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THE RISE

OF THE

DUTCH REPUBLIC.

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THE RISE

OF THE

DUTCH REPUBLIC:

A HISTORY.

BY

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY.

A NEW EDITION.

COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

LONDON:
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PREFACE.

THE Rise of the Dutch Republic must ever be regarded as one of the leading events of modern times. Without the birth of this great commonwealth, the various historical phenomena of the sixteenth and following centuries must have either not existed, or have presented themselves under essential modifications. Itself an organised protest against ecclesiastical tyranny and universal empire, the Republic guarded with sagacity, at many critical periods in the world's history, that balance of power which, among civilised states, ought always to be identical with the scales of Divine justice. The splendid empire of Charles the Fifth was erected upon the grave of liberty. It is a consolation to watch afterwards the gradual but triumphant resurrection of its spirit. From the hand-breadth of territory called the province of Holland rises a Power which wages eighty years' warfare with the most potent empire upon earth, and which, during the progress of the struggle, becoming itself a mighty state, and binding about its own slender form a zone of the richest possessions of earth, from pole to tropic, finally dictates its decrees to the empire of Charles.

So much is each individual state but a member of one great international commonwealth, and so close is the relationship between the whole human family, that it is impossible for a nation, even while struggling for itself, not to acquire something for all mankind. The maintenance of the right by the little provinces of Holland and Zealand in the sixteenth, by Holland and England united in the seventeenth, and by the United States of America in the eighteenth centuries, forms but a single chapter in the great volume of human fate; for the so-called revolutions of Holland, England, and America, are all links of one chain.

To the Dutch Republic, even more than to Florence at an earlier day, is the world indebted for practical instruction in that great science of political equilibrium which must always become more and more important as the various states of the civilised world are pressed more closely together, and as the struggle for pre-eminence becomes more

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY, EDINBURGH.

Earliest Charter of Middelburg: p. 19.

Chimes at Antwerp above 1k towers 639

Last Struggle of Moors in Spain, 650


BOUND BY
BURN
37 & 38
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The oldest *Keur*, or act of municipal incorporation, in the provinces afterwards constituting the republic, was that granted by Count William the First of Holland and Countess Joanna of Flanders, as joint proprietors of Walcheren, to the town of Middelburg. It will be seen that its main purport is to promise, as a special privilege to this community, *law*, in place of the arbitrary violence by which mankind, in general, were governed by their betters.

"The inhabitants," ran the charter, "are taken into protection by both Counts. Upon fighting, maiming, wounding, striking, scolding; upon peace-breaking, upon resistance to peace-makers and to the judgment of Schepens; upon contemning the Ban, upon selling spoiled wine, and upon other misdeeds, fines are imposed for behoof of the Count, the city, and sometimes of the Schepens. . . . . To all Middelburgers one kind of law is guaranteed. Every man must go to law before the Schepens. If any one being summoned and present in Walcheren does not appear, or refuses submission to sentence, he shall be banished with confiscation of property. Schout or Schepen denying justice to a complainant shall, until reparation, hold no tribunal again. . . . A burgher having a dispute with an outsider (buiten mann), must summon him before the Schepens. An appeal lies from the Schepens to the Count. No one can testify but a householder. All alienation of real estate must take place before the Schepens. If an outsider has a complaint against a burgher, the Schepens and Schout must arrange it. If either party refuses submission to them, they must ring the town bell and summon an assembly of all the burghers to compel him. Any one ringing the town bell, except by general consent, and any one not appearing when it tolls, are liable to a fine. No Middelburger can be arrested or held in durance within Flanders or Holland, except for crime."

This document was signed, sealed, and sworn to by the two sovereigns in the year 1217. It was the model upon which many other communities, cradles of great cities, in Holland and Zeland were afterwards created.

These charters are certainly not very extensive, even for the privileged municipalities which obtained them, when viewed from an abstract standpoint. They constituted, however, a very great advance from the standpoint at which humanity actually found itself. They created, not for all inhabitants, but for great numbers of them, the right, not to govern themselves, but to be governed by law. They furnished a local administration of justice. They provided against arbitrary imprisonment. They set up tribunals, where men of burgher class were to sit in judgment. They held up a shield against arbitrary violence from above and sedition from within. They encouraged peace-makers, punished peace-breakers. They guarded the fundamental principle, *ut sua tenerent*, to the verge of absurdity; forbidding a freeman, without a freehold, from testifying—a capacity not denied even to a country slave. Certainly all this was better than fist-law and courts manorial. For the commencement of the thirteenth century, it was progress.

