide of all who attempt the study of Dutch history; without his assistance, indeed, it would be utterly impossible for a foreigner to pursue its intricate and doubtful mazes with anything like confidence. He is, however, not exempt from defects, though they are as nothing compared with his excellencies. He confines himself to the relation of events in chronological order, without sufficiently illustrating their connexion with one another; his plan wants completeness and unity, and the groundwork on which it is laid is narrow, excluding wholly all notices of the manners, habits, and literature of his country; his style, though pure and elegant, is cold and often diffuse, with a singular deficiency of force and animation in the descriptions; and his work has this further disadvantage, though it cannot be reckoned as a fault, that, written solely for his countrymen, and on the supposition that the laws and constitution of the Provinces are already understood, it leaves the foreign reader almost wholly in the dark on these subjects. The *Vaderlandsche Historie*, in twenty volumes, comprises the period from the first notices of the Batavi by Tacitus to the death of the present stadtholder in 1751.

Besides her own illustrious sons, Holland claims a share in the glory of those by adoption, in the Descartes, the Grævius, the Gronovius, the Huet, and innumerable others, whom the charms of literary association, the facilities afforded for research, the freedom of the press, and the peace and leisure—unembarrassed by patronage, and undisturbed by persecution—they were permitted to enjoy, attracted to her cities. So long as an author abstained from publishing libels on

1747 private character, or anything offensive to morals or decency, he was allowed to promulgate any opinions, religious, philosophical, or political, he thought fit; the government, however sharply their own persons or acts might be reprehended or commented upon, disquieting themselves little on the subject, and leaving to divines, philosophers, and politicians, the task of refuting them. The consequence of this almost unlimited liberty was the printing and publishing of so vast a number of books that the sale and exportation of them for a considerable period formed an extensive and lucrative branch of commerce. As no express laws existed for the protection of authors, they were accustomed to obtain a "privilege," as it was called, of the States of the Province where their work was published, in the nature of a prohibition to all others to publish it for a term of years, usually fifteen, at the end of which it was sometimes renewed. This privilege the States might refuse if the work did not meet with their approbation*; and the Court of Holland sometimes condemned works which they considered immoral or blasphemous to be burned by the common hangman and imposed a fine on the publishers^m†. This exertion of authority was, however, rare, and little heeded; and the plans proposed, more than once, by that body to the States for the restriction of the license of the press, were uniformly rejectedⁿ.

^m Vad. Hist., b. 88, bl. 355.

ⁿ Vad. Hist., b. 88, bl. 356. B. 90, bl. 218.

* The privilege granted to the printer of Rousseau's *Emile* was withdrawn by the States of Holland in 1762. Vad. Hist., b. 87, bl. 218.

† Such was the fate of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* of Voltaire.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

Funds raised by a "voluntary gift." Treaty with Russia, and Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle. Riotous Proceedings against the Tax-farmers. Custom of Farming the Excise abolished. Disturbances of the "Doelists" at Amsterdam. Governments of the Towns changed. "Regulations" restored in Guelderland, Overijssel, and Utrecht. Stadtholder created Chief Director of the East and West India Companies. Religious Eccentricities in the United Provinces. Death of the Stadtholder. His Character. Government of the Princess-Royal of England. Seven Years' War. Right of Search exercised by the English. States appear favourable to France. Determine to preserve their neutrality. Injuries inflicted by the privateering of the English. Dispute between the Governness and the town of Haarlem. Death and Character of the Governness. Friendship between England and the States restored. Bankruptcies at Amsterdam. Dissensions between the English and Dutch East India Company.

DURING the late reverses which the United Provinces 1747 had sustained, the people had come to regard the remedy most easily attainable, the appointment, namely, of a single responsible head of affairs, as a certain means of salvation to their country; an opinion which contributed in no small degree to its own realization. The new stadtholder, moreover, though not distinguished by any remarkable talent either political or military, possessed extensive influence over men's minds by his courteous and amiable manners, added to the belief universally entertained that he was actuated by a strong and genuine desire for the welfare of the State. Accordingly, the bene-

1747 fits of the change in the government, the renewal of mutual confidence and the restoration of national energy, were immediate and palpable; while the evils it was calculated to entail were as yet comparatively afar off and hidden from the unobservant eye of the public. All mention of obtaining a neutrality from France was at once dropped; the allies were assured of a determined resolution on the part of the States to persist in the war; and the latter consented to pay one-third as their share of the subsidy of £150,000, which England had engaged to contribute towards the support of a body of Russian auxiliaries subsidized by the Empress-queen. But the difficulties of raising the sum, small as it appears, seemed, in the present state of the resources of the United Provinces, almost insuperable. Several of the Provinces were greatly in arrear in the payment of their quotas to the generality, and all, even Holland itself, overwhelmed with debt; the excise duties were strained to as high a pitch as they could bear; the customs were, as we have had occasion to remark, so heavy as to threaten destruction to commerce; and the assessed taxes had been but lately regulated. In this embarrassment, the stadtholder proposed a general voluntary gift of two per cent. from all such as possessed two thousand guilders and upwards, and one from those who had above one thousand, with as much more as they chose; while those of smaller capital were to give what they could afford; every one stating the amount of his property on oath. The improved temper of the people was strikingly displayed in the alacrity and integrity with which they contributed funds they could so ill afford, for an object in which they could be supposed to take but little personal interest. Although the

money was collected in such a manner that it could 1747 not be known what each person gave, an immense sum was realised, and not the slightest cause was given for suspicion that any, or if any, very few indeed, had given in a fictitious return of their property^a.

Meanwhile the States and Great Britain concluded a treaty with the Empress for the subsidy of 37,500 troops at the annual cost of 300,000*l.* with 150,000 rix-dollars for the expenses of their march; of both which sums the States, after the collection of the voluntary gift, were able to undertake to pay the half. To these forces it was proposed by a treaty between Hungary, Great Britain, Sardinia, and the States, to 1748 add such a number as would increase the allied army to 190,000 men for the ensuing campaign. But notwithstanding this display of firmness in the continuance of the war, and that France on her side had resumed offensive hostilities by the siege of Maestricht, it was perfectly evident that all parties had become earnestly desirous of peace. The army of the allies, so formidable on paper, appeared in the field in comparatively insignificant numbers; the last effort made by the United Provinces had been a desperate one, and it was very doubtful whether under any circumstances they would be able or willing to make such another; the dispositions of the English, now that their object of restoring the stadtholderal authority in Holland was accomplished, were wholly changed, insomuch that Lord Sandwich, who, at Breda, had confessed that he was instructed to impede the negotiations by raising difficulty upon difficulty, now hesitated not to declare that his court had neither money nor credit to prosecute the war any longer^b;

^a Vad Hist., b. 78, No. 1.

^b Vad. Hist. b. 78, No. 11, bl. 184.

1748 the Empress-queen was necessitated, however reluctantly, to follow in the wake of Great Britain and the States; while the approach of the Russian troops towards the Netherlands strengthened the pacific dispositions which France had already manifested at Breda. Never, therefore, were there fewer disputes concerning the ceremonial than at the congress of ambassadors from France, England, the Empire, Spain, Sardinia, and the States, which now met at Aix-la-Chapelle.

The preliminaries were arranged and signed by France, Great Britain, and the States, on the basis that all the conquests should be restored to their former possessors and a truce established; England and the States acceding to the desire of France that the Russians should return to their own country. By virtue of the ensuing treaty, therefore, Bergen-op-Zoom and Maestricht, with their territories in Dutch Brabant and Dutch Flanders, were to be given back to the States. The powers who had engaged to support the Pragmatic Sanction now renewed their promise in the most solemn manner, saving as regarded those portions of territory ceded by Charles IV., or the Empress-queen herself.

Thus ended a war of eight years' duration, in which the Dutch mingling voluntarily as allies of the Queen of Hungary, had reaped nothing but damage and dishonour. All their barrier towns and a portion of their own frontier had been conquered by France; and although now restored to them, yet it was, from the number of dismantled fortresses, in so ill a condition as to be for a considerable period absolutely useless; their commerce had suffered incalculably; and their constitution had undergone a change which, whether or not beneficial in principle, had been effected by

violence and disorder, and with an inconsiderate haste 1748 that precluded the adoption of any salutary measures of precaution or restriction on the excessive and undefined authority conferred on the stadtholder. They were unable, moreover, to obtain from France the renewal of the commercial treaty of 1739, which she had offered at the previous negotiations at Breda; the conditions of the present treaty being altogether, in fact, far inferior for all the allies to what they might then have secured had not the English been so pertinaciously bent on the rupture of the conferences^c.

No sooner had the prospect of external peace become certain, than those internal commotions were excited in the United Provinces, which the Orange party had, in the last year, contemplated, but which it was considered hazardous to risk while the country was involved in foreign war.

The States of the four Provinces, Holland, Zealand, Utrecht, and Overryssel, though constrained by the violence of popular clamour to create an hereditary stadtholder, in the person of the Prince of Orange, were, as well as the councils of the towns, their principals, generally averse to that mode of government; and might, it was supposed, as soon as the excitement had passed away with the circumstances that had caused it, venture to oppose his measures, and thus virtually circumscribe his authority within much narrower limits than suited either the interests or the temper of his partisans. It was, therefore, considered a matter of necessity, that the councils should be displaced to make room for others upon whose support he could constantly reckon; and for the attainment of this object a combination was formed, as in 1672, between the

^c Sec. Res. van de St., Ap. 4th. Rec. de Rousset, tom. xxi., p. 158—183.

1748 monarchical and democratic elements of the state, whose natural and constant tendency to unite together, is in no history more fully developed than in that of the United Provinces. It was now determined to create, through the instrumentality of the populace in the towns, such disturbances as should justify the stadtholder in making an irregular and arbitrary change in the governments; a measure of no difficult accomplishment with a people, among whom, oppressed by taxes, and deprived, by unavoidable circumstances, of many of their usual sources of gain, there was no lack of grievances sufficient to exasperate disaffection into tumult. Of these, the most palpable and general, was the mode of collecting the excise and customs by the method of farming; the evils of which system were now loudly expatiated on, while the persons of the farmers themselves were pointed out as subjects of popular odium; and reports were industriously spread, that one of the first measures of the stadtholder was to be the abolition of the custom of farming the imposts, in order that the levy of the public funds might be made by means of a poll-tax.

The people, easily led to believe that hatred to the farmers was identified with affection to the stadtholder, soon began to manifest their rage against the former without scruple. At Haarlem, Leyden, the Hague, and Amsterdam, they attacked the houses of these persons, destroyed every article of furniture they contained, threw all the bags of money that were to be found into the river, and made bonfires of their books and papers. Similar riots, though with circumstances of less outrage and daring, occurred in other towns of Holland; the schuttery, who were equally with the populace prejudiced against

the farmers, everywhere quietly looking on, or shew-1748
ing their activity only in preventing the few from
acting who appeared inclined to protect the sufferers.
At Lecuwarden, in Friezland, the populace, joined
by a mob from Harlingen, assembled before the house
where the States were sitting, and forced them by
threats of instant death, to declare the farms of the
taxes abrogated, and the inheritance of the stadtholderate
extended to the female descendants of William IV. At Groningen, where, as in Friezland, the States had not as yet resolved on this measure, the populace forced the members of that body out of their dwellings, and dragging, or driving them by blows to the council-house, constrained them to its instant adoption as well as to the abolition of the farms. In Overyssel, the disturbances were quelled at their commencement by the presence of a body of Swiss troops at Steenwyk; Guelderland temporized, by making some fresh arrangements in the mode of farming for the next year; but in Utrecht the populace succeeded in terrifying the States into a compliance with their wishes^d.

The stadtholder, who in the commencement of these excesses had been disabled by sickness from making any attempt to suppress them, came, while they were yet at their height, to the assembly of the States of Holland with a proposal, that the custom of farming the taxes should be abolished; observing that the distaste to this mode of taxation was nothing new, since many able politicians had held the opinion, that more easy and competent methods of raising funds might readily be found, although the desire for its abolition was never expressed so strongly as at present, when it betrayed

^d *Nederlandsche Jaarboek* 1748, bl. 197, 433, 453, 478.

1748 itself in acts such as might entail the most disastrous consequences to the State; but which, however much to be condemned, had proceeded from no ill-disposition on the part of the people, nor any wish to evade their just burdens; wherefore he desired, that they would use their best endeavours to discover some new mode of taxation, that of a poll-tax being, in his judgment, the most advisable. Surprised at so unexpected a proposition just at this crisis, the deputies gazed at each other in silence; but the next day, dreading an exacerbation of the present convulsions when the speech of the stadtholder became known if his requisition were not complied with, they passed a resolution, abolishing for ever the farming of the excise and customs; a mode of levy which, however objectionable, had continued with little complaint or observation for above two centuries^c.

The question was now how to supply the loss to the treasury incurred by its abolition. Projects of raising funds by other methods poured in upon the States from all sides; the ignorant and unlettered busying themselves as much in the matter as the skilful and experienced. The stadtholder had found the voluntary principle to succeed so well, on the the occasion of the "gift" in the last year, that he determined to bring it again into operation, proposing that each person should assess himself in proportion to what he had been accustomed to consume in excisable articles. The States consented to adopt this plan for six months; but, as might be supposed, it utterly failed. The tax, scarcely perceptible when paid by instalments on the purchase of each article, appeared enormous when called for in one sum; the

^c Res. van de St., Jun. 25.

poorer sort either did not assess themselves at all, 1748 or to a very trifling amount; travellers and persons residing for a short time in the country,—always a very numerous class in the United Provinces,—were now exempted from the share they used to bear in the tax when it was paid on the purchase of the article; and the whole burden, in consequence, fell on a proportionably small number. The prince then suggested, either the imposition of a poll-tax, or the levy of the excise and customs by the mode of collection. But the unequal and oppressive mode of a poll-tax was considered more suitable to the barbarous legislation of the early ages than to the genius of a civilized and mercantile nation; and the States, therefore, decided in favour of the latter expedient, and resolved upon the appointment of collectors with fixed salaries. They subsequently indemnified the late farmers for the injuries they had sustained in the riots in the sum of 300,000 guilders^f.

These disturbances were not, however, of exactly such a nature as their movers had reckoned upon. The popular vengeance, how violent soever, had been directed solely against the tax farmers; the members of the government had in no case become its object; and accordingly no pretext was afforded for assuming that the discontents of the burghers against their rulers were so general and incurable as to render an arbitrary change of the governments necessary. In order to excite this feeling, the old and but too real subject of grievance, the malversations of the members of the councils in the disposal of municipal offices, was again brought forward and loudly descanted upon. In Amsterdam, a powerful party was formed in opposition to

^f Res. van de St. Ju. 26, A.D. 1754, Ap. 6th. Vad. Hist., b. 78, No. 23.

1748 the government, calling themselves "Doelists" from the Doel, the place where they were accustomed to assemble, and induced by one Daniel Raap, a porcelain seller of the city, to sign a petition he had drawn up, demanding, first, that the administration of the post-office (which the government had hitherto persisted in retaining in its own hands) should be given up to the stadtholder; secondly, that all abuses in the disposal of offices should be rectified; thirdly, that the colonels and captains of the schuttery should be chosen by the body of the burghers, and not as at present by the members of government from among themselves, or their friends. On being informed of the meetings at the Doel, the burgomasters, anxious to ascertain how far the disaffection had spread, instructed the officers of the burgher-guard to inquire into the grievances, and receive the complaints of the people, each in his separate ward. The magistrates thus fairly challenged the fullest investigation of their conduct; and perhaps nothing can illustrate more strongly than the result of this challenge the nature of the government, just and gentle in spite of all its faults, of which the people, ignorant of the real evils of despotism, had become so impatient. The magistrates had now been long in the full and uncontrolled possession of power; no suspicion could exist that the people, embittered as their minds had been against them, and assured as they were of the support of the ruling powers, could be actuated by any motive of reserve or timidity, to soften or withhold any accusation they might think fit to make. Yet not one single act of oppression, tyranny, or injustice, was adduced against them; many of the more respectable citizens declared to the officers, who sat on a certain day in the church, or the chief inn of the ward, to hear grievances, that

they had nothing whatever to complain of; and the 1748 incessant activity of the Doelists had no further effect than that of inducing the people to demand the execution of the three articles set forth in their petition. On its being presented to the burgomasters and councillors, they manifested a disposition to comply with the requisitions, except that of the appointment of the officers of the schuttery by the burghers, which was contrary, they said, to the ancient laws and customs of the towns. This article being the only one absolutely rejected, became, as of course, the object of the most eager desire. The Doelists, having gained over the guild of shipwrights to their party, assembled in large numbers, threatening to have recourse to arms unless they were satisfied in this particular. They were appeased in some degree by the influence of Raap, who, at the same time, expatiated forcibly to the burgomasters on the determined spirit of the people, alleging that it would be impossible to hold them in check unless their demands were granted without reservation. The government, uncertain upon whom among the burghers they could depend for support, resolved to accede to the contents of the petition, with the proviso, that it contained nothing contrary to the resolutions of the States or the interests of the stadtholder. The views of the Doelist leaders, however, tended to no such conclusion of the affair. They insisted that the consent of the government should be without the slightest qualification, and obtained that emissaries should be dispatched to the stadtholder desiring his presence in the city. The burgomasters, hereupon, instead of at once retiring from their offices with firmness and dignity, allowed themselves to be forced into granting the petition in simple and unlimited terms. But even this was of no avail. The

1748 Doelists required that in order to pacify the people the measure should be passed in full council. This demand also was complied with; when the government, weary at length of the affronts to which they had been exposed, and convinced that nothing less than the entire surrender of their authority would satisfy their opponents, declared their readiness to resign their offices into the hands of any person whom the stadtholder should nominate. Matters were thus brought to the desired point; and the prince, having obtained instructions from the States of Holland to take measures for the restoration of the peace of the city, entered Amsterdam, escorted by the most zealous members of the Doelist party, who met him outside the gates, and three or four thousand shipwrights hearing a flag with the inscription "For Orange and liberty." William, expressing his regret that the people were so dissatisfied with the government, and that he must for that reason be obliged to dismiss many he would willingly retain, deprived all the burgomasters and nineteen councillors of their offices, and appointed the new members from among such as had never yet borne any share in the municipal government.

Yet, both he himself and his partisans soon discovered that they were unable to control that power which the latter had raised in order to turn to their own purposes. Of the three articles of the petition, the one providing that the colonels and captains of the schuttery should be chosen by the burghers had been the most pertinaciously insisted on by the Doelists; first, because it was found to be the most obnoxious to the government; and next, because, if ceded, the appointment of these functionaries independently of the magistrates would tend to bring the latter wholly

under the control of the burghers. But the new 1748 members of the government, who were appointed conformably to the views of Raap and the Doelist leaders, became as anxious that this matter should remain in its present state as they had before been for a change. They found their followers, however, by no means so versatile in their sentiments, or disposed to abandon a point upon which they had created so much disquiet; and that this proof of their own insincerity caused a rapid and violent reaction of popular feeling. The people loudly declared that a "free council of war," as it was termed, was indispensable to the peace of the city; they accused Raap and his friends of being corrupted by the prince's courtiers to deceive the people, and insisted that no officer should be appointed by the new government any more than by the old. To so high a pitch at length did their passion rise, that some of the most zealous advocates of the measure repaired to the house where the prince was residing, after he had retired to rest, and threatened that if he did not immediately consent to it, the people would break out into acts of violence and great evils were to be apprehended. The prince returned an evasive answer. The next day the town was filled with rumours of the affront that had been offered to him, and he himself is said to have expressed a purpose of throwing up his offices and retiring to his German territories.

Finally a compromise was effected, the prince consenting to appoint new officers out of a double number nominated by the "council of war." Many companies, however, thought fit to take the appointments entirely on themselves; the council of war made others without submitting them to the selection of the stadtholder; and both carefully avoided the

1748 choice of a single individual in any way connected with the government he had introduced into office; so much so, indeed, that one of the officers who had been a most zealous partisan of the Doelists was forced to resign, merely because his father had been created member of the council by the prince. Deeply indignant at finding his authority thwarted by the very instruments through whom it was hoped to procure it a most important accession, William immediately quitted Amsterdam, and the tide of popular feeling which had set so strongly against the late government very soon changed its course; the Doelists becoming as much objects of contempt as they had before been of admiration. The stadtholder himself, for some reason or other which does not appear, subsequently disgraced John Rousset, the first to raise, and the most active to promote, the outcry against the tax-farmers, by revoking the act whereby he had created him his historian; and this powerful organ of the Orange party was ultimately obliged to fly the city to escape arrest for the publication of some libels. The hatred against the leaders of the Doelists became, indeed, so excessive, that Raap dying in 1754, the populace would not permit their former idol to have the customary burial, and the corpse was obliged to be carried to church by night in a common cart^s.

The example afforded by Amsterdam was followed in other towns, and with more favourable results to the Orange party; in many places the question of the appointment of burgher officers, trivial as the subject of grievance appeared,—since the people had in fact nothing to complain of in the conduct of either them or the schuttery, who never in any single instance

^s Nederl. Jaarb. 1748, bl. 687—722, 833—876.

took part with the government in measures obnoxious 1748 to their interests,—was found available to excite similar commotions; in others, the burghers were induced to petition for a change of government without alleging any reason at all; and on one or other of these grounds the alteration was effected in all the towns of South Holland except Dordrecht, which had first proposed to invest the stadtholder with powers for this purpose. In some of the towns of North Holland, however, the measure was carried in entire opposition to the wishes of the inhabitants; and the commissioners nominated by the prince for its execution were obliged to have a guard of soldiers to protect them from the popular fury^h.

In Guelderland, Utrecht, and Overyssel, the constitution was altered to the same basis as that on which it had been fixed on the readmission of the Provinces into the Union after their conquest by France in 1672. In Friezland and Groningen, also, where the authority of the stadtholder had hitherto been greatly limited by the tenor of his instructions, the framework of the constitution was considerably altered, and a bias given to it strongly monarchical in its tendency. The municipal governments of Zealand alone remained unchanged, and the mode of farming taxes even was persisted in; some tumults excited by the populace being soon quieted by the arrest and imprisonment of two or three of the ringleaders. The object of the disturbances once accomplished, a 1749 general amnesty was published, any violence offered to the present magistrates or officers of the schuttery, if accompanied by the use of arms, being made punishable with death, as well as any forcible resistance to the new collectors of taxes; while, on the

^h Vad. Hist., b. 79, No. 14. Res. van de St., Aug. 31.

1749 other hand, all offence or insult against the deposed magistrates was strictly prohibited^l.

As though all the bodies of the state vied with each other in adding to the already exorbitant power of the stadtholder, the directors of the East India Company now appointed him their chief director and governor; a dignity never yet enjoyed by any of his predecessors, and this with such authority and prerogatives as rendered that august body almost subservient to his influence. The West India Company followed their example; while his importance in the state was still further augmented by the appointment of a new Pensionary of Holland at his recommendation, Peter Heyn, one article of whose instructions was to the effect, that he would labour to maintain the present form of government, especially the hereditary stadtholderate as established in 1747, and give information to the prince of any attempt to undermine it that might come within his knowledge^k.

The civil broils of the United Provinces were scarcely appeased when the appearance of some singular aberrations in the religious sentiments of a portion of the people caused apprehensions of new disturbances. It had been for some time remarked that in the congregations of the churches, persons, particularly of the more excitable and impassioned sex, were often so struck with the energetic and touching language of the preacher that they indulged in groans and sobs, and sometimes disturbed the solemnity of the service by uttering loud and piercing shrieks. These symptoms began to appear first and most strongly at the village of Nieuwerkerk, in Guelderland; where the preaching of one Gerard Ruyper, an eloquent and zealous minister, had such an effect upon

^l Vad. Hist., b. 79. No. 17. ^k Sec. Res. van de St., Nov. 21.

his hearers that they were accustomed to give vent to 1749 their feelings by bursting out into cries and floods of tears, wringing their hands, tearing their hair, loudly bewailing their sins, abjuring the devil, and imploring the mercy of the Redeemer. Some fell into convulsions or swooned away; others, suddenly relieved of their anguish, broke forth into an ecstasy of transport and singing before the whole congregation. After the sermon, and at other times, meetings were held, where the most extravagant and absurd scenes were enacted.

These manifestations soon began to increase and spread from place to place with the rapidity of a pestilence. By some, among whom was Ruyper himself, they were regarded as the workings of the Holy Spirit; others attributed the phenomena to the effects of the style of preaching adopted on persons of a nervous and irritable temperament; and the disputes on the subject were carried on with a considerable degree of vehemence and acrimony. At length it was observed that young girls and children imitating the actions of their elders fell into the same ecstasies; and that others assumed them for the purpose of obtaining alms sufficient to enable them to live without work; many who were the most forward in displaying these highly-wrought feelings of piety, being the most conspicuous for their profligate course of life. In places where it was discouraged by the ministers of the churches this excitement soon died away; and at 1750 length the consistory of Nieuwerk ordered that persons disturbing the congregation by cries or convulsions should be removed, and that those who were subject to be so affected should place themselves near the door, and not as usual in the middle of the church; exhorting the people rather to pray to be relieved from, than

1750 encourage these visitations which prevented them from fulfilling the duties of good Christians. In other places similar extravagancies were put an end to by the admonitions of the municipal governments, and sometimes the mere presence of the schout in the church was sufficient to prevent them. By degrees they ceased altogether, without recourse being had to any severities¹.

It was happy for the Dutch people that, since they had come to the resolution to give so unbounded an influence to their stadtholder, he was not imbued with the same military propensities as some of his predecessors, nor disposed to hurry them into ruinous wars to promote his personal interests or to carry out his private political views. On the contrary, no sooner had he become settled in his government, than he manifested his desire to benefit the state, by devoting himself to schemes for the restoration of its commerce and manufactures. Before, however, he could make much progress in his measures of
1751 amelioration, he was arrested by the hand of death; the numerous complaints he had been afflicted with for several months terminating in the thrush, which proved fatal to him at the age of forty.

The talents of this prince, though by no means such as to entitle him to rank in the higher class of the intellectual world, were respectable, and improved by the acquisition of a considerable fund of information; he spoke the Latin, French, English, and German languages with fluency, was not ill-versed in the mathematics, and his memory was so uncommonly retentive, that he could relate conversations word for word as they had occurred. His benevolence, liberality, affability, and placable though choleric

¹ Vad. Hist., b. 80, No. 3.

temper, rendered him greatly beloved; and it was 1751 thought, and perhaps justly, that if he had taken all the advantage he might have done of the popular feeling in his favour, at the time of his elevation to the stadtholderate, he would have been able to obtain an absolute authority. But he constantly shewed himself averse to the adoption of any violent or illegal measures to this effect; and on one of his courtiers remarking upon his moderation, and that any other prince would seize the opportunity of manifesting his resentment against his opponents, "Resentment!" he answered quickly, "I have none, except against those who offer me such counsel^m." His zeal for the welfare of his country, though not always tempered with judgment, and still more rarely guided by penetration in the choice of his ministers, was deep and sincere. Accordingly, the memory of none of their stadtholders, except Frederic-Henry and William I., was ever cherished by the Dutch with so great or so well-deserved affection. He left one son, William V., hereditary stadtholder, and a daughter, Caroline, afterwards married to the Prince of Nassau Weilburg; the former of whom being little more than three years of age, the administration of affairs was, pursuant to the act of 1747, assumed by his mother, Anne, princess-royal of England, under the name of Governess. Duke Louis Ernest of Brunswick retained the appointment of commander-in-chief of the army, which had been conferred on him by the late stadtholder in 1750ⁿ.

From this time, during a period of some years, nothing appears in the history of the United Pro-

^m Cerisier, Tab. de l'Hist. des Prov. Unies, tom. x., p. 431.

ⁿ Res. van de St., Oct. 22.

1751 vices worthy to arrest our attention. The pages of contemporary annalists, formerly bright with the records of deeds of heroism, or rich in lessons of policy and jurisprudence, are now filled with tedious relations of the journeys of the stadtholderal family through the Provinces; the processions and triumphal arches that awaited them in every town, and the festivals held in celebration of the birthday of the infant prince; relations which have not even the merit of making us acquainted with the domestic habits of the people, and are calculated to excite no other feeling, than astonishment at beholding a once free and high-spirited nation reduced to so low a depth of adulation and servility. Of this disposition, meanwhile, the Governess, a woman of a violent and imperious temper, failed not to take advantage, in order to increase, as much as possible, the influence of the stadtholderate. She induced the States to
1755 adopt an act, providing for the administration of government in case of her death before the young prince had attained his majority, in such a manner as effectually to debar them from resuming any portion of the power they had lately yielded. By it, Duke Louis of Brunswick was continued in the command of the troops, and the functions of the stadtholderate were to be exercised by the States-General and States of the Provinces; but aware, that if the appointment of senates in the towns were left to the councils, as usual when there was no stadtholder, it would undoubtedly tend to infuse into the municipal governments a more popular spirit than was at all conformable to the views of the Orange party, she proposed, that the nomination of the councils should be sent to the States-General for selection, as guardians of the minor. Some of the towns of

Overijssel ventured to resist this infringement of 1755 their privileges, and the hitherto unprecedented interference of the States-General in their municipal affairs; but their opposition was quickly overcome^o.

The tranquillity which the Governess enjoyed 1756 during the first years of her administration was at length disturbed by the breaking out of the "seven years' war;" and the customary and embarrassing question asked by France and England, which side the States intended to espouse. Colonel Yorke, ambassador of George II. at the Hague, demanded the subsidy of 6000 men, stipulated by the treaties of 1678 and 1716; while the French minister, Count d'Affry, insisted, that the States were bound to furnish auxiliaries to England only in the event of her being first attacked, and were equally bound to fulfil similar defensive treaties made with France; more particularly in a case like the present, where England was so notoriously the aggressor. Perceiving the inclination of the States to adopt this view of the question, Yorke applied himself especially to the Governess, who brought forward in person his requisition in the States-General. She found them determined, however, to preserve an exact neutrality. They remembered the irreparable damage they had sustained in the last war, and the indifference shewn by the allies, especially England, to their interests at the time of the peace; the present war, they considered, was offensive on the part of England, and therefore did not come within the scope of the treaties alluded to; and if they complied with the demand for the purpose of gratifying that power, they would inevitably draw on themselves ruinous hostilities with France; while at

^o N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D., 1754, bl. 114E—1177.

1756 the same time the tenor of the declaration of war by England was not such as to incline them to make any great sacrifices on her behalf. By this manifesto, all ships, of whatever country, carrying contraband wares to France, were declared lawful prizes; in contravention of the treaty of 1674 between England and the States, which stipulated that the goods only expressly specified as contraband should be forfeited, the ships and other lading being allowed to go free. The Dutch had accordingly nothing to expect but a renewal of the unlicensed system of privateering under which they had so severely suffered during the war of 1739 between England and Spain; nor did the event falsify their anticipations. The English included all such wares under the denomination of contraband as suited their purpose; they claimed, likewise, an unlimited right of search, and with it generally used the privilege of plunder on all merchant-ships they fell in with, whether bound for France or for neutral and friendly ports, or whether in Europe or America. The Dutch, on the other hand, were in no condition to defend themselves in the only way that could be of any avail,—by an armament sufficiently powerful to make their neutrality respected. The large and expensive land force they had been obliged to keep on foot during the late wars had absorbed their finances, and had caused the army to be an object of such paramount importance, that the care of the navy had been almost slight of. Instead of the superb fleets which had formerly held at bay, and not unfrequently defeated, those of her comparatively gigantic rival, Holland could now only send forth thirty small ships, in a wretched state of repair and equipment; while the Governess, devoted

to the interests of her native country, made little or 1756 no effort to remedy the deficiency^p.

It was probably the alienation caused by the renewal of this subject of dispute and heart-burning, that prompted the States to manifest inclinations hostile to England, by granting a passage through their barrier towns of Namur and Maestricht to the French troops marching to the assistance of the Empress Maria Theresa in the war she was now carrying on against the Kings of Prussia and Great Britain; and by consenting without hesitation to the admission of French garrisons into Nieuport and Ostend. The campaign, marked by the most singular alternations of success of any, perhaps, recorded in military history, terminated in the defeat of the French at the battle of Rosbach, 1758 which obliged them to retreat into Cleves. Hereupon, the provinces of Guelderland and Overyssel, alarmed at the presence of an army so close to their boundaries, applied to the Governess to use her influence with the rest of the States for an increase to the land forces; a petition in the highest degree acceptable to Anne, who justly conceived that the troops once levied, it would be no difficult matter to involve them in hostilities with the French, and thus afford a pretext for war. Finding her reiterated proposals for an augmentation of 13,450 infantry and 1092 cavalry received with coldness by the States, she observed, with some sharpness of expression, that if she had to contend with delays and contradictions, and the Republic meanwhile suffered any mischance or diminution of credit and influence, it was not to be imputed to her.

^p N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1757, bl. 357, 421, 494, 628, 648, 674, 768, 837, 995.

1758 The States of Holland, Zealand, and Friezland, however, unheeding the menace contained in this intimation, were resolutely determined not to incur the appearance of a design to violate their neutrality by raising a force which, too small to repel a regular invasion, was unnecessary to protect the confines of Overyssel and Guelderland from predatory excursions, for which the troops already stationed there were amply sufficient. Provoked at this unexpected opposition to her will, the Governess adopted a method of reducing them to compliance, which gave the United Provinces cause bitterly to repent of the indiscretion which had led them to allow functions of such vital importance as those of captain and admiral-general to be lodged in the hands of a woman and a stranger, whose sex rendered her unable, as her personal relations unwilling, to execute them with efficiency and integrity^a.

The privateering, or rather piracies, committed by the English on the Dutch merchants had now arrived at such a height as to cause terrible and wide-spread injury to the commercial population. In the space of a single month in this year, the losses sustained in this way were estimated at no less than 13,000,000 of guilders; many of the most wealthy merchants were utterly ruined; the insurances of ships mounted so high as to absorb all the profits of the lading; numbers of workmen were thrown out of employ; notwithstanding which, it was found difficult to procure seamen for the merchant service on account of the ill-treatment and cruelties to which the crews of the vessels captured by the English were exposed; and the ensuing winter was looked forward to with dismay, as threatening the extreme

^a Res. van de St., Jun. 7, 23.

of poverty and distress. The repeated earnest, and 1758 even touching remonstrances of the merchants of Holland had constrained the Governess to make application to the English court for redress; the answer to which had been a peremptory demand from the minister, Mr. Pitt, that the Dutch would abstain from trading to the French colonies or carrying to France materials for ship-building; wares which had been expressly exempted from the list of contraband by the treaty of 1674. Perceiving there were no hopes of remedy by amicable means, the merchants, in the fifth petition they presented to the Governess, vehemently urged the equipment of a sufficient number of ships of war to enable them to defend themselves by force. But she refused, in explicit and somewhat insolent terms, to make the slightest addition to the naval force, unless the States of the Provinces consented at the same time to an increase of the troops; declaring, moreover, that she could not flatter them with the hope of the restoration of any of their ships.

The States immediately, but with no better result, entered into negotiation with the ambassador Yorke; who, determined to make the grant of the subsidy required by England the price of any concession on this point, answered, that though his majesty would take measures to procure the restoration of the ships unjustly seized, he was resolved to prevent the commerce of any nation with France, under the specious pretext of neutrality, in wares which, though not especially named as contraband, were, under existing circumstances, such in every sense and point of view. The States, nevertheless, continued firm in their refusal to consent to the levy of fresh troops; and their commerce in consequence

1758 still remaining unprotected, the piracies continued to increase to so great an excess that the Zealanders, who, from the strong predilection they entertained for England, had hitherto borne the evil in silence, now broke forth into loud and bitter complaints. They had suffered more, they said, from the English than they could have expected at the hands of the most implacable enemies or the wildest barbarians; ships so free from contraband that not even a suspicion could attach to them, were ruthlessly plundered; those coming from Essequibo, or trading in slaves from Africa, which could by no possibility contain any loadings for France, were indiscriminately sold as prizes, while the crews were maltreated and cruelly tortured in order to extort a declaration from them that a part of the lading belonged to Frenchmen; and notwithstanding that the Zealanders carried on little trade, except to their own colonies, they had equally to endure all that rapacity, tyranny, and commercial jealousy could invent, in order to render it unsafe, and even impracticable; and in this object the English had succeeded so well, that commerce was almost at a stand, and the nation was threatened with speedy and irretrievable ruin^r.

