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### William of Orange and the Counter Reformation

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May, 1949

*How Stoyer.*  
*N. G. Pearson*



## OUTLINE

### Introduction:

The Lutheran Reformation spreads over Europe; is mixed with political and personal ambitions; and results in the Roman Counter Reformation. These two movements demanded a choice of allegiance by the individual; and, in the Netherlands, the two outstanding champions are William and Philip.

### Background and training

#### A. Orange

1. parents were tolerant Lutherans
2. at 11 years becomes ward of Charles and raised Catholic
3. result of these two conflicting philosophies
4. physical description, character, station, allegiance

#### B. Philip

1. son of Charles V
2. no love for Low Countries
3. physical description
4. characteristics: absolutism, procrastination, strict Catholic

#### C. Their relations

1. not too cordial
2. Orange honored by Philip: Golden Fleece, hostage, stadtholder
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4. Philip recognizes Orange as chief trouble-maker

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- c. placards
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- e. new oath of allegiance; Orange into exile; allies, study

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- b. Blood Council: Egmont, Hoorne, summoning of nobles results in publication of Justification of Orange, who takes up arms
- c. Brill taken by "Sea Beggars"; Orange Stadtholder;
- d. Mons and St. Bartholomew's Day; Haarlem; Alkmaar
- e. 1573 Orange becomes Calvinist

#### 3. Requesens

- a. Middleburg taken
- b. Mook Heath and loss of Louis and Henry of Nassau
- c. relief of Leyden; the University
- d. Orange supreme in Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht

#### 4. John of Austria

- a. Ghent, 1577, Spanish Fury; Perpetual Edict by Don John
- b. Union of Brussels
- c. Matthias invited by Catholic nobles, Orange Ruward

#### 5. Alexander of Farnese

- a. reconciliation by many
- b. Unions of Arras and Utrecht sow seeds of split
- c. Ban against Orange in 1580
- d. Orange supports Anjou; French Fury; Anjou leaves



**OUTLINE**  
**(2)**

**The Death of Orange**

- A. Attempt of Anostro results in severe wound and death of wife of Orange; thought to be work of Anjou**
- B. Success of Gerard**
  - 1. a Catholic fanatic long dedicated to this task
  - 2. seals of Mansfeld; advice of Jesuits; of Gory; Farnese authorizes attempt with no financial support
  - 3. Gerard meets Orange through village minister; sent to France
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- A. Criticism**
  - 1. spy system a thing of time, important to success
  - 2. people loyal to Orange in spite of his failures
  - 3. a daring tactician; able diplomat
  - 4. an opportunist
    - a. A Christian but swears that accepted Reformed Creed for political reasons
    - b. names of children
    - c. was the embodying of tolerance of Luther's Reformation
- B. Conclusion**
  - 1. aim was freedom of conscience
  - 2. work resulted in formation of the republic
  - 3. assured existence of Protestantism in north Europe



The crowning movement of the sixteenth century was the Reformation of Martin Luther, which began with the publication of the ninety-five theses in Wittenberg, October 31, 1517. The effects of this movement were felt not only in Germany but throughout the world. It took but little time for the idea of freedom of conscience to spread through the world of that time. In every land, people of every class took on new attitudes toward life. They sought freedom in spiritual realms; and this desire was also soon reflected in their political life. It was a short step from freedom of the conscience to a not less desirable freedom in social life. The dominance of Rome over thought was broken; and, in time, the equally hard dominance of Roman social superiors and secular nobles was attacked and shattered. Both struggles were bitterly fought over long years; but both were eventually successful. The way to the modern freedom of the individual was opened.

It was natural that the reformation of Luther and other religious reformers should not go unattacked. Rome felt the loss of prestige and manpower keenly and set about reforming herself. The Council of Trent was convened for this purpose; and, through its long years of assembly, finally came forth with decrees which served as the basis of Catholic Reform. The Council began its sessions on December 13, 1545 and continued intermittently on account of



political difficulties until December 4, 1563. "During this time every important point of Roman Catholic doctrine had been considered and definitely formulated... The Council was reactionary rather than reformatory, but gave to the Roman Catholic Church a fixity of organization and a definiteness of doctrine that made it more unified and centralized than ever before,"<sup>1</sup> and it made the Church a more formidable opponent of the growing powers and demands of Protestant Christianity. Further means used by the Roman Church in its efforts to stamp out Protestantism were the Order of the Society of Jesus, founded by Ignatius Loyola; the Inquisition; the Index. This movement within the Roman Church was called the Counter Reformation and includes "all the measures taken by the Roman Catholic Church to uproot Protestantism in those lands in which it had entirely or partially triumphed."<sup>2</sup>