The Schout and Schepens, or chief magistrate and aldermen, were originally appointed by the sovereign. In process of time, the election of these municipal authorities was conceded to the communities. This inestimable privilege, however, after having been exercised during a certain period by the whole body of citizens, was eventually monopolised by the municipal government itself, acting in common with the deans of the various guilds.

Thus organised and inspired with the breath of civic life, the communities of Flanders and Holland began to move rapidly forward. More and more they assumed the appearance of posperous little republics. For this prosperity they were indebted to commerce, particularly with England and the Baltic nations, and to manufactures, especially of wool.

The trade between England and the Netherlands had existed for ages, and was still extending itself, to the great

Women, children, old men, were killed in countless numbers, and still, through all this havoc, directly over the heads of the struggling throng, suspended in mid-air above the din and smoke of the conflict, there sounded, every half-quarter of every hour, as if in gentle mockery, from the belfry of the cathedral, the tender and melodious chimes.

Never was there a more monstrous massacre, even in the blood-stained history of the Netherlands. It was estimated that, in the course of this and the two following days, not less than eight thousand human beings were murdered.[1] The Spaniards seemed to cast off even the vizard of humanity. Hell seemed emptied of its fiends. Night fell upon the scene before the soldiers were masters of the city; but worse horrors began after the contest was ended. This army of brigands had come thither with a definite, practical purpose, for it was not blood-thirst, nor lust, nor revenge, which had impelled them, but it was avarice, greediness for gold. For gold they had waded through all this blood and fire. Never had men more simplicity of purpose, more directness in its execution. They had conquered their India at last; its gold mines lay all before them, and every sword should open a shaft. Riot and rape might be deferred; even murder, though congenial to their taste, was only subsidiary to their business. They had come to take possession of the city's wealth, and they set themselves faithfully to accomplish their task. For gold, infants were dashed out of existence in their mothers' arms; for gold, parents were tortured in their children's presence; for gold, brides were scourged to death before their husbands' eyes.[2] Wherever treasure was suspected, every expedient which ingenuity, sharpened by greediness, could suggest, was employed to extort it from its possessors. The fire, spreading more extensively and more rapidly than had been desired through the wealthiest quarter of the city, had unfortunately devoured a vast amount of property. Six millions,[3] at least, had thus been swallowed; a destruction by which no one had profited. There was, however, much left. The strong boxes of the merchants, the gold, silver, and precious jewellery, the velvets, satins, brocades, laces, and similar well concentrated and portable plunder, were rapidly appropriated. So far the course was plain and easy, but in private houses it was more difficult. The cash, plate, and other valuables of individuals were not so easily discovered. Torture was, therefore, at once employed to discover the hidden treasures. After all had been given, if the sum seemed too little, the proprietors were brutally punished for their poverty or their supposed dissimulation.[4] A gentlewoman, named Fabry,[5] with her aged mother and other females of the family, had taken refuge in the

[1] This is the estimate of Mendoza; viz., two thousand five hundred slain with the sword, and double that number burned and drowned.—xv. 317. Cabrera puts the figures at seven thousand and upwards.—xi. 865b. Bor and Hoofd give the same number of dead bodies, actually found in the streets—viz., two thousand five hundred; and estimating the drowned at as many more, leave the number of the burned to conjecture. Meteren (vi. 110), who on all occasions seeks to diminish the number of his countrymen slain in battle or massacre, while he magnifies the loss of his opponents, admits that from four to five thousand were slain; adding, however, that but fifteen hundred bodies were found, which were all buried together in two great pits. He thus deducts exactly one thousand from the number of counted corpses, as given by every other authority, Spanish or Flemish. Strada (viii. 422) gives three thousand as the number of those slain with the sword.—Compare De Thou, vii. 383–390 (l. 62). The letter of Jerome de Roda to the King, written from the citadel of Antwerp upon the 6th November, when the carnage was hardly over, estimates the number of the slain at eight thousand, and one thousand horses. This authority, coming from the very hour and spot, and from a man so deeply implicated, may be considered conclusive.—See the Letter of Roda, in Bor, ix. 737, 738.