The indifference manifested by the Governess to the welfare of the Provinces had begun to change the feelings of attachment with which the people had formerly regarded her as a member of the family of Orange into those of alienation and dislike; sentiments further augmented by a fresh attempt she made to exalt the stadtholderal prerogative on the ruins of the municipal privileges of the constitution. In selecting the burgomasters and senate of Haar-

^r Res. van de St., Jun. 7, Aug. 4, Sept. 28. Annual Register, A.D. 1758, p. 143, et seq. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1759, bl. 143, et seq.

lem, she refused the persons nominated by the 1758 council, and claimed the right of examining whether the nomination was duly made, and if not, of filling it up herself. The council justly objected, that the exercise of such a prerogative by the stadtholder, must render their right to nominate a mere phantom, and appealed to the decision of the States of Holland. There, however, the affair was treated in a manner wholly different from what it may be supposed they expected. The Governess appearing in the assembly, the deputies, except those of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Briel, thanking her for her good conduct in the management of the business, pronounced that the right of examination in question belonged to her as trustee of the stadtholder. Thus supported, she in the next year appointed a burgomaster (one Van Echten,) without any examination at all; and, in answer to the remonstrances of the council, commanded the chief officer of the burgher guard at Haarlem to publish in that city an "admonition," in which she declared that the appointment had been made agreeably to the privileges of the council, and that the members who resisted the admission of Van Echten into his office did so in direct contempt of her person and lawful authority. The council having made a second appeal to the States of Holland, she caused a letter to be delivered to that assembly, in which she observed, that she felt assured they regarded the conduct of the majority of the council of Haarlem,—a cabal formed for the purpose of keeping out of the government all such as had not been members of it before the year 1748,—with no less astonishment than indignation; and that the "eminent character" she supported in the Provinces,

1758 should have exempted her from such treatment. Observing that she had no intention of allowing the undoubted rights of her son to be called in question, but merely to justify her own proceedings, she recapitulated the whole of the transactions with the council of Haarlem; painting their conduct and motives in the darkest colours, and accusing them of attempting to deprive the Stadtholder of the rights inherent in his office. The council presenting a counter memorial, the matter remained in debate until terminated by the death of the Governess, which happened in the January of the following 1759 year*.

The Princess Anne, according to the testimony of Frederick, king of Prussia, usually termed the Great, was a woman of "magnanimity, prudence, and an understanding superior to her sex;" she was possessed, moreover, of a retentive memory, and had, under the instructions of the able Samuel Clarke, obtained a competent proficiency in literature and science; but, unacquainted with the history and constitution of the Dutch nation, she was utterly unfit to be its ruler, as well for this cause, as that, besides her naturally imperious temper, her mode of education and early habits rendered her incapable of distinguishing between the nature of royal prerogative, and the subservient and ministerial authority, which alone ought of right to be exercised by the stadtholders of the Dutch Republic; and postponing the welfare of the nation to the maintenance and extension of the influence of her son, she bent the whole force of her mind to the

* Res. van. de St., Sept. 27, 28; Dec. 14.

† See Lett. in Universal Magazine, vol. xxiv., p. 108.

attainment of that object, with the headstrong obstinacy peculiar to her character, and with a disregard of all considerations of justice or policy. 1759

The functions of the stadtholderate being by the act of 1755 lodged in the States-General, they were able to preserve their neutrality undisturbed during the present desolating war; and testified their resolution no longer to endure the outrages committed by the English on their flag, by voting a reinforcement of twenty-five additional ships of war to the navy. The beneficial effects of this measure 1760 were soon visible in the diminution of the privateering of that nation^u.

Ere long the death of George II. and the 1761 removal of Mr. Pitt from the administration of affairs placed a still stronger check upon this evil. The Tories had hitherto viewed the Dutch, as the advocates and representatives of the principles of extended popular rights and unbounded religious toleration, with extreme and undisguised aversion; but now the more monarchical form of government to which the United Provinces had subjected themselves, had tended to mollify this dislike, while the common anxiety for peace, and the detestation in which Mr. Pitt was held, no less by the one nation than by the other party, inclined them, formerly so hostile to the Republic, towards a renewal of those relations of amity which were never estranged without detriment to both countries. On the other hand, the speech of the ambassador Boreel, sent from the States-General to congratulate George III. on his accession, breathed nothing but expressions of the esteem and attachment with which the United Provinces were always wont to regard their

^u Nederl. Jaarb., A. D. 1759, bl. 290—293.

1762 English ally; and on the subsequent conclusion of the peace, the States made no difficulty in complying with the request of England for the passage of her troops through their territories, to embark at Willemstadt on their return home^v.

1763 Scarcely had the navigation of the United Provinces been freed from its embarrassments when their commerce sustained a severe shock in the bankruptcy of several of the most distinguished and extensive mercantile houses of Amsterdam; of which the cause was chiefly this. The refined metals and manufactured articles exported from Amsterdam to Germany, the nations of the Baltic, and other parts, amounting to about treble the value of the gross commodities imported from those countries, the merchants of the latter were accustomed to pay those of Amsterdam in bills of exchange. The circulation of these bills at length became so extensive that their amount was reckoned at fifteen times the value of all the specie and available effects in the province of Holland; while specie, on the other hand, was comparatively so scarce that the merchants found a difficulty in discounting the bills and made a hasty resolve to give credit on no more until they had received value for those they held. The discount thus stopped, it was found impossible to negotiate the bills; credit, that vast pillar of commerce which a breath can destroy, was for the time nearly annihilated, and an almost universal stagnation of business ensued. The first suspension of payments on the part of one of the most considerable houses at Amsterdam, was followed by that of forty others in the space of a few weeks; and fraudulent bankrupts, as usual in such crises, were not wanting to aggravate

^v Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1760, bl. 599—860; A.D. 1762, bl. 1358—1369.

the mischief still further. The panic was incon-1763
ceivable; many merchants perfectly solvent suspended
payments from mere timidity; no rate of interest, no
security however valuable, could tempt those who
possessed specie to part with it; preferring rather to
keep it locked up in chests and forego the profits of
its use, than to apply it in any way. The Jews, in
especial, whose transactions lay chiefly in bills of
exchange, looked forward to nothing but utter ruin.
Project after project was devised for the revival of
credit and found unavailing. At length news was
received far more favourable than was anticipated of
the stability of the foreign houses in connexion with
those of Amsterdam; and several of these taking up
their bills, confidence was restored sufficiently to admit
of those upon whom the pressure was only temporary
taking measures for the resumption of payments. By
degrees things righted themselves, but not before
extensive distress and suffering had been endured*.

The disgusts so lately appeased between England
and the United Provinces had well nigh been renewed
and exasperated to actual hostility in consequence of
the mutual complaints and recriminations of the East
India Companies of the two nations. The Dutch
alleged, that having sent troops to reinforce the
garrison of the fort of Chincery in order to enable the
governor to protect the subjects of the Company
against the extortions of the Nabob of Bengal, the
English, under pretext of being the ally of that poten-
tate, had attacked their troops, fired upon their vessels
as they sailed up the Hooghly, and seized and plun-
dered them; that, having gained the advantage in a
battle fought on this account, they had forced the
Dutch to conclude a treaty with the Nabob, which

* *Vad. Hist.*, b. 87, bl. 233.

1763 would entirely destroy their trade, and give both his officers and the English liberty at any time to visit their settlements; that it was at the instigation of the English East India Company, that the Nabob of Bengal, their ally and creature, had committed repeated acts of hostility against the Dutch; that the English had monopolized the trade in saltpetre and entirely deprived them of that in linen; and that they persisted in trading to the Spice Islands, belonging exclusively to the Dutch Company. The East India Company of England on their side complained, that the real object of the Dutch in reinforcing the garrison of Chincery was to acquire sufficient strength in the country to worm the English out of the trade in saltpetre, or to surprise the English forts and factories in Bengal, and that it was for this reason only, they had prevented the march of the troops to that fort; when the Dutch, having in retaliation stopped the English ships going up the Hooghly, the hostilities alluded to were a necessary consequence. The States' ambassador in London, Van Welderen, was instructed to apply to the English court to devise some method for the speedy adjustment of these differences, and that such regulations might be made as to enable the Dutch Company to know with certainty what line of conduct they were to follow with regard to the English. His solicitations remained unheeded; and the struggle continued—a struggle between a rising and a falling power—till it ended in the ruin of the weaker, tending meanwhile to embitter the animosities which other circumstances subsequently excited between England and the United Provinces^x.

^x Ann. Reg., A.D. 1760, p. 113—115. Vad. Hist., b. 88, bl. 236 et seq.

CHAPTER II.

Auspicious commencement of the administration of the Stadtholder. His majority. Character of the Stadtholder, of the Princess of Prussia, and of Duke Louis of Brunswick. Literary and scientific institutions established in Holland. Marriage of the Prince of Orange. Apathy of the Dutch people. Monetary panic in Holland. England urges the States to assist her against her American Colonies. Rigorous enforcement of the claim of search. Abortive attempt to equip a fleet in Holland. Complaints of the English Ambassador against the Governor of St. Eustatius. Convoy refused to ships laden with timber. Anger of the King of France. Discussions in the States-General on the reinforcement of the army or navy. Commodore Fielding seizes the Dutch merchant-vessels. Demand of Subsidies by England refused. Alliance of the States courted by France. Formation of the "Armed Neutrality." England endeavours to prevent the accession thereto of the States. Umbrage taken by England at the conduct of the Pensionary and Burgomasters of Amsterdam. Yorke recalled from the Hague. Declaration of war by England. Mischiefs attendant on the rupture of the alliance. Reply of the States. Commencement of hostilities. Party disputes concerning the land and sea forces. Inaction of the Stadtholderal Government. Neutral powers hostile or indifferent towards Holland. Cessation of trade in the United Provinces. Capture of the Dutch West India Islands. Battle of the Doggersbank. No advantages reaped by the Dutch from their supposed victory. Renewed vigour apparent in the United Provinces. Unattended by any result. Decline of the Orange Party in Holland, and hostility towards Duke Louis of Brunswick. Failure of the expected junction with the French fleet at Brest. Louis of Brunswick forced to retire from the Hague. Treaty with America. Proposals of peace from England, refused. Negotiations at Paris. Dissatisfaction of the Dutch at the peace of 1783. Scheme of a "Fundamental restoration of the Constitution" in the United Provinces. Resuscitation of the Schutterij, and formation of the Free Corps. Interference of the King of Prussia in the affairs of Holland. The Emperor Joseph II. of Germany obliges the States to surrender the Barrier Towns, seizes the Forts of the Generality, and demands the free navigation of the Scheldt. Active preparations for war. Commission appointed to inquire into the state of defence of Holland. Hostile movements against

Duke Louis of Brunswick, who retires to Aix. The Emperor, unprepared for war, concludes a peace. He evades the provisions of the Treaty. Mutual exasperation of the Orange and Patriot Parties in Holland. Disturbances at the Hague. The Stadtholder being deprived of the command of the garrison, retires to Nimeguen. Commotions at Utrecht. In Overijssel. Troops sent against Hattem and Elburg. Stadtholder deprived of the office of Captain-General of Holland. Cordon of troops in the Province. Attempt of France and Prussia to reconcile the contending parties. Rendered abortive by the Princess of Orange. Virulence of both factions. Stadtholder deprived of his honours. Tumult at the Hague. Divisions in the "Patriot" Party. Excesses of the Free Corps. They summon an Assembly: and, in concert with the "Commissioners of the Burghers," force the Members of the Municipal Governments to resign their offices. The Orange Party regains ground. Manifestations at the Hague. States of Holland lose their majority in the States-General. Contradictory orders given by these two bodies to the troops. Measures of security adopted by the States of Holland. "Commission of Defence." Commencement of hostilities. State of the contending parties. Journey of the Princess of Orange to the Hague arrested. Memorials of the Prince of Orange and King of Prussia on the subject. Holland prepares for its own defence. Reliance of the Patriots on France. Disappointment of their expectations. Second Memorial of the King of Prussia. Invasion of the United Provinces by a Prussian army. Their rapid progress. Desertion of Utrecht by the Patriot General, and entry of the Stadtholder. Stadtholder invited to the Hague, and his reception there. Outrages of the populace. Easy subjugation of the United Provinces by the Prussians. Patriots evacuate Franeker and Staveren. Resistance and conquest of Amsterdam. Seventeen of the Patriot Party declared incapable of serving their country. Causes of the sudden fall of the United Provinces. Question as to the origin of the disorders.

1766 THE period fixed as that of the majority of the stadtholder, which had now arrived, was hailed by all ranks of men with satisfaction and joy. The Council of State, in presenting the annual "petition" to the States-General, expressed their confidence, that this would be the epoch of the restoration of the former power and splendour of the United Provinces, and of

the cessation and entire oblivion of the party names 1766 of "States" and "Orange." The States-General, in their edict appointing the day for the customary yearly fast and thanksgiving, reminded the inhabitants, that the time was now at hand when "a prince, the love and hope of his people, the cherished scion of a race, the equal of which Providence had rarely vouchsafed to grant to the world, and endowed with every talent and quality the heart of man could desire, was to enter upon the offices of his ancestors, and to fill the place of those immortal heroes who, for two centuries, had been the instruments of the strength and greatness of the nation^a." How little could the most skilful seer foretell that the administration begun under such seemingly favourable auspices, would end in civil strife, in blood, and in subjection to a foreign yoke!

But, in truth, there is no period of the history of mankind so illustrative of the vanity of human calculation, so humiliating to human pride, as that of the latter part of the eighteenth century. High aspirations at objects constantly eluding the grasp of the aspirants; dreams of human perfectibility, and realities of the uttermost of human crime and degradation; struggles for liberty, ending in the very slavery of despotism; mighty projects rashly formed, and as pusillanimously abandoned; people warring against their rulers only to change their dominion for that of tyrants far worse than they; rulers plunging the sword into the bosom of their people, and sacrificing their welfare to their own selfish interest or ambition. The words of freedom, of generosity and philanthropy, snatched from the mouths of the wise and the good, and used to cover, till they became so associated with, deeds of fraud, spoliation, and hypocrisy, that the wise

^a Res van de St., Jan. 23. Vad. Hist., b. 89, bl. 7.

1766 and the good were almost ashamed to utter them; the pure and healthful principles of natural right and universal justice perverted and falsely applied till their very essence appeared changed. Such is the spectacle afforded by the history of the greater portion of Europe during the ensuing period; nor was Holland exempt from her share of error, degradation, and sorrow.

Of the events we have to record in this chapter, we shall discover a miniature resemblance in the outline to those more fearful, which followed immediately on their traces in France; but divested of their darker and more odious colours, in proportion as they were brought about by a people, nursed in freedom, and in the principles of religion, justice, and humanity.

William, who had been admitted under an oath of secrecy to a sitting in the Council of State at the age of eleven, and at fifteen to the States-General, was now, on his eighteenth birthday, invested with powers as ample in every respect as those enjoyed by his father. The day was celebrated with unbounded rejoicings; and in a progression which the prince made soon after through the Provinces, he was everywhere welcomed with royal honours, and entertained with festivals of surpassing magnificence. Duke Louis Ernest of Brunswick still continued as general of the forces, and received from the States, with a flattering acknowledgment of his services, a present of 611,000 guilders^b.

Had the character of the young stadtholder been at all equal to the circumstances in which he was placed, there is little doubt that, though he might never have been able to resuscitate the ancient enthu-

^b Res. van de St., Mar. 8.

siastic patriotism of the Dutch, he might have found 1766 in their present sentiments of loyalty and affection to his person, a new principle of union, a new impulse to activity, sufficiently powerful to have raised them to somewhat of their former rank in the scale of moral dignity and political importance. Unhappily, however, William was neither by nature nor education, fitted to inspire that esteem which alone can give permanence to such sentiments. Though possessing considerable quickness of intellect and great powers of memory, his mind, notwithstanding the facility of comprehending, and the capability of retaining ideas, with which he was gifted, was utterly deficient in the faculties of distinguishing, comparing, or combining, and consequently in the power of attaining, by a course of ratiocination, to a just, or even any, conclusion. Hence arose an irresolution almost amounting to imbecility. Always coinciding in opinion with the last speaker, he rarely gave a definite order, or decided on any specific measure; and far less was he able to pursue any consistent or determined course of action; he was, therefore, peculiarly unfitted to impose any check on that dilatoriness which was the prevailing vice in the constitution and character of his country. These defects, which might have been remedied in some degree had he possessed the advantage of an upright and enlightened guide in his youth, had been fostered to an incredible extent by his preceptor, Duke Louis Ernest of Brunswick, who, in order to retain him permanently under his own influence, had kept him as much as possible in ignorance of affairs, or directed his mind exclusively to petty details and useless minutiae, accustoming him on all occasions to appeal to his decision. The effect of such a plan was a want of self-confidence in his pupil, which rendered

1766 him averse to the responsibility attending the transaction of any business of the least importance; the only efforts of this kind he usually made, being to grant long audiences to his ministers, in which, after displaying all the resources of memory, extensive knowledge of history, and considerable skill in the theory of government, he left the matter in question just where he found it.

Thus, destitute alike of firmness of opinion and activity of will, he naturally fell under the government of the princess he soon after married, Frederica Wilhelmina, niece of the King of Prussia, a woman of talent, diligence, and singular capacity for affairs; haughty, imperious, and ambitious, and gifted with the undaunted courage, both moral and physical, peculiar to her family. The whole administration of affairs, accordingly, was conducted by her, in association with the stadtholder's preceptor, Louis of Brunswick. This prince, not deficient in understanding, but of an ambitious, intriguing, and dissembling character, could never, during his long residence in Holland, accommodate himself in the slightest degree to the genius of the people. He constantly impressed on the mind of his nephew, that the interests of the stadtholder and those of the republic were in exact opposition to each other; a principle, the practical application of which, caused many of the evils that will hereafter come under our notice. Wholly under the control of these two persons, William, with a constant desire to do right, found some secret influence always opposed to his better resolutions; and often when he promised, and really intended to remedy such defects as were complained of in his administration, the duke, or the courtiers, who were all his creatures, were allowed to prevent the fulfil-

ment of his engagements. This conduct gave him 1766 a character for insincerity, which he was far from meriting, and contributed, more than any other cause, to lose him the affections of the large portion of the people who were removed from the immediate influence of his conciliating manners and amiable temper.

As if to compensate to themselves for the large measure of civil liberty and political importance they had lost, the Dutch began to devote their attention towards raising the reputation of the United Provinces on the score of literature, science, and the arts; which, hitherto, the deficiency of public societies and national academies had caused them to be accused of undervaluing and neglecting. That these sort of institutions had not been necessary to the production of a Boerhaave, a Huygens, a Katz, or a Vondel, they had fully experienced; and even, whether conducive to the interests of learning and science at all—whether by bringing excellence and mediocrity into equal notoriety, they do not tend to discourage the one and unduly foster the other—whether with so easy a road to fame open to them, men will turn aside from it, and be content to pursue the long and silent labour, which alone can achieve immortality—may well be a question. The Dutch, however, appeared resolved to lie no longer under the reproach of foreign nations on this head. Haarlem taking the lead had, in the year 1752, established a company of science; at Leyden, in this year, a society was formed for the encouragement of science and literature, and another for poetry and theatrical representations; the academy of painting, at Amsterdam, which had of late fallen into decay was restored; and Flushing in Zealand, Rotterdam, and most of

1766 the other principal towns established similar institutions^c.

1767 The marriage of the Prince of Orange (with the permission of the States^d) to the Princess of Prussia, was the signal for the renewal of the scenes of festivity of the last year. Sumptuous repasts, processions, and mock fights on the water were liberally provided for the amusement of the young couple in their subsequent tour through the Provinces; each town, whether wealthy or poor, vying with the others in useless and prodigal expenditure. Such shews and pageants, indeed, (in some of which we recognise the quaint devices of older times*,) were the only symptoms of vitality evinced by the Dutch nation during this period; which otherwise passed in utter inanition, and indifference towards the restoration of their decaying liberties, or the recovery of their political position on the theatre of Europe. Poland, threatened with partition by Russia and Prussia, besought in vain for aid or intercession those States, who a century before had forced the warlike King of Sweden to release Dantzic from his grasp.

1768

The name of maritime power, as applied to the United Provinces, was now become little else than a mocking and an irony. Year by year their navy was allowed to fall into a state of greater decay; and all the projects of reinforcement, recommended with eloquent and unceasing earnestness by the States

^c Nieuwe Nederlandsche Jaarboeken, A.D. 1766 passim.

^d Res van de St., Oct. 28.

* On a visit of the prince to Leeuwarden, in 1773, he was attended by a group of children dressed in the different costumes of ancient Friesland, Rome, Spain, and Turkey; they were followed by the whole of the burghers under arms; and after them came eleven persons representing the seven liberal sciences, Honour, Wisdom, Industry, and Immortality. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1773, bl. 952.

of Holland, were either rejected by the others, or 1768 if consented to, left unexecuted; while the feeble and indolent stadholder, instead of exerting himself, as in duty bound, to remedy the deficiency, replied to a requisition of Holland for the meagre com- 1772
 plement of twenty-four ships of the line, that the other Provinces "were not inclined to apply *all their resources* to the increase of a maritime force, lest if it were raised to the height aimed at by Holland, it would lessen their ability to make the long-required provision for their security on land*."

Meanwhile, terrific floods which occurred in the years 1770 and 1771, combined with an infectious disease rife among the cattle to spread devastation, ruin, and famine, throughout the Provinces; which, however, the benevolence of the more fortunate was neither slow nor niggardly in relieving. To these calamities was added a renewal of the monetary panic of 1763, arising partly from the same cause, partly from the system of unlimited stockjobbing which now prevailed. Numerous bankruptcies were followed by the same effect in the disappearance of specie, the decay of credit, and the stagnation of business as on the previous occasion. The fear lest the whole commercial world should be affected by the ruin of Amsterdam, prompted both London 1773
 and Paris to make strenuous efforts on her behalf. The merchants of these towns sent thither a quantity of specie sufficient to relieve the immediate

* N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1767, 1300—1350. Res. van de St., Nov. 6. Mem. of Pr. of Orange.

* The Province of Holland expended, during the interval between 1767 and 1784, 23,000,000 of guilders in support of the navy; while all the rest of the Provinces together contributed no more than 13,000,000. Res. van de St., Mar. 24, A.D. 1784.

1773 pressure of difficulties; and, soon after, the municipal government resolved to lend, out of the public treasury, the sum of 2,000,000 of guilders at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., to such as could give good security. Though the amount in itself was trifling, yet, judiciously applied, it produced the beneficial effects desired; many merchants labouring under temporary embarrassments were enabled to meet their liabilities; while the demonstration of confidence in the state of credit, induced those who had hitherto hoarded their specie to apply it in a similar manner; and by this timely aid the magistrates succeeded in restoring the credit of the town, and reviving its languishing commerce^f.

Scarcely yet recovered from the effects of flood, famine, and commercial distress, supine, and enfeebled—such was the condition of Holland, when the breaking out of the war between Great Britain and her
1775 American colonies, and the evident disposition of France and Spain to side with the latter, threatened the extension of hostilities to Europe, and seemed likely to require all her former strength and energy to enable her to preserve a safe and respected neutrality. The difficulty of securing such a neutrality was, on this occasion, greatly enhanced by the strong predilection entertained by the stadtholder and his court for England, and his desire that the United Provinces should take an active part in her favour. He vehemently insisted, that the demand made by the ministry of that country for the return of the Scottish regiments in the service of the States, and the subsidies of money and troops stipulated by the treaty of 1716-17, should be immediately complied with. The

^f Rech. sur le Com., tom. ii., p. 2. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1773, bl. 79, 208, 246. A.D. 1774, bl. 85.

sympathies of the great majority of the people, on the 1775 other hand, were powerfully enlisted on the side of the insurgents, in whose situation they imagined they discovered a similarity with their own in the revolt against Spain; sentiments in which the States in some measure shared. The present war, they objected, was waged by the King of England against his own subjects, in which case, unless the Protestant succession were endangered, they were not bound to afford the subsidy. This decision excited feelings of the deepest irritation in the stadtholderal court, and proved a cause of alienation between the two parties in the nation, which circumstances subsequently increased to the bitterest animosity^g.

The estrangement which this refusal excited also between the court of England and the States was soon augmented by the revival of the old subject of irritation, the conveyance of timber and ships' stores to France. An order in council was now issued that all 1776 vessels trading in such materials to France and Spain should be seized, and their cargoes sold to the commissioners of the Admiralty, for the benefit of the owners. As no war had been declared against France or Spain, not the slightest pretext existed for considering them in the light of belligerents with regard to neutrals, even had not the wares in question been expressly exempted by the treaty of 1674, and still more clearly by the explanation subsequently given to the article of that treaty, "that free bottoms should make free goods," which was declared to extend to ships of neutrals trading to hostile ports^h. England herself had by virtue of that treaty constantly supplied France with such commodities during the last war of that nation with the United Provinces, without

^g Res. van de St., Mar. 6. ^h Idem, A.D., 1676, Jan. 16, Sept. 20.

1776 her right of doing so having ever been disputed; and her pretension to debar the Dutch from the use of the same liberty could be supported only on the ground of the necessity of the case; to recognise the validity of which, would be to admit that she was bound to adhere to treaties only so long as she should not find them disadvantageous to her. Nevertheless, she began to exercise her claim of search in its utmost rigour.

The Dutch merchantmen were everywhere captured with the same circumstances of injustice and cruelty as before; their cargoes were overhauled and often plundered, and the crews maltreated and forced to take service in the English navy; and it appeared as though nothing less than the utter destruction of the commerce of Holland would satisfy her rival. "Very soon," replied the captain of an English privateer to the master of a Dutch merchant vessel, when he solicited the restoration of his flag, "very soon, no Dutch flag will be seen on the ocean¹." In vain did the States, with a naval strength of no more than twenty-four insufficiently equipped frigates, plead the law of nations and the faith of treaties to a power now become arbitrary and domineering even to its closest
 1777 allies. They found themselves constrained, at length, to give their consent to a reinforcement, wholly inadequate indeed to the occasion, of four vessels of sixty guns, seven of fifty, three of thirty-six, and three of twenty, although England had declared she should regard any such augmentation to their navy in the light of a hostile measure².

But even this slight movement now proved a painful and exhausting effort to a country, which in the middle of the last century had required only a single

¹ *Essai sur le Code Maritime de l'Europe*, p. 65, 66.

² *N. Nederl. Jaarb.*, A.D., 1778, bl. 811.

fortnight to put forth a fleet of seventy vessels*. Not-1777 withstanding severe penalties against such as entered any foreign service, it was found impossible to man a sufficient convoy to protect the merchant vessels, which therefore lay idle in the ports; and the Dutch beheld with vexation the inhabitants of Ostend and other towns of the Austrian Netherlands gradually insinuating themselves into those branches of trade with Spain and France, in which they had hitherto enjoyed almost a monopoly^k.

Another object of jealousy to the English arose in the vast increase of commerce, which, from the commencement of the disturbances in America, the Dutch colonies of St. Eustatius, Curacao, and other parts of the West Indies, had drawn to themselves. In this quarter, therefore, was diligently sought and easily discovered a cause of quarrel. An accusation was brought by the president of the council of St. Christopher's, against the governor of St. Eustatius, De Graaf, that he allowed all sorts of provisions to be supplied from that island to the American rebels; that an English brigantine had been captured by a rebel privateer almost under the artillery of the island; and an armed ship bearing the American flag, had been saluted from Fort Orange with the honours due only to independent sovereigns. De Graaf refusing to give any explanation of his conduct except to his masters, the States-General, the grievance was made a national affair, and solemnly brought forward before that assembly by the ambassador Yorke, with the demand of a disavowal of the salute from Fort Orange, the immediate recall of De Graaf, and a threat of hostilities if the States refused compliance. Although, as the States observed, the memorial was couched in a

* See vol. ii., p. 612. ^k Id. A.D., 1777, bl. 1427.

1777 tone such as had scarcely ever yet been adopted towards an equal and independent nation, they yielded to the wishes of their exacting ally; covering, however, the recall of De Graaf under the pretext of summoning him home to give an account of the transactions that had occurred under his government. They likewise enjoined anew the governors of their West India colonies to prevent the exportation of ammunition to the Americans; and empowered the officer of whom the merchants should demand a convoy to examine whether their vessels contained military stores of any kind¹.

But they soon found that complaisance was only made the stepping-stone to subservience. Not content with capturing their vessels, in the proportion of one hundred belonging to Holland alone, from the 2nd of August to the 20th of September, the English did their best to cut off all supplies from the colonies of Essequibo and Demerara by blockading those rivers. This proceeding, Yorke, who had formed the scheme of engaging the States to abstain from all trade to France and Spain, provided the demand of the English for subsidies were remitted, defended in somewhat insolent terms; declaring that his master was resolved to do himself justice without regard to rights or treaties, and revenge himself upon such as gave support to the Americans; since it was better to have a number of open enemies, than allies, who under cover of neutrality supplied all the wants of his rebel subjects. In fine, by means of the powerful party which a residence of twenty-seven years had enabled him to form in the States, he obtained a resolution 1778 from the States-General that no convoy should be granted to ships laden with materials for ship-building,

¹ Parl. Hist., vol. xxi., col. 1079 (note). Res. van de St., Mar. 5, 20, 21.

in spite of the vivid remonstrances of Amsterdam, who 1778 contended that even if this measure could be supported on any principle of law or justice, it would be of no benefit to England, since France could be equally well supplied with these commodities by Sweden, Denmark, and the other nations of the North, and its only effect would be the transfer to them of this valuable branch of commerce; and of the merchants of Friesland, who 1779 urged that they had hitherto employed above two thousand ships, chiefly in the timber trade which was now virtually annihilated^m.

The King of France, on his side, took violent umbrage at this denial of convoys to his ports, and renewed the import duty of fifty sous a ton imposed in 1744 on Dutch ships trading to France; excepting, at the same time, from its operation, the towns of Amsterdam and Haarlem, which had opposed the resolution. It became, therefore, evident that a rupture with one of the two powers was scarcely possible to be avoided. Yorke expatiated largely on the authority arrogated by France to dictate to the States what branches of their trade they should or should not protect, and on the example of favouring two members of the government at the expense of the rest, as an infraction of the union and independence of the Provinces; declaring, that even should the ships carrying timber to France be protected by men of war it was the determination of the English to seize them. The ambassador of France, De la Vauguyon, loudly exclaimed that the liberty of the United Provinces would be illusory and their integrity violated, if they consented at the pleasure of any foreign power to deprive their subjects of the right of convoy. Both powers, profuse in their

^m N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1778, bl. 1376. Sec. Res. van de St., Nov. 18, A.D. 1779, Jan. 28.

1779 professions of friendship, and exhortations to the States to support their independence, gave pretty clearly to understand that their friendship would depend entirely on the subserviency of the Dutch to their behests, and that each expected their independence would be exerted solely in his own favour^a.

It was at this juncture—when their commerce was impeded, their flag insulted, and even the passage of the high seas almost denied to them—when the animosity between Great Britain, France, and Spain, threatened to kindle a war throughout Europe—when every nerve and sinew should have been strained to appear in a formidable state of defence—that the dispute began to grow rife in the Provinces, as to whether it were most advisable to make additions to the sea or land forces, which had the effect of preventing any improvement in either. The principal parties, at the first, were the town of Amsterdam and the body of the nobility in the States of Holland; the latter insisting, that all supplies should be devoted to the levy of troops; the former, that a portion, at least, ought to be applied to the support of the navy. Very soon the States of all the Provinces began to range themselves on one side or the other; and the question to be made an exercise of party virulence. Utrecht, Overyssel, Guelderland, and Zealand, under the influence of the stadtholder, insisted upon the reinforcement of the land troops; while Holland and Friezland, which depended chiefly on commerce and ship-building, urged the necessity of the restoration of the former power of the navy. A proposition of the stadtholder, calculated to embrace the views of both parties, that the navy and army should be simultaneously increased, the former

^a Res. van de St., Mar. 5. Sec. Res. van de St., Dec. 19.

by the equipment of fifty or sixty sail, the latter 1779 by the levy of 50,000 or 60,000 men, before an unlimited convoy was granted, was rejected by the States of Holland from a suspicion, that his sole object in making it was to use the delay thereby created to impede the granting of the convoy^o.

The exemption enjoyed by Amsterdam and Haarlem, from the new duties in France, had induced the States of Holland to vote for an unlimited convoy of all wares not expressly named as contraband, which was followed by a similar remission, on the part of France, as regarded the whole Province. They were unable, however, to obtain the adoption of this measure by the States-General; and the convoy setting sail, under a prohibition to protect vessels carrying ship's timber, was met by six English vessels under the command of Commodore Fielding. As he had received orders from his court to examine all ships, whether under convoy or not, he declared his intention to Admiral Bylandt, who commanded the four Dutch men-of-war, to search the merchant-vessels under his care. Bylandt refused to permit the search, but shewed him the declaration subscribed by the masters of all the ships, alleging on oath that they contained no contraband wares, and affirmed, upon his honour, that he had refused protection to all such as carried ship's timber. Fielding, nevertheless, asserting that hemp and iron were likewise to be considered as contraband, sent a sloop of war to search the vessels. Bylandt warned them to desist by firing two shots on the sloop, when Fielding instantly attacked his ship, and that of his second in command, with a heavy broadside. Either fearing to come to a general engagement, as being

^o Res. van de St., Mar. 10, May 13, 14.

1779 overmatched in strength, or unwilling to risk being the cause of war, Bylandt made a signal, which he had before agreed on with the captains, to strike; and, refusing to leave the ships under his charge, was carried with them to the harbour of Spithead. Several vessels carrying ship's timber, which had joined themselves to the rest of the fleet on sailing, escaped on sight of the English men-of-war^p.

1780 The news of this proceeding was received at Amsterdam with unbounded astonishment; the people for a while withheld their belief, imagining it to be a fiction of the stock-exchange, and a broker, who had been the first to communicate it, was nearly experiencing some disagreeable effects of their anger. As doubt could no longer exist, astonishment gave place to indignation, which rose to excess when it was found that some of the vessels under convoy were confiscated; while others, which were seized laden with timber, and not under such protection, sustained no further injury than the loss of their cargoes; thus visiting as a crime upon the subjects the protection afforded them by their sovereign. The most violent complaints were poured forth against England, as the tyrant and scourge of the seas; and those, who were before the zealous partisans of that nation, now began to change their tone, and to talk of maintaining their rights, if necessary, by arms^q.

While men's minds were in this ferment, Yorke brought forward a renewal of the demand he had made on two several occasions in the last year, sub-

^p Res. van de St., Ap. 29, Jun. 11, 24, Jul. 21, 22, 23, Sept. 30. Annual Register, A.D. 1780, p. 204. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1780, bl. 131, et seq.

^q N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1780, bl. 491. Lettres Historiques et Politiques, tom. iv., p. 354.

sequently to the formal declaration of war against 1720 England by France and Spain, of subsidies, in pursuance of the treaties of 1678 and 1716, with a threat, that if an answer in the affirmative were not given within three weeks, it would be regarded as an abandonment of all alliance with England, and the United Provinces would henceforth stand in the relation to her of an indifferent and unprivileged neutral power^r. Although the subsidy was undoubtedly due, the increasing alienation from England and resentment at her violation of the treaty of 1674, had hitherto deterred the Provinces from taking the subject into consideration; and as it was necessary to refer it to the provincial States, the States-General replied, that according to the fundamental rules of the constitution, it was scarcely possible to have a definitive answer within the time specified. The smallest delay was, however, peremptorily refused^s; nor did it in the event prove necessary. The Provinces unanimously and without debate declined to grant the subsidy, some in terms of courtesy; others, particularly Utrecht and Overijssel, with expressions of acrimony, and severe animadversions on the example afforded by England, of disregard to the obligations of treaties^t. The execution of the menace held out by Yorke, as a consequence of such refusal, immediately followed. All treaties of commerce and navigation with the States-General, particularly that of 1674, were declared by the English Government annulled, and letters of marque were issued, authorizing the seizure of all

^r Parl. Hist., vol. xxi., col. 972 et seq. Res. van de St., Mar. 30. This memorial, dated March 21st, does not appear among the papers laid before parliament.

^s Res. van de St., Ap. 14.

^t Res. van de St., Ap. 10, 11, 21.

1780 Dutch ships carrying wares which, according to the general law of nations, were esteemed contraband; or in other words, all which the English captains chose to denominate such^u.