Thus the entire Christian world was agitated by two movements, both touching the innermost soul of man, both fiercely supported or hated, both intermingled with personalities and with political and personal ambitions. Everywhere people took sides. It could hardly be otherwise. As soon as the Protestant Reformation came to one place, just so soon came the Counter Reformation. It was

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1. Bruce, Gustave M., Ten Studies in Church History, pp. 79
  2. Jackson, S.M., Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge pp. 201



difficult to stand on middle ground. Men were forced to make their decision. Either they would remain subject to Rome and help her to gain back her lost possessions of land and men through intrigue, fire and sword, or they would claim their religious freedom and push onward toward a greater social and political freedom at the risk of the loss of property, fame, and life.

These two movements spread naturally to the Low Countries, which Emperor Charles V had in 1543, succeeded in uniting into one dominion which he had placed under his sister, Mary.<sup>3</sup> The provincial representatives, nobles, and others were allowed to assist her in an advisory capacity. The Netherlands consisted of seventeen provinces with more than two hundred walled cities and many other towns and villages. It was a prosperous and highly civilized European corner, where commerce, shipping, fisheries, cattle rearing, weaving, industries, architecture and fine arts had learned to thrive notwithstanding continuous wars and political upheavals. "But there was as yet not a feeling of super-provincial solidarity, of national union. To be sure, there were common interests in the economic field, there were cultural bonds, there was, in the northern provinces, a freedom of mind which made them perhaps more accessible to the spirit of the new era of Erasmus, Columbus, Luther, Copernicus, Calvin;"<sup>4</sup> and, generally speaking, the Netherlands were interested in philosophy, reformation, science, and discovery.

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3. Bricklayer, Peter, Holland's House, pp. 16

4. ibid.



Here in these provinces arose champions of both movements, and the struggle between them was long and bitter and filled with much bloodshed. Outstanding among the champions of freedom of conscience was William of Orange. Opposed to him was Phillip II, King of Spain, who was the stern and relentless champion of absolutism both of rule and faith. Both men were aided by lesser figures; but, in this territory, the battle between the new religion and the old; between the new freedom and the old bondage, was directed and maintained by these two, both of whom were equally tenacious. It would be foolish to assert that both were moved only by conscience motives. There were other aims; but their struggle, which resulted in the formation of the independent Netherlands, "got to be in essence a religious struggle between the Protestants of what became the Netherlands and Philip, in which the latter was supported to a certain extent by the provinces of the Catholic Netherlands of modern Belgium."<sup>5</sup>

William of Orange was the son of William of Nassau and Juliana of Stolberg. His family was one of the outstanding noble families in the Low Lands and could boast of possessions in that region dating back to 1403. Orange was a product of the Reformation of Luther. His father had seen Luther make his stand at the Diet of Worms and agreed with Luther at least to a certain extent. The Orange was

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5. Chapman, Charles E., A History of Spain, pp. 250



"born and educated" in the Augsburg Confession. Following the lead of other nobles, his father, believing that the Nuremberg Confession contained all that was necessary for true Christian religion, had gradually and without any strife changed his Catholic lands to Protestantism. He had even succeeded in quietly changing a Catholic nunnery into a Protestant Sisterhood; and, for the guidance of his clergy, he had written the Nassau Church Handbook.<sup>6</sup> As far as political actions were concerned, William was not especially active. He did finally join the Smalcald League, but never was active in its measures. Into this liberal Protestant household at Dillenburg in Nassau was born William of Nassau, later William of Orange, April 16, 1533. There can be but little doubt that his early training in this tolerant household helped to make the later hero of the Netherlands the most tolerant man of his time.

However, the Protestant education of Orange was interrupted at the age of eleven years when he became heir to René of Orange. This relative died in battle, having only shortly before named his nephew as his heir with the consent of Charles V. In order to take the privilege granted, it was necessary that young William become the ward of the Emperor. His father objected for a while - perhaps he was influenced by the fact that he had not been made the heir - but finally gave in and permitted young William to be taken over by Charles, who naturally raised the youth in the strictest forms of Catholicism.

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6. Putnam, Ruth; William, The Silent, pp. 177

7. ibid. pp. 178



Here in the royal court, young William was educated in all things necessary for his position. He became the favorite of Charles; and, through his position as page, learned much of the methods of diplomats and rulers. This training in Machiavelian tactics stood him in good stead in later years when he was able to match his wits with the best that Spain and other countries could offer.