[2] Bor, ix. 731, sqq. Hoofd, xi. 462, sqq.

[3] Hoofd, xi. 462. Bor's estimate is three millions, ix. 731. The property consumed, says Meteren, was equal in value to that which was obtained in the plundering afterwards by the soldiery. This he estimates at more than four millions in cash, not counting jewellery and other merchandise, vi. 110.

[4] Hoofd, xi. 463.

[5] Ibid.—The lady was grandmother of the historian's wife.

nanimous care, for her husband's extreme solicitude for the infant's welfare had convinced her that he was its father. On one occasion, when their house was in flames, Quixada rescued the infant before he saved his wife, "although Magdalen knew herself to be dearer to him than the apple of his eye." From that time forth she altered her opinion, and believed the mysterious child to be of lofty origin. The boy grew up full of beauty, grace, and agility, the leader of all his companions in every hardy sport. Through the country round there were none who could throw the javelin, break a lance, or ride at the ring like little Juan Quixada. In taming unmanageable horses he was celebrated for his audacity and skill. These accomplishments, however, were likely to prove of but slender advantage in the ecclesiastical profession, to which he had been destined by his Imperial father. The death of Charles occurred before clerical studies had been commenced, and Philip, to whom the secret had been confided at the close of the Emperor's life, prolonged the delay thus interposed.[1] Juan had already reached his fourteenth year, when one day his supposed father Quixada invited him to ride towards Valladolid to see the royal hunt. Two horses stood at the door—a splendidly caparisoned charger and a common hackney. The boy naturally mounted the humbler steed, and they set forth for the mountains of Toro, but on hearing the bugles of the approaching huntsmen, Quixada suddenly halted, and bade his youthful companion exchange horses with himself. When this had been done, he seized the hand of the wondering boy, and, kissing it respectfully, exclaimed, "Your Highness will be informed as to the meaning of my conduct by his Majesty, who is even now approaching." They had proceeded but a short distance before they encountered the royal hunting party, when both Quixada and young Juan dismounted, and bent the knee to their monarch. Philip, commanding the boy to rise, asked him if he knew his father's name. Juan replied, with a sigh, that he had at that moment lost the only father whom he had known, for Quixada had just disowned him. "You have the same father as myself," cried the King; "the Emperor Charles was the august parent of us both." Then tenderly embracing him, he commanded him to remount his horse, and all returned together to Valladolid, Philip observing with a sentimentality that seems highly apocryphal, that he had never brought home such precious game from any hunt before.[2]

This theatrical recognition of imperial descent was one among the many romantic incidents of Don John's picturesque career, for his life was never destined to know the common-place. He now commenced his education, in company with his two nephews, the Duchess Margaret's son, and Don Carlos, Prince-royal of Spain. They were all of the same age, but the superiority of Don John was soon recognised. It was not difficult to surpass the limping, malicious, Carlos, either in physical graces or intellectual accomplishments; but the graceful, urbane, and chivalrous Alexander, destined afterwards to such wide celebrity, was a more formidable rival; yet even the professed panegyrist of the Farnese family exalts the son of Barbara Blomberg over the grandson of Margaret Van Geest.[3]

Still destined for the clerical profession, Don John, at the age of eighteen, to avoid compliance with Philip's commands, made his escape to Barcelona. It was his intention to join the Maltese expedition. Recalled peremptorily by Philip, he was for a short time in disgrace, but afterwards

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[1] Strada, x. 506, 507 Cabrera, xi. 874.

[2] "Nunquam se jucundiorem venando prædam quam eo die retulisse domum."—Strada, x. 508. It must be borne in mind that the legends of Don John's boyhood have passed through the busy and inventive brain of Father Strada. Placed in a severe crucible, much of the romantic filigree would perhaps disappear, but the substance of his narrative is genuine.—Compare V. d. Vynckt, ii. 219.

[3] Strada, x. 509.