While England was thus wantonly, as it appears, estranging the affections of her oldest and most constant ally, circumstances, no less than the efforts of the king, contributed to draw her into relations of amity with France, which it was the interest of the former to prevent at any price. Since the possession of the Netherlands had been finally settled in the house of Austria, the United Provinces, no longer in danger of having France as their immediate neighbour, had ceased to feel the dread they before entertained of that power; and this sentiment had been, in a great measure, transferred to England, whose increasing naval superiority they considered as detrimental to their safety, as the ambition of France had formerly been. Their commerce with England, moreover, which since the passing of the Navigation Act had been gradually diminishing, was now of very trifling value; while that with France was become extremely profitable, and was favoured by numerous privileges and exemptions. Of these propitious circumstances Louis failed not to take advantage to the utmost. Immediately on the passing of a vote of unlimited convoy, which was carried in the States-General after the capture of Bylandt's fleet, he not only took off the duties lately imposed on the Dutch merchant vessels, but refunded the whole amount of those already collected^v.

Nor were other nations, besides the Dutch, exempt from the assaults of the English on their

^u N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1780, bl. 335.

^v N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1780, bl. 345.

commerce, though committed, according to their 1780 capability of self-defence, with less of license and tyranny. From every shore of Europe, from almost every quarter of the globe, in fact, complaints resounded of her aggressions and piracies; while, since the decline of the Dutch as a maritime power, the navy of no single state was in sufficient force to oppose to her any effective resistance. Unless some such were offered, it was evident that the freedom and security of the seas were lost to all; and the merit of suggesting a plan to this effect is due to Catherine II., Empress of the Russias. Her subjects, who were accustomed to employ a large number of Dutch vessels in their trade, had sustained considerable damage in the capture of these by the English; and Sweden and Denmark had likewise expressed to Catherine feelings of resentment on the same subject. But as she was now in close alliance with England, and, therefore, unwilling to adopt any measure calculated to excite the animosity of that power, she took occasion, from the arrest of some Russian merchant-ships in the Mediterranean by the Spaniards, to promulgate the system of alliance between the neutral powers of Europe, so celebrated under the name of the "Armed Neutrality^w." By this act, to which she invited Denmark, Sweden, Portugal, and the United Provinces, to become parties, it was provided, that neutral ships should trade freely from one port to another, and to the coasts of nations engaged in war; second, and thirdly, that wares belonging to the subjects of belligerents, on board neutral ships, should be free, except such as were expressly declared contraband by the treaty

^w Missive of Zwart, resident of the States-General, at the Court of Russia. Res. van de St., A.D. 1778, Dec. 29.

1780 of 1734 between Russia and Great Britain, (in which the contraband, as in that of 1674, between England and the United Provinces, is strictly limited to arms, ammunition, and military accoutrements); fourthly, that a port is to be considered blockaded, only when it cannot be entered without evident danger, from the position of the ships of the belligerent blockading; and fifthly, that these principles should serve as rules for guidance in the decisions on the legality of prizes. For the maintenance of these conditions it was proposed, that each power should furnish a quota of armed vessels, to act in concert for their mutual protection. The Prince Gallitzin was dispatched, as envoy extraordinary, to the Hague, to solicit the accession of the United Provinces. The proposal was received with readiness, and even eagerness, by every one of the provincial States. They unanimously consented to send ambassadors to the court of St. Petersburg to arrange the terms of their accession, and engaged to support, to the utmost of their power, the common liberty of trade and navigation^x.

Scarcely, however, was this step taken, when the paralyzing consciousness of their own weakness, of their utter inability to sustain themselves in the hostile position in which it would place them with regard to England, forced itself on the minds of the Dutch. The plan of the Armed Neutrality—politic in its principle, as affording by union, strength to the weak to resist the encroachments of the powerful, and beneficial in its provisions, as tending to relieve commerce in general from the ruinous effects of war—was acceptable to both neutrals and belligerents; Sweden and Denmark immediately became

^x Res. van de St., Ap. 3, 24. Sec. Res. van de St., Jun. 15.

parties to it, and France and Spain expressed their 1780 approbation in the most unequivocal manner. But in proportion as it was received by other nations with gratitude and acclamation, it was regarded by England in the light of an injury and an insult; she justly conceived, that its provisions were directed chiefly against herself, and the ready acquiescence of other powers seemed, as it were, a public expression of the opinion of Europe to her prejudice. Their accession to it, would, the States well knew, give her the deepest umbrage; and they dreaded lest the first effects of her anger would be to seize on their defenceless colonies. These considerations were strongly urged by the stadtholderal party, wholly devoted to England, and who left no effort untried to thwart the success of the question. Accordingly, doubt and vacillation began to take place of their former alacrity; the departure of their ambassador to St. Petersburg was long retarded; and when at last he received powers, it was with the restriction, that, as a condition of the accession of the United Provinces, the neutral powers should guarantee all their possessions out of Europe. This condition, which there was not the slightest ground either for the one party to demand or the other to grant, was of course rejected by the Russian minister, Count Panin; he, however, sent to the States-General, under a seal of secrecy, a copy of the treaty with Denmark, stipulating that all the powers should engage to assist any one of them who might draw on themselves a war by their accession to the Armed Neutrality. While the States hesitated, the English left no means untried at the Court of Russia to effect their exclusion from the alliance; representing, that the United Provinces becoming parties to it

1780 would tend to involve the Empress herself in a war, and promising, that if they were excluded the flag of Russia should be constantly respected. But Catherine, among whose faults neither vacillation nor want of generosity found a place, answered, that nothing should induce her to abandon her purpose whether war followed or not. An offer, by the English minister, of 100,000*l.* to Count Panin to procure the exclusion of the Dutch, was refused^y.

Finding their efforts at the Court of Russia fruitless, the English ministers next turned their attention towards preventing its final acceptance by the States-General; which was to be effected, either by the influential party which they controlled in their councils, or by terrifying them with threats of instant war as the consequence. They succeeded so far as to induce Zealand, Utrecht, and Guelderland, which the constitution of their government rendered greatly subservient to the stadtholder, to vote against it; but they failed in deterring the four others, and these, forming the majority, passed a resolution of accession to the Armed Neutrality^z.

The disappointment and bitterness felt by the Court of England at this decision were unbounded; and from that moment, war with the United Provinces was determined upon. A declaration, however, upon the real cause of offence, besides that it might arm the neutral powers in favour of Holland, would savour too much of dictation; but, as it happened, another ground of quarrel existed, which might with more of plausibility, though with scarcely more of justice, be magnified into a pretext for the desired

^y Lettre d'un Observateur impartialc. Sec. Res. van de St., Jun. 22, (Lett. of Zwart,) Aug. 3, Oct. 4. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1780, bl. 1122; A.D. 1781, bl. 19, 20.

^z Sec. Res., Dec. 24.

hostilities. After the recognition of the United States of America as an independent nation by France, and the subsequent treaty of amity and commerce concluded between them (1778), a commissioner, William Lee, was dispatched by Congress to endeavour to procure a treaty of a similar nature with the United Provinces. He first proposed the plan to the burgomasters of Amsterdam, who, objecting that their connexions with England did not admit of their bringing it forward in the States so long as that country and America continued at war, engaged to use their efforts to accomplish such a treaty, as soon as the independence of his colonies should be declared by George III. Agreeably to these views a project of a treaty was drawn up by one of the principal merchants of Amsterdam, with the privity of the first pensionary, Van Berkel, and the burgomasters, to be proposed to the States after the declaration of independence which was then universally expected; the transaction being, meanwhile, kept profoundly secret, in order not to give umbrage to England. But it so occurred, that the vessel, in which was the ex-president of the American Congress, Laurens, in sailing to Holland, was captured by an English frigate. An attempt he made to destroy his dispatches proved unsuccessful; and thus a discovery was elicited of the whole affair. Among the papers was the sketch of the proposed treaty and different letters, whereby it appeared that Amsterdam had engaged, so long as the Americans committed no act of hostility against Holland, to make use of her influence to bring the desired alliance to pass; the States of Holland, it was said, would have passed many resolutions favourable to the Americans, had they not been prevented by the

1760 influence of the stadtholder and the English party; and mention was made of a loan of money from some parties in Amsterdam to Congress, to be transacted through the medium of France. These papers were delivered by Yorke into the hands of the Prince of Orange, and by him laid before the States of Holland and the States-General; the ambassador, in his usual authoritative style, demanding of the latter the immediate punishment of the pensionary of Amsterdam "and his accomplices," and the express disavowal of their proceedings on the part of the States. Both those of Holland and the States-General immediately consented to make the required disavowal in the most explicit manner. But this would by no means satisfy the ambassador, who insisted upon the immediate and exemplary punishment of the obnoxious individuals; declaring, that their crime was an infraction of the public faith, an attack upon the dignity of the English crown, and a violation of the constitution of the United Provinces, *of which the king was the guarantee*^a.

With the requisition couched in these singular and startling terms it was utterly impossible for the States to comply. The impression, under which it was made, that the body of the States-General was the sovereign of the town of Amsterdam, and as such, had a right to punish its citizens, was wholly erroneous; a fact, upon which a nearly thirty years' residence in Holland should have enlightened the ambassador. The States-General—not sovereigns at all, but composed merely of the representatives of the seven sovereign States—had no more legal power over the citizens of Amsterdam than the King

^a Essai sur un Code Maritime de l'Europe, p. 137. Res. van de St., Oct. 20, Nov. 23, 29, 30, Dec. 14. Parl. Hist., vol. xxi., col. 978.

of England himself. With regard to the States of 1780 Holland, the act of the burgomasters and pensionary of Amsterdam was either to be considered as the act of the whole municipal government, or it was not. If it were not, the States had no right to take cognizance of it, since by the most ancient privileges of the Province, the citizens of a city, possessing, like Amsterdam, both the high and low jurisdiction, are amenable to none but their own municipal tribunal (Vierschaar). If it were the act of the government as a body, the States could proceed against it in such a manner as the constitution permitted only as a whole, and not against particular members as required by the ambassador. By the constitution of the Provinces, moreover, as settled by the Act of Union in 1579, although it was not competent for a separate province or municipal government to make a treaty with any foreign power, an indisputable right was left to every voting town to propose such in the States, and to entertain any correspondence on the subject of such proposal. Nor was their right less entire to advocate, in the States, the interests of any foreign country with whom they were not actually at war; and if, in so doing, they transgressed the limits of the law, of prudence, or of expediency, the matter concerned the States of the province alone, and did not afford just cause to any foreign power to intermeddle. The States-General and States of Holland, therefore, pursued the only course open to them; the former referring the memorial to the States of the provinces; the latter passing a resolution, that the papers containing the grounds of accusation should be laid before the Court of Holland, and if it were found that matter existed, rendering the burgomasters and pensionary liable to punish-

1780 ment by the laws of the land, they should be tried before the municipal tribunal of that city. This resolution was adopted by the States-General and communicated to Yorke; but the day before it passed war had been already resolved on in the Privy Council of England. Yorke accordingly refused to transmit it to his court; and on being sent for presentation to Van Welderen in London, it was in like manner refused by Lord Stormont. It was quite evident, therefore, that had the States consented to sacrifice the principles of their constitution to gratify the vengeance of England, it would have been wholly ineffectual to avert the war upon which that power was determined^b.

Eager to hurry on hostilities, in order to place Holland in the position of a belligerent, before the accession of the States to the Armed Neutrality was formally notified at the Court of Russia, the English ministers abruptly recalled Yorke from the Hague*. Van Welderen, also, received commands on the night of the 27th of December, to deliver a copy of the accession of the States-General to the Armed Neutrality, and instantly to quit the kingdom. Van Welderen, together with that document, delivered a copy of the resolution of the States with respect to the pensionary of Amsterdam; it was returned unopened; and to his remonstrances, that it was impossible for the English ministry to know whether

^b N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 24—36. Res. van de St., Dec. 21.

* Before his departure he held a secret conference with the Stadtholder and the Duke of Brunswick, in which, it is said, an agreement was made, that the naval armament should be delayed as much as possible, and that the stadtholder should persist in demanding a simultaneous augmentation of land forces; which, as Holland would oppose the question, might entail lengthened discussions. Lett. Hist. et Pol., tom. vii., p. 31, 147.

or. not it were satisfactory, unless he would deign 1780 to examine its contents, Lord Stormont replied, that all alliance between the two nations having ceased in consequence of "the hostile attack of his people," the diplomatic relations between the ministers had ceased also^c.

In the declaration of war now issued, the English Court dexterously omitted the slightest allusion to the real cause of quarrel,—the accession to the States to the Armed Neutrality; and alleged, as the grounds of the measure, the refusal of the subsidy due by treaty; the conveyance of ship's stores to France; the harbouring of pirates (alluding to the circumstance of the refusal of the States to detain Paul Jones and his prizes, on the occasion of his having retired into the harbours of the Texel to refit); the attempts of the Dutch in the East Indies to raise up enemies against England; the traffic in contraband articles between the American rebels and the island of St. Eustatius; and, last and chief, the conduct of the burghers of Amsterdam.

Thus, for causes so trivial and interests so petty, was an alliance broken up, cemented by all the proudest recollections of either nation,—by all the best feelings and noblest sentiments of which human nature is capable, and for a period of nearly a century scarcely ruffled by the breath of contention; an alliance which had protected the weak and resisted the powerful; which had sustained the oppressed and curbed the ambitious; which had said to Europe, "Let there be peace," and there was peace; which had held out to the civilized world, not, indeed, the flicker-

^c N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 31. Parl. Hist., vol. xxi., col. 968. The speeches of Lords Shelburne and Chatham on the rupture with Holland, (col. 1023) are particularly worthy of perusal.

1780 ing and dangerous torch of theoretical liberty, but the mild and guiding light of religious toleration and rational freedom. Each nation imputed to the other the blame of this false and fatal step; and each paid the heavy penalty of her own wrong. In Holland, the result of the war was to widen to an irreparable breach those internal dissensions, to which the affairs of England had first given rise, and which were the proximate cause of her fall; and England, on the breaking out of hostilities with France, in 1793, found that, in fomenting domestic strife in the bosom of Holland, and forcing upon her a ruinous foreign war, she had disabled the only ally who, if strong by unity within herself, and invigorated by long repose, would, in concert with her, have held the arms of the French Republic in check, and saved Europe from a long and desolating war. Both were, though not perhaps equally, in fault.

The pertinacity of the English in preventing the Dutch from carrying supplies of materials for ship-building to France, could scarcely have proceeded from any other motive than jealousy of their commerce, since as France would have obtained these articles immediately from the countries where they were produced, the abstaining from it on the part of the Dutch could have no other effect than to transfer the trade from the United Provinces to those countries; their commerce, of which this was one of the most valuable branches, was their only means of existence, insomuch that in their own wars they had ever been accustomed to supply even their enemies themselves with such articles. On the other hand, the trade carried on between the Dutch West Indian colonies and the insurgent States of America, was justly calculated to give umbrage to England, although

it was participated in to a very large extent by the 1780 English merchants, as well as those of other nations; and however England might have violated the faith of treaties by her claim of search and the mode in which she enforced it, the Dutch were by no means exempted from the obligations of national integrity, which bound them on the declaration of war by France to afford the subsidy required by their ally.

The dismay which the United Provinces might be 1781 supposed to feel at the prospect of hostilities in their present defenceless condition, gave place to indignation and anger. "If ever," say the States-General, in answer to the manifesto of the king, "the records of past ages gave an example of a free and independent state attacked by a neighbouring power united with her in the bonds of friendship and alliance, without a shadow of reason and justice, undoubtedly such is the present attack by England on the United Provinces^d."

The manner in which England commenced hostilities tended to justify the assertion made by a writer of that country, that she was prompted less by the incitement of honour or of irritated pride, than the desire to repair the losses she had sustained in the American war by the capture of rich prizes from the Dutch. Scarcely could the declaration of war have reached the United Provinces, when the seizure of vessels commenced, and was carried on with unceasing activity. But the English were likewise aware, and quick to take advantage of, the state of weakness both internal and external into which the Provinces had now fallen. So fiercely did party spirit rage, that even now, with the flames of war on their very threshold, instead of making active preparations to meet the evil, they

^d Res. van de St., Jan. 12.

* History of the Internal Affairs of the United Provinces, p. 33.

1781 squandered their time in the old disputes, as to whether the land or the sea forces were to be increased. A petition of the Council of State for the equipment of ninety-four ships, and a land army of 50,000 men, was negatived by the province of Holland, on the pitiful pretext, that from the scarcity of men the levy of troops would retard that of seamen; and it was not until long after the forces should have been in readiness to act, that a vote of 17,000 land troops and 6000 mariners was agreed upon¹.

But if the States, or "Patriot" party, as it now began to be termed, may be accused with truth of postponing the vital interests of their country to their petty feuds, the party in power had nothing to boast of on the score of superior energy and patriotism. An unaccountable supineness and inactivity pervaded every department of the government. No preparation for the carrying on of active hostilities was visible; the equipment of new vessels was neglected, and the old were detained in the ports, for want of orders; often, when supposed to be ready for sailing, the captains declared themselves destitute of ammunition and provisions; the seamen dreading to lie idle in the harbours, shunned the service; and though at the instances of Amsterdam, who contributed the sum of 25,000 guilders for the purpose, the enormous bounty of seventy guilders a head was offered, the admiralty received no instructions as to its payment. A visit of the stadtholder to the Texel inspired men with the hope that some more vigorous measures would be pursued; and, in particular, that orders would be given to the fleet to intercept a convoy of English vessels which was about to transport

¹ Res. van de St., Jan. 3—Jun. 1. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A. D. 1781, bl. 37.

some regiments of Germans to America. This hope, 1781 however, was disappointed: the fleet sailed out of port indeed, but returned almost immediately; and at the same time a rumour was spread, that one hundred British merchant-men were gone to the Baltic without any convoy at all, as if conscious of their security from molestation. The mistrust which these circumstances excited, was inflamed to still more painful suspicions when it appeared that the English newspapers had mentioned the expected return of the Dutch fleet; and that the government of that country was far better informed of the state of the naval force, and of all the concerns of the United Provinces, than the inhabitants themselves; it being indeed by no means uncommon to receive intelligence of many occurrences that had happened there, first from England^s.

It was scarcely to be imagined that other nations would espouse with vigour a cause so languidly supported by the parties most interested. If ever the provisions of the Armed Neutrality were to be carried into effect, now was the time, when one of its members was attacked by a powerful enemy for no other cause, as it was evident notwithstanding the precautions taken by England to disguise the fact, than her accession to that treaty. But, dread of the power of Great Britain, and the hope of an increased commerce raised upon the ruins of that of the Dutch, proved stronger incentives to Sweden and Denmark than the obligation to fulfil the spirit of their engagements; while Holland had rendered herself so little feared or respected that the violation of them, as far as regarded her, was contemplated without compunction or hesitation. These powers not only refused all aid in answer to the solicitations of the States, but forbade their ships

^s N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 755, 783.

1781 to commit hostilities in the Baltic. The Empress herself, in whose court the English party, supported by the influence of the favourite, Prince Potemkin, had again obtained the preponderance, used the circumstances of the tardy accession of the States to the Armed Neutrality, and of that accession not having been named in the declaration of war by England, as pretexts for limiting her assistance to the cold interposition of her good offices between the belligerents. Portugal, also, testified her unfavourable sentiments towards the Dutch by refusing their ships permission to make any sojourn in her ports; while the English were allowed to bring in and sell their prizes there.

It was to France alone, therefore, that the United Provinces could now look for support, who was, indeed, sufficiently ready with her proffers of friendship; but the most indifferent neutrality or open enmity would have had a far less sinister influence on their affairs than the insidious friendship of that faithless and selfish ally, whose sole motive of interference was to foment the dissensions between the two parties, in the hope, ultimately, by the overthrow of the authority of the stadtholder, to subject them to her own control^b.

As the necessary consequence of the hostility of all the maritime powers towards Holland, her commerce was completely at a stand; an embargo was laid on all fishing; the merchant ships were obliged to remain in whatever port they happened to be, except the East and West India-men which were equipped for battle; and the cessation of internal trade was so entire, that the public weighing-house at Amsterdam, usually teeming with life and activity, now remained closed altogether, or with but one of its numerous doors open.

^b Vad. Hist., b. 5, bl. 151. Sec. Res. van de St., Mar. 9, Jul. 6. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 64.

Besides these disadvantages, under which Holland 1781 began an expensive and hazardous war, the general distrust was so great that no loan could be raised under six per cent. (the usual rate of interest being three, or three and a half,) and extreme doubt and anxiety was felt concerning the payment of a loan of no less a sum than 450,000,000 of guilders invested in English securitiesⁱ.

While Holland was thus by her own errors preparing the way to her ruin, the feeble and defenceless condition in which she allowed her colonies to remain, rendered her vulnerable at every point. The Island of St. Eustatius was at once the object of the cupidity and vengeance of the English, from its enormous wealth, and the extensive trade it had carried on with the Americans since their revolt. On the very day, therefore, that the war with the States-General was determined on in the English council, a fast-sailing sloop was sent to Admiral Rodney at Barbadoes with orders to attack the Dutch West India possessions. After an unsuccessful attack on St. Vincent, Rodney sailed with fourteen ships besides frigates, and a force of 2500 men, to St. Eustatius, which, wholly ignorant of the rupture of the peace, almost unfortified, and defended by about sixty soldiers, surrendered at the first summons, together with an immense number of richly laden merchant ships in the port. Having commanded the inhabitants to deliver a list of all they possessed, Rodney stripped them of the entire of their property, and even their very provisions, seized their books and papers, and turned them out of their houses in a state of utter destitution*. Demarara, Essequibo,

N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 27, 145 and seq.

* The transaction is described with singular force and beauty by Burke, in his speech on the occasion of a motion he brought forward on the subject. Parl. Hist., vol. xxii., col. 218.

1781 and Berbice, were afterwards delivered up to the English, with a pusillanimity which not even their insufficient state of defence could excuse. All, however, were retaken with nearly equal facility by the French, who re-established the Dutch government in St. Eustatius, and restored to the inhabitants such of their property as remained. In the East, the Cape of Good Hope was saved solely by the active and timely aid of the French; but Negapatnam on the coast of Coromandel, with the forts in Ceylon, were mastered by the enemy[†].

In Europe, owing to the retention of the Dutch fleet in the ports, hostilities were confined to privateering and combats between single vessels, in which the Dutch, though, from the inferiority in the size and equipment of their ships, usually worsted, gave many proofs that they had not utterly degenerated from the spirit and valour of their ancestors. At length, on the reiterated instances of the merchants, a convoy of eight men-of-war, seven frigates, and a cutter, under Rear-Admiral Zoutman, received orders to sail from the Texel to the Baltic with seventy-two merchantmen. Near the Doggersbank they encountered a convoy of English, commanded by Vice-Admiral Parker, consisting of seven ships of the line, five frigates, and one cutter, with one hundred merchantmen. The English, though somewhat less in number, were vastly superior in the size and strength of their vessels*, and had, moreover, the advantage of the wind. Neither side fired till within half-musket-shot, when the two admiral's ships, the *De Ruyter* of sixty-

[†] N. Nederl. Jaarb. A.D. 1781, bl. 784—794.

* The Dutch had but one vessel of above sixty-four guns, a seventy-four; the English three, two seventy-fours and one of eighty guns.

four guns, and the Fortitude of seventy-four, engaged 1781 each other, but without any decisive event. After four hours of incessant fighting the English dropped away out of their line, and shewed no inclination to renew the contest. The victory was doubtful, though claimed by both parties; the Dutch kept their place indeed, but one of their ships was so damaged that she afterwards sank; while the English lost none of their vessels though all were much shattered^{k*}.

The exultation of the Dutch at the discovery that they were yet able to meet their ancient rival on the ocean on equal terms was such as to argue the deep mistrust they had entertained of themselves. Honours and rewards were showered on both officers and men engaged in the battle; every tongue spoke of the heroes of the Doggersbank; poets celebrated them in verse; the people sung songs in the streets in their praise; and even the ladies, imitating the customs of their French neighbours, had articles of furniture and dress, *à la Zoutman*. The more zealous partisans of the stadtholder, only, preserved a sullen silence in the midst of the general joy; and the prince himself is said to have betrayed the real state of his feelings by exclaiming on the news of the victory, "I hope at least that the English have sustained no loss!" But those to whom the page of history suggested the reflection, with how far less of pomp and circumstance the glorious naval victories achieved by their forefathers

^k N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 1503—1516. Ann. Reg., A.D. 1782, bl. 119. Vad. Hist., b. 7, bl. 310.

^l Hist. de Fred. Guill. 2^{me}, tom. i., 179.

* Such is the account given by the Dutch; the English affirm that one of the States' ships, the *Hollandia*, was sunk; and two more so totally disabled as to be incapable of future service. Ann. Reg., A.D. 1782, p. 21.

1781 had been attended, could not but be struck with the suspicion, that it was the rarity and unexpectedness of the (at best doubtful) success, rather than its magnitude, which was the occasion of so much pride. In the minds of the more thinking portion of the inhabitants, also, the feeling of gratification was greatly modified by the consideration that had not the squadrons of the Meuse and Zeeland been most unaccountably detained there, the convoy would have been so superior to that of Parker, that, the latter must either have been compelled to forbear the combat, or defeated and brought as prizes into the ports of Holland. As it was, the Dutch experienced all the ill-consequences of a defeat; the repair and re-fitting of the ships proceeded so slowly that the convoy was unable to sail that year; the merchant vessels being forced to proceed to the Baltic under the flag of the neutral powers, escorted by a Swedish frigate of war. Being met by the English Admiral Stewart, the captain refused him permission to search the vessels under his protection^m.

But however disproportioned the event of the battle of the Doggersbank, or the actual advantages gained by it, to the sensation excited, its effect was undeniably to rouse the Dutch in some degree from the state of reckless apathy into which they had fallen. The seamen, hoping that they would be no longer condemned to lie inactive and sickening in the 1782 harbours, began to take service more readily; the Provinces passed an unanimous vote for the building of nineteen heavy ships of war, which were immediately put upon the stocks; and with those already in preparation, it was hoped that before the end of the year the fleet would be increased by fifty sail; for the

^m Vad Hist., b. 7, bl. 356, 367.

expenses of which, a subsidy of twelve and a half 1782 millions of guilders was decreed; while all the provinces except Friezland consented to the increase of the land troops. The States-General, also, besought the stadtholder to take measures in concert with the court of France, for carrying on the ensuing campaign; a requisition with which he found himself obliged, however reluctantly, to comply^a.

But these movements were (if it may be permitted to use so homely a simile) like the labouring of a steam carriage on a slippery surface, which, with the exertion of its utmost power, is unable to advance a single step. The resolutions of the States were not responded to by the slightest increase of activity in the officers of the maritime affairs of government; but where the fault lay, whether in the negligence and misconduct of the councils of war and admiralty, in the sloth and cowardice of the commanders of the vessels, or in the secret instructions given by the stadtholder, it was impossible to determine, though the latter was strongly suspected. The ships remained as before, rotting in the ports; neglecting the convoy of the merchant-men, and allowing a comparatively insignificant squadron of the enemy to insult and threaten their coasts with impunity, and their merchant fleets to pass unmolested, though almost without protection.

From these and other causes, the Orange party began rapidly to lose ground in the United Provinces. Duke Louis of Brunswick, the guide of all the prince's sentiments and actions, became the first object of popular resentment. Without due consideration, perhaps, of the real and formidable difficulties that embarrassed both him and the stadtholder, and which

^a N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 453. Vad. Hist., b. 9, bl. 168.

1782 neither had sufficient talent or decision of character to cope with, the people ascribed all the neglect and omissions apparent in the government to a secret and corrupt understanding with England. Of this general feeling of discontent, the burgomasters and pensionary of Amsterdam, whose hostile position to the stadtholderal government we have already noticed, did not omit to take advantage. They now presented a petition to the stadtholder, complaining of Duke Louis as a stranger, to whom the welfare of the Provinces was of no concern, and whose interference prevented the exercise of those feelings of affection and respect which the inhabitants had always cherished for their stadtholder, and earnestly entreating his removal from public affairs. Friezland, a large majority in Holland, and the quarter of Zutphen in Guelderland, expressed their strong approbation of this memorial; nor had an appeal from Duke Louis to the States-General, demanding that the burgomasters and pensionary of Amsterdam should be compelled to prove the allegations or be punished as calumniators, any effect in removing from the public mind the sinister impression it had received. The quarter of Oostergouwe in Friezland even went so far as to offer a reward of one million of guilders for the discovery of the person to whose influence the neglect of the public business was to be attributed, or of any illicit correspondence with the enemy. Even Zealand itself, though formerly devoted to the interests of the stadtholder, sent a circular to the other provinces exhorting them to make strict inquiry into the causes of the inactivity of the maritime department, and to demand of the admiral-general, copies of the orders issued for the sailing of the squadrons and of the resolutions of the naval councils of war.

A similar proposition, particularizing with some 1782 emphasis all the gross faults and omissions that had occurred, being brought forward in the States of Holland by the deputies of Leyden, they received the thanks of the assembly; who, soon after, presented to the stadtholder, a second memorial, brought forward by Leyden, containing the stringent question;—"why, when the burgomasters of Amsterdam were informed in the last year that a number of men-of-war were ready for sailing, the commanders of those vessels should have declared themselves destitute of stores of every kind, and in a state unfit to obey their orders?" The stadtholder refused to reply to the petition, declaring himself responsible for his conduct to the States-General alone. To that body he delivered a long justification of his conduct, which serves but little towards putting him in the right in this momentous dispute. In it, he attributes the perpetual miscarriages in naval affairs to various natural and incidental causes;—the badness of the harbours, the dilapidated condition of the navy, the scarcity of seamen and provisions, and the unfavourable weather for leaving the ports; difficulties of which the greater part had existed at all times in an equal degree, and all of which it was the part of a leader, imbued with zeal for the public good, and who possessed the art of inspiring his subordinate commanders with a similar feeling, to have remedied or overcome. On the other hand, the want of sufficient ability or unanimity to arrange a regular and systematic plan for the defence and protection both of the coasts and of commerce is rendered very evident; as well as that either a most unjustifiable degree of latitude was given to the officers as to the execution of their orders, or that they were suffered to neglect them with a security of impunity

1782 which argued either a secret understanding with their superior, or a most unaccountable supineness in the latter. By the prince's own testimony it appears, that every one of his orders was met by objections and excuses on the part of the officers, and these not unfrequently of the most frivolous nature^o *.

Meanwhile an event occurred which, according to the opinion of many, rendered the evidence of treachery in some or other of the public officers so strong as to be almost incontrovertible. The French ambassador, De la Vauguyon, observing the Dutch ships useless in their ports, proposed that a squadron should be sent to join that of France at Brest, with the purpose of intercepting the convoys returning to the southern and western ports of England, while the fleet of that country was employed in throwing succours into Gibraltar. The proposition was coldly received by the stadtholder, who pleaded as an objection, that such a division of the naval force would prevent the due care of the fleets returning from the East Indies and the Baltic. The majority of the Provinces, however, were of opinion, that whatever the secret views of France with regard to them, the actual services she had rendered in the preservation of their colonies, and her generous conduct respecting St. Eustatius, entitled her to expect compliance with so moderate a request. Accordingly the States-General at once resolved, in conformity with the desire of De la Vauguyon, that a squadron of ten

^o Res. van de St., Jun. 8 and 21. Vad. Hist., b. 9, bl. 195, 229, 265, Memoire van Zyne Hoogheit, &c.

* For instance, the Admiral Hartsinck being commanded to join a convoy from Drontheim and the Baltic, pleaded as a reason for withholding obedience, the want of fresh water on board the ships.

vessels of war should be dispatched to co-operate with 1782 the French, and besought the admiral-general to issue orders pursuant to the resolution. He complied with their requisition, but in rather a singular manner; observing to the admiralty, that such were the orders of the States, but that if the ships could not be ready before the 8th of October they were to be considered as revoked. If the hint were meant it was well interpreted. The Count van Bylandt, who was appointed commander of the expedition, instead of obeying his orders, declared, that in consequence of a memorial delivered by the captains of nine out of the ten promised vessels, stating that they were utterly deficient in every necessary for the voyage, and for various other reasons too long to enumerate, he considered the expedition impracticable*. It was, accordingly, obliged to be abandoned. No sooner was this fact known than murmurs re-echoed on every side; the transaction was alleged to be the worst of the bad that had occurred during the war; taunts, insults, and insinuations of the most odious character, of which the prince and princess had their full share, were lavished unsparingly on every member of the government. The answer of the prince, to the inquiry of the States of Friezland, as to the cause of this miscarriage, that the failure was to be attributed as well to the unfavourable state of the weather as the unprepared condition of the ships, was deemed rather a mockery than a justification. It was considered scarcely credible, that ships said to be sufficiently equipped for the Baltic

* This admiral had been heard to say, that he would never execute the order though it should cost him his head; and that he preferred resigning his commission to delivering ten of the best ships of the Provinces to France, or placing himself under a French commander. *Vad. Hist.*, b. 15., bl. 160.

1782 should not be ready to sail to Brest; and particularly as the stadtholder had secretly informed one of the admirals, Hartsinck, of the design above a month previously. Many discrepancies also were found in the accounts given by the admiral and the captains. But one mode, therefore, remained of satisfying the nation; that of at once discovering the delinquents and visiting them with exemplary punishment^p.

Considerable delay, however, intervened before any step of the kind was taken^{*}; and discontent meanwhile rapidly ripened to disaffection. The popular clamour against Duke Louis of Brunswick ran so high, that he thought it advisable to quit the Hague and take up his permanent residence in his own government of Bois-le-Duc. So much, indeed, had the Orange party sunk in influence, that the measure, which of all others they were desirous of preventing, and had hitherto been able to retard, the recognition, namely, of the independence of the United States of America, was carried triumphantly.

A resolution to this effect being proposed in the States of Holland, was voted unanimously within a

^p Lett. of Stadt. to St.-Gen., Lett. Hist. and Pol., tom. xi., p. 138. Vad. Hist., b. x.

* It was only in the next year that a commission was appointed to inquire into the matter; and then its labours were so much impeded by the reluctance of most of the witnesses to give evidence relating to a transaction in which themselves were concerned, and the deficiency of any power in the committee to compel them, as well as the purposed absence of others, that the report was not given in before 1785. It stated, that the deficiency in the provision of the ships was to be attributed, partly to the admiralty of Amsterdam, partly to the commanders-in-chief, and those of the ships destined for the expedition; that this deficiency was not so great as to render the enterprise infeasible, but had been magnified into a pretext for its abandonment by those unwilling to engage in it; at the same time it entirely acquitted the admiral-general of the accusation, that he had given orders in contravention of those of the States-General.

week, and the example of that Province being followed by the remainder, John Adams, who had remained in the Hague since the last year without being able to obtain an audience of the States-General, was received in that body with all the honours due to the minister of an independent and sovereign republic. A treaty of amity and commerce was concluded on terms of equal advantage to both nations; and by it timber and ship's stores, the trade in which had been the cause of so much heartburning between England and the United Provinces, were expressly excluded from the list of contraband articles. Both nations promised themselves the most beneficial results from this union. Holland beheld in her young and vigorous ally, an able supporter, and a liberal consumer of her merchandize and manufactures; while the latter, at once enterprising and needy, hoped to find in the enormous wealth, which the impaired energies of the old republic rendered her little able to use for the advancement of her own power and dignity, those resources in which she herself was deficient. Accordingly, the first consequence of the alliance was a loan from the United Provinces to the American States of 5,000,000 of guilders under the guarantee of France. Shortly after, the States-General sent, as minister plenipotentiary to Congress, Peter van Berkel, burgomaster of Rotterdam, brother to the pensionary of Amsterdam, who had incurred the violent anger of England on account of the scheme he had drawn out for this very treaty^a. Yet the result grievously disappointed one at least of the contracting parties. America, instead of opening a

^a Schlözer's Staats-Anzeigen, A.D. 1783, bl. 134. Res. van de St., Mar. 28. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1781, bl. 1496.

1782 new vent for the commerce of the United Provinces, proved a rival far more formidable than England herself. So early as the year 1786, the merchants of that country had wrested from the Dutch a considerable portion of their trade to China, while the illicit traffic carried on from New York to their West India islands, Surinam, and the Cape of Good Hope, proved extensively detrimental to the trade of the mother country with those colonies^r.

The change of ministers in England, and the admission of the whigs to office, a maxim of whose policy it was, as we have observed, to cultivate the alliance of the Dutch republic, produced a mitigation of the system of hostility which had of late years been pursued with so much diligence and perseverance. The foreign affairs being now placed in the hands of Charles Fox, whose opinions as to the injustice and impolicy of the present war had often been strongly expressed, one of his first acts was to solicit the renewal of the mediation, offered by the Empress of Russia in the last year, to procure a separate peace with the States-General. Under the predominance of the party opposed to the stadtholder, however, that body unhesitatingly refused to listen to any proposals of such a nature except in conjunction with France; and demanded, as a preliminary, a full indemnification for the injuries which their commerce had sustained from the privateering of the English. But this courtesy was by no means returned by France; negotiations being soon after opened at Paris, without any communication to the States-General, for a general peace, of which the recognition of the independence of her colonies by Great Britain should be the basis. Fearing they

^r Vad. Hist., b. 38, bl. 29.

should find themselves totally excluded, the States 1782 dispatched Lestevenon van Berkenrode and Gerard Brandtsen, as their plenipotentiaries at the conferences; during the progress of which, Holland but too plainly perceived how low she had fallen in the estimation of the powers of Europe. The time had been when, in a similar congress, the movements of the whole complicated machinery awaited her impulse; when the instructions and opinions of her ministers, were anxiously looked to for guidance by those of the most powerful sovereigns; and when it was for her to incline the balance towards peace or war as she willed. But that time had now passed away. A proposition, sent by their plenipotentiaries at Paris to 1783 England, demanding the restitution of all the places conquered from them during the war and compensation for their losses, was answered with a haughty and unqualified rejection. As it had been framed with the cognizance and approbation of the French minister, De Vergennes, the States-General fully depended on that support from him of which they had received frequent promises, and that he would make some satisfaction at least to them, the preliminary to any treaty. Great was their amazement, therefore, to learn that the preliminaries had been signed by all the other powers, with no further regard to them than to include them without their sanction or knowledge in the preparatory armistice then agreed upon. The remonstrances of the Dutch ministers only served to draw from De Vergennes the unreserved confession of the principle on which he acted; that "each power must study its own interests, and those of France required peace."

England, finding her rival thus alone in her weakness, failed not to press upon her to the utmost.

1783 Whereas she had before offered to renew the treaty of 1674, she now refused the restoration of a single article of that treaty advantageous to the Dutch, declaring that the commercial relations of the two states should follow the ordinary principles of the law of nations, but insisted on their awarding her all the honours of the flag as then agreed on; she required the permanent cession of Negapatnam, and entire freedom of trade to all the Dutch colonies in the East Indies, and peremptorily refused the smallest compensation for the injuries inflicted by her privateers. As De Vergennes declared his inability to obtain from England any mitigation of the terms, and, as well as the ministers of Spain, proceeded to sign the treaty independently of the States-General, the latter had but the choice of accepting them or continuing the war alone. The majority only (the deputies of Guelderland, Zealand, and Groningen, having no powers) decided on the former alternative; and a treaty on these preliminaries was concluded in the following year*.

Each party blamed its adversary as the cause of this disgraceful and injurious peace; which was in fact to be attributed as well to the slothfulness and malversation of the one as to the hot-headed party-spirit of the other. The captain-general in particular became the object of the most sinister suspicions, because, when as yet scarcely any progress had been made in the preliminaries, he had attempted to weaken still further the already inefficient navy, and render the acceptance of a peace on any terms unavoidable, by proposing to withdraw the bounties to seamen, and to pay off some guard-ships and out-lyers; and had

* N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1782, bl. 454; A.D. 1783, bl. 68 et seq. 87 et seq. 407. Vad. Hist., b. 14, bl. 5—58.

induced the admiralty to disband a considerable 1783 portion of the naval force. The conduct of the government during the war, it was said, unparalleled in the history of the United Provinces, almost in the world, and its corrupt subservience to the enemy, had been such as to deprive their only sincere ally, the King of France, of the power of doing anything for their advantage, even if the disgraceful failure of the expedition to Brest had not taken from him the inclination. On the other hand, both the war and the peace which followed it were declared to be the work solely of that democratic and seditious faction in the provinces, who to serve their own party purposes had alienated their ancient and natural ally, and thrown themselves into the arms of a selfish and ambitious power who supported them only so far as it was conducive to her own interests, and had deserted them at the time of need.

Though the reproaches on both sides were not destitute of a large share of truth, the effect of the peace was chiefly inimical to the stadtholder, to whose already declining authority it gave a sensible shock. The Dutch now felt for the first time in all its force the consciousness of how deeply they were degraded in the eyes of Europe; they felt that if they had not been wanting to themselves, neither their enemy would have ventured to impose such conditions, nor their ally to leave them in such a situation as to render their acceptance unavoidable; they reflected, with bitter regret, on the brilliant position they had formerly occupied among nations; and, forgetting how low they had sunk before the establishment of the hereditary stadtholderate which they had hailed with such transport, they now attributed to that cause alone their present misfortunes, and began to view both the

1783 person and the office with contempt and aversion. They looked back to the customs and institutions under which they had so long flourished, and, unconsciously how unfit they had become to enjoy, and how unable to preserve them, fondly hoped that could these be once revived, or if a "fundamental restoration of the constitution," as they termed it, were effected, the recovery of the ancient power and dignity of the republic would be the necessary consequence. Among the institutions that had undergone the greatest change, was that which formed one of the essential characteristics of their nationality; the constitution of their municipal governments. After the establishment of the hereditary stadtholderate in 1747, and when the tide of popular opinion ran strongly in favour of increasing the stadtholderal authority in every way, the towns, weary of the bribery, bickerings, and party-spirit on a small scale, usually called forth by the annual change of the senates and the filling up of the vacancies as they occurred in the councils, had been induced to apply to the stadtholder to recommend persons to be put in nomination to these offices; and some of them had even placed the nomination wholly in his hands. The custom of giving these recommendations had been so constantly practised by the present stadtholder and his father, that it was come to be looked upon by the Orange party almost as a privilege inherent in the constitution of 1747; while the States' or "patriot" party considered it a long-standing abuse in itself, the maladministration of which rendered it yet more intolerable; the persons recommended by the stadtholder being frequently such as were expressly excluded by law, as not being burghers, and sometimes were not even natives of the province. Accordingly the majority of burgomasters and members of the

councils of most of the towns of Holland, Utrecht, and 1783 Friezland, now resolved, that in future they would pay no attention to the previous recommendation of the stadtholder, but proceed as formerly to the nomination of the senates on the appointed days, and send the names to him for selection; and that the vacancies in the councils should henceforth be filled up by themselves; a measure which the towns considered themselves fully competent to adopt, but which was bitterly complained of by William, as an encroachment on his rights and prerogative¹.

So long as the senates and councils were little else than the nominees of the stadtholder, it was scarcely surprising that the "schuttery," or bodies of burgher guards, whose allegiance was supposed to belong peculiarly to the former, and who were always viewed by the latter with jealousy and distrust, should, from a feeling of complaisance towards him, have been allowed to fall into a state of almost total decay. Now, however, so general was the unpopularity of the stadtholder, and so enraptured were all orders of men with the idea of restoring the ancient constitution of the republic, that notwithstanding no change had as yet taken place in the municipal governments, few or none hesitated to yield to the urgent demands of the burghers for the restoration of the schuttery. An universal military enthusiasm appeared all at once to seize on the people; bodies of burgher troops were enrolled in an incredibly short space of time, and supplied with arms and uniform, of which the expenses were partly defrayed by the funds of the towns, but a far larger portion by voluntary subscription; companies of armed volunteers, or, as they were afterwards called, "free-corps," were formed; and the "doels" or

¹ Res. van de St., Nov. 28, et passim.

1783 yards appropriated to the training of the schuttery, long silent and deserted, became once more the scene of numerous and brilliant assemblies met together to practise shooting at a mark and other military exercises^u.

Again, therefore, did Holland wear somewhat the appearance she had done in her high and palmy days; but it was as the withered and decrepit skeleton, donning the arms, and the helmet and plume of his youth; the vigour, the life-blood of disinterested zeal and patriotism were gone; and the reality of yesterday proved but the idle dream of to-morrow. The burghers on entering the ranks of the civic army thought less of the defence and protection of their country, than of the gratification of their own self-importance, and of displaying in this manner the numbers and strength of their party; and were as ready, should the slightest cause of exasperation arise, to turn their arms against their fellow-citizens as against the foreign enemy.

Holland was soon reminded of how many powerful hands were interested in fixing her fetters by the domineering mode in which the King of Prussia, uncle to the Princess of Orange, thought fit to interfere in the domestic affairs of the state. Among the remedial measures adopted at this time was a resolution passed by the provincial States abolishing the jurisdiction of courts martial, except in cases purely military; an amendment which the abuses that had crept into the administration of these courts rendered absolutely necessary. But as from their composition and constitution they were wholly under the control of the stadtholder, as captain-general, the attempt to limit their powers was deemed an attack on his prerogative. Hence Frederic took occasion to command his ambassador,

^u N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1783, bl. 791, 1171.

Thulemeyer, to deliver to the States-General a sharp remonstrance, condemning in many respects the treatment of the Prince of Orange, who cherished, he said, "the purest and most upright intentions towards the republic, which owed its existence and lustre to the blood and labours of his ancestors. All the other neighbouring powers were interested as well as himself in the support of the present system of government in Holland, and beheld with astonishment the contentions that existed and daily increased, in the bosom of the republic, which he exhorted them to quell, rather than employ themselves in diminishing the just rights and prerogatives of the stadtholder *." In the next year he sent a letter filled with animadversions on the same subject, when the States-General, instead of repudiating at once in indignant and decided terms, an interference so inimical to their own dignity, and indefensible by the law of nations, condescended to justify their conduct to the monarch; and some observations on his proceedings published in Holland and Utrecht being complained of by the ambassador, they carried their complaisance so far as to admonish the States of those provinces to search out and punish the writers and publishers of the papers in which they were contained. The deputies of Zierikzee alone expressed a just resentment, accompanied by a desire that the king would forbear to embarrass himself with the affairs of a republic of whose constitution it was impossible he could form a correct idea. But Thulemeyer, highly affronted, pronounced this declaration of their opinions, a premature, unjust, and indecent criticism on the actions of his sovereign. Neither his complaints, however, nor the admonitions of the States-General, could pre-

* Res. van de St., Aug. 6. Schlözer's Staats-Anz., A.D. 1783, bl. 508.

1783 vail with the provincial States to take any measures against the authors of the alleged libels; and the ambassador, finding his remonstrances against the manner in which the king's conduct was represented and canvassed of none effect, declared that his majesty could not interpret in other than an unfavourable manner their repeated refusals to impose some restrictions on the too great freedom of the press; and that he would be obliged to require satisfaction equivalent to the magnitude of the injury he had sustained^{*}. It is somewhat remarkable as an instance of the power which public opinion will still retain over those who aim to place themselves above its reach, that a monarch, noted for his indifference to observations and libels on his person and government in his own dominions, should have been so sensitively alive to those of a people he affected to despise. Here, however, the matter ended; the great Frederic, now reduced to the last stage of infirmity by the gout, was little inclined to disturb the repose of his declining years, or to risk involving himself in hostile relations with France, by taking up arms to avenge the stadtholder's quarrel, or kindling a civil war in the United Provinces.

The condition of the Dutch indeed, feeble, isolated and wealthy, was such as to offer a strong temptation to the less scrupulous among neighbouring princes to gratify their pride, ambition, or rapacity at their cost. But there was one from whom, above all others, they had a right to expect forbearance and generosity, and that one was Joseph II., emperor of Germany. Through their means, principally, it was, that the Netherlands had been preserved to the House of Austria; the protection of these provinces was the sole object for which they had ever, during the whole

^{*} N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1783, bl. 1023, 1108. Lett. Hist. et Pol., tom. xiv., p. 103, 187.

of their political existence, been tempted to declare 1783 offensive war; they had come forward in support of the late Empress Maria Theresa, and honestly kept the faith of treaties when the imminent peril of their own safety, and the example of the greatest monarchs of Europe, alike prompted its violation. Yet, unmindful of these considerations, Joseph had in the year 1781, remarking while on a journey through the Netherlands the weakness of the barrier towns, demanded that some should be dismantled, and the remainder, even Namur itself, delivered up to him; a requisition, which the States, having no means of resisting, were fain to comply with; and thus found themselves deprived in an instant of the barrier which (though experience had proved its inefficiency) had cost them so vast an outlay of blood and treasure to obtain. He now sought to take advantage of the distracted condition of the old and constant ally of his house, as a favourable opportunity for extending his dominion on the side of the Netherlands, and securing to his subjects of those provinces an increased commerce at her expense.

The first symptom he manifested of his rising ill-will, was the renewal and severe execution of a prohibition to neutral troops to pass over his boundaries; he next laid claim to some of the possessions of the States in Flanders, occupied two or three of their forts, declared he would not permit the smallest encroachment on his frontier, and as an evidence of this determination, caused the body of a soldier whom the garrison of Liefkenshoeck had buried, as was their custom, at the village of Doel, to be dug up and thrown 1784 into the fosse of the fort. These proceedings were, in answer to the expostulations of the States, justified in a haughty tone by the government at Brussels, and

1784 incessant complaints of the violation of territory by the Dutch soldiers, were closely followed up by a demand that the navigation of a portion of the Scheldt from Doel to Antwerp should be laid open. But however exorbitant, or in whatever offensive terms expressed, the States were fain to comply with a demand they were in no condition to resist at the risk of a war. They ordered their guard-ship to refrain from the exercise of search on the Austrian vessels, which had now continued ever since the peace of Munster; and, ere long, removed the ship itself to near Hulst, considerably farther from the Austrian boundary. Their complaisance, as usual in similar cases, only encouraged the Emperor to further aggressions. His troops threw down the fortifications of old Lillo (abandoned indeed, but still not belonging to him), and not only destroyed the barrier of the Scheldt at Simpelveldt, but carried his arrogance so far as to threaten to punish as thieves any persons who should raise tolls there. His ambassador, meanwhile, professed the most ardent desire for the continuance of peace, and testified extreme surprise at some slight preparations for resistance made by the States, and at the order they gave to the governors of the frontier towns to repel violence by force; declaring that his master would regard the smallest violation of his territory as an act of hostility. The States, however, whose tone in proportion as that of the Emperor was violent and overbearing, became pliant and submissive, showed no disposition to commit any such; but, appealing to the King of France as umpire, professed themselves willing to satisfy all the just claims of their antagonist. Joseph, however, refused the mediation of that prince, and added to his previous requisitions, that the navigation of the Scheldt should be thrown entirely open, together with

the trade to both the Indies, from the ports of the 1784 Austrian Netherlands. But in making this demand, he tried the patience of the States beyond even their endurance, and by grasping at too much, lost what he might have otherwise obtained.

The privilege of keeping the Scheldt closed, secured to them by the treaty of Munster in 1648, and wrested from Spain as the fruit of the longest and most glorious war ever waged by one nation against another, they cherished at once, as the remnant of their former greatness, and the prop and mainstay of their commerce; while the passage of the river once open to the Emperor, no impediment remained to hinder him, on the slightest cause of offence, from invading the islands of Zealand. Driven to desperation, therefore, by the demand, they at length felt themselves compelled to make a stand. They flatly refused to comply with the requisition, alleging, that the treaty of Munster had been confirmed by all succeeding treaties, and particularly by that of Utrecht in 1713, which alone gave the Emperor any right to the possession of the Netherland provinces. Nevertheless, Joseph commanded one of his captains, Van Iseghem, to sail his vessel direct from Antwerp to the sea without allowing himself to be searched by any Dutch ship, or submitting to the levy of any toll; having previously made a declaration, that he should consider a shot fired against one of his ships passing the Scheldt as the commencement of war. On the side of the States, Admiral Reynst received orders to sail from Zealand to the West Scheldt, for the purpose of preventing the passage of any ship from the Austrian Netherlands. Accordingly, Iseghem was fired upon, first with blank cartridge, afterwards with ball, and detained. In answer to a command from the States

1784 not to fire, which arrived two hours after, a message was sent back, saying, that the act was already done. The imperial vessel was released only on condition of her immediate return to Antwerp^v.

War, therefore, appeared inevitable. The Emperor began to make preparations for the march of 40,000 troops to the Netherlands, and hastily recalled his ambassador at the Hague. In this state of affairs, the States-General applied to the King of France for aid, who so far acceded to their requisition, as to address an emphatic memorial to the Emperor, purporting, that any attempt to invade a right of which the Dutch had now been in the undisturbed enjoyment for nearly a century and a half, would oblige him to send an army into the Netherlands, and to co-operate with other powers of Europe in adopting such precautions for their own safety as they might find necessary. Meanwhile, the States in the measures they took for their defence, showed a far greater degree of energy and unanimity than had of late distinguished their proceedings. They voted an addition of 10,000 foot and 1000 horse to their army, and commanded all the officers to fill up the number of their companies; they commissioned the Rhingrave of Salms to levy some regiments of German troops, and laid the land around Lillo and the other forts on the Scheldt, under water. But, lest this last step should close the door against an amicable settlement of the matter, they professed their readiness to indemnify such of the subjects of the Emperor as were sufferers by the inundation in case an accommodation were effected. The States-General likewise decreed a levy, according to the ancient custom, of every third man between the ages

^v N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1783, bl. 1887; A.D. 1784, bl. 39, et seq., bl. 1354—1475; A.D. 1785, bl. 375. Vad. Hist. b. 19, bl. 223—229.

of eighteen and sixty, except from those classes especially exempted by the edict. But its execution was attended with some difficulty in South Holland where the peasantry, among whom chiefly were to be found the partisans of the Prince of Orange, in several villages refused to submit to the ballot, because the proclamation was issued in the name of the States and not of the Prince, whom alone they would serve. They insulted and maltreated the bailiffs and other persons employed to distribute the lots, mounted the Orange cockade, formed themselves into companies, and sometimes proceeded to actual riot. In North Holland, where the people, as being more engaged in commerce, were more deeply interested in the question, the levy was carried on with ease and rapidity; and in the other provinces it met with comparatively little opposition^z.

But though a greater degree than usual of spirit and energy pervaded the counsels of the Dutch, the occasion which should have prompted them to bury at once all domestic differences in oblivion, and unite in an unanimous and strong effort to remedy, as far as possible, the evils they laboured under, served but to administer fresh fuel to the flames of civil discord. Making use of it as an engine to serve their party purposes, the States of Holland, under the plea of examining into the condition of the fortifications on the frontier, appointed a commission to this effect composed of the bitterest enemies of the stadtholder, the pensionaries of Dordrecht, Amsterdam, and Alkmaar (Gyzelaar, Visscher and Kempenaar), and granted them their special protection. This was nothing less than giving them to understand that

^z Lett. Hist. et Pol., tom. xv., p. 154. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1785, bl. 97, 105, 113, 189, 980.

1784 they might accuse the prince with safety of any act of negligence or criminality they may think fit. Accordingly, their report was such as might have been expected, and calculated to place the government in the most odious light before the nation.

The military defences of the frontier, it was said, and especially Dutch Flanders, a country so amply protected by nature, that according to the opinion of Koehoorn it was capable of forming the strongest barrier in the world, had been so entirely neglected, that there was not a single place where the point d'appui of an army could be formed with safety; and that to put the fortifications in the necessary state of repair would be the work, not of a few months of war, but of years of leisure and peace. The magazines and artillery were reported to be deficient, the Council of State having parted with many valuable pieces of ordnance for no apparent cause; they had likewise dismissed without reason a skilful cannon-founder, who immediately entered the service of England. Frequent and urgent remonstrances were upon record as having been made by the chief officers of the engineers and artillery, but without producing the slightest effect; a course of conduct, the commissioners observed, which forced upon their minds the conviction, that it was part of a system adopted to leave the country destitute of means for its own defence in order to oblige the inhabitants, through fear of foreign invasion, to seek protection under an arbitrary and unconstitutional power. Though they did not implicate the prince personally in these delinquencies, it was quite clear they could not have occurred without his knowledge and connivance^a.

The irritation of public feeling caused by these

^a Res. van de St., Jan. 28. Vad. Hist., b. 20, bl. 359.

representations, more especially against Duke Louis of 1784 Brunswick, whose influence, though absent, was still supposed to govern the court, received still further aggravation by the discovery made at this time of an act he had obtained from the young stadtholder on his majority, engaging himself to consult Duke Louis in the administration of all public affairs whatsoever, and that he should be answerable for the advice he gave to none but himself. This act, it was alleged, was in direct contravention of the oath taken by Duke Louis at the time of his appointment to the command of the troops, by which he was bound to abstain from all interference in matters relating to policy, justice, finance, or religion. The States of Friezland forthwith resolved that it was necessary for the peace and safety of the country that Duke Louis should be removed; the States of Holland passed a decree to the same effect; and a deputation from Amsterdam, Haarlem, and Dordrecht, was sent to the prince to concert measures for his speedy and peaceful evacuation of the territory of the United Provinces. This William absolutely refused to permit; but found ere long that his influence was no more sufficient to protect this obnoxious favourite.

The majority of the States of Holland resolved, that in obtaining the act in question from the stadtholder, without the knowledge of the States his sovereign, Duke Louis had perverted to the worst of purposes the influence he possessed over the mind of his pupil; that the act itself was null and void, and that he ought to be banished as a person dangerous to the safety of the United Provinces; and proposed in the States-General the adoption of this course, accompanied by deprivation of all the offices he held in their service. The nobility, however, and some of the smaller towns,

1784 declared themselves satisfied with the explanation of the act given by the stadtholder, and that they considered it far more inimical to social peace and security that any one should be banished on the ground of political expediency, than any act of the nature of that in question could be. Duke Louis himself sent a requisition to the five provinces which had not yet declared their opinions, complaining of the course taken by Holland and Friezland, and praying to be allowed to defend himself before the States-General. From Guelderland he received a favourable answer; but Utrecht and Zealand passed a resolution similar to that of Holland. Finding the tide of opinion thus too strong for him, he resigned his offices, sold his estates, and retired to Aix. He was afterwards accused of a design of obtaining the delivery of Maestricht to the Emperor; but as the imputation originated with the Rhingrave of Salms, whose integrity after events will prove was not to be relied on, there is every reason to believe the charge groundless^b.

Although the recall of his ambassador from the Hague and similar movements on the part of the Emperor, seemed to threaten instant hostilities, he was in no condition to follow up this commencement with much celerity. His Netherland States being totally destitute of troops and ammunition, it was necessary to await the slow and expensive transmission of both from Germany; while the discontents he had raised by the wild and impracticable projects of reform which have rendered his name so famous, made it dangerous for him to withdraw any large portion of the former from his other dominions, and the Turkish frontier

^b Copy of Act presented by the Prince of Orange to the States. Res. Ma. 26. Res. van de St., Aug. 18, Sep. 17, Oct. 20. Schlözer's Staats.-Anz., A.D. 1785, bl. 379.

required a powerful force for its protection. Under 1784 these circumstances many in the United Provinces strongly advised the commencement of offensive operations before the Emperor was in readiness; their own army, it was said, amounting to nearly 38,000 men, it would be easy, by striking the first blow with celerity and decision, to strip him of his Netherland possessions, where as yet there were no more than 14,000 troops; their forts on the Scheldt held the whole of the Maasland in subjection; and if their troops took up a strong position on the Meuse the enemy would find great difficulty in effecting the passage; while the Brabanters, who trembled at the approach of the German soldiers, would receive the Dutch with open arms. But these spirited, and as they would, there is little doubt, have proved in the end prudent counsels, were overruled by the dread of estranging the King of France if the States should act counter to the injunctions he had given them not to make the breach with the Emperor irreparable; and the increase of the Imperial army in the Netherlands, shortly after, rendered them less promising of success. 1785 On the other hand, the league now formed by the old King of Prussia and the German princes against the Emperor, on account of his meditated succession to the duchy of Bavaria, increased the disinclination he had already conceived to an undertaking which promised to be one of so much more difficulty than he had anticipated. He accordingly began to be sincerely desirous of an accommodation with the States, and offered to restrict his demand of the opening of the Scheldt to that portion of the river between Antwerp and Saftingen*. He still, however, insisted upon the evacuation of the forts of

* Opposite the eastern corner of South Beveland.

1785 Kruys, Frederic Henry, Lillo, and Liefkenshoeck, and that the boundaries of Flanders should be the same as those fixed by the treaty of 1664.

The influence of France so far prevailed with the majority of the States-General (Zealand, Friesland, and Groningen being dissentient) as to induce them to accede to the requisition of the Emperor, that they would send ambassadors to Vienna to treat of peace on this basis; a step which was justly considered as humiliating in the highest degree, and as wearing the semblance of soliciting the forbearance of their unprovoked and unjust aggressor. The Count Van Wassenaar and the Lord of Leyden being appointed to this office, a treaty was concluded on the above-mentioned preliminaries; the States agreed to pay the Emperor 9,500,000 in lieu of his pretensions to Maestricht, St. Servaas, &c.; all other pecuniary claims between the two sovereigns being abandoned, and those which concerned subjects, to be settled by umpires. But the treaty was received with anything rather than satisfaction or unanimity in the United Provinces. All, even those most anxious for an accommodation allowed that the conditions were deeply degrading; the three Provinces which had opposed the acceptance of the preliminaries declared that the chances of a war were far preferable to such a peace, and the question of the ratification was with difficulty carried through the States-General by a majority of one^b.

But how disadvantageous soever the treaty to the Dutch, it appeared as though the Emperor thought he had conceded too much in allowing them the enjoyment of what they yet retained of the privileges secured to them by the treaty of Munster. Before

^a *Vad Hist.*, b. 25, bl. 230. *N. Nederl. Jaarb.*, A.D. 1785, bl. 1245.

the conclusion of the peace, he had already prepared 1735 to evade its provisions by commencing a canal to join that of Bruges with the Zwin; and this work he now completed so as to be available for the navigation of 1786 small craft. The States, alleging that the Zwin was as expressly closed by the treaty of Munster as the Scheldt, stationed a hoy at the mouth of the former river, to preclude the passage to the sea; and it seemed probable that the quarrel would be renewed in all its acrimony. Eventually, however, the revolt in the Emperor's Netherland dominions suspended his further prosecution of the affair^d.

Meanwhile affairs in the United Provinces were rapidly verging to that state of anarchy, which, affording a pretext for foreign interference, led to the invasion, and ultimately to the fall of the nation. The States party, now again numerous and powerful, had become more and more deeply enamoured of their project of a "fundamental restoration of the constitution." With this were interwoven ideas of national freedom and happiness (which never have been and, it is to be feared, never will be realized) imbibed from the political writings of the day; the works of Drs. Price and Priestley in especial, translated into Dutch, were read by all ranks of men with avidity and admiration. The first measure necessary to the desired restoration was considered to be the resumption from the stadtholder, not only of the authority he had been tacitly allowed to usurp, but of that also which had been legally, however hastily and rashly, conferred on him by the Act of 1747; and accordingly every pretext which offered itself for the accomplishment of this object was eagerly seized upon.

In the last year the populace of the Hague, always

^d Vad. Hist., b. 30, bl. 115, et seq.

1786 much attached to the family of Orange, and irritated at beholding the decline of the influence of the stadtholder, had, on the occasion of his birthday, created some disturbance by marching about in troops decorated with Orange colours, pelting some of the patriot members of the government with stones and filth, breaking the windows of their houses, and similar proceedings, by which Dutch mobs have at all times been accustomed to indulge in the display of their sentiments. A large crowd likewise assembled on a part of the quay where they knew that two of the most active leaders of the patriot party, Van Berkel and De Gyze-laar, were expected to land on their return from a pleasure excursion, and with so menacing an appearance, that the pensionary found it necessary to send a strong guard to escort these persons to their homes. These doings were judged of by the two parties according to the difference of their feelings towards the cause in which they had their origin; the one, regarding them as the mere ebullition of wanton but harmless mirth; while by the patriots, who were, or affected to be, convinced that the stadtholder was the secret promoter of the tumult, and that it was purposed to enact the scene of the De Witts over again, they were condemned as riotous, seditious, and a dangerous defiance of the public authorities. The prince accordingly had remained quietly in his house without taking any measures to arrest the disorder. The States of Holland interpreting this conduct as a wilful dereliction of duty, passed a resolution, unanimously with the exception of the vote of the nobility, depriving him of the command of the garrison at the Hague, and the privilege hitherto always enjoyed by the captains-general of giving the watchword. William presented himself the same evening before the assembly and

complained in vivid terms of this resolution, declaring ¹⁷⁸⁶ that he was always ready to adopt any measures the States might advise for the suppression of disturbances. Nevertheless the States persevered in their determination; and William retired shortly after in anger and disgust to his country-house at Loo, near Nimeguen. From thence he addressed to the States a memorial demanding the restoration of the command at the Hague, as a right inherent in his office, and threatening never to return thither if it were refused; a threat which was attended with so much effect, that the question being again mooted, it was decided against him by a majority of one only ^c.

So far the States had unquestionably a right to resume a portion of the authority they had so prodigally lavished on their too powerful subject; on experience of its pernicious consequences, and the dereliction of duty on his part appears to have rendered the exercise of that right justifiable in the present instance. But the measure was followed by others, which partook more of the character of vindictiveness and encroachment, than of necessary precaution or restriction. In the diminution of the forces consequent on the cessation of the probability of war, the States of Holland disbanded such regiments as they thought fit, without the concurrence of the captain-general; they refused to promote at his recommendation, which it had hitherto been the invariable custom to comply with, the Princes of Waldek and Hesse Darmstadt, officers in the service of the States-General, and retained in their own particular pay the Rhingrave of Salms and his corps, which had been disbanded by the States-General; and at the same time the Admiralty

^c Res. van de St., Jul. 27. Hist. de Fred. Guil. 2^{me}, tom. i., p. 189. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1785, bl. 1485, et seq.

1786 of Amsterdam resumed the disposal of the offices which they had formerly ceded to the stadtholder as admiral-general.

Nor were the other provinces in a state of less ferment and disquietude than Holland. In Utrecht, Overyssel, and Guelderland, the "regulations" upon which these provinces had been re-admitted to the Union, and which had been confirmed in 1750 were now held up to public abhorrence as a code framed to support the tyranny of a selfish and oppressive oligarchy, and the rock whereon the liberties and happiness of the inhabitants had been wrecked. In the city of Utrecht the burghers drew up a code reforming these offensive regulations, and endeavoured to impose on the Great Council an oath to observe it. But as the members were principally friends and dependants of the Prince of Orange, the majority refused to subscribe to any such oath; whereupon the burghers took on themselves to declare all the recusant members deprived of their offices, and to fill their places with others of their own nomination. The deposed councillors appealing to the States of Utrecht, who on the breaking out of these commotions had retired to Amersfoort, and obtained from the stadtholder a garrison for their protection, it was resolved in that assembly, that no deputies from the city of Utrecht should be admitted unless sent by the former council of the city. The new council, in answer, adopted the bold measure of declaring the assembly of the States at Amersfoort illegal, and absolving the burghers from their oath of allegiance to it. Overyssel, with the exception of Zwol, was, notwithstanding the vast influence of the stadtholder, entirely "patriotic;" but in Guelderland, where parties were more equally divided, affairs as-

sumed a formidable aspect. The burghers of most of 1786 the towns of that province had presented to the States and to their respective governments, petitions for the revival and improvement of the regulations of 1750; for a general defensive arming, for an examination into the funds of the generality, and other measures of amendment which they considered requisite. But the majority of the States, composed, it is said, entirely of the servants and creatures of the Prince of Orange, not only rejected these petitions, but issued an edict rather befitting a despotic monarchy than a free republic, forbidding any petition to be signed by more than six persons, unless with the authority of a proctor, who should be answerable for its contents.

This edict, the small towns of Hattem and Elburg, which had throughout been the most conspicuous on the patriot side, absolutely and steadily refused to publish; a show of contumacy which justified the States, they conceived, in applying to the captain-general for troops to be quartered therein for the purpose of restoring peace, although, in reality, not the slightest act of violence had been committed. The prince immediately dispatched General Sprenghel with two regiments of infantry, four squadrons of dragoons, six pieces of heavy cannon, and several field-pieces. On their approach the two towns put themselves into a state of defence; but the fortifications of Elburg being utterly untenable, the inhabitants came to the singular resolution of abandoning it in a body, together with their families. A slight resistance made by Hattem served only as a pretext for pillage by the soldiers.

¹ N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1786, bl. 756, 826, et seq. Vad. Hist., b. 27, bl. 236. Lett. de M. de Rayneval au C. de Goertz, Pièces Authen. pub. à Nimeguen, 1787. Hist. de Fred. Guil. 2^{me}, tom. i., p. 215. Ellis's Revolution of the Dutch Republic, p. 143.

1786 As the regular and constitutional mode of proceeding with towns on similar occasions of recusancy, was to send a deputation of remonstrance from the States, this exertion of military force, uncalled for as it appeared, was animadverted upon by the "patriot" party, in terms of mingled complaint and indignation. The States of Holland, in particular, took such violent umbrage at the measure, that they had, on intelligence of the application to the stadtholder for troops, passed a resolution, that none of those in their pay should be employed in interfering in any domestic disturbances of the towns of another province; and accompanied the resolution by a vehement exhortation to the States of Guelderland and Utrecht, not to permit the military force to be used for the purpose of stifling the just complaints and demands of the people. The body of the nobility in the States of Holland, having ventured to declare their opposition to this motion, were told in terms of some asperity, that they would, ere long, be constrained to give, before the face of the nation and to posterity, the explanation of the system by which they endeavoured to thwart all measures of public utility.

It may be doubted, indeed, whether any benefit were likely to accrue to the stadtholder from this measure, to compensate for the handle it afforded his enemies against him. De Gyzelaar lost no time in bringing forward a proposition in the States of Holland, that unless William gave unequivocal testimony of his disapprobation of the employment of troops in Guelderland, he should be suspended from the office of captain-general. This was approved of by ten towns without hesitation or restriction; and a second proposition, that the commanders of troops in the pay of Holland should be enjoined to obey

no orders of march that were not confirmed by the 1786 States of the Provinces, passed almost unanimously*. It was hardly to be supposed, that the stadtholder would consent to stultify himself, by professing his disapprobation of a measure, in the execution, if not in the concoction of which, he had been so active an agent; and his answer, that he had "taken no steps, except by desire of the States of Guelderland, whose orders he was bound to obey," was accordingly as strong a disclaimer of the responsibility attached to it, as could well be expected. It was, however, voted unsatisfactory by the States of Holland, who proceeded to suspend him, except as regarded the foreign troops, from his office of captain-general, the exercise of which was declared incompatible with the safety of the Province; the dissentient voices being only those of Delft, Briel, and Hoorn. Immediately addresses of congratulation and approval, some couched in language highly inflammatory and injurious to the stadtholder, poured in from the towns of Holland; that from Amsterdam, though only a cold and vacillating supporter of the patriot party, being signed by above 16,000 persons.

The first use the States made of the military authority thus wrested from the stadtholder, was anything rather than demonstrative of their prudence or patriotism. In the present uncertain disposition of the Emperor, when it behoved them to be most especially on their guard against his aggressions, they withdrew the troops in their pay from the frontier towns of the generality, and placed them in a line

* Res. van de St., Mar. 16, Sept. 4, 6, 8, 22, Oct. 20, Nov. 2, 3, 8, 9.

* This act was by no means unprecedented in the United Provinces. Friesland and Groningen had, in the year 1684, recalled the troops in their pay from Flanders. Neg. d'Avaux, tom. iii., p. 19, 58.

1786 of observation on the boundary of the province towards Guelderland and Utrecht, with orders (somewhat repugnant to the resolution they had lately passed,) to hold themselves in readiness to march into either province on a given signal^b.

Considering how deeply many neighbouring powers were interested in the support or abasement of the stadtholderal authority, it would have been a matter of surprise, had the States of Holland been allowed to go on long in their present course, without the interference of some one at least of those powers. England and Prussia had both presented emphatic memorials, deprecating the existing dissensions, and proffering their services as mediators; an offer which, on the part of the latter, was renewed after the death of Frederic III. by his successor, Frederic William II., brother of the Princess of Orange, in terms considerably more dictatorial than heretofore, and already indicative of a disposition to enforce his mediation if it were not accepted. The King of France, on the other hand, with whom the States had now, in defiance of the Prince of Orange, formed an intimate alliance, had hitherto supported the patriots in all their proceedings against the stadtholder, and given them express and repeated assurances of assistance in case of necessity; but, at this juncture, desirous of conciliating the good will of the new monarch of Prussia, he sent M. de Rayneval to the Hague, with powers to enter into a negotiation with the Count de Goertz, ambassador of Frederic William, at the court of the stadtholder at Loo, with a view to an accommodation between the contending parties. Rayneval proposed, that the prince should express his regret for the occurrences in Guelderland;

^b Res. van de St., Sep. 7, Oct. 6.

should desire the States of that province to remove 1786 the garrisons from Hattem and Elburg; and consent to the revision of the regulations of 1674, in order to the accomplishment of such a reformation as might be considered necessary; when Holland could have no pretext left for refusing to withdraw the cordon of troops from the frontier of Utrecht and Guelderland, or for continuing the suspension of the office of captain-general¹.

Unhappily, the Princess of Orange, to whom the Prussian ambassador submitted these conditions, alleging that they were of so offensive a nature she could not venture to propose that part relating to the regulations to her husband, took the matter entirely into her own hands. She demanded the unconditional revocation of the suspension—the cause of which, she said, was a matter wherein the States of Holland had not a shadow of right to interfere, since the prince, having acted in the capacity of captain-general of Guelderland, was responsible to the States of that province only—and the restoration of the command of the garrison at the Hague; observing, that the regulations of the governments of Utrecht, Overyssel, and Guelderland, could not become a subject for present consideration, since any changes which the stadtholder might think fit to make therein was an affair of purely domestic concernment. Had the princess condescended to enter into discussion upon the terms, there is little doubt that the States might have been induced to soften the most obnoxious points, and matters have been thus happily accommodated; but by this haughty rejection of all negotiation, she destroyed the last hope of conciliation,

¹ N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1785, bl. 1576, 1639; A.D. 1786, bl. 1018. Lett. de M. de Rayneval au M. le C. Goertz, Pièces Authentiques.

1786 and embittered the angry feelings of her opponents to exasperation. In addition to this ill-judged course of conduct, the prince was induced to present a remonstrance to the States-General, in which, expressions of anxiety for the welfare and happiness of the Provinces, and the justification of his own acts and motives, were intermingled with sharp upbraidings, and insulting animadversions on the conduct and motives of his adversaries¹.

The patriots, on the other hand, were equally regardless of the rules of justice, prudence, and decorum. The newspapers and other public prints were filled with virulent abuse of the person of the stadtholder; he was compared to Philip III. and the Duke of Alva, though with the distinction that Philip, how tyrannical soever, was still a legitimate sovereign, while the prince was only an unfaithful minister, "whose heart was as corrupt as his mind was narrow^k." The large sums he received in different ways out of the public treasury, were scrutinized and enumerated with malicious exactness; and the exemption from the extraordinary land-tax which the stadtholders were accustomed to enjoy, was withdrawn. Besides these useless and unjustifiable modes of irritation, he was refused by the States of Holland, the continuance of those marks of sovereignty which he ought never to have been allowed to assume, but of which it was invidious now to deprive him. His arms were changed for those of the States in the heading of all public documents, and even on the boxes of the couriers; the same was done with respect to the standards of the

¹ Lett. of the Princess of Orange to Count Goertz, *Pièces Authentiques*. Res: van de St., A.D. 1787, Mar. 30.

^k *Vad. Hist.*, b. 31, bl. 413. *N. Nederl. Jaarb.*, A. D. 1786, bl. 120, 121; A. D. 1787, bl. 52.

troops; his guard was now called the States' guard; 1786 and the gate at the Hague, which had hitherto been used only by the stadtholders, and from thence termed the stadtholder's gate, was thrown open during the time the States were assembled.

This last untimely exertion of authority had well nigh proved the cause of a serious tumult. The populace of the Hague conceiving it a personal insult offered to the prince, on one occasion when the deputies of Dordrecht, Gevaarts and De Gyzelaar, were returning in their carriage from the assembly of the States, collected together in great numbers at the gate, headed by one Mourand, and seizing the reins of the horses, attempted to turn them back by force. The mob was with some difficulty dispersed by the bailiff and his attendants, and Mourand was seized, tried, and condemned to death for high treason, on the ground that he had attempted to excite the people to a massacre of the two deputies, similar to that of the De Witts. He was respited, however, at the intercession of De Gyzelaar¹.

Scarcely had the patriot party obtained by the subjection of its opponent a more extended sphere of action, than it became evident on how tottering a foundation it was raised, and what heterogeneous and ill-assorted materials a common sentiment of aversion to the stadtholder and his court had hitherto held together*. They now discovered that they had made 1787 the "fundamental restoration of the constitution" the

¹ N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1786, bl. 186, et seq.

* In one important particular, the effect of the decline of the Orange party was most beneficially manifested; in the improvement, namely, of the navy, which it was the policy of that party to keep constantly in an inefficient condition, as well out of complaisance to England, as because it was less under the control of the stadtholder than the army.

1787 object of all their desires and efforts, without having formed any regular plan of carrying it into effect, and even without any exact and fixed idea of what they themselves meant by the term. Some desired only the reduction of the power of the stadtholder within the same limits as before the year 1747, and the re-establishment of the constitution of municipal councils, such as they were at that time; others aimed at the restoration of the government to the same state as in the year 1651, when the stadtholderate was abolished; while a third proposed to itself, besides the destruction of that office, that of the hereditary aristocracy, together with the formation of a constitution on an entirely popular basis. In proportion as their views and opinions became, under the sunshine of prosperity, more developed, the two extremes began to regard each other with scarcely less of suspicion and aversion than they had before felt towards the Orangeists. The popular party accused the aristocrats, as they termed them, of desiring to circumscribe the authority of the stadtholder, only to substitute that of an oligarchy in its room; while the aristocrats condemned the popular party as dangerous innovators, whose principles, destitute of the guide of the ancient constitution of the country, tended to nothing less than anarchy and confusion. Of the aristocratic party, the pensionary of Holland, Bleiswyk, was considered the organ;—a man of superior talent, profoundly versed in state affairs, in geometry and the exact sciences, but temporizing and deficient in energy and steadiness of purpose; of the second, the leaders most in repute, were De Gyzelaar, pensionary of Dordrecht, Van Berkel, pensionary of Amsterdam,

The fleet of the States now consisted of ninety-one vessels, of which nine carried 74 guns, besides brigs and cutters. *Vad. Hist.*, b. 38, bl. 58.

and Zeebergen, pensionary of Haarlem, all men 1787 distinguished for spirit, talent, and ability.

The third section of the patriot party, inferior to the two former in numbers and intelligence, far surpassed them both in violence and activity. Under numerous leaders of no note, it had obtained an extensive control over the governments of the towns by means of bodies of men called "commissioners of the burghers," whom such of the inhabitants as were dissatisfied at being excluded from all share in the nomination of the municipal governments, had appointed, ostensibly to watch over their interests, but who virtually suspended the authority of the regular councils by keeping them in such constant dread of popular sedition that they dared decide on no measure contrary to their wishes. Of this party, also, were most of the members of the armed companies of volunteers, or "free corps." The first establishment of these companies had been, as we have observed, simultaneous with the renovation of the schuttery in 1783, and since that time, their formation had continued with such activity, that they were to be found in nearly every town of the provinces. These troops, not being, like the schuttery, under the command of the burgomasters of the towns to which they belonged, but deriving their support from voluntary contributions collected by a society of persons assuming the name of "free and patriotic rulers," considered themselves amenable to no recognised authority, and scarcely paid obedience even to their own commanders. Lawless, reckless, and with arms ready for any use in their hands, they by degrees forced every other body in the state to submit to their dictation. In Holland, they took upon themselves to form a commission for the purpose of summoning an assembly of deputies

1787 from themselves, from the schuttery, and from the patriotic societies in different parts of the Provinces, to consider of the measures to be adopted for the safety of the country.

The assembly convened under such auspices, demanded of the States in its turn, that they should appoint a commission to regulate matters relating to the influence of the people in the government; that Holland should cease to pay its quota towards the funds of the generality, except as regarded the interest of the debt*, until the stadtholder was suspended from that office and from the captain-generalship of the generality, and all the emoluments he enjoyed therefrom withdrawn; and that they should bring the enemies of the state to reason by the united power of the burghers and military; or in other words that the "free-corps" should be allowed to force such measures as they pleased upon whom they pleased. These requisitions were accompanied by a threat that unless an answer were given within fourteen days it would be considered as a refusal, and other measures taken to satisfy the people. Nevertheless the States ventured to have recourse to that system of delay by which they were accustomed to elude demands they were disinclined to comply with and not in a situation to refuse; and the discussions on the question were purposely protracted until a change in affairs rendered a decision no longer necessary. The same fate attended the requisition of Woerden, Heusden, and some other small towns in Holland appertaining to the generality, for a sitting and vote in the States of the province; a scheme which as it would be utterly

* A remarkable proof that even the fury of party strife did not cause any class of persons in Holland, to lose sight of the importance of sustaining the national credit.

subversive of the influence of the great towns, was 1787 offensive in the highest degree to the aristocratic section of the patriot party.

A motion brought forward by the deputies of Haarlem to consider of the most advisable mode of admitting the people to a share in the government, was evaded in a somewhat similar manner, by the appointment of a committee for that purpose consisting of several of the adherents of the Orange party^m.

The failure of these projects, which was attributed to the dereliction of some of the towns, especially Amsterdam, and the temporary union of the aristocrats with the Orangeists, convinced the popular party of the necessity of securing a decided and steady majority in the States of Holland; the only mode of effecting which was, to change the government of those towns where the majority of the members were of the adverse party, or where the two were so equally divided as to render the votes uncertain. The first step was made at Amsterdam, where the burghers and free-corps assembling in an immense crowd round the guildhall, forced the council to cashier nine of their body and appoint new ones agreeable to the popular party. Encouraged by this success, the free-corps then proceeded from town to town, and, with the assistance of the "commissioners of the burghers," displaced all the members both of the senates and councils whom they judged favourable either to the aristocratic or Orange party, and appointed in their room such as it pleased them to distinguish by the name of patriots. They likewise disarmed all the companies of schuttery favourable to the Prince of

^m Hist. de Fred. Guill. 2^{me}, tom. i., p. 301. Vad. Hist., b. 39, bl. 252—264. Res. van de St., Jan. 30, Mar. 30, Ma. 25.

1787 Orange, as well as such members of their own bodies as were inclined to the same cause.

These excesses soon alienated entirely the minds of the so-called aristocrats, and of the more moderate of the patriot party. They reflected, that however inimical to freedom the exorbitant power of the stadtholder, the license of troops of undisciplined soldiery was still more so; and however the malversation or incapacity of their late government had brought them under the contempt of foreign nations, their patient endurance of the dominion of the lowest and most ignorant of their countrymen would sink them still lower in public esteem. Numbers, therefore, began to drop off to the party of the stadtholder, which daily gained strength; and a master-stroke of policy devised by William Van Bentinck, an active and spirited youth of three-and-twenty, contributed greatly to its advancement.

Perceiving the advantage which the patriots had gained by the establishment of political societies under names significant of the object for which they were formed—the promotion, namely, of the liberty and happiness of their country—he effected the formation of a similar society, first at the Hague, termed the “real patriotic society,” and afterwards at many other towns. These societies proved at once formidable rivals to their opponents, and rallying-points to members of their own party; and under their auspices petitions for the restoration of the privileges and dignity of the stadtholder were drawn up and presented from the open country and several towns, even of those most conspicuous in the States as advocates of the patriot party, as Leyden, and Gorcum; at Amsterdam it was signed by above eight hundred persons^a.

^a N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 681, 1295, 1309.

At the Hague, where the people, especially of the 1787 lower ranks, were at all times strongly attached to their stadtholders, public opinion began to manifest itself more boldly. Notwithstanding an edict published (in 1785) against wearing Orange colours, and that the penalty of death was threatened if the offence were accompanied by any seditious movement*, persons now and then ventured to appear with the obnoxious badge in defiance of the authorities; the cry of "Orange boven," the watchword of the party, was often heard resounding through the streets at the dead of night; and the populace appeared every moment on the eve of an outbreak. On one occasion, the States' guard, on assembling in the morning, found that their flag, bearing the insignia of the States' arms, had a gallows painted on it to which the lion was suspended by a rope passed round the neck. A reward of no less than a thousand ducats was offered for the discovery of the perpetrator of this exploit, who taking flight, sentence of banishment was pronounced against him. So insecure indeed did some of the members of the patriot party consider that the Hague was now become for the assembly of the States of Holland, that Haarlem and Schoonhoven refused to send any more deputies unless the garrison were reinforced with the regiment of the Rhingrave of Salms. Nor were their fears by any means groundless; since the schuttery, the principal means of defence, were devoted to the Prince of Orange. The States, therefore, having admitted a company of free-

* So jealous was the States' government in this respect that they caused the glasses and pots containing Orange-coloured flowers to be removed from the windows of the inhabitants, (Vad. Hist., b. 44, bl. 69) and it is even said, that carrots were not allowed to be exposed for sale with their roots outwards. Rev. of Dutch Rep. p. 113.

1787 corps, commanded by Lieutenant Sonnoy, were fain to disarm the schuttery altogether^o.

While thus divided among themselves, in subjection to one portion of their subjects and in dread of another, the States of Holland had lost their majority in the States-General. Friesland, in which the great body of the patriots might be considered to belong to the aristocratic section of that party, now deserted it altogether, and voted from henceforward constantly in favour of the stadtholder. Zealand, likewise, which at an early period of the discontents had concurred in most of the resolutions adverse to the stadtholder—in the condemnation of the inactivity of the government during the war with England—in the endeavours to remove Duke Louis of Brunswick—and in the abolition of the courts martial, was now alienated from the States of Holland by a dispute concerning a proposed reform in the administration of the affairs of the East India Company, which the States of Zealand considered would throw too great influence into the hands of those of Holland.

This circumstance was dexterously taken advantage of by the Pensionary Van de Spiegel, a man of talent and energy, and a devoted partisan of the house of Orange, to extend and strengthen that party. Not allowing time for the feelings of anger to subside, he drew up an address of thanks to the States for the wisdom of their government, in which the calumnies and libels against the stadtholder and his friends were spoken of in strong terms of reprobation, and the conduct of that prince from the beginning of the English war, pronounced such as to merit the approval of his country and of posterity. This address, numerously signed by the burghers of the towns, was

^o N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 213. Vad. Hist., b. 41, bl. 67.

answered in corresponding terms by the States except 1787 Flushing and Zierikzee. Thus confident of their support, Van de Spiegel obtained of the States the appointment of a committee to examine into the causes of the present disturbances. Its report was such as fully to answer his expectations. It declared that the present troubles were fomented chiefly by the use of badges and party names; by the establishment of patriotic societies and companies, particularly the free-corps; the levy of funds in the name of the "free and patriotic rulers," without cognizance of the State; and the unexampled and unrestricted license of the press.

The States accordingly passed a resolution, forbidding the introduction of these "odious novelties;" and that instructions should be given to their deputies at the States-General to use their best endeavours that the stadtholder should be recalled and restored to his just rights. By virtue of this edict, the patriotic societies were dissolved, the free-corps cashiered, and the patriotic fund seized for the use of the government. Another resolution passed in the States, that no question referred to them should be allowed to occupy more than four weeks in deliberation, deprived the minority (Zierikzee and Flushing) of their only chance of thwarting an unpalatable measure,—that of delay. Accordingly, the Province of Zealand was at this time the one upon which the stadtholderal party could the most firmly depend. The States of Utrecht and Guelderland, as before mentioned, were, in consequence of their constitution under the regulations of 1674, subservient to the stadtholder. Overijssel, however, in spite of the same circumstance, was patriotic; and, with Groningen, supported the measures of Holland. But as these two provinces were of comparatively

1787 slight consideration in the States-General, the struggle was now ostensibly between that body in its entire, and the States of Holland; and now that affairs appeared verging to a crisis, the first object of both was to obtain as many as possible of the troops at their disposal^p.

The States-General first called in question the orders which Van Ryssel, general-in-chief of the troops in the pay of Holland, had given in conformity with his instructions, that they were to advance into the Province of Utrecht at a given signal^q, and enjoined the troops, if the orders of march into another province given by the States of Holland were not confirmed by the States of the province in question, to withhold their obedience; at the same time summoning Van Ryssel to give an account of his conduct. This general, placed in the embarrassing situation of choosing whether to obey the States-General or the States of Holland, to both of whom he had sworn allegiance, decided in favour of the latter, his paymasters, to whom he had taken a new oath of special obedience in the last year. The other officers and soldiers found themselves in a like difficulty; all such as did not obey their orders being cashiered by the States of Holland. The consequences of this measure, however, were detrimental in the highest degree to the patriot party; since the number of officers and men who were displaced, or who deserted from the service of Holland, was so great as materially to weaken the army of observation on the frontier of Utrecht and Guelderland. The States-General, in their turn, indemnified all those cashiered by the

^p Vad. Hist., b. 36, p. 142, et seq., b. 52, bl. 247—302. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 317—337.

^q Vide page 506.

States of Holland; suspended Van Ryssel; and com-1787
manded his officers, instead of obeying him, to retire
to some place where they would be secure from any
constraint to act contrary to their duty to the
generality^r.

Meanwhile, hostilities (which will be noticed here-
after) had commenced at Utrecht, and the States of
Holland thought it time to adopt measures for their
own protection. They formed a league of mutual
defence with that city, and to obviate the danger of
an armament on the Zuyderzee, either against it or
their own provinces, commanded the admiralty not
to permit the use of ships of war or ammunition,
except for the protection of foreign trade and naviga-
tion. On the proposition of Van Berkel, pensionary
of Amsterdam, the States also appointed a commission
of defence, consisting of five members and a secretary,
who took up their abode at Woerden, with the view of
superintending the operations of the cordon of troops,
which extended through Kronenburg, Wesep, and
Muyden, to Geertruydenburg on the one side, and on
the other, through Oudewater, Ysselstein, and Vianen
to Gorcum. Several companies of free-corps marched
to the frontier; but before their departure, these
licentious bands forced the States to set aside a con-
siderable sum out of the public treasury for their
support, and to engage, that when the present troubles
were appeased, the people should be admitted to a
due share in the government; and published a decla-
ration that they would execute severe vengeance upon
all such as committed pillage, insult, or violence,
against their wives and families during their absence
on the service of the country; as well as upon those

^r N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 887, 930, 1212. Res. van de St.,
A.D. 1787, Ma. 23, Jun. 10.

1787 officers of justice whom they should find to have been guilty of negligence in repressing such excesses*.

But the "commission of defence," destitute of executive authority, served but little other purpose than to retard operations. The Council of State refused the artillery demanded by them for the defence of Krimpenland; and their representations of the necessities which prevailed in the camp were met by the States of Holland, as well as the Council of State, with their usual tardiness and indecision. It was at length found necessary to invest them with enlarged, and indeed, almost dictatorial powers, but this measure was adopted too late to produce any beneficial effect of importance. The commission appointed, as commander-in-chief of the troops, the Rhingrave of Salms, a foreigner, held at this time in high estimation by some of the patriot party, especially the free-corps†.

The stadtholder, meanwhile, losing all hope of effecting his restoration to power otherwise than by force, had resolved upon the commencement of actual hostilities, and obtained from the States of Utrecht assembled at Amersfoort, orders to the Count Van Efferen, to occupy the post of Jutphaas near the city of Utrecht, the garrison of which had been reinforced with a considerable number of volunteers from Haarlem, Leyden, and other parts of Holland. On intelligence of his approach, d'Averhoul, a member of the council of Utrecht, sallied out with about 300 men, attacked the enemy near Jutphaas, and after a sharp encounter, forced them to retreat, with the loss of about eighty men in killed and wounded. The States of Holland, upon intelligence of these transactions,

* N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 1220. Vad. Hist., b. 39, bl. 235—239.

† Idem, b. 40, bl. 372, 398.

declared the union violated by the hostilities committed at Utrecht, and commanded the Rhingrave of Salms to march with a detachment of the army of observation to that city; while the camp of the Orangeists was reinforced by a regiment of infantry and two squadrons of cavalry, under Van Thuyt, from Guelderland. Shortly after their arrival, a second skirmish took place between forty hussars of the army of the Rhingrave and sixty of De Thuyt's cavalry, in which the latter was routed with some loss. On the other hand, the besiegers succeeded in securing the post of Bilt, within three miles of Utrecht.

The arrival of the stadtholder at Amersfoort on the invitation of the States, aggravated the hostile appearance of affairs. At the head of about 4000 men, he fixed his camp at Zeist, only two leagues from Utrecht; and the patriots accordingly redoubled their vigilance for the safety of that city. The Rhingrave of Salms was created by the council, general-in-chief of the forces of Utrecht; a reinforcement of free-corps marched to the frontier; the bridges over the Vecht were broken; a strong line was thrown up on the side of the town where the danger was most to be apprehended; preparations were made for extensive inundation of the surrounding country; and artillery and ammunition were plentifully supplied by Holland. A resolution, likewise, was passed by an assembly of the officers of the schuttery, that they would hear of no surrender until the town were rased to the ground, and presented to the enemy nothing but a heap of ruins. But even here, the stronghold of the patriot party out of Holland, the friends of the stadtholder were so numerous, that the garrison ventured not upon a general sally, for fear of the tumults that might be excited in their absence; and the besieging army

1787 was constantly informed by signals of every movement which occurred within the walls^v.

But, notwithstanding the great improvement that had taken place in the stadtholder's affairs, he was still far from equal in strength to his adversaries. The province of Holland, exceeding in wealth all the rest together, had immense resources of provisions, artillery, and funds for the levy of fresh troops at her command; the city of Utrecht had ceased to furnish its contingent to the finances of the province, and applied all its funds to the patriot cause; while Groningen and Overijssel sided with Holland. The prince on the other hand, with troops poorly equipped, and destitute of sufficient artillery and ammunition for a regular siege, was obliged to rely principally for the support of his army upon Guelderland, whose resources were wholly inadequate to the purpose. His partisans also in all the provinces were chiefly among the inferior classes and the nobility, of whom the latter, impoverished themselves, rather relied on him for assistance than were able to afford it; nor were the members of the patriot party who had gone over to him inclined to make any pecuniary sacrifices in his favour. It was evident, therefore, that as want of supplies would oblige him to dismiss his troops on the approach of winter, his party must eventually succumb, without speedy and effective aid from some foreign power. The King of Prussia had long been on the watch for some pretext for active interference in favour of his brother-in-law; and the framing such with the mode of carrying it into effect, had been the subject of anxious debate at the court of Nimeguen, between the Princess of Orange and the ambassadors of Prussia and England, Thulemeyer, and Sir James

^v *Vad. Hist.*, b. 49, bl. 298—307, 367—369. *Res. van de St.*, Jun. 20, 30.

Harris. It was now agreed, that the princess should 1787 take advantage of the growing discontent against the present government in Holland to perform a journey to the Hague, where, if she arrived without interruption, she might excite a revolt among the populace in favour of her husband, and prevail with the States-General to invite the King of Prussia to assist in quelling it; or, if her journey were impeded, he might plead the insult thus offered to his sister as a justification of the commencement of hostilities*.

In compliance with these suggestions, the princess on the 28th of June set out, with a slender train of attendants, from Nimeguen towards Holland by way of Schoonhoven, having at the moment of her departure written to inform the States of Guelderland, that she purposed going to the Hague, where she thought her presence might contribute to the salvation of the country and the re-establishment of the constitution. On the same day expresses were sent to England and Prussia, and one of her suite, Eckeren de Zuydras, travelled express by a different route to the Hague to warn the Orange party there of her approach. Although her journey was kept a profound secret from all but a few friends, some movements previously remarked among the principal of the Orangeists, convinced the commander of the fort of Goejanverwelle-sluys, situated near Gouda (the next town which the princess must pass from Schoonhoven) that the arrival of some person of importance was expected. He accordingly sent for orders to the commission of defence at Woerden, by whom he was instructed to detain all persons whose presence in

* So early as the month of May a German paper, the "Real Zeitung," had published, that events were to be expected, prepared by the stadtholder, from which the best results might be anticipated. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 965.

1787 Holland might be dangerous to the public safety, and a small reinforcement of troops was sent to his assistance. A detachment of the free-corps being, in pursuance of this mandate, stationed about a league beyond Schoonhoven, they stopped the princess's equipage with the inquiry of "who was there," to which it was replied, "the Princess of Prussia." She was thereupon informed that she could not be permitted to continue her journey; but her request, that a messenger might be sent to the General Van Ryssel to ascertain whether it were possible she could be included in the orders of arrest given by the commission of defence, was immediately complied with. Meanwhile she was conducted to the Goejanverwelle-sluis, where, in a few hours, three of the members of the commission arrived, and escorted her back to Schoonhoven. From thence she wrote to the registrar of the States-General and the pensionary of Holland complaining of her arrest; when, finding there was no chance of her being permitted to continue her journey she retraced her steps to Nimeguen. The day after the event, the prince sent a letter to the States-General demanding their interference to obtain the release of the princess, and reparation for the dishonour done to her and her family, which could not, he observed, be viewed with indifference by the royal houses to whom they were so nearly allied. The States-General, hereupon, renewed the instances they had already made on the same morning to those of Holland, to remedy the evil they had done, by soliciting the princess to resume her journey, declaring that otherwise they would hold them responsible for all the consequences that might ensue from an act of such violence. But the States of Holland, notwithstanding an able and earnest protest of the nobility (supported

only, however, by two or three towns of North Hol- 1787
land,) persisted in their approval of the acts of the
commissioners *.

The King of Prussia on his side was not slow to seize on the opportunity for interference thus afforded him. He commanded his ambassador, Thulemeyer, to present to the States-General and States of Holland memorials expressive of his astonishment and indignation at the arrest of his sister, demanding a speedy and signal ("eclatante") satisfaction for the outrage offered to her, and the punishment of all such as had taken any part in the affair. Far from complying with his requisition, the States of Holland justified in very plain terms both their right as sovereigns to forbid any one their territory, and the motives that had prompted them to its exercise on the present occasion. The fermentation, they said, which existed in every part of Holland could but be augmented by the arrival of the princess at the Hague; that the States of Holland, not having been informed of her purpose, could not take timely measures to arrest its progress; while the populace, excited by persons interested in maintaining disorders, was already prepared for violence; and that consequently, however pure her own intentions, she might have been exposed to scenes of tumult and massacre too horrible to contemplate, and whereby her personal safety might have been endangered. They protested that so far from any insult or outrage having been offered to the princess, she herself had allowed that she had treated with all the deference due to her rank and sex. The expressions of apprehension used by the States of Holland appeared

* Vad. Hist., b. 41, bl. 8, 14. Lett. of P. of Orange. Pers. Nar. of Col. Stamford, (pub. 1788.) Hist. de Fred. Guil. 2^{me}., tom. i., p. 126, 317. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 1302. Res. van de St., Jul. 3, 7.

1787 to be fully justified by some disturbances which broke out in different parts of the Provinces on the very day she was expected to arrive at the Hague^x.

It is probable that the States of Holland, accustomed, as we have seen, to memorials of a similar tendency from Frederic the Great, imagined that the anger of the monarch would, as that of his predecessor had often done, evaporate in remonstrances and reproaches; or that fear of arousing the interference of France would deter him from proceeding to extremities. They, nevertheless, prepared themselves for the worst. A resolution was passed to increase the army of the province to 30,000 men; the commission of defence made arrangements for cutting the dyke of the Lek above Vianen, and of the Vecht at Naarden, and for laying the Liesfeldt under water, in order to cover Oudewater and Schoonhoven; and an arsenal at Woerden belonging to the States-General was seized, and the arms distributed to the free-corps ^γ.

Far more, however, than on their own preparations, the Dutch patriots relied on the assistance of France, which they now sent to solicit, and which they never doubted would be granted them in the most ready and efficient manner. The ambassadors, De la Vauguyon, and afterwards De Verac, had from the first been a party to all the proceedings of the States of Holland against the stadtholder, and the latter had given express and repeated promises, both before and after the arrest of the Princess of Orange, that if any power attempted to interfere in the domestic affairs of the United Provinces, the king was resolved to defend them with his whole strength. A report was spread,

^x Res. van de St., Ju. 7. 14. Hist. de Fred. Guill. 2^me., tom. ii., p. 328. Mandrillon, Rev. de Hol., p. 110.

^γ Rev. of Dutch Rep., p. 186.

and fully believed, that a fleet was equipped at Brest 1787 to act on their behalf against any attack by England; and that an army of 15,000 men was stationed at Givet, ready to march as soon as it became necessary. Some suspicions, aroused by the sudden recal of De Verac, were again lulled by his assurances that his place would soon be filled, that the king was about to recal his ambassador from the court of Prussia, and was ready to afford efficacious aid to that party whose cause he had espoused before the face of Europe ^z.

Not a single step, however, had been taken towards the fulfilment of these magniloquent promises. The French minister De Vergennes was now dead, and was succeeded by the Archbishop of Sens, a man who, unequal to, and overwhelmed with the difficulties of his office in the present state of the finances of France, trembled at the idea of the cost and embarrassment which an active support of the patriot party would entail. Though he ventured not to counsel his sovereign to an open abandonment of his allies, he found means to thwart every measure proposed for their benefit. The fleet remained in the port of Brest without orders; and he had so successfully retarded the formation of the camp at Givet, that when the King of Prussia sent to reconnoitre the troops there, not a single regiment was to be found. Had the slightest evidence of an intention to proceed to hostilities been given by France, Frederic William, indolent and irresolute, would, there is little doubt, at once have abandoned his purpose. But, finding how matters stood, he commanded Thulemeyer to present a second memorial to the States of Holland, requiring them to write a letter under the inspection of his minister to her royal highness, imploring pardon

* N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 1800, 4016, 4017.

1787 for their error, and engaging to punish all who had had any share in offering her the insult; to revoke all the resolutions taken to prevent her journey, and invite her to come to the Hague for the purpose of negotiating¹ in the name of the prince some terms on which the present disputes might be accommodated. Four days were allowed as the term of compliance at the end of which, it was signified the Prussian troops had orders to march into the United Provinces. Van Berkel and De Gyzelaar strongly urged that no notice whatever should be taken of a document so insulting to the sovereignty of the States; but it was at length agreed that ambassadors should be sent to Berlin to give the king exact information upon the whole affair^a.

Meanwhile, the King of Prussia had collected an army of 20,000 men in Cleves; and England had made a reinforcement to her navy, and concluded a subsidiary treaty with the Landgrave of Hesse for 12,000 men to act in favour of the Prince of Orange, in case the patriots should receive assistance from France^b. Accordingly, before the arrival of the ambassadors from Holland at Berlin, the Prussian troops under the reigning Duke of Brunswick were already on their march towards the United Provinces.

They entered the province of Guelderland, (Sept. 13th,) in three divisions, two of which, under the generals Lottum and Gaudi, encamped near Arnhem, and the third, commanded by the duke in person, crossed the Wahal at Nimeguen, and advanced to the village of Lend. The next day the duke proceeded as far as Thiel, whence he sent a detachment to occupy Leerdam, which was abandoned by the patriots; on the 16th he marched to Asperen, and on the morning of

^a Res. van de St., Sep. 10, 13.

^b Parl. Hist., vol. xxvi., col. 1226.

the 17th appeared before the walls of Goreum. The 1787 defence of this place had been intrusted to Alexander van der Capellen; a member of a noble and distinguished family of that name, leaders of the patriot party in Guelderland and Overyssel. A few balls being thrown into the town, a house was observed to be in flames, when the inhabitants forced the governor to hoist the white flag on the tower. After a short parley Van der Capellen consented to surrender himself and the whole garrison prisoners of war. The duke, on entering the town, was received with every mark of joy: a multitude surrounded him, with cries of "Orange boven," hailing him and his army as deliverers; in the evening the houses were illuminated, orange flags waved on all sides, and the streets were filled with people decorated with orange colours, and singing the national ballad of "Willem c."

Of the other two divisions of the Prussian army, the first, under General Lottum, proceeded through Amersfoort (a friendly town) to Hilversum in the neighbourhood of Naarden; the second, formed into two columns, marching on each side the Lek, advanced, the one under Gaudi, through Kuylenburg and Vianen to Nieuwport; the other, commanded by the general Waldek, through Wyk te Duurstede to Schoonhoven. All these places were abandoned or yielded without resistance, not more than eight of the Dutch troops being killed, although the invaders took more than four hundred pieces of artillery, and about six hundred prisoners ^d.

The patriots had contemplated making their stand at Utrecht, and had spared neither labour nor expense on the fortifications, which, under the direction of

^c Rev. of the Dutch Rep., p. 197. Bowdler's Letters, No. 8, p. 34.

^d Bowdler's Letters, No. 4, p. 21.

1787 French engineers had undergone a vast improvement. There was at this time, in the town and advanced posts, nearly two hundred pieces of artillery, and the number of persons bearing arms within its walls amounted to ten thousand. But, unhappily for them, the command had been entrusted to the Rhingrave of Salms, who, notwithstanding some appearances of doubtful import as to his fidelity, still stood high in the esteem of a large portion of the patriot party*.

Sept. Scarcely had the news of the arrival of the enemy
15. at Wyk te Duurstede reached Utrecht, than the traitor announced his intention of abandoning the city; and without waiting either to spike their cannon, or to take any measures for the security of those who remained behind, the auxiliary troops at midnight of the same day commenced their flight towards Amsterdam. The roads were filled with wagons and vehicles of all descriptions laden with goods; boats ready to sink with their own weight, covered the canal; and such expedition did they use, that before six o'clock of the morning of the 16th, the town was completely evacuated. The burgher-guards, in their rage and despair, broke their arms in pieces, or threw them into the river with bitter imprecations upon those who had thus treacherously deserted them. About noon, the stadtholder entered the city, where he was received with every manifestation of welcome and gladness, the patriots being allowed to remain unmolested in

* In the last month the States of Holland had received a copy of a letter stated to be from the rhingrave to the commission of defence, proposing to abandon Utrecht on the approach of the Prussian forces, together with a resolution of the commission approving of the measure. It was framed by one to whom the rhingrave had entrusted his design, as a means of giving information of it to the States; but the commission having on reference declared it to be fictitious, it was treated by the former merely as a device of the Orange party, and the important warning was neglected. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 4000.

their houses. On the third day the assembly of the 1787 States returned to Utrecht, and the government was restored to its former footing under the regulations of 1674. The Rhingrave fled from Amsterdam to Grumenbach, although his friends had obtained the appointment of a commission in order to give him an opportunity of clearing himself^e.

Debates had been for some days pending in the States of Holland, concerning the expediency of transferring the assembly for greater safety to Amsterdam; and many of the deputies had in fact gone thither. The remainder, appalled at the intelligence of the surrender of Utrecht, offered no opposition to the proposal of the nobility, that the office of captain-general, and the command of the garrison of the Hague, should be restored to the stadtholder, and a pressing invitation be sent to him to repair, without delay, to the seat of government, "in order to apply his efforts to the restoration of peace, the settlement of the constitution, and the suppression of party dissensions,—the cause of all the present misfortunes." The next day a resolution to this effect was passed; the edict against wearing orange colours or singing party songs, was revoked; the free-corps were disbanded; the commission of defence was suspended; the towns of the province were commanded to offer no resistance to the Prussian forces; and those officers who had been cashiered for not obeying the orders of the States of Holland, were reinstated^f. Never, perhaps, since the States of Holland existed, had they accomplished so much business in a single day. The day after, all the resolutions which had at any

^e Bowdler's Letters, p. 25—33. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 4868, et seq., 4909.

^f Res. van de St., Sept. 18.

1787 time been passed to the prejudice of the stadtholder, were declared null and void; and the Prince of Orange came to the Hague, where his entry rather resembled the return of a beloved sovereign from a victorious war, than the reception given to a minister forced upon the nation at the point of foreign bayonets. About a mile from the town he was met by a multitude of several thousand persons, with orange cockades and banners, marching to the tune of "Willem;" the horses were taken off his carriage, and he was drawn by the people through the streets, between the lines of the garrison and schuttery, mustered under arms; the air resounded with acclamations and cries of "Orange boven;" festoons of orange-coloured flowers were hung across from house to house, and the churches were decorated with banners of the same favoured hue*. A similar reception awaited the Princess, who arrived with her two sons and daughter a few days after. On their first appearance at church, the tune of "Willem" was immediately struck up on the organ, and repeated several times during the service‡.

Some outrages were committed by the populace here as in other places upon the houses and property of the patriots, in revenge, it was said, of the previous excesses indulged in by the latter; though neither party had acquired by its forbearance any right to reproach its adversary on that score. In those towns

* Res. van de St., Sept. 19. Vad. Hist., b. 42, bl. 245. Bowdler's Letters.

‡ Among the first to welcome the stadtholder, was the Pensionary Bleiswyk, mentioned already as the leader of the aristocratic section of the Patriot party. It is said that while he was paying his visit at the court, the prince took him to the window, and pointing to the crowd below, said, "See *there*, sir, the voice of the people." N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 4621.

of Zealand and Guelderland where the Orange party 1787 was the stronger, the houses of the patriots had been pillaged and destroyed with as much zeal as those of the Orangeists in the towns of Holland, and with equal licence and impunity on the part of the municipal governments. Except in a very few instances, however, the spirit of mischief was in some degree atoned for by the absence of the slightest disposition towards cruelty or bloodshed^b.

In the other provinces, the revolution was effected with as much ease and rapidity as in Holland. Overyssel, which had coincided with Holland in all her measures, presented at the commencement of the invasion an object of some embarrassment to the Duke of Brunswick; since, while it was unsafe to leave this unfriendly province in his rear, the alternative of attacking it in a hostile manner in the midst of profound peace, and on the occasion of a quarrel resting solely between the King of Prussia and the States of Holland, was a somewhat too flagrant violation of the law of nations even for him to venture upon. To obviate this difficulty, he demanded of the States of the province a free passage and quarters for his troops, which, if refused, would supply a pretext at least for the use of force, and if granted, would create animosity between that province and Holland. He did not wait, however, for the result of their deliberations, but sent a detachment of 3000 troops into the province, issuing at the same time a manifesto that he should treat any attempt to interrupt them as an act of hostility. Deventer opened its gates immediately on the summons of the invaders; Zwol was occupied without resistance by a detachment of about 600 cavalry; and though a free passage only had been

^b N. Nederl. Jaarb., passim.

1787 demanded, the General Von Goecking required that the arms of all the military companies, as well as the keys of the town, should be delivered up to him. He stopped, also, all communication between Zwol and Amsterdam till the Orange flag were hoisted on the towers of the former city. The stadtholder was almost immediately restored to his authority according to the regulations of 1675¹.

In Friezland, where the patriots had fortified Franeker, Steen, and Staveren, they were prevented inundating the land by cutting through the dyke at the Lemmeer in order to defend the province against the Prussians, by the peasants, who assembled armed, and in such numbers as to force the workmen and military to abandon the work. But, perhaps, nowhere did affairs take a more singular turn than at Franeker. Here the patriots first discovered their fears as to the issue of events by the attempted flight of three of the heads of that party;—fears which were soon confirmed by the intelligence of the failure of the French King to fulfil the expectations he had held out, and of the inability of the Hollanders to afford any assistance, in consequence of the difficulties in which themselves were involved. The high-raised hopes of the patriots sank at once into the deepest dread and despondency. Abuse and recrimination, reproaches of deception and treachery, were cast from one to the other without sparing. The leaders, endeavouring to make their escape, were fired upon by their own auxiliaries from Holland, who kept the gates closed, and answered all their entreaties to be allowed to pass with jeers and insults. A strong body of the free-corps at length obtained egress by force; when the auxiliaries threatened to cannonade the town unless satisfied with their

¹ Vad. Hist., b. 50, bl. 89—117.

pay, and actually seized a carriage containing a large sum of money belonging to one of the fugitives, when about to pass the gate. They were at length appeased by some of the citizens becoming security for their payment, and the whole of the patriots speedily evacuated Franeker. Staveren was abandoned with similar expedition¹.

The Prussian army being, in conformity with the orders of the States of Holland, received into all the towns of the province, without resistance, excepting a slight show on the part of Naarden, Amsterdam, which refused to obey this injunction, became the last and only strong-hold of the patriots. This town had belonged to the aristocratic section of the patriot party until the deposition of several of the members of the council by the "commissioners of the burghers," and free-corps, when the votes and opinions of its deputies were distinguished above all others by animosity to the stadtholder, and resentment at the interference of the King of Prussia.

The evacuation of Utrecht, the barrier, as it was considered, for the security of Amsterdam excited the utmost consternation in the latter. At first not the smallest credit was attached to the report, which was treated as an invention of the enemy; but, ere long, the number of fugitives who poured into the town, with terror and despair depicted on their countenances, afforded but too full confirmation of the marvellous tale. Troops of peasants who had abandoned their houses without waiting to secure a single article of their property, arriving in a state of destitution, added to the misery of the scene; and the embarrassment thus occasioned to the government was still further increased by their dread of a revolt within the city;

¹ N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 4052, et seq.

1787 the greater portion of the lower rank of people, the whole of the formidable body of shipwrights, and the Jews with scarcely an individual exception, being devoted adherents of the Orange party; in addition to whom were to be reckoned the members of the council who had been deposed by the agency of the free-corps, and their friends. Under these circumstances, the government on the approach of the Duke of Brunswick to Leymuyden sent a deputation to solicit a truce for the purpose of bringing matters to a final accommodation. An armistice of three days was granted, and negotiations were commenced, when the council of Amsterdam declared itself ready to give satisfaction to the princess for any irregularity which had occurred in her detention, relying on her generosity not to prosecute those concerned in it. The duke, however, declared that nothing less would satisfy the King of Prussia than an exact conformity with the requisitions contained in the last memorial presented by Thulemeyer. The besieged chose rather to risk the fortune of war than submit to these conditions; a determination to which they were encouraged as well by their belief that auxiliaries were even now on their route from France, as by the contemplation of the immense strength of their position. The inundations they had caused by cutting through the dykes of the Amstel, the Vecht, and the Nieuwe Meer, had laid the surrounding country entirely under water; so that the town could be approached on land, only by five roads along the top of the dykes, of which nearly all were so narrow as not to admit of two pieces of artillery abreast. On each of these roads, the advanced posts of Muyden, Diemerbrug, Duyvendregterbrug, Ouderkerk, and Amstelveen, were strongly fortified and defended by powerful batteries; while

the communication with Haarlem was cut off by the 1787 burning of the bridge called the Liebrug, and another large battery was erected at Halfwegen, on the strait between the Y and the lake of Haarlem; the whole forming a line of about seventeen miles in length. A number of armed vessels stationed in the Zuyderzee protected the town from any attack on that side. The Duke of Brunswick commenced the siege by forming a corresponding line of posts at Wesep, Abcoude, Uythoorn, Kudelsteert, and Aalsmeer, having his head-quarters at Leymuyden^k.

In the undoubtedly able and efficient system of defence they had adopted, the government of Amsterdam had most unaccountably omitted to station guardships on the lake of Haarlem; an oversight which was pointed out to them by the commandant of the fort of Amstelveen, on the morning of the day on which the truce was to expire, and which they determined to remedy by placing some armed vessels on the lake the next day. But, unhappily for them, it was no longer time. The same evening, within an hour of the expiration of the truce, two detachments of troops were embarked in a number of small boats, at Aalsmeer, on the lake of Haarlem, one of 800 men with orders to land near Slooten, to the north of the branch of the lake called the Nieuwe Meer, and attack the post at Halfwegen; and the other, commanded by the captains Langelair and Hirschfeldt, to turn that of Amstelveen, while the duke himself made a feint attack on the same post in front. The former arrived before daylight at the post of Halfwegen, which they surprised without loss, taking about twenty French artillerymen prisoners. The other made a successful landing at Lelie, in the rear of Amstelveen, and having gained

^k Vad. Hist., b. 48, bl. 173—196. Bowdler's Letters, p. 100—102.

1787 the high-road with some difficulty, met a detachment which had meanwhile proceeded by a footpath along the edge of the lake of Haarlem. They drove the patriots from a strong battery and seven traverses they had erected along the dyke; but when within a short distance from the fort, owing to some mistake in the orders, they halted at the last traverse, exposed to the fire of the enemy's cannon, which had it not been pointed too high must have been productive of the most fatal effects. During this time, the duke had advanced along the dyke in front of the fort, and occupied the hamlet of Hand-van-Leyden, about 1200 yards from Amstelveen, between which and the hamlet he found that the besieged had thrown up another strong entrenchment. A vigorous attempt to make himself master of this work proved unsuccessful, and the duke was obliged to retreat to Hand-van-Leyden, where he remained during a period of above four hours in a situation of imminent danger. At length, a portion of the troops in the rear of Amstelveen pushed on to the attack of that post, and after a sharp contest forced the patriots to abandon it, when they fled in disorder towards Ouderkirk. The Prussians had about 150 killed and as many severely wounded; the loss on the side of the patriots was never ascertained. Simultaneous assaults on the other posts had been repulsed with signal valour and success; but the possession of Halfwegen and Amstelveen affording the enemy an easy passage to Amsterdam, the remaining forts were rendered wholly useless, and were therefore abandoned. As Amsterdam was now no longer tenable, the magistrates sent deputies to the duke to propose a capitulation. It was stipulated that the deputies of the town on resuming their seats in the States should agree unconditionally to all the reso-

lutions passed in their absence; and that the troops in 1787 the pay of the municipal government should be transferred to the States. The new burgher-guards and the free-corps were disarmed; the members of the council appointed by the commissioners of the burghers were obliged to resign their seats, and the former government was restored; the schuttery was placed upon the same footing as at the commencement of the administration of William V., and satisfaction was to be given to the Princess of Orange¹.

An embassy being accordingly sent from the States to inquire as to her wishes on this point, the princess transmitted to them a list, by which, besides the five members of the commission of defence at Woerden and the secretary, eleven other persons of those engaged in the affair of her arrest were to be declared incapable of ever again serving their country. The States disavowed unreservedly the act of arrest, and pronounced the sentence required against all those named in the list. Among the stipulations at the surrender of Amsterdam, was one which provided that the government should not be obliged to receive a foreign garrison; but being now wholly devoted to the stadtholder, a request for troops, was easily obtained from them, so as to justify the quartering there a body of Prussian soldiers; and the proud city beheld for the first time since she had risen in her beauty and her strength from the surrounding marsh, the conquering enemy within her walls^m.

Thus in the space of a fortnight (exclusive of the siege of Amsterdam which is rather to be considered as an episode than a necessary part of the action) was

¹ Bowdler's Letters, p. 115, 118. Account of a Prussian officer. Vad, Hist., b. 48, bl. 195 et seq.

^m Res. van de St., Oct. 6, 8, 9, 11.

1787 this singular and almost unexampled revolution completed. That a powerful and well-disciplined army of above 19,000 men invading a country but ill-prepared for defence should prove victorious in the contest might have been expected; but that a party which, though inferior perhaps in point of numbers to its adversary, comprehended a very large portion of the intelligence and a still larger of the wealth of the country, and whose resources were so extensive, should have succumbed at once, unresistingly, and without an effort to preserve its own existence, was a matter of general and unbounded astonishment. From the addresses and resolutions of the companies of free-corps and the speeches delivered at the different patriotic societies, men might have been led to suppose that every town would have proved itself the Leyden or Haarlem of the sixteenth century; and that the Prussian army must either have perished of weariness and famine before their walls, or have waded through oceans of blood to the conquest of the Provinces. But many circumstances, besides the pusillanimity and vacillation of the patriots, contributed to bring about this result. The failure of France, to whom they had looked with unbounded confidence for support, to fulfil her promises at the critical moment, inspired them with distrust and dejection. In every town attacked by the Prussians, the friends of the Prince of Orange and of the members of the governments dispossessed by the commissioners of the burghers were ready to admit the invaders, or to create a sedition within the walls while the patriots should be engaged in their defence. To this was added the treacherous abandonment of Utrecht by the Rhingrave of Salms, and the uncertainty as to how far he had spread disaffection among the troops. Nature too appeared to

have enlisted against them; since the rivers were so 1787 unusually low for the season, that there was not sufficient water to overflow the country. Had the inundations projected by the commission of defence been successful, and retarded the march of the Prussians but a few weeks, the approach of winter and the rainy season would most probably have rendered their farther advance impracticable, and the issue of the invasion had been wholly different*.

* There is much political truth in the humorous description given by Burke, of these events. "A chivalrous king, hearing that a princess had been affronted, takes his lance, assembles his knights, and determines to do her justice. He sets out instantly with his knights in quest of adventures, and carries all before him, achieving wonders in the cause of the injured princess. This reminded him of the ancient story of a Princess Latona, who, having been insulted by a nation like the Dutch, appealed to Jupiter for satisfaction, when the god in revenge for her wrongs turned the nation that affronted her into a nation of frogs, and left them to live among dykes and waters. Although the King of Prussia had, professedly, set out merely to obtain adequate satisfaction for the injury done his sister, his army by accident took Utrecht, possessed themselves of Amsterdam, restored the stadtholder and the former government, and all this at a stroke and by the bye." (Speech in the debate on the Hessian subsidy. Parl. Hist., vol. xxvi., col. 1277.) Nothing, indeed, but the weakness of Holland—her utter inability to attract the attention of other nations to her cause by the strenuous defence or reclamation of her rights, could have blinded their eyes to the nature of the interference of England and Prussia in the domestic affairs of that country. In direct violation of the law of nations and the principles of justice, they had forced a sovereign to reinstate a minister whom, whether on good grounds or not, that sovereign conceived to have betrayed his trust; and had worked out the entire destruction of a constitution with which they could have had no possible right to meddle. Yet scarce a voice was heard in remonstrance or appeal against the aggression. Even the Whigs of England, dazzled by the influence their court had by such means gained over so important an ally, forgot their usual zeal for the liberty and independence of nations; and, though they found some faults in the detail of the measures pursued, united in applauding their tendency. "Let therefore," says their organ, Charles Fox, in his speech on the address of the House of Commons, on this occasion, "the expense of effecting and enforcing the late measures in the Republic of Holland have been what it might, he should think the money well laid out, and would give any assistance in his power to voting it cheerfully and freely." Neither did they offer one dissenting

1787 The origin of these disturbances has by some writers been attributed to the ambition of the governments of the large towns, and their desire to transfer into their own hands the power they might be able to wrest from the stadtholder. But as the members of these bodies were persons first recommended by him to the nomination of the councils, and then selected by him out of such nomination, it is next to a moral impossibility that any but his adherents could be chosen to these offices, or that they could be so stultified as to seek for an increase of power by the destruction of the source from which only they derived that which they enjoyed. The part which the municipal governments took against the stadtholder was either in obedience to the impulsion of, or to their own participation in, a strong popular feeling, which had gradually increased in proportion to the real or supposed delinquencies of which that prince was guilty; and which feeling, the circumstances we have already noticed afterwards contributed to change or abate. Equally idle it is to ascribe these movements to the causes of excitement administered by the publications of the periodical press. The periodical press is rather the expression than the guide of popular opinion; did the sentiments it promulgates find no response in the public mind it would soon change its tone; it may encourage and foster, but it will never create, prejudices or passions; and the stadtholderal government would have done wisely to inquire, what

vote to the address itself, expressing approbation of the outrage in these terms: "The rapid and brilliant success of the Prussian arms under the conduct of the Duke of Brunswick affords us matter of peculiar satisfaction, both as it was the means of obtaining the reparation demanded by the King of Prussia, and as it has enabled the Provinces to deliver themselves from the oppression under which they laboured and to re-establish their lawful government." Parl. Hist., vol. xxvi., col. 1240, 1244.

was the temper of mind which led people to read and 1787
applaud certain publications, rather than blame those
• publications as the origin of evils which might more
properly be sought for elsewhere.

CHAPTER III.

Hereditary Stadtholderate made an essential part of the Constitution under the guarantee of England and Prussia. Increase of the influence of England, and decline of that of France in the United Provinces. Humiliation of the Patriots. Embassy to the King of Prussia at Nimeguen. Presents to the Duke of Brunswick and the Prussian troops. Patriots excluded from office. Governments of the Towns changed. Unlimited influence of the Stadtholder. Improvement in his councils. Regulation of the payment of the Quotas. Decay of the Commercial Companies, and scarcity of Corn. Depreciation of the Money of the Bank of Amsterdam. Affairs of the East India Company. Indifference of the Dutch nation to the politics of Europe, and the events in France. The Dutch constrained to assume a hostile position towards France. Question of the Navigation of the Scheldt. Reluctance of the Dutch to engage in hostilities. Declaration of war against the Stadtholder by the National Convention. Measures of defence adopted by the States-General. Invasion of the United Provinces by Dumourier. Arrival of Auxiliaries from England. Siege of Willemstadt raised. French evacuate the United Provinces. The States are determined on the prosecution of the war. Ill-success of the campaign on the part of the Allies. Heavy expenses entailed on the Dutch by the war. Treaty of subsidy with Prussia. Defeat of the French at Bouchain, and of the Austrian general at Moeckern. Army of the Allies forced to retreat beyond the Lys. Rapid conquest of the Netherland towns by the French. Stadtholder animates the Dutch to resistance. Resolutions of the States. Reduction of Sluys and Bois-le-Duc, and evacuation of Nimeguen. Obstacles to the progress of the invaders. Inefficiency of the Allies of Holland. Internal divisions. The Patriots maintain a correspondence with the enemy. Formation, and acts of the "Revolutionary Committees." Apprehended discovery of the designs of the Patriots. Attempt to procure Peace. The formation of ice on the rivers and land waters facilitates the conquest of the United Provinces. The invaders pass the Wahal. Stadtholder quits the Hague. Revolution at Amsterdam, and in the other towns of Holland. Zealand revolutionized. Retreat of the English army. Assembly of "Representatives of the People." Annihilation of the Dutch Constitution. Oppression exercised by the "Representatives of the French People" at the Hague. Forced

circulation of the Assignats, and seizure of the property of the Prince of Orange. Terms of the recognition of "Batavian" independence. Treaty of Alliance with the French Republic. Holland becomes virtually a province of France. Conclusion.

THE revolution had, to all appearance, annihilated the 1787 patriots as a party. The most considerable members had fled the country*; and the remainder, mistrustful of each other, and fallen into the contempt of the nation at large, ventured not to offer the slightest opposition to the proceedings of their adversaries, who hastened to the adoption of such measures as they hoped would give strength and stability to the present framework of the constitution. On the proposition of Enkhuyzen, a small town of North Holland, which had constantly, during the late troubles, distinguished itself by voting with the nobles in the minority, a resolution was passed in the States of Holland, and adopted by the States-General, that the maintenance of the hereditary stadtholderate as an essential part of the constitution should be guaranteed on oath by all the confederate Provinces to each other; an oath to support the constitution as at present established being imposed not only on all public officers, but even on members of the lowest order of guilds†. Still further security for the existing order of things was sought in an alliance with Prussia and England, whereby both 1788 these powers became guarantees for the preservation of the stadtholderate according to the act of 1747; these two powers, moreover, by a separate treaty, somewhat novel in the history of nations, binding themselves mutually to a similar guarantee. So great a change had the public mind undergone, that England, whom

* The number of emigrants and exiles who quitted the United Provinces in this and the following year was reckoned at 42,394. N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1795, bl. 2119.

† The turf-carriers and porters were constrained to take this oath.

1788 three years before scarcely any dared mention except in terms of animosity, now governed the councils of the United Provinces with undisputed sway; the ambassador, Sir James Harris, mingled himself in all the affairs of state, and on his appearance in public was received with marks of distinction little inferior to those paid to the stadtholder himself. The influence of France, on the other hand, was now wholly annihilated. In a late declaration made to the Court of England, Louis had disclaimed having ever had any intention of interfering in the affairs of the United Provinces; and, declaring that he entertained no hostile feeling towards any quarter on account of the late transactions in Holland, agreed that the warlike preparations should be discontinued on each side, and the navies reduced to the footing of the peace establishment. This act, which savoured, it was thought, as much of pusillanimity as of infidelity, inspired the patriots in the United Provinces with a hatred and contempt of France scarcely less than had formerly actuated the Orangeists. The house of the ambassador, St. Priest, was at this period frequently surrounded by a mob of persons, hooting and loading both him and his master with abuse and execration, and his chasseur, who had the imprudence to appear in the streets with a white cockade had very nearly fallen a victim to the fury of the populace. As satisfaction for these outrages was constantly refused, it is not improbable they were secretly encouraged, in order to induce the ambassador to withdraw from the Hague; an event which soon after occurred^a.

Thus deprived of the aid, or even the intercession, of any foreign potentate, and exposed defenceless to

^a Res. van de St., Jul. 3rd. Parl. Hist., vol. xxviii., col. 1265; vol. xxvii., col. 553. N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1787, bl. 5643; 1788, bl. 436, 956.

the vengeance of their adversaries, backed by the 1788 power of England and Prussia, the unhappy patriots were constrained to drink to the very dregs of the bitter cup of humiliation. One of the first acts of the States, on the change of affairs, had been to annul all the judgments pronounced, and suspend all the criminal proceedings then pending, against such as were guilty of any misdemeanour proceeding from affection to the House of Orange; a decree which, besides that it made every principle of law and order subservient to political purposes, seemed framed purposely to secure impunity to those who had committed outrages upon the houses and property of the patriots. On the other hand, four months were suffered to elapse before the latter were relieved of their fears by the publication of an amnesty; which then was limited by so many exceptions that it served but little to arrest the general desertion of the country which it was intended to prevent. All those who had been concerned in the displacing the governments, the authors of obnoxious addresses, such as had entered into mutual bonds to bring about a change in affairs; those who had assisted in causing the inundations, in taking possession of the gates of the towns, who had become members of a free-corps, together with the writers, printers, and distributors of seditious publications, were excluded from the benefit of the amnesty, and punished by fines, imprisonment, or banishment. Not a drop of blood, however, was shed on the scaffold, a very few only being condemned to death, and in their case the sentence was commuted to that of perpetual exile ^b.

Among the minor vexations to which the patriots had to submit, not the least, perhaps, was the necessity of wearing the Orange badge, which no person,

^b Res. van de St., A.D. 1787, Sept. 27; 1788, Nov. 21st.

1788 of whatever sex or country, dared appear without. One of the principal merchants of Amsterdam having persisted for several days in coming to the Exchange without any ornament of the favourite colour, a violent commotion, and even a contest of blows, was the result. This circumstance called forth an injunction on the part of the magistrates of the city to all persons to wear some token of their affection to the family of Orange; one of the first instances, perhaps, on record, of a government commanding the adoption of party badges. An Italian officer was actually expelled from Amsterdam for refusing obedience to this singular mandate; and a woman was imprisoned for two years, and banished, for having indulged in some expression of ridicule on the subject. Similar edicts were issued by the governments of Groningen, Utrecht, and many other towns, and severe punishments inflicted on those who transgressed them in the slightest degree; proceedings which rendered the liberty of the subject, so boasted and cherished in Holland, rather dubious^c.

But how galling soever these petty acts of tyranny by which the triumphant party retaliated the indignities formerly suffered by themselves, a measure far more painful and degrading to Holland in especial, was adopted by the States-General, in demanding of the different colleges of the admiralty, a list, with a view to the punishment, of those officers who had entered into any service without their permission or that of the admiral-general. This was in reference to the commanders of the vessels stationed by the patriots on the Zuyderzee, at the siege of Amsterdam, and who had been specially promised protection and indemnity by the States of Holland. The deputies of

^c N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 5949—5951; A.D. 1788, bl. 883.

Amsterdam in vain pleaded that however hastily or 1788 unguardedly a promise of protection might have been given from the sovereign to the subject, the most fatal distrust between all bodies of the state must ensue if a change of views were made the pretext for so gross a violation of the public faith; that the only fault of these officers had been obedience to their territorial sovereign, and that to most of them the resolutions of the States-General and Council of State were unknown. Both the naval and military officers who had embraced the service of the States of Holland, were cashiered; and the principal among them subjected to criminal prosecutions for breach of duty. Though the States of Holland could not prevent the passing of this resolution in the States-General, both justice and honour demanded that they should shield the sufferers in every possible way; should allow no prosecution of them in their territory, and should continue their salary. Yet they opposed no obstacle to the execution of the sentences pronounced against them. Van Ryssel, the general, and several others, were banished; some were fined, and all declared incapable of again serving their country. It was above a year after, ere the States of Holland so far redeemed their pledge as to grant them a small annuity^d.

While thus consigning their defenders to punishment and disgrace, the States of Holland were obliged to concur in expressions of the deepest gratitude and affection to their invaders and conquerors. The King of Prussia coming to Nimeguen on a visit to his sister, was met at Wesel by an embassy commissioned to express, on the part of the States-General, their sense of the honour done them by the acquisition of a princess, whose talents and virtues, constancy and

^d Res. van de St., May 13, 14, 23; A.D. 1790, Jan. 29th.

1788 magnanimity, were evidences of her near relationship to him; of the obligation they were under for his assistance in bringing about the revolution necessary to restore their ancient constitution; and of the advantages they reaped from the alliance of so great a monarch, whom with fulsome adulation they termed the worthy successor and rival of the great Frederic. The Duke of Brunswick had enjoyed a reception scarcely less distinguished at the Hague. Gold medals commemorative of the revolution and inscribed to the "defender of their ancient liberty," were presented to him and his principal officers; and the sum of 500,000 guilders was given him to distribute among his troops. After a short stay at the Hague, he returned to Germany, leaving at the desire of the States of Holland four thousand Prussian soldiers in garrison in different towns of the province. The remainder took their departure in the month of April, having occupied the country for the space of six months, during which time they had exercised far less of pillage and license than might, under the circumstances, have been expected. All the arms and ammunition, however, belonging to Holland, being carried away as lawful booty, the loss sustained by that province was very considerable. Duke Louis Ernest of Brunswick; who a few years before had been the object of such deep and general obloquy, was, after his death in this year, declared innocent of the bad faith, the neglect of the public service, the exercising a sinister influence over the stadtholder, and other similar imputations cast upon him^f.

But lest the States of Holland incur too deeply the charge of pusillanimity for so sudden and entire

^e Vad. Hist., bl. 60, bl. 228.

^f Vad. Hist. b. 56, bl. 103. N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 5907, 5928.

a change of measures and opinions, it must be re-1788
membered that very few, if any, of the patriot deputies now remained in the assembly. Of the leaders of that party, Van Berkel and Zeebergen were included among those declared incapable of serving their country according to the list given by the princess; and the term of office of Bleiswyk, pensionary of Holland, being expired, his place was filled by Van de Spiegel, pensionary of Zealand. The patriot members of the municipal councils had for the most part quitted the towns as fugitives, or remained concealed in their houses, leaving their adversaries in undisputed possession of the council-chamber. Deputies were therefore sent to the States, of a totally opposite bias to their predecessors, and furnished with instructions of a different character. But even this state of things was scarcely deemed a sufficient security by the Orange party, who had obtained that the stadtholder should be empowered to change the governments of all the towns where he might find it necessary. This vote was carried in the States of Holland unanimously, the deputies of Alkmaar, who appeared inclined to offer a strenuous opposition, being constrained to acquiesce, by the threat, that otherwise a garrison of Prussians should be quartered in their town^g.

Had this commission been executed by the placable and irresolute stadtholder in person, its effects would probably have fallen far short of those anticipated by the leaders of the dominant party; but William, supposing himself occupied in more important matters, transferred it to two persons likely from their character and situation to carry it out to the extent of, or if not beyond, its utmost limits. These were William van Bentinck, whom we have before

^g Res. van de St., A.D. 1787, Oct. 31.

1788 observed, as the primary agent in the formation of the Orange societies; and Dirk Merens, councillor of the Court of Holland, formerly an active opponent of the encroachments of the stadtholderal power, but who had lately become an adherent of the Orange party, and was imbued with all the zeal of a proselyte. Both were under the immediate influence of the Princess of Orange, who, not satisfied with the empire she had obtained over the mind of her husband, had taken advantage of his weakness to form a powerful party in the court wholly devoted to herself, and would fain have employed it to draw the entire administration of affairs into her own hands; this, however, even the most strenuous supporters of the stadtholderal authority were by no means disposed to endure^b. Under her auspices, the commissioners carried matters with a high hand. Passing from town to town, and remaining in some no more than a single day, they, without deigning to listen to any argument or expostulation, displaced all the members of the governments whom they conceived to be not sufficiently zealous partisans of the Prince of Orange, and in substituting others, embarrassed themselves in no degree with municipal privileges, or as to whether the candidates possessed the necessary requisites of age, burghership, or other qualifications. But, notwithstanding the latitude thus assumed, such was the paucity of persons of the Orange party who could with any show of decency be nominated to these dignities, that in some towns of importance several places remained vacant. In a like unceremonious manner all those who were suspected of holding patriotic opinions were deprived of their offices whether ecclesiastical or civil; were expelled the schuttery; and

^b *Vad. Hist.* b. 57, bl. 317. Lett. of Pensionary van de Spiegel to the Ex-Registrar Fagel.

even the professors of the universities were for the 1788 same cause displaced from their chairs¹.

Thus every department of the state was filled with the friends of the present government. The municipal councils were in entire subservience to the stadtholder, and the schuttery, composed of his partisans, had become somewhat in the nature of his personal troops. He was now therefore in the possession of uncontrolled authority, which he might long have continued to enjoy, had some measures of conciliation, some hopes of happiness, been held out to the patriots, the impolitic severities against whom proved in the event a fatal source of disunion, weakness, and consequent ruin. This error had been happily avoided by the late stadtholder under somewhat similar circumstances; and though the course of conduct he then pursued has been frequently blamed by politicians, it unquestionably secured to him and his successor a longer interval of repose and popularity than had been ever enjoyed by any stadtholder except Frederic-Henry. The different and less praiseworthy course adopted on the present occasion is to be ascribed to the influence of the Princess of Orange; an influence, which in other respects began from this time happily to decline, giving place to that of Lawrence van de Spiegel, pensionary of Holland, who, a warm advocate for the stadtholderal authority, was no less zealous for the real good of his country, which, whether justly or not, he considered to depend in a great measure on the stability of the former. This upright and able man found a worthy pupil in the hereditary Prince of Orange, whose age soon permitted, as his ability already enabled him to take an active share in affairs. Under their guidance the measures of the government

¹ N. Nederl. Jaarb., A.D. 1787, bl. 5722, et seq.

1788 became distinguished by a rectitude of purpose and vigour of execution they had long wanted; and whereas we have been constrained hitherto to award the larger portion of reprobation to the Orange party, the conduct of that party will henceforward on almost all occasions be entitled to our esteem; while that of the patriots, were it not palliated by the severities and oppression under which they laboured, would merit unmingled censure.

Among the many evils for which it required all the wisdom, firmness, and energy of the present government to provide a remedy, not the least was the miserable condition of the public finances, especially those of the generality. This was to be attributed to two causes; first, the right claimed by each Province of withholding at pleasure and without stating any reason, its consent to the supplies voted by the States-General; and secondly, the privilege insisted on by each, of not providing for the payment of the subsidy till it had been voted unanimously. A commission was now appointed to examine into this matter, upon whose report in the year 1792 the quotas of the provinces were altered; an increase of burden being laid on the provinces of Holland and Guelderland, with proportionable relief to the five others*. It was

* In the levy of the funds for the use of the generality, the hundred guilders was divided into the following proportions;

	gull.	stuy.	den.		gull.	stuy.	den.
Guelderland.....	5	11	20	{ by the present } { adjustment }	6	0	10
Holland	57	14	8	.....	62	1	0
Zealand	9	1	10	.....	3	16	0
Utrecht	5	15	5	.....	4	10	0
Friezland.....	11	10	11	.....	9	7	0
Overyssel.....	3	10	8	.....	3	9	6
Groningen and the } Ommelande }	5	15	7	.....	5	7	8
Drent	0	19	10	.....	0	19	10

[The

decreed, also, that if the purpose for which any extra-1783 ordinary funds had been voted were carried into effect within nine weeks, the Provinces should be bound to pay their quotas, whether on reference they had consented to the acts of their deputies or not; and that if any Province persisted in remaining in arrear for a twelvemonth, and after a remonstrance and embassy from the States-General, its deputies were to be no longer permitted a sitting in that or any other body of the State; the Province being held meanwhile to have consented to all the resolutions passed during its exclusion^k.

The rapid decay of the commercial companies, also, contributed to increase the pressure of financial difficulties. The East India Company, formerly a source of such vast wealth to the Provinces, but which so long ago as 1770 had begun to fall into arrear to the amount of nearly 24,000 guilders annually, had, since the last war with England become every year more deeply involved in debts and embarrassments, and had subsisted only by dint of constantly increasing loans from the State*. In this year no less than 20,000,000 were demanded. The affairs of the West India Company were in a still more disastrous condition, threatening immediate bankruptcy and ruin; and

^k Vad. Hist., b. 71, bl. 152—162.

The deficiency being made up from the revenues of the generality, now assessed in the proportion of 4 guil., 8 stuy., 2 den. Janiçon, Etat des Provinces Unies, tom. i., p. 119. Vad. Hist., b. 81., bl. 153.

* In 1782 the debt of the Company was 20 millions.

1783.....	28	“
1784.....	37	“
1785.....	40	“
1786.....	49	“
1787.....	59	“

—Vad. Hist. b. 55, bl. 387.

1788 it was, in fact, dissolved at the expiration of the charter, the proprietors having the choice of receiving their shares at thirty, or leaving them to form part of the funds of the generality at three per cent. interest. In the Greenland whale-fishery the number of ships employed had diminished from one hundred and twenty, to which it amounted in 1770, to sixty-nine in the present year. The trade to the United States of America from which the Dutch had promised themselves so rich a harvest was entirely engrossed by England: while a sensible shock was given to commerce by an edict of the King of Spain, prohibiting the importation of all foreign merchandise in other than Spanish vessels, except into such ports as enjoyed special privileges. To these evils were added those of an extreme scarcity of specie, occasioned partly by the heavy loans contracted by most of the princes of Europe from the Dutch, and in some degree by the quantity of gold which the advantage of exchange had drawn to England; and of the excessive dearth of corn, felt scarcely less grievously in Holland than in the other nations of Europe, the price of wheat being almost doubled. The municipal governments exempted the poor in great measure from the pressure of scarcity, by a mode, available, however, only in small communities, of keeping down the assize of bread, and indemnifying the bakers for the proportionably high price at which they bought corn, out of the public treasury; due care being taken to prevent fraud. At the same time the governments wisely abstained from the adoption by way of remedy of the empirical measures of prohibiting exportation or preventing monopoly; considering that every prohibition to export contained within itself a virtual prohibition to import, since no merchant will be found to risk his capital if

prevented from disposing of his wares to the best ¹⁷⁸⁸ advantage; and with regard to monopoly, they were of opinion, that if the merchant bought up his corn before the scarcity arrived at its greatest height, he conferred a benefit on the public by having it to sell when that time arrived; and if after, he did it to his own loss; maxims common-place in the theory of the political economist, but which the practical statesman has been rarely found to have foresight or resolution to carry out when under the pressure of difficulties. Happily, abundance was restored before the winter set in, which it did with such unusual severity that the ice on the Zuyderzee admitted of persons travelling from Staveren to Medemblick as on dry land. Large subscriptions were raised for the poor, above 36,000 guilders being collected in Amsterdam alone ¹.

In consequence of the scarcity of specie above mentioned, and the necessity in which the East India Company found itself of selling their bank stock, in order to obtain the large sums they transmitted to India, the money of the bank of Amsterdam suffered so great a depreciation, that from a premium of from five to three per cent., it sank to one-half below par; and this, in its turn, caused such a demand of specie upon the bank as seriously to threaten its credit. It was proposed, as a remedy, either to prohibit the export- ¹⁷⁹¹ tation of gold and silver, or to coin money of so great nominal, in proportion to its real value, as to obviate the temptation to melt it down for that purpose. But the municipal government at this crisis evinced a singular clearness of views upon a subject then far less understood than at present. Gold and silver, they objected, were strictly articles of commerce, with the

¹ Vad. Hist. b. 63, bl. 228 et seq., 241, 258; b. 66, bl. 197; b. 70, bl. 324, 359.

1791 freedom of which, as well as the rights of merchants, any such prohibition would interfere; and by inciting other nations to a similar proceeding, would tend to aggravate the evil it was designed to prevent; while the measure of coining money of fictitious value was rejected as unjust in itself, useless as a remedy, and highly prejudicial to the credit of the bank. It was at length resolved, that the only effectual mode of restoring this credit was to contract the circulation of the issues of the bank, and to take effective measures for satisfying the public that it had actually the immediate command of the precious metals which its paper represented. Accordingly two millions of guilders in specie was forthwith lodged by the government in the hands of the cashiers, and a fund of six millions was raised among the principal merchants of the city, for the purpose of buying up the promissory notes of the bank to that amount ^m.

The affairs of the East India Company were less easy to arrange. By the report of a commission appointed to examine into them, it appeared, that the liabilities incurred within the last ten years only, amounted to no less than 84,000,000 guilders, of which 67,707,585 was in loans from the States. This state of things was to be imputed partly to the immense losses sustained in the war with England, the company having during that war been deprived of Soucatta, the western coast of Sumatra, Coromandel, Bengal, and Trincomalee; besides a loss of 10,400,000 guilders in merchandize and 10,300,000 in the capture and destruction of vessels. Far more, however, was the decay to be attributed to the crying abuses existing in every part of the administration of the colonies. The public servants, promoted chiefly through private

^m Vad. Hist. b. 67, bl. 333; b. 70, bl. 235.

interest and from corrupt motives, were often wholly inefficient; indolent and luxurious, they neglected their duties, and sought for the means of supporting their prodigality by receiving bribes, or conniving at, and sometimes sharing in the profits of the smuggling carried on by the traders; while the supreme government, equally indolent and inept, was too lax or too feeble either to punish the malversations of its own subjects or to chastise the bad faith of the native princes with whom it was in alliance. The military department, kept up at an enormous expense, was, owing to the ill-conduct of every branch of its administration, wholly useless either for protection or defence. With the view of averting, if possible, the speedy and utter downfall of the Company, which these evils appeared to threaten, the appointment of a special commission was resolved on, consisting of four members, with power to reform abuses and enforce such a system of economy as they should find expedient both in India and at the Cape of Good Hope, the expenses of which colony had, through the maladministration of its affairs and the prodigality of the Company's servants, become so enormous as to make it doubtful whether the colony were worth preserving at the price. The labours of the commission, however, effected no amendment, and the debt went on increasing till 1794, when it reached the sum of 112,000,000. On the revolution of 1795 the commission itself was superseded .

In this year William Frederic, hereditary Prince of Orange, was married to Frederica Louisa Wilhelmina, Princess-royal of Prussia; the marriage of his sister of the same name with George Augustus, hereditary Prince of Brunswick, having been solemnized

* Sec. Res. van de St., Jan. 28, Jul. 14. Vad. Hist. b. 96, bl. 149.

1791 in the preceding. This year is also remarkable for the destruction by fire of the superb building belonging to the college of the admiralty of Amsterdam; the loss was estimated at two millions of guilders°.

As regarded its foreign politics, the Dutch nation at this period, under the entire sway of England and Prussia, made no greater figure than if it had been a province of one of those kingdoms. Out of complaisance to the latter power, the States secretly assisted the people of the Austrian Netherlands, though under constant professions of neutrality, in the formidable revolt which the attempts of the Emperor Joseph to introduce a more liberal system of civil and religious government had raised against him; and became nominally a party to the treaty, which, in consequence of a change of policy in the Prussian court, was concluded with Leopold the Second, successor of Joseph, and the Netherland Provinces, whereby the latter were annexed to the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria, under the guarantee of Holland, England, and Prussia. Further than this the United Provinces appeared to interest themselves little in the affairs of neighbouring nations; or even in the course of those mighty events which at this time drew towards France the contemplation and wonder of Europe. Well pleased to behold the humiliation of a power they detested, the Dutch government viewed with indifference the first attacks made by the French people on the throne and monarchical institutions of the country. They received the notification of the king's acceptance of the constitution forced upon him in 1789, which that unhappy monarch had neither the firmness to refuse nor the integrity to abide by, with no other observation than general expressions of desire for the

° Vad. Hist. b. 69, bl. 162.

continuance of amity between the two nations; they 1791 kept studiously aloof from the confederacy entered into at Pilnitz by the sovereigns of Austria and Prussia for the purpose of obtaining the restoration of the King of France to his rights, and which drew from the National Assembly of France the declaration 1792 of war against the former power; they received in silence the invitation of even the King of Prussia himself to become a party to the league formed against the present administration of France by the sovereigns of Prussia, Austria, Russia, Sardinia, Savoy, and the papal see; and beheld with apparent indifference the march of the allied army of 180,000 men towards the frontiers of that kingdom ^p.

But had the States been inclined to take part in these measures, the results of the latter in particular were such as to cause them to congratulate themselves on having forborne to do so. Imposing on the people of France the necessity of joining to repel invasion and assert their national independence, it gave to the different parties in the state a single impulse of action, and a bond of union of which they were before destitute, and strengthened a government, which, torn by internal faction, and enfeebled by the hostility of a large body of the nation, must, ere long, have fallen to pieces of itself, or made terms with the royal authority; while the celebrated proclamation of the Duke of Brunswick, as general of the invading army, alienated the friends of a limited and constitutional monarchy, by far the most numerous party in France, and by depriving them of the hope of seeing royalty restored except accompanied by all the intolerable oppression and abuses of the ancient regime, inspired them with feelings adverse to that form of govern-

^p Vad. Hist., b. 71, bl. 41.

1792 ment at all. On the other hand, inflaming the more violent of the king's opponents with suspicions of his bad faith, and secret understanding with the enemy, the proceedings of the league proved the immediate cause of the imprisonment and subsequent death of that unhappy monarch.

But though exempt from participation in these acts, the Dutch were none the less sufferers by their pernicious consequences. The King of England having withdrawn his ambassador from Paris on the arrest of the king and royal family, the States found themselves obliged, however reluctantly, to assume a hostile attitude towards France by following his example; while the subjugation, soon after, of nearly the whole of the Austrian Netherlands, the consequence of the brilliant victory obtained over the Austrian army at Gemappe by Dumourier, appeared likely to produce a more immediate cause of quarrel.

On the reduction of the town of Antwerp by the French general De la Bourdonnaye, the citadel still holding out, two armed schooners were sent against it, with orders from Dumourier to sail down the Scheldt. The commander of one of them, accordingly, made an application to the States of Zealand for permission, which was peremptorily refused; whereupon Dumourier sent an additional number of armed vessels with instructions to sail up the river at all risks to Lillo and Antwerp. This event was hailed by the enemies of France as tending to involve the Provinces immediately and inevitably in the war; a consummation which of all others they most desired to see. The Emperor, anxious to obtain their co-operation in opposing the progress of the French arms in the Netherlands, exhorted the States to take the speediest and most energetic measures to resist so palpable an

infracton of treaties and violation of their neutrality. 1792
Great Britain, unable hitherto to find a pretext for the war she was eager to commence, laboured diligently to invite the States to hostilities, wherein she might bear a part as their ally, and declared her resolution of supporting them in the assertion of their rights when required. If, we call to mind the events of a few years before, it affords a striking instance how greatly the ideas of justice among nations are modified by considerations of their own interest, to behold the Emperor now insisting upon the religious observation of a treaty which his predecessor, Joseph II., had so unscrupulously set at nought; France, asserting that the privilege of closing the Scheldt, which had been preserved to the Dutch at that time chiefly by her interference, was contrary to the natural and universal rights of mankind; and England, who then viewed the whole question with the most profound indifference, now ready to make it a cause of proclaiming war on behalf of her ally. She did in fact follow up her remonstrance by the equipment of a flotilla to guard the mouths of the Scheldt; but before it was in order for sea, seven French vessels had sailed unmolested up the river and anchored before Antwerp^a.

Yet so strongly were the United Provinces possessed with the conviction of the ruinous consequences that must ensue from a war at this juncture, that not even the defence of this long-cherished right could overcome their reluctance to hostile measures, or relax the efforts of the Pensionary to avert so fatal an evil. Numerous conferences were held to this effect between the French ambassador at the Hague, De Maulde, Lord Auckland, and the Pensionary, which appeared to take

^a Val. Hist., b. 71, bl. 119, 121, 130, 132.

1792 so favourable a turn that the latter entertained sanguine hopes of an accommodation on the basis that England and the United Provinces should agree to acknowledge the French republic, to observe an exact neutrality during the war, and to offer their mediation for a general peace, in the event of which the question of the Scheldt would drop of itself; and in case it were refused by the allies, to take such measures in concert with France as might be thought most conducive to the termination of hostilities^r. But these negotiations were at once and abruptly terminated by 1793 the death of Louis XVI. on the scaffold, the expulsion of the French ambassador from the court of London, and the consequent declaration of war by the National Convention against the King of England and the stadtholder.

The simultaneous withdrawal of the ambassadors of the two nations from Paris, the acquiescence of the stadtholder in all the measures, and his constant deference to the counsels of the court of England, justified the National Convention, in some degree, in the affectation it assumed of treating him as a dependant of that power. Accordingly it was to him, as such, and not to the States—a politic distinction of which the Convention hereafter found the value—that the manifesto was addressed. It purported, that he had treated the agents of the French nation with contempt; had received and cherished the emigrants; protected the forgers of false assignats; and in order to co-operate, with the King of England in his hostile intentions, had given orders for the equipment of a naval armament, and commanded the Dutch ships to join the English; had raised money to provide for the expenses of a war; and had hindered the exportation of corn

^r *Vad Hist.*, b. 73, bl. 325.

to France, while he favoured the replenishment of the 1793 magazines of Austria and Prussia. This declaration, singular in its contents, as well as in the circumstance of its being addressed, not to the sovereign, but to a subject, was accompanied by a manifesto alike unprecedented; declaring the inhabitants of the United Provinces released from the oath they had been forced to take to the stadtholderal government in 1788, and that all such as pretended to be bound by it were enemies of the French people and to be treated with all the rigour of the laws of war¹.

Whatever effect this document might have had upon the body of the people was not perceptible in the States-General. They issued at once a counter-declaration, in the form of a letter to the States of the Provinces, couched in terms of mingled contempt, derision, and aversion, both of the persons and principles of the party by which France was at that time governed; while the stadtholder, nearly at the same moment, published a manifesto calculated to arouse the people to a strenuous defence of their country. Preparations were immediately commenced with great activity. A dam was laid across the small river Linge which caused an overflow of water around Gorninchem; the land of Heusden, and north of the old Meuse, was inundated; and a cutting in the great dyke of that river, between Woudrichem and Ryswick, was carried so far, that it could be completed in a few hours when occasion should require. Exportation from the United Provinces to France and the Netherlands was strictly prohibited, and an embargo laid on all vessels except such as were ready for sailing to the East or West Indies, Greenland, Davis' Straits,

¹ Res. van de St., Feb. 14, Mar. 1; Proclamation of Dumourier, Feb. 21.

1793 and packets to England; and the vessels along the south-west coast of Holland from Heusden to Bergenop-Zoom were removed, lest they might be seized by the enemy for the purpose of transporting their troops across the rivers. A free gift of two hundredths was voted by the States, and 9000 guilders specially for the defence by water. The command of the army was conferred on the hereditary Prince of Orange, and of the ships in the channels on Admiral Kingsbergen^t.

Whether the Dutch emigrants had possessed the National Convention with an erroneous idea of the strength and dispositions of the malcontents in the United Provinces, or whether the result of the Prussian invasion six years before had inspired the French with a profound, and not wholly undeserved, contempt of the military prowess of the Dutch nation, the army sent under the general Dumourier to achieve the conquest of the Provinces appeared absolutely inadequate to the occasion. In the proclamation by which his approach was preceded, the French commander had declared that he was about to enter Holland with 60,000 men, to assist the Batavians in breaking the chains laid upon them by the tyranny of the house of Orange. But the reality fell far short of the promise or threat; since he advanced toward the confines with an army of no more than 13,700 strong, among whom were 2000 Dutch and Belgian emigrants, and with a ridiculously small train of artillery, consisting of only four twelve-pounders, and about thirty-six smaller pieces. One detachment of the advanced guard under General Daendels, a refugee from Hattem in Overysse, was commanded to march to the rivers Zwaluwe and Roevaart, and to seize the small vessels he might find in those waters for the purpose of trans-

^t Vad Hist., b. 73. bl. 387. Res. van de St., Mar. 4, 7, 13.

porting the troops to Dordrecht, where it was resolved 1793 to make the first attack; while the other, under Berneron, advanced to the Oude Bosch, to keep open the communication with the former by means of a bridge over the Merwe. With so small a force at his command, Dumourier was conscious that his only hope of success was in celerity, and in taking advantage of the feeling of dismay he had so dexterously inspired. The precaution of the Hollanders in removing the boats having rendered the design on Dordrecht abortive, he resolved, though almost destitute of materials for a siege, to attack Breda. The event justified his sagacity; since Breda, though defended on all sides by water and morasses, well fortified and provided, surrendered the day after his Feb. summons. The usual excuses, the deficiency of troops ^{24.} and provisions, were pleaded by Bylandt, the commandant, for this disgraceful act; but being subsequently tried before a court-martial he was cashiered and condemned to perpetual imprisonment. The magazines of Breda supplied Dumourier with the material of which he stood so much in need. At the taking of Geertruydenberg, which, being next attacked, surrendered after a feeble resistance of a few days, the invaders secured another large supply of artillery and ammunition as well as abundance of provisions^u.

The loss of these towns followed by that of Klundert excited the most vivid anxiety for the safety of Dordrecht, which was in some degree relieved by the appearance of a reinforcement of vessels from England, together with a body of 2400 troops under the Duke of York. In conjunction with the hereditary prince, the duke formed a line of defence extending eight

^u Vad. Hist., b. 73, bl. 361, 394, 412, 445.

1793 miles from Steenberg to Hardinxveld, the English gunboats lying along Hollands Diep*.

The French had already laid siege to Willemstadt, the defence of which by the governor Van Botzelaar contributed much to efface the stain cast upon the arms of the Dutch by the previous events of this campaign. The summons to surrender having been answered by Van Botzelaar with a peremptory refusal, a torrent of red-hot balls and howitzer grenades was poured into the town, and continued for three days without intermission, setting fire to the houses in several directions. After six days, the French general sent another summons, which, though the garrison—no more than 500 in number, while the assailants amounted to 8000—were so harassed with wounds and fatigue as to be totally unable to withstand a general assault, was received in the same manner as the former. The cannonade was renewed with redoubled fury from several batteries round the town; and the French, though they suffered severely from the fire of the English gunboats in the Hollands Diep, approached continually nearer, threatening to enclose the besieged on all sides. Botzelaar had already made preparations for withdrawing his exhausted troops to the vessels while there was yet a possibility of doing so, when the joyful intelligence was announced by a deserter, that the siege was raised, and the French army on the retreat.

The cause of this propitious and unexpected event was the diversion occasioned to the enemy by the arrival in the Netherlands of the Prince of Saxe-Coburg and General Clairfait, who surprised the French cantonments between Liege and Maestricht, and obliged the garrison of the former town to sur-

* Vad. Hist. 73, bl. 440—442.

render after having sustained a loss of 4000 men. 1793 General Miranda was in consequence forced to raise the siege of Maestricht, which he had undertaken at the same time that Dumourier had commenced that of Breda. Dumourier therefore, hastily quitting Holland, arrived scarcely in time to save the wreck of the retreating army in the Netherlands from destruction by the victorious Austrians. The towns in Holland which had been captured were shortly after evacuated, and the country once more freed from its invaders.

It is not improbable that at this juncture the National Convention, who had made overtures of peace to England, would gladly have listened to similar proposals from the United Provinces, and have been inclined to grant favourable terms. The States were now, however, fully resolved to continue the war into which they had been driven with so much reluctance, but which gratitude to their allies they considered, and especially to England, for the efficacious assistance she had afforded them in their time of need, bound them to persevere in; while the present appearance of affairs supported and flattered the passions of hatred and vengeance against the French republic which forbade the leagued sovereigns to harbour the smallest thought of an accommodation. The French army in the Netherlands, dispirited by its late reverses, and by the defection of its general, Dumourier, to the League, which occurred soon after his departure from Holland; the provinces of the Austrian Netherlands almost reconquered; Frankfort retaken, and Metz blockaded by the Prussian and Hessian troops; the occupation of the electorate of Treves by the Austrian and Prussian army; together with the revolt of the royalists that had broken out in La Vendée,—justified the sanguine hopes of the allies that the results of another cam-

1793 paign would bring their victorious arms to the gates of Paris, and crush the revolutionary spirit for ever. Sharing in some degree in these sentiments, the States entered with zeal into the counsels of England, the one of all the belligerents most passionately bent on the prosecution of the war; and the congress held at Antwerp to deliberate on the plan of the campaign was attended by the stadtholder in person, with both his sons, and the Pensionary Van de Spiegel*.

The campaign, however, terminated in a manner widely different from that anticipated by the allies, who soon found how very widely they had miscalculated the resources of their antagonist. The revolutionary tribunal now governed France in all its terrible strength. With the absolute disposal of the lives, the property, and the actions of twenty-four millions of men, who submitted in the utter helplessness of fear to its sway, it was enabled to bring a mass of force into the field, such as had never, under the most powerful monarchs, yet been seen, and to oppose an army to its enemies on every side. And, while the power of coercion in filling the ranks of the defenders of France was unlimited, its exercise was scarcely necessary. Men of honour and virtue, deprived of safety at home, hastened to find in the career of arms a mode of serving their country without disgrace, though not without danger; the camp afforded a refuge to all that was yet left of good and noble in France, and it may truly be said that the whole power of the nation, moral, intellectual, and physical, was there concentrated. The French, who at Paris appeared a nation of bloodthirsty tyrants, or trembling cowards, on the frontier were a people of heroes and patriots. While horror and execration rested upon the names

* *Vad. Hist.*, b. 74, bl. 137.

of Danton, Robespierre, and Marat, honour and vic-1793
tory followed the standards of Jourdain, Pichegru,
Moreau, and Kleber. Instead of gaining a foot of
ground on the enemy's frontier, the allies lost a con-
siderable portion of what they had before possessed.
In the Netherlands, the dearly bought victory of
Famars, and the capture of the towns of Condé
and Valenciennes, was followed by the loss of the
important battle of Hondschoten, which involved the
raising of the siege of Dunkirk by the Duke of
York, and the hurried retreat of that Prince to Ypres.
The posts of the hereditary prince of Orange, at
Hallum and Werwyk were then attacked, from whence
he was driven back in confusion to Ghent with con-
siderable loss in killed and wounded, and among the
latter was his brother Prince Frederic. Not dismayed
by his ill-success, however, the prince undertook, in
conjunction with the imperial commander, the Prince
of Saxe-Coburg, the siege of Maubeuge. But General
Jourdain coming to its relief with an army of
70,000 men, a severe engagement was fought, which
obliged the prince to retreat beyond the Sambre, the
hereditary Prince of Orange taking up his head-
quarters at Mons.

The Dutch had in this campaign lost above
8000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; and
the expenses had been far above what the present
condition of the United Provinces was able to bear.
The States of Holland in answer to the extraordinary
petition of "the State of War," had contributed nearly
3,000,000 of guilders, besides 200,000 for the expenses
of the camp, and 900,000 for the maritime defence of
the state. An additional sum of 3,500,000 was also
voted for the equipment of ten ships of the line and
ten frigates; 600,000 for the supply of the magazines,

1793 and 1,200,000 for the fortifications. A tax of a fiftieth had been imposed; but this was found so far from sufficient that the States were obliged to have recourse to the mischievous and uncertain expedient of a lottery for 1,000,000 of guilders. Yet, it is remarkable, that in the midst of its embarrassments, the province of Holland did not cease to supply funds to foreign nations. A loan of 5,000,000 guilders was this year raised for the King of Prussia, and the American congress sold to the Dutch 2,000,000 of acres situate in the State of New York for 3,750,000 guilders^x.

If gratitude to the allies, and the hopes of a prosperous issue of affairs induced the States to continue the war during the last year, now that the debt might be supposed to be liquidated, and that these flattering prospects had vanished, they were no less strongly impelled to the same course by horror and indignation at the massacre of the Queen of France, and the atrocities perpetrated under the Reign of Terror. They received the energetic manifesto published by the King of England on the occasion with symptoms of the highest approval, and declaring that they entirely coincided in all the views laid open in that document, and that their sole purpose in continuing the war was such as was therein expressed. A far different disposition, however, appeared on the part of the King of Prussia, who now began to betray his purpose of deserting the league he had been the first and most eager to promote. Hoping to rekindle his ardour by the animating motive of self-interest, the
1794 United Provinces and England concluded with him a treaty, by which they bound themselves to pay an immediate subsidy of 400,000*l.* sterling, and 50,000*l.*

^x Vad. Hist. b. 76, bl. 338—341.

a month during the year, towards the expenses of 1794 62,400 troops to be furnished by the King of Prussia; the conquests to be made in the name of the maritime powers, who should retain two deputies in the Prussian camp. This engagement, which was entered into in full reliance on the solemn assurances of the King of Prussia that he would employ his whole strength in the prosecution of the war, proved fruitless in the result. Scarcely was the first subsidy paid when the commander of the Prussian forces, the Duke of Brunswick, sought and obtained his discharge; and the King ordered his general, Mollendorf, to draw off his troops, except 20,000 under Kalkreuth, to Cologne, thus leaving the whole burden of the war, on the Emperor, England, and the United Provinces *v*.

Yet, after this desertion, the forces of the allies amounted to 20,000 men, commanded by the Prince of Saxe-Coburg, the Duke of York, and the hereditary Prince of Orange; the Emperor Francis the Second, with his brothers the Archdukes Charles and Joseph, being present in the camp. The French army of the North, destined to act in the Netherlands, was now under the command of the general Pichegru. This great captain proposed by collecting his troops about Cambray and Bouchain, to be enabled to make a concentrated attack on the head of the position of the allies. He was, however, forestalled in his purpose by a general and simultaneous assault of his own intrenchments at Bouchain, Cambray, Landreecy, and Guise. The French at first offered a courageous resistance; but the cavalry having fallen into disorder, an universal flight ensued. The victory on the side of the allies was complete; and on the same evening the hereditary Prince of Orange opened the trenches

v N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1794, bl. 266. Parl. Hist, vol. xxxi., col. 433.

1794 before Landrecy, the siege being conducted by the Emperor in person. Pichegru then changing his plan, separated his army into three divisions, and while continuing his operations in the centre, commanded Souham with 3000 men to march against Courtrai, while Moreau with 20,000 men, directing his course along the two banks of the Lys, invested Menin. Courtrai was captured with little difficulty; and the Austrian general, Clairfait, having taken up a position at Moeckhern and Castrel, with the design of relieving Menin, was vigorously assaulted by Pichegru, and, after a severe defeat, forced to retire to Tournay. Menin capitulated, but on the other hand Landrecy surrendered to the Emperor.

Francis the Second having then with a force of 20,000 men joined the English and Hanoverian troops under the Duke of York, a design was concerted with General Clairfait of blockading the portion of the French army in Courtrai, an attack on which by the latter general had been repulsed with some loss. The Duke of York, marching with 45,000 men from Tournay, mastered all the posts on the right of the great road, from Lille to Courtrai, and established his head-quarters at Roubaix, while Clairfait, having forced the posts defending the Lys, passed that river at Werwyk. But just as he was on the point of effecting a junction with the English commander, the latter was attacked by the enemy, completely routed, after a long and obstinate resistance, and compelled to fly to Tournay, leaving his dead and wounded on the field of battle. Meanwhile Moreau's division engaged with the corps commanded by Clairfait; the combat continued indecisive during the greater part of the day, when Clairfait having learned the defeat of the Duke of York, re-passed the Lys, under cover

of the night, and made a rapid and skilful retreat 1794 to Thielt ^z.

The remainder of the campaign was little less than a succession of conquests on the side of the French. The Emperor retired to Brussels, which he hastily quitted and returned to Vienna. Ypres and Bruges capitulated, and Ostend was abandoned by order of the Duke of York; Ghent and Tournay were evacuated by the allies; Oudenarde opened its gates; and Brussels was occupied by the enemy. The army of the Sambre and Meuse then joining with the army of the North, forced the English and Dutch troops from their intrenchments behind the canal from Louvain to Mechlin, and carried the latter town by assault; Louvain and Judoigne were quickly mastered, and the garrison of Namur forced to evacuate the town and citadel. These events were followed by the capitulation of Antwerp, Tongres, Liege, and Nieuport.

The powerful and victorious army of the invaders was now close to the boundaries of Holland. Yet the stadtholder in his address to the States-General on the occasion breathed neither thought nor wish for peace. He declared, that far from despairing of the safety of the state, he was ready to sacrifice life and possessions in its defence; and that he considered untimely fear and discouragement,—sentiments, he said, inspired by some degenerate Netherlanders, who hoped to find in the enemy the instrument of their party vengeance,—as the most probable and fatal cause of ruin. He compared their situation and means of resistance at present, when a large portion of their frontier was covered with an army which had obtained so well deserved a renown in the last cam-

^z Vad. Hist. b. 77, bl. 66—78. Hist. de Pichegru, chap. 3—6.

1794 paign, and would now fight with redoubled ardour in defence of their altars and homes, with what they were in 1672, when not only towns, but whole provinces were in subjection to the conqueror; or in 1747, when the whole of Dutch Flanders and Bergen-op-Zoom had fallen into the enemy's hands. These sentiments were re-echoed by the assembly with expressions of flattering hope, that the means which they employed would be blessed with a prosperous issue in the safety and honour of the state; hopes founded on fair and rational grounds, destined to bitter and fatal disappointment^a.

Nor were these courageous resolutions confined to words alone. The States of Holland voted the sum of 600,000 guilders for the equipment of additional schooners and gun-boats, which, joined to the English vessels, might form a chain of defence to Holland and Zealand; all vessels were directed to draw in close to the shores lest they might serve as transports for the enemy; and the inhabitants of the Generality were commanded to bring their cattle, provisions, and other movables into the fortified towns. The proposal of the stadtholder for the unlimited levy of foreign troops, and for raising a militia in all the Provinces, was instantly adopted; and a resolution that they should lose no time in bringing their finances into a condition to support the most expensive war in which they had ever yet been engaged, was sent without delay to the States of the several Provinces; the States-General, meanwhile, opening an extensive loan on their own responsibility. The King of England, also, alive to the danger which threatened his ally, dispatched the Lords Spencer and Grenville to the head-quarters of the Prince of Saxe

^a Res. van de St., Jul. 15, 26.

Coburg, in order to consider of the measures best calculated to avert it; from whence they proceeded with the same purpose to the Court of Vienna, and in a treaty concluded with the Emperor agreed upon a subsidy sufficient for the support of 10,000 men, to be paid in the first instance by England, Holland being liable for one-third of the amount. Thirty-five English ships arrived under the command of Lord Mulgrave off the coast of Flushing, and a considerable reinforcement of troops, artillery, and ammunition was landed shortly after at Helvoetsluys^b.

Meanwhile, Moreau had laid siege to Sluys, whose vigorous resistance gave little earnest of the disastrous events that were hereafter to ensue. Two assaults were beaten off with resolution and success; and it was not until the town had suffered severely from the fire of four large batteries, and the garrison was reduced by epidemic diseases from 2000 to 500 men in a state to do duty, that the governor, himself disabled by sickness, consented to surrender with the troops as prisoners of war. As a general apprehension existed that Breda or Bois-le-Duc would be the next object of attack, the Duke of York encamped on the land of Boxtel to cover the latter town, the hereditary Prince of Orange retiring to the village of Raemsdonck. Pichegru, whose object it was to defeat the English army before its junction with the Austrians, stationed along the Meuse from Ruremonde to Maestricht, could be effected, took up his position on the Dommel, attacked the advanced post of the English at Boxtel, 7000 strong, and, having defeated both that and the reserve, pursued the duke on his retreat as far as the river Aa. He then laid siege to Bois-le-Duc, which, well fortified and provided, and

^b Res. van de St., Aug. 6, Oct. 8. Vad. Hist., b. 78, bl. 145—174.

1794 covered by extensive inundations, appeared likely to present a formidable resistance.

Co-operating with Pichegru, Daendels with his brigade having occupied the weak fort of Ortenschans, attacked that of Crevecœur, which though abundantly supplied with forces and provisions capitulated in a single day. The possession of Crevecœur, which protected the sluices of the Meuse, enabled the French to draw the water off the country surrounding Bois-le-Duc; nevertheless the excessive rains still kept the inundations so high that the trenches became impracticable, and it was scarcely possible to work the artillery with any effect. Pichegru had begun to despair of the enterprise, when the burghers, among whom was a considerable party favourably disposed towards the French, constrained the governor, the Prince of Hesse Philipsthal, to capitulate. The campaign of the division of the French army which had invaded Holland on the east side had been no less prosperous. Maestricht was reduced by General Kleber after a siege of eleven days; Venloo submitted to the arms of General Laurens; and the English troops having retired from Nimeguen, it was found untenable against the superior forces of the enemy and accordingly evacuated^c.

But notwithstanding these successes, the invaders found the most formidable obstacles opposed to their further progress. The passage of the rivers, defended by powerful batteries and large bodies of troops, appeared next to an impossibility. The French had, indeed, crossed the Meuse and captured the fort of St. Andrew; and had inflicted a severe defeat upon the English at Druten, forcing them to retreat behind the

^c N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1794, bl. 1307, 1411—1453. Hist. de Pichegru, chap. xi.

Rhine upon Arnhem. But they had as quickly lost 1794 the fort, and an attempt made by General Daendels to possess himself of the island of Bommel and to throw a bridge of boats across the Meuse, proved wholly futile. Even though they should succeed in effecting a permanent lodgment on the right of the Meuse, the Wahal and the Rhine yet remained, equally strongly defended; while the Yssel, with its banks crowded with troops stationed in different posts from Arnhem to Deventer, covered the remainder of Guelderland and Overyssel. Nearly the whole country before them was under water. The hereditary prince in person superintended the cuttings of the dykes between the Wahal and Lek, so as to inundate the land from Wageningen to Schoonhoven; as well as on the side of Utrecht, which was defended by a tract of flooded land, called the line of the Greb, from the Rhine to the river Eems and the Zuyderzee, behind which Prince Frederic with a strong body of native troops was stationed; while a line of batteries extended from Bommel to Nimeguen^d.

Had Holland now been true to herself, or received anything like efficient aid from her allies—had the force of an active and united military power been added to the passive resistance offered by her natural defences, there is little doubt that the enemy, wearied by disappointment, and wasted by the famine and sickness inevitably attendant on a long sojourn in the positions they then occupied, must have been eventually forced to retreat, and she would have reaped the glory of being the first to arrest the victories, and render powerless the exterminating arms, of the new republic. But, unhappily, her allies were such as she

^d Vad. Hist., b. 79, bl. 285 et seq. N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1704, bl. 1271.

1794 could place but little dependence upon. Though England did not want for zeal and activity in her behalf, the troops she furnished, ill-organised, and wretchedly commanded, appeared to serve no other purpose than to abandon one by one every position they had taken up; and, totally destitute of discipline, were an object of terror to the inhabitants and contempt to their enemies. "Their conduct on their retreat from Nimeguen," says a writer strongly favourable to that nation and the Orange party, "was marked by the most lawless pillage, the most odious licentiousness, and detestable cruelties; so that the inhabitants of the places they passed through would far rather trust to the mercy of the invading enemy than to such allies and defenders^c." The prohibitions issued by the Duke of York were found wholly inefficient to restrain these excesses; and even the Pensionary Van de Spiegel himself began to doubt whether it were not preferable to make a separate peace with France upon such conditions as they could obtain, than await an issue dependent upon the assistance of such coadjutors*. The Emperor, from whom the French had conquered the left bank of the Rhine except Metz, was wholly unable to make any addition to the small body of auxiliaries he maintained in the Dutch army; and the

^c N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1794, bl. 1140.

* Writing to the registrar Fagel, in London, Van de Spiegel observes, that, "the prince is enraged at what he had witnessed, which surpassed the bounds of imagination; that the English were accustomed to answer to the complaints of the inhabitants, that they would be sure to be plundered by the Carnagnoles, and it was better they should forestal them." In a subsequent letter to the ambassadors sent to Paris with proposals of peace, he says, "Be assured that no English influence governs here; and that the nation has obtained in this country so bad a reputation that a century will not efface the impression." Brief in Vad. Hist. gequot b. 82, bl. 367.

King of Prussia, beholding with the most contemptuous indifference that ruin which he himself had been mainly instrumental in bringing about, had already opened negotiations for the separate peace which he concluded with France in the ensuing year.

But it was from within that the destruction of Holland was to come; her own arm was destined to guide the weapon of the enemy to her vitals; it was for the bitterness of party spirit to transform a large portion of her sons to traitors, ready now to open her bosom to the French, as their opponents had done to the Prussian invaders, seven years before. The severities exercised by the Orange party after the revolution of 1787, had effectually awed the patriots into silence; but while they enforced quiescence by fear, they fostered treason by the exasperated feelings of hate. The patriots had, at the commencement of the French revolution, shared in the sanguine expectations formed by the lovers of liberty throughout Europe of its results. Unmindful of the improbability that among a nobility uneducated, indolent, debauched, and effeminate; a middle class, which though more virtuous and enlightened, was wholly inexperienced in public affairs, and embittered against the aristocracy by sentiments of mingled contempt and fear; and a commonalty ignorant and oppressed, brutalised by long servitude and exasperated by want and misery, an order of men should be found gifted with the requisite moral or intellectual force, and of sufficient temper and moderation, to execute the difficult task of framing a free constitution for the equal and mutual benefit of all, or that a nation formed of such component parts should prove able either to appreciate or preserve so great a blessing, they regarded the epoch of the revolution, as that of the regeneration of

1794 France; and looked forward to the period as not far distant, when, free and happy herself, she should with earnestness and sincerity of purpose lend her aid towards relieving them from the despotism of the stadtholder, or, as they regarded it, from the yoke of Prussia and England. The progress of the French in the Austrian Netherlands was therefore hailed by the patriots within the Provinces as the approaching era of the realisation of their cherished dreams of liberty; and they were inclined rather to welcome them as deliverers, than repel them as invaders. The policy of the court of England, moreover, in forcing upon the stadtholder measures calculated to provoke the hostility of the Convention, had unconsciously forwarded their views; since the declaration of war being issued against him personally, the patriots readily persuaded themselves that they might, without incurring the imputation of treason against their country, unite with the invaders, not as her enemies, but as auxiliaries in the overthrow of her tyrant. The reverses sustained by the arms of the French republic in 1792, and the treason of Dumourier, had chilled and discouraged them; and the atrocities committed during the reign of terror had for a while appalled them at the idea of working out their freedom with coadjutors so inconsistent and so ferocious. But the fall of Robespierre and the change of measures consequent upon that event, had renewed somewhat of their confidence, which the late successes of Pichegru, and the amiable and upright character of that great man, contributed fully to restore. Accordingly they had for some time begun to assemble in small meetings, held under the name of "reading societies," ostensibly for the mere purpose of instructing the common people by reading to them aloud; under cover of which, secret com-

mittees were formed for the purpose of furthering the 1794 object of a national insurrection. As these in a short time became numerous, there being no less than sixty in Haarlem alone, it was thought advisable to organise two central committees, the one to keep up a correspondence with their representatives in the French camp, with the revolutionary committee at Antwerp, and with the different societies in the Provinces; while the other undertook to thwart all such plans and measures as might contribute to the efficiency of the present government, and to adopt every suitable and prudent means of arousing the enthusiasm of the people in favour of liberty. The efforts of the first attracted, for a considerable interval, but little notice. The results of the agency of the other were soon perceived, though the cause as yet lay hidden, in the opposition offered to all levies of money voted by the States; in the mistrust inspired of the government, and the denunciation of its measures as injurious to the commonwealth; in the perpetual dissemination of evil and discouraging reports; in the sudden resignation of the few patriot members who had crept into the municipal governments, accompanied by addresses, in which under pretence of assigning their reasons for the act, they drew a dark and alarming picture of the state of public affairs; and, last and principally, in the coldness with which the people received, and the slight obedience they paid, to the animated calls of the hereditary Prince of Orange and the States, to arouse and arm in their own defence.

These machinations having answered nearly to the utmost the expectations of their contrivers, they proceeded to hold a general assembly of all the provincial and municipal committees, where two questions were

1794 proposed; first whether they possessed sufficient force to undertake an insurrection; and next, where such insurrection ought to commence? It was resolved, that it was impossible for the friends of the republic to assemble with the requisite secrecy and celerity in numbers sufficient for the success of an insurrection, unless supported by an efficient army of French. With regard to the second question it was determined to make Amsterdam the focus of the revolution, and accordingly a general national committee was appointed in that city to manage the affairs relating to this object, to which all other committees were bound to submit. Deputies were dispatched to the "representatives of the French people" in the enemy's camp, to inform them of the number and strength of their partisans in the United Provinces, and to urge the speedy advance of the army, because, they said, though they were ripe for revolt, they could not sustain themselves, surrounded as they were by the troops of the stadtholder, and with those of his allies between them and their supporters. The representatives, in answer, were liberal in their promises of protection and fidelity to the patriots. Pichegru, then at Elsacker, engaged within six or eight days to be in readiness to attack the army covering the frontier of the United Provinces; and after the victory he was sure of obtaining, to send an army of 35,000 strong to occupy the banks of the Meuse and Wahal, and to intercept the march of the allies to Amsterdam, whither his own troops should advance immediately on the accomplishment of the revolution. While their deputies were at the French camp, the revolutionary committee of Amsterdam continued in full activity. Magazines of arms were collected in different places; a small naval force was

raised to protect the harbours, especially that of 1794 Amsterdam; the Jews to the number of 40,000 were bought off with heavy sums from the party of the stadtholder, with the view of embarrassing the money transactions of the government; and the troops in the garrisons were tampered with, not altogether without success. No expense was spared in maintaining spies, as well to discover the views and communications of the allied powers, as the secret projects and measures of the government; and every possible endeavour was used to incite the peasantry to resist the making of the necessary inundations^f.

Yet the promised march of the French army was delayed beyond all expectation by the obstacles above enumerated; and the risk to the patriots of a premature discovery of their designs became every day more imminent. The government already entertained suspicions of some lurking mischief, and had ceased to quarter any garrisons in the more doubtful places; all assemblies, under whatever pretext, were forbidden unless by permission previously obtained, and were then to be held with open doors; the people were admonished against the delivery of petitions and addresses on the subject of the administration of public affairs; and some of the first subscribers to a petition against the introduction of an English garrison into Amsterdam and against inundating the lands, were taken into custody. Soon after, a mere chance discovered some magazines of arms belonging to the patriots; and in the midst of the anxiety caused by this circumstance, the sudden appearance of the Duke of York and the hereditary prince at Amsterdam, for the ostensible purpose of bringing in an English garrison, and the redoublement of vigilance

^f *Vad. Hist.*, b. 78, bl. 211—220.

1794 against the patriots, with the arrest of some of the members of the revolutionary committee, spread consternation and dismay through the whole party. They sent pressing invitations to the French army to hasten their march, though the communication was now become extremely difficult, the States of Holland having issued an edict prohibiting any person under penalty of death from passing the boundaries without a passport from themselves, the Council of State, or the stadtholder. Notwithstanding this obstacle, however, many of the patriots were constantly found willing, at the peril of their lives, and with a courage and resolution worthy of a better cause, to penetrate by various stratagems through the cordon of troops which now hemmed them in on every side, for the purpose of carrying dispatches to the enemy's camp, with information as to the state of affairs, the most vulnerable points by which they might enter the Provinces, or the means of turning off the waters which caused the inundations^s.

Still, the genius and firmness of Van de Spiegel, and the activity and intelligence of the Prince of Orange, struggled manfully against the combined evils of treason within, and a powerful and victorious army without, and for a time with some appearance of success. A second vigorous attempt on the part of the French to master the Bommel had been defeated with considerable loss by the English auxiliaries; and the Hanoverians had been no less successful in repelling an attack on the village of Gent on the opposite side of the Wahal to Nimeguen. The imperial troops prevented a landing at Schenkenschans, as well as an attempted passage of the Meuse at the village of Rossum. The contemplation of the diffi-

^s *Vad. Hist.*, b. 80, bl. 88, 105. *N. Nederl. Jaarb.*, bl. 1499—1502.

culties under which the invading army was labouring, 1794 coupled with some vague expressions that dropped from the Committee of Public Safety in France, inspired Van de Spiegel with the hope that the Convention would now be amenable to terms of accommodation. The registrar Fagel had before been sent privately to England, to feel the pulse of that nation, and to prepare her for the conclusion of a separate peace by the States, should she prove disinclined to hearken to overtures of that nature; and two ambassadors, Brandsen and Repelaar, were now dispatched to Paris with instructions to offer any conditions short of such as should involve any sacrifice of the independence, the constitution, or the honour of the republic. All their efforts were, however, frustrated by the vigilance and activity of the revolutionary committee, whose deputies succeeded in obtaining from the Convention the transmission of immediate orders to the army to march at all hazards; and, ere long, nature herself declared as a champion of the invaders^h.

In the month of December, harbingers began to appear of the severity of the winter emphatically called by the people of the United Provinces "the French winter." With anguish and despair, the inhabitants (such at least as were not in league with the enemy) beheld the daily increase of ice in the rivers and land waters, which soon, instead of a formidable and almost insurmountable barrier, offered to the French, as to the barbarian Franks above twelve centuries before, an easy passage into the heart of the country, and firm fields of battle for the evolutions of their troops. On this eventful change of circum-

^h N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1794, bl. 1763—1771. Vad. Hist., b. 79, bl. 333.

1794 stances Pichegru immediately formed the plan of a general attack. Daendels was commanded to resume under new and favouring auspices his twice foiled attempt to penetrate into Holland by way of the Bommel. The result was now proportionably different. Passing the Meuse at Driel, he mastered the "Waard," or open country of the Bommel, drove back the troops from the advanced posts of the town, and carried the place itself by assault, ere the inhabitants had well recovered their surprise at his approach. The Prince of Hesse having spiked the guns at fort St. Andrew, retired to Ophemert beyond the Wahal. The attacks of the other division of the invading army were equally successful. Such alterations had, indeed, been made in the disposition of the troops for the defence as the emergency required or permitted; but the posts were now no longer tenable except by an army equal in numbers, discipline, and strength to the assailants. The generals Bonneau and Le Maire mastered the lines between Geertruydenberg, Breda, and Willemstadt; and on the 10th 1795 of January the French troops crossed the Wahal near Nimeguen at four places, Panderen, Gent, Bommel, and Lent, defeating with great slaughter a body of Imperialists and Hanoverians stationed to oppose their passage. Arnhem immediately surrendered on conditions. After the conquest of the Bommel, Daendels advanced across the Wahal to Thuyt and Waardenbrug, where he encountered a force of 6000 English and Hessians, by whom he was attacked and driven back with loss. He still, however, kept his footing on the Wahal at Bommel, and, having received reinforcements from Crevecoeur, forced the allies in their turn to retreat after a sharp conflict of six hours on the ice.

Heusden, cut off from Holland by detachments of 1795 French troops and having a great number of patriots within its walls, yielded to Daendels on the third day after his summons. Grave, which had been blockaded since the commencement of the siege of Bois-le-Duc, and defended by the general De Bons, a veteran of sixty years' service, with the ancient valour and steadiness of his country, now capitulated; but not until the town had sustained a bombardment of twenty-four days, and had wholly exhausted its ammunition and provisions. The English and Hanoverians stationed in the Thielerwaard abandoned it, and subsequently the Betuwe, with a slight resistance¹.

Yet the Pensionary and States of Holland did not despair. Another animated call to arms was issued, William van Bentinck being appointed chief of the levy; but it was received almost in silence; at Rotterdam and the Hague only, places always distinguished for affection to the House of Orange, were the levies carried on with the slightest activity. Now too the province of Utrecht was abandoned as untenable; since the inundated line of the Greb, before an impenetrable barrier, opposed, since the frost, not the slightest obstacle to the advance of the enemy. The ice, also, afforded a smooth and easy passage to Dordrecht, the ancient capital of Holland, which was filled with fugitives from different parts of the country; in vain were incessant efforts used to keep it broken; the intense cold of the night as constantly destroying the labours of the day. Terror, confusion, and despair took possession of the city and the whole province.

On intelligence of the loss of Utrecht, a mournful assembly of the States-General was held at the Hague,

¹ N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1795, bl. 1—35. Hist. de Pichegru, chap. xv.

1795 and a resolution passed to send a deputation to the stadtholder with the ominous question "whether anything could yet be done for the defence of Holland." He replied, that, according to all human appearance no probability remained of being able save the Province under existing circumstances. This discouraging communication was followed on the next morning by another still more disheartening; the announcement by the stadtholder to the States-General and the States of Holland of his intention to quit the Hague. About two o'clock on that day, having taken a melancholy leave of the States, he set out, accompanied by his sons, for Scheveningen, whence the princess and her daughter had already sailed some hours before. Vast crowds of persons assembled to bid him farewell, and pay him a last tribute of affection and respect. The fishing smack in which he was to embark being at some distance from the shore, he was about to wade into the water, when Bentinck exclaiming to the people, "Will you allow your prince to leave you thus?" they immediately hoisted him on their shoulders and bore him to the vessel. He delayed some time at anchor off Scheveningen to await, as a last hope, the arrival of letters from the ambassadors at Paris. The contents were not of a nature to induce him to desist from his purpose. The evacuation of the United Provinces on the part of himself and his family, was required by the National Convention, as an indispensable preliminary to the conclusion of any treaty of amity and commerce with the States-General. He remained only, therefore, to write a letter to the States, expressive of his intention to return to Holland, or some other of the provinces, as soon as opportunity permitted, and turned from his native shore to the hospitable havens of England.

The next day he landed at Harwich. His departure 1795 from the Hague was immediately followed by that of the ambassadors from the Courts of London, Berlin, Madrid, Turin, and Hanover^k.

Meanwhile, the general Daendels, impatient at the delay of the long-promised and expected revolution at Amsterdam, had, on the day of his arrival at Utrecht, sent to admonish the revolutionary committee to all possible speed in the accomplishment of that work, in order that they might, on his approach, be in a condition to treat with the French as friends and brothers, instead of conquerors. Symptoms of hesitation still appearing, in consequence of the reluctance of the government to resign their offices, one Krayenhoff, an emigrant in the French camp, and a physician by profession, offered to go and examine into the state of affairs. On his arrival, he presented himself before the burgomasters, promising, on the part of the French general, safety and indemnity of person and property to the government and the whole town, if the former would consent immediately to resign their offices; and threatening them with certain massacre in case of refusal. They were not long in choosing the former alternative, Krayenhoff being appointed by the revolutionary committee commandant, in the room of General Golowkin. On the same evening by torchlight the committee, assembling the people on the Dam, proclaimed from the steps of the "Waage," or public weighing-house, the "revolution;" exhorting them at the same time, on the part of themselves and their friends the French, to abstain from all tumult, or insult to the military. During the night, which passed in profound quiet, Daendels himself entered the town, accompanied only by a few hussars,

^k Res. van de St., Jan. 17, 18. N. Nederl. Jaarb., 1795, bl. 54, et seq.

1795 and took his seat in the assembly of the revolutionary committee, which had declared itself permanent. Early on the following morning the tree of liberty was planted on the Dam; and while the people were performing their insensate dance around it, the council were summoned to the guildhall for the last time. They were then informed, that "the sun of freedom, having now dawned upon the Batavian horizon," the former government of the city was superseded by the revolutionary committee, which would conduct the administration of affairs till a regular constitution was established, and commanded to return to their homes in the quality of simple burghers. The multitude were then informed of the event by a proclamation made on the steps of the guildhall, in these few but significant words; "Worthy citizens! your former government has obeyed the will of the people." Afterwards, the names of twenty-one "provisional representatives of the people" were proclaimed, the approval of whom on the part of the burghers was supposed to be signified by the clamours of the populace on the Dam, which on this occasion received the appellation of "the plain of liberty." This body was invested with a power almost unlimited, of doing all that circumstances required for the peace and safety of the city. Another committee was also formed of deputies from all the committees of the Provinces, and termed the "united revolutionary committee;" whose business it was to forward the work of the revolution by sending deputies to all the towns where it was incomplete. The activity of this body and the proclamations of General Daendels, similar to that which had been addressed to Amsterdam, quickly determined all to adopt, or submit to the proposed change; a very slight resistance only being offered by Geertruydenberg and Gornichem.

In most of the towns were found the revolutionary committees, organized bodies, ready to act, and to administer affairs on the abdication of the old governments. Few, therefore, in any of the Provinces awaited the arrival of the French; the revolution being effected in a similar manner and with equal ease and rapidity to that of Amsterdam. In Haarlem, the members of the committee secretly and silently displaced the government, and deprived the commandant of his authority in a single night, and the citizens, on awaking in the morning, beheld, to their utter astonishment, the streets filled with persons decorated with the tricolor, and proclaiming that the town was in their hands. On the 22nd of January, Generals Pichegru and Moreau made their entry into the Hague, already revolutionized*. The patriot party everywhere received the invaders with open arms as friends and deliverers, "fraternizing," as it was called in the jargon of the day, with the French soldiers; public feasts and rejoicings were held to celebrate the event; the tree of liberty was planted in nearly every town; and the people, hand in hand with the spoilers, danced around it in reckless mirth, over the grave of their fondest hopes and their proudest recollections¹.

In Zealand, a province generally strongly attached to the stadtholder, the revolution was somewhat, though not long, delayed. The defences by water had here, as in Holland, become useless from the frost; and, abandoned by the allies, and surrounded by

¹ Vad. Hist., b. 80, bl. 125—143; b. 81, bl. 190, et seq.

* On Pichegru's quitting the Hague, in the month of March ensuing, to take the command of the army of the Rhine, an annuity of 10,000 guilders was settled on him by the States-General as the reward of his services. Vad. Hist., b. 94, bl. 242.

1795 the enemy, who was in possession of Dutch Flanders, Bergen-op-Zoom, and Holland, the States had scarcely a choice left but to obey the summons to "revolutionize" issued by the French general, Michaud. A deputation was accordingly sent to the French camp to offer submission upon terms; and the revolution was effected by the patriot party much in the same manner as in Holland. The constitution of 1789 was abolished; provisional representatives were substituted for the governments of the towns; the States changed their appellation from "noble and mighty lords" to that of "representatives of the people of Zealand;" and headed their acts with the motto, "Equality, liberty, and fraternity^m."

On the occupation of the province of Holland by the invaders, the English army retired behind the Yssel, forming a line from Doesburg to Campen. Scarcely, however, had the enemy appeared at Harderwyk when they abandoned this position, and soon after retreated into Westphalia. Eight hundred having taken refuge in Helvoetsluys, the French commander forced Captain Storey, governor of the town, to detain them as prisoners of warⁿ.

Immediately on the completion of the revolution in the towns of Holland, they, in obedience to the summons of the central revolutionary committee, sent deputies to the Hague for the purpose of framing a new constitution. At this assembly*, the sovereignty of the people, and the "rights of man" were formally acknowledged; and the ancient representative constitution of Holland, which had now subsisted with

^m Vad. Hist. b. 83, bl. 72—129.

ⁿ Idem. b. 84, bl. 166.

* The president was Peter Paulus, who, on the revolution of 1787, had been deprived of his office of fiscal advocate to the admiralty of the Meuse.

but slight alteration for six hundred years, and had 1795 withstood the successive shocks of the revolt from Spain, of long wars, and of civil dissensions, was annihilated at one stroke. It was decreed that every individual of the male sex, and of mature age, should have a vote in the election of representatives, the States, as formerly constituted, being for ever abolished; as were likewise the dignities of Stadtholder and Captain and Admiral-general. The villages of the open country, which had formerly been considered as represented in the States by the nobles, now obtained the right of sending representatives of their own. Thus composed, the assembly took the name of the "Provisional Representatives of the People of Holland." The council and chamber of finance were also abolished, and three committees, of "military affairs," of "general welfare," and of "finance," were formed in their stead. The pensionary Van de Spiegel was deprived of his offices, and a few days after, himself and William van Bentinck were arrested; their papers were seized, and they were condemned to imprisonment in the castle of Woerden.

The first business of the new assembly of representatives of Holland was to bring forward a proposal in the States-General, that they should acknowledge the rights and sovereignty of the people; release the inhabitants of the United Provinces from their oath to the stadtholder and the old constitution, and send ministers to Paris to offer to the Convention an alliance on reasonable conditions, as between two equal and independent nations. The States-General complied with all these demands; they did not, however, change their title of "high and mighty lords;" the reformers being content to indulge "that whim and

° Vad. Hist. b. 85, bl. 260—280; b. 91, bl. 312—341.

1795 prejudice" on account of their relations with foreign states; neither did the constitution of the body itself undergo any other alteration than that their votes were sometimes taken individually instead of by provinces, and that the date of their edicts bore, in addition to the year of Christ, that of "Batavian liberty," and were headed with the watch-cry of the revolutionists, "equality, liberty, and fraternity."

With respect to all the other parts of the constitution of the United Provinces, however, the patriots, under the guidance, or rather coercion, of the representatives of the French republic at the Hague, proceeded rapidly and unsparingly in the work of demolition. The beneficial provisions, the essential principles, and the most valued privileges, fell equally with the most antiquated abuses and mischievous corruptions, beneath the scythe of the destroyer. The Council of State was annulled, and a committee of general affairs of the confederacy appointed in its stead; the five colleges of the Admiralty were in like manner broken up, and replaced by a committee of twenty-one members for the administration of the marine; the act of guarantee of the stadtholderate was burned, and William V. declared deprived of his dignities; and all the courts of justice both high and low were remodelled. A new committee was also formed of "general vigilance," having subordinate committees in different towns of the Provinces, and whose powers, undefined and almost unlimited, were exercised in the most inquisitorial manner. By their authority, all who had held office under the late government were forbidden to quit their residences under pain of confiscation of their goods; and persons leaving the town where they resided without a passport from the municipality, with all such as were present at counter-revolutionary

assemblies, or who endeavoured by word or deed to 1795 disturb the present order of things, were punishable with death, as well as those who knowing of such assemblies failed to give information of them to the committee. The hereditary nobility was abolished, and their domains applied to the public service; the use of escutcheons and other ornaments of heraldry was prohibited, together with the wearing of liveries; all remnants of feudal customs, where any such remained, were abolished; and county tolls, staple rights, and special commercial privileges were abrogated. The penal laws existing against the marriage of political and military officers with Catholics were revoked; and the religious ceremony of marriage was declared unnecessary. The synods were no longer to be held at the public expense; the hatchments were removed from the churches; and even the pews were not permitted to remain, as being inconsistent with the present notions of equality.

All the gallows and whipping-posts in the country were destroyed, on the ground that they were derogatory to the dignity of mankind, and monuments of ancient barbarism. Happily, the punishment of torture, which still subsisted in some parts of Guelderland, shared in the general annihilation^p.

This sudden sweeping away of every relic of their constitution, of every trace of their nationality, excited grief and dismay among all but the more zealous and hot-headed of the patriot party; of whom the great majority had never contemplated more than the reformation of the constitution in such a manner as might render it suitable, as they thought, to the

^p Vad. Hist., b. 85, bl. 323—335; b. 86, bl. 15—45, 56—79; b. 91, bl. 287.

1795 improved condition of society, and the more extended and varied necessities of the body politic. The entire and fearful awakening from the dream in which their own reckless frenzy had steeped their senses rapidly followed. They found that those whom they had hailed as deliverers were become their oppressors, with a tyranny of which the barbarous times they so severely reprobated had given them no idea. They dared not make the slightest political movement except at the impulse of their new masters, the French representatives; at their bidding they were forced to lay an embargo on all the vessels of England in their ports, an act of which the consequence was a declaration of war by that country, and the loss of all their most valuable colonies, which fell an easy prey to her arms; their commerce, and more especially their fisheries, were laid under such restrictions as it pleased the invaders to impose; who took possession, moreover, of all their harbours, their strong towns and magazines, and exacted an oath from the military and naval forces to undertake nothing against the republic of France.

To other vexations was added the burden of the French troops quartered in the towns, often of the smallest and poorest provinces, and whose inhabitants were, by the severity of the winter, the floods which followed it, and the consequent scarcity, left with hardly the means of subsistence. The demands of the army for provisions, clothing, horses, forage, and fuel, were absolutely insatiable*; nor did the

* The States-General were required to deliver in one month 200,000 quintals of wheat; 75,000,000 lbs. of hay; 2,000,000 lbs. of straw; 50,000,000 lbs. of oats; 150,000 pairs of shoes; 20,000 pairs of stockings; 20,000 cloth coats and vests; 40,000 pairs of breeches; 150,000 shirts; and 50,000 caps. And within two months 12,000 oxen. *Vad. Hist.*, b. 88, bl. 270.

consideration that the unhappy Provinces of Guelder-land and Overyssel were already reduced to the extremity of misery by the above causes and the pillage of the English army on its retreat, produce any mitigation of their treatment¹.

But a grievance far more deeply felt than these, was the constraint the Dutch were under to receive as current the worthless paper money which the Convention had issued under the name of "Assignats," in the beginning of the war. The representative assembly of Holland, dreading the system of gambling and usury with the ruin to their commercial transactions which the unlimited circulation of this money must occasion, commanded that it should be received in payment only from the French troops and accompanied by a written order from their officers. But this edict they were ordered by the French representatives to revoke, as derogatory to the dignity, and injurious to the credit, of the republic of France. A remonstrance sent to the National Convention, to the effect that the unlimited currency of the assignats would prove utterly ruinous to the United Provinces, remained unheeded; and as they were obliged to receive them at a higher price than they held in France and the Netherlands, the country became deluged with them, to the irreparable detriment and confusion of the public finances, as well as the fortunes of individuals; while the mischief was aggravated still further by the number of forged assignats which made their way into circulation. This measure, enforced amidst professions of the most profound veneration for the rights of property, was accompanied by the seizure and appropriation by the French representatives of the effects of the stadtholder, (which, as the States justly remonstrated, he possessed

¹ Vad. Hist., b. 88, bl. 257, 264, 207.

1795 not in the quality of stadtholder, but that of citizen,) and, among the rest, his valuable museum and gallery of paintings*. His demesnes were sequestrated by the representative assemblies of the Provinces where they were situated, in order to preserve them from the hands of the French^r.

Acts of such a nature inspired the Dutch with no unreasonable doubts as to the intention of the National Convention really to respect that independence which they had on the entrance of the French army into the United Provinces solemnly promised to uphold. In order to satisfy themselves on this point, they provided the ambassadors (Jacob Blauw and Caspar Meyer) sent to Paris for the purpose of concluding the treaty of amity and commerce, with instructions to obtain, if possible, an express acknowledgement of the independence of the Dutch republic. The ambassadors, on their arrival, found the suspicions of their employers but too truly realised. They were refused admittance in that quality; and informed by the Abbé Sieyes, member of the "Committee of Public Safety," that the question of indemnity to France, for the expenses she had incurred in liberating the United Provinces, must precede that of the

^r Vad. Hist., b. 88, bl. 283.

* They restored to the States-General with much pomp of circumstance and self-gratulation on their own magnanimity and generosity, the sword of De Ruyter, Admiral Tromp's baton of command, the wooden cup in which the "Gueux" pledged the first health to each other, with the wooden bowl in which each of the confederate nobility had, on that occasion, driven a nail as a token of their union and firmness in the cause; and a piece of ordnance given by a Javanese sovereign as an acknowledgment of fealty to the States. Vad. Hist., b. 88, bl. 304. The States, as though they could rise from the degradation of the present on the memory of the past, received these glorious relics with a transport of joy and gratitude.

acknowledgement of their independence. This indemnity, as it was termed, amounted to no less than a subsidy of 100,000,000 of guilders, with the like sum by way of loan at $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 per cent. The Provinces were in no condition to yield any such subsidies. Holland had, since the revolution of 1787, furnished 80,000,000 in extraordinary expenses only, and was, precisely at this juncture, obliged to have recourse to the expedient of requiring all the inhabitants to deliver their gold and silver plate to be melted into money; Zealand and Utrecht were driven to the same extremity; and it is, perhaps, scarcely possible for any other people to conceive the vexation caused by this measure to the Dutch, accustomed to hoard the relics of their ancestors with a veneration and affection almost amounting to a passion*. The treasury of the remaining Provinces was totally empty. Not only, however, was the demand made an indispensable preliminary to the treaty proposed by the Dutch ambassadors, but, on the production of the ultimatum of the committee, drawn up by Sieyès, it appeared, that the acknowledgment of independence for which they were to pay so dear was nothing more than a mere verbal recognition. By it, the boundaries of the Batavian republic were to be limited to the territory on the right shore of the Rhine and Wahal; the French were to keep military possession of all the strong places in the "restored" provinces, which they should think necessary; and the land and sea forces were to be under the command of French officers.

* The most sacred and cherished of such relics were only preserved by the special permission of the Representative Assembly. A descendant of De Ruyter was allowed to retain a cup of porcelain and gold presented to him by the States of Holland in 1668; and the widow of Admiral Zoutman the sword given him by the stadtholder after the battle of the Doggersbank. *Vad. Hist.*, b. 95, bl. 30, 31.

1795 The navigation of the Rhine, Meuse, and Scheldt, was to be declared free to both nations*.

Zealand, however, had still courage left to oppose a dismemberment wresting from her the islands of Walcheren and South Beveland, which, besides their inestimable value in a commercial and political point of view, she cherished as the monument of some of the most glorious exploits during the war of independence, achieved on their soil. The representatives of the province declared to the States-General, that they were prepared to dare the last extremity rather than submit to such degradation; a threat which the consideration of the numerous and powerful Orange party, and the already discontented patriots, ripe for revolt on the slightest signal, and certain of receiving speedy aid from England, rendered not without effect. Accordingly that article was much modified in the treaty which the Abbé Sieyès now repaired to the Hague for the purpose of concluding; France engaging to restore to the United Provinces all their territories except Dutch Flanders as far as the Hondt, Maestricht, and Venloo, with the land south of the latter town. The republic was also reinstated in the possession of her naval force and arsenals†.

Whether in fact soothed and encouraged by this appearance of complaisance on the part of the National Convention, or whether considering it most politic to appear content with that which they could not remedy, the Dutch received with festivals and acclamations of joy, a peace, which while it recognised in imposing terms the independence and sovereignty of the "Batavian republic," rendered the sovereignty a jest, and the independence an illusion. Deprived of

* Vad. Hist., b. 95, bl. 14 et seq. ; b. 88, bl. 335, 356.

† Vad. Hist., b. 89, bl. 13.

the power of making foreign alliances, of the authority 1795 over their own troops—since the government was obliged to consult the French general on every movement, and the army itself, composed of more than half French soldiers, was remodelled in a manner analogous to that of the invaders—with a military force ready to punish or crush the slightest attempt at opposition to the behests (or “admonitions” as they were termed) of the representatives of the French people, who still continued at the Hague, the Dutch republic was now become virtually a province of France. It is at this point, therefore, that her history, as an independent commonwealth, terminates.

The nominal government of the States-General was, in the next year, superseded by the equally shadowy authority of a National Convention. This again gave place in 1798 to the so-called “Constituent Assembly of the Batavian People,” and an Executive Directory. After a struggling existence of scarce four months, the Constituent Assembly was violently dissolved, and substituted by “Chambers of Representatives.” This government proving as utterly inefficient as its predecessors, it was at length found necessary to recur in some measure to the traces of the ancient constitution, by instituting new legislative bodies, termed the eight provincial and one central commissions, bearing a resemblance to the States of the Provinces and States-General. These different and quickly-succeeding governments agreed but in one point, that of laying merciless imposts on the people. Commerce, navigation, trade, and manufactures fell into rapid decay. Flood, famine, disease, and the invasion of their territory by the hostile troops of England and Russia filled up the measure of their

woes. The peace of Amiens afforded them but a short respite. Not content with forcing the Dutch to take part in the renewed war against England, the First Consul of France manifested at the same time his insolent contempt towards them, by investing their own ambassador at his court, Schimmelpenninck, (1805,) with the sole government of their state, and a power scarcely less than monarchical, under the title of Pensionary; a suitable preliminary to the species of mock royalty he, in the next year, conferred on his brother Louis.

The period of her subsequent incorporation with the French empire, (1810,) was one of unmitigated misery to Holland. The little commerce that was yet left her, destroyed by arbitrary imposts—forfeitures to the amount of several millions, exacted under the pretext of a surrender of all wares imported from England—millions more wrung from her in the shape of a duty of fifty per cent. on colonial produce—her numerous useful and charitable institutions abolished, in order that their funds might contribute to gratify the rapacity of the emperor—the flower of her youth and manhood torn away by the conscription, which was exercised with unexampled tyranny—it seemed as though all trace of her individual existence was to be effaced, by the introduction of a French political administration, and of the “Code Napoleon,” in the French language; an assemblage of laws which, whatever its intrinsic merits, was wholly unsuited to the genius and habits of the Dutch people, and appeared little else than an engine framed for their oppression.

Yet the season of adversity was not without its uses. Under privation and poverty, the spirit of patriotism, which wealth and luxury had stifled, again

started into life; under the pressure of a common sorrow, the Dutch learned a lesson of mutual forbearance; degradation taught them humility, and experience, moderation. And when the momentous change in the affairs of Europe gave them an occasion of again asserting their independence, they exhibited the spectacle of a people in whom oppression had failed to engender treachery, injustice anger, or tyranny vindictiveness; the revolution of 1813, effected with courage and energy, with calmness and judgment, and temper, was worthy of the best days of the nation.

In the limited monarchy they then chose for themselves, the Dutch fixed upon the mode of government the best adapted, perhaps, to their exigencies and the juncture of affairs. A return to the old government of the States was impossible; its slow and simple forms were notoriously inadequate to cope with the rapid march of events, and the extended and complicated relations consequent on the modern system of politics. Neither is it probable that a republican government on a more popular basis could have been settled, with any promise of permanence or of beneficial results, in defiance of the mass of prejudice which recent circumstances had combined to array against the democratic principle, under what modification soever, and the strongly monarchical spirit with which the public mind both in Holland and the rest of Europe was imbued. The constitution of 1814-15, provided for the Dutch many of the practical advantages of liberty; and it may well be expected of an enlightened, intelligent, and temperate people to adopt, as circumstances permit, such remedies for its defects, and reform of its abuses, as shall add to, rather than detract from, the elements of stability

inherent in that constitution, and secure to themselves a career of national existence less brilliant and glorious perhaps than that which has gone before, but of equal respectability and happiness, and of more prolonged duration.

. THE publication of the present volume has been somewhat delayed, in the hope of obtaining permission to inspect the correspondence of Sir Joseph Yorke, (ambassador from England to the Hague, between the years 1750 and 1780,) the fact of the preservation of which, in the State Paper Office, did not come to my knowledge till the manuscript was in a forward state of preparation for the press. But in answer to my application to the Right Honourable the Secretary for the Home Department, I was informed, that he could not accede to my request, as it has been unusual to grant such permission for so recent a period, inasmuch, as the publication of correspondence of that nature might be attended with considerable inconvenience. A second application, made through the medium of a friend, met with an equally peremptory refusal; of which I do not presume to question the propriety, but which was to me a source of some surprise and extreme regret; since, as the examination of the papers in question was (as I then stated) designed merely to serve the purposes of Dutch history, it was scarcely probable I should publish anything it might be requisite to keep concealed; and I might have been enabled to throw some additional light on a portion of history, as yet, though well known, not fully understood; the causes, namely, which led to the war of 1781 between Holland and England. The Dutch authorities are, indeed, exact and copious on the subject as far as they go; yet it would have been of great advantage to have gained a more intimate acquaintance with the views and sentiments by which the English court was actuated, during the transactions which preceded that event;

and by ascertaining the nature of the influence exercised by that court over the Stadtholder, some clue would have been afforded to the discovery, as to whether the accusations of a treasonable correspondence with England, fraught with such important results to him, were or were not brought forward on just grounds; a question, the decision of which would make a considerable difference in the estimate of right and wrong between the parties, in his subsequent dispute with the States of Holland.

N O T E S.

NOTE A. (Page 7.)

It is somewhat extraordinary that the frequent recurrence of this delinquency did not have the effect of opening the eyes of the States as to its true cause. It has been already observed, that the captain of each vessel was allowed a certain sum for its provision, which he was to apply at his discretion. So long as the navy was on a moderate scale and the most meritorious officers only were chosen for employment, the evils resulting from this system were but slightly felt; so little indeed that, as we are informed by Tindal, (Continuation of Rapin, vol. i. p. 102,) when, in 1639, the English and Dutch fleets were acting in conjunction, the crews of the former were disabled by sickness, while the Dutch continued healthy in consequence of the superior quality of the provisions with which they were supplied. But when any extraordinary emergency demanded a considerable increase of ships, and, the necessity of the occasion not admitting of selection, the command was intrusted to low and mercenary persons, they often sought to enrich themselves by the savings they could effect out of the funds given them for the ships' use, and consequently, when the time of action arrived, the sailors, ill and scantily fed, were found disaffected, while the deficiency of material and ammunition rendered it impossible for them to engage with the enemy, even had they been inclined.

NOTE B. (Page 121.)

The important duties of the Pensionary of Holland and the means which a man of talent and dexterity possessed of obtaining extensive influence both in the Province and the States-General, will be best judged of by the examining the nature of his instructions. "He is to be of the reformed religion, and versed in the Latin and French languages; he is to fill no other office except by permission of the States; to maintain the laws, customs, and privileges of the Province; to hold the assemblies of the States on the day they are

summoned, and to commence business on the third day after at latest; to bring under the consideration of the States all the vacant offices, in order that they may be disposed of." (The Pensionary often accompanied such notice with a recommendation of some one to fill the office, which, if he were popular, the States usually adopted.) "He shall be present in the assemblies of the Commissioned Counsellors, as well as in those of the States-General, where he is to have only a deliberative voice; and to refer any question relating to Holland to the Commissioned Counsellors in order to the summoning of the States of Holland thereupon. He is to hold the assemblies of the States of Holland at nine in the morning and at four in the afternoon, and to break up at eleven in the morning, to give him an opportunity of attending the assemblies of the States-General. He is to propose such measures as he shall deem advisable for the service of the country;" (thus taking the initiative in all proceedings;) "to collect the votes, and to use his utmost endeavours to bring the members to unanimity; but if that be found impossible, to take the resolution of the majority in cases where it is admissible from the nature of the question. *To admonish any member unreasonably long and tedious to express his opinions more succinctly*; to register all the resolutions of the States, and all books, letters, and papers, concerning public affairs, which may come into his hands. He is to make a report at the opening of every assembly of the States of Holland, of what has been done since the last meeting in the college of Commissioned Counsellors, and in the States-General. He is forbidden to withhold from the States any missive he may receive. He is to entertain a correspondence with the ministers of the States at foreign courts, and to communicate such circumstances as he may judge expedient to the ministers of foreign princes accredited to the States, and to report to the States such intelligence as he may receive from them. He is to make himself acquainted with the state of the finances, and report thereon to the States, but without interfering in the administration thereof, neither is he to meddle with the distribution of offices." (Res. van de St., A.D. 1663, Jul. 24, 25.) Thus the Pensionary may truly be said to be the eyes, ears, and mouth-piece of the States.

NOTE C. (Page 380.)

Sir William Temple gives, in his Memoirs, a whimsical illustration of this peculiarity of the Dutch people. "Dining one day," he says, "at Monsieur Hoef's (chief burgomaster of Amsterdam), and having a great cold, I observed, every time I spit, a tight

handsome wench was presently down to wipe it up, and rub the board clean: somebody at table speaking of my cold, I said, the most trouble it gave me was to see the poor wench take so much pains about it: Monsieur Hœft told me it was well I escaped so; and that if his wife had been at home, though I was an ambassador, she would have turned me out of doors for fouling her house; and, laughing at that humour, said, there were two rooms of his house that he never durst come into, and believed they were never opened but twice a year, to make them clean." The ambassador congratulating him on conforming so zealously to the customs of his country, where, as he heard, the wife's government was a thing established, he replied it was true, and all a man could hope for was an easy mistress, such as he had. A-propos of this conversation, an anecdote was mentioned in the company, of a magistrate, who, going to visit a lady in the neighbourhood, and receiving an answer in the affirmative, to his inquiry whether she were at home of a "stout North Holland lass" who opened the door, was about to enter, when the girl "remarking that his shoes were not very clean, took him up by both arms, threw him upon her back, carried him across two rooms, set him down at the bottom of the stairs, pulled off his shoes, put him on a pair of slippers that stood there, and all this without saying a word; but when she had done, told him he might go up to her mistress, who was in her chamber." (Memoirs of what passed in Christendom from 1672 to 1679, p. 458.) Another author expressing his astonishment at the patience with which the Dutch husbands submitted to this domestic governance, tells us that, dining one day at an inn in North Holland, where, according to the primitive customs of the country, the guests, hosts, and servants sat at table together, the master of the house, during dinner, ordered his female domestic to fetch him something. Hereupon his wife told him he might go and fetch it himself, for she would have her servant take some rest. Sharp words passed, and the husband for a time showed symptoms of a disposition to violate the wise customs of his ancestors by rebelling; but at length, convinced of his error, he solicited pardon of his offended fair by a respectful salute. *Lettres sur la Hollande de Beaumarchais*, No. 27.

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| <p>Zutphen, taken by Don Frederic di Toledo, and cruelly pillaged, i. 591
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ERRATA.

- p. 121, line 10 from bottom, *for unusually, read usually.*
- p. 151, line 3 from bottom, *for allow read endure.*
- p. 176, line 15 from bottom, *for from two read from the two.*
- p. 202, line 2 from bottom, *for less certain read less than certain.*
- p. 240, line 15 from bottom, *for tendered read tended.*
- p. 247, line 18, *insert a before politic.*
- p. 270, line 1, *for States read state.*
- p. 292, line 10 from bottom, *for began read begun.*
- p. 295, line 16, *for short read sharp.*
- p. 302, line 6 from bottom note*, *for Outies read Orchies.*
- p. 387, line 15, *for on ships read of ships.*
- p. 408, line 18, *for subjects read objects.*
- p. 463, line 9, *for to the States read of the States.*
- p. 519, line 12, *for provinces read province.*
- p. 525, *for had treated read had been treated.*
- p. 542, *for which read whence.*
- p. 572, line 12 from bottom, *dele and.*
- p. 574, line 10, *for Moeckhern read Moeckern.*

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