The natural result of these two conflicting religious philosophies in early life was that William came to young manhood with little interest in things religious. His was the attitude of "simple, unquestioning conformity"<sup>8</sup> and he possessed "indifference toward all religion which was the outcome of his familiarity with the form of observance in which he participated, combined with his knowledge that his own people held opinions completely at variance with those of the imperial household."<sup>9</sup> When he had already begun his work which was to lead to the founding of the Dutch nation, he said to the dissenting religious parties, "The difference is too slight to separate you from one another."<sup>10</sup> At the time of his first marriage, he jokingly remarked that he would soon have his wife reading more interesting literature than Holy Scripture. His life also seems to have been - in young manhood - the kind which knew little religious restraint, for "there are frequent references in the intimate letters which show that his standard of life and morals was by no means puritanic."<sup>11</sup> In 1559 he had an illegitimate son

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8, 9. Putnam, Ruth; William, The Silent, pp. 38

10. ibid., pp. 244



by Eve Elivir, one of several mistresses. <sup>11</sup>

William, having reached his majority, was in 1550, <sup>12</sup> the richest noble in the Low Countries; and his home was filled with luxuries of the highest type. Socially, he was of the highest type, equally at home with nobles and peasant, making friends easily. "In physical appearance he was rather tall, well made, and strong, but thin. His hair and complexion were brown, and his eyes were brown, too, and very bright and large. His head was small and well shaped, but the brow was broad. His mouth was firmly closed and rather melancholy, and his whole appearance was that of a man of great strength of character and of self control." <sup>13</sup> This was the man who became the champion of freedom of religion against the workings of the Counter Reformation of Rome. Physically and mentally and materially, he was well equipped for the great things to be required of him. But spiritually, he was filled with indifference. It is conceivable that, had there been no pressure from Philip, William would have remained Catholic all his life, serving Philip loyally as he had served Charles V. But the easy going tolerance of Orange was stirred up into study and effort by Philip's efforts to restore the Roman religion absolutely; and Orange was forced into the lists and into greatness.

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11. *ibid.* in footnote, pp. 92

The child, Justin, was acknowledged and educated by Orange and later became Admiral of Holland.

12. Ponsonby, Arthur and Dorothea, Rebels and Reformers, pp. 48

13. *ibid.* pp. 63



Philip II, the champion of Rome, was the opposite of Orange. Physically he was small and below middle height with facial features much like those of his father, Charles. His protruding lower chin made speech difficult; and, no doubt, helped to increase the habit of looking away when speaking to others. His beard and hair were yellow. Unlike his father who could not forget his Flemish background, Philip was Spanish to the core and had no love for things Dutch. As a ruler he believed in absolutism in politics and in religion and was possessed of two big faults. He loved "bureaucratic methods" and was given to a "constant and complete intermingling of religious and political affairs." As a procrustinator of the worst type, he constantly kept in touch with every minor detail of his realm and kept subordinates waiting long periods of his decisions.

Philip was a strict Catholic who "looked upon himself as a servant of the Almighty, the Captain General of God's forces upon earth, with a duty to overthrow and trample down whatever might intrude between God's will and its accomplishment." "He was determined to reduce his Burgundian inheritance to the status of a Spanish province and to impose upon all his subjects therein - nobles, burghers, and peasants alike - the creed in which he himself was an ardent believer." "He would not reign over heretics." He was convinced that "there are but few of us left in this world who care for religion. 'Tis necessary therefore for us to take the greater

14, 15. Vleeke, B.H.M., The Evolution Of The Dutch Nation, pp. 126

16. Sedgwick, H.D., A Short History Of Spain, pp. 152

17, 18. Vleeke, op. cit., pp. 109-10



need of Christianity."<sup>19</sup>

Believing himself "to be divinely appointed to effect the restoration of Catholicism and to perpetuate the supremacy of Spain,"<sup>20</sup> Philip took over the rule of the Netherlands upon the abdication of his father, Charles V, in 1555. Born and reared in the glory of Spain and Charles' empire, he was convinced that the Netherlands would be a fitting addition to his real holdings; and, instructed in the complete supremacy of the Roman religion over all others, he was convinced of God-given duty to restore this religion even by the use of force. Like his father before him, he was perhaps convinced that one religion meant a more unified country; but, unlike his father, Philip was more interested in religion than in conquering.

These two men, Orange and Philip, came into important contact when Philip took over the Netherlands. At the abdication of Charles, Orange had been the support of the tired monarch. He continued to be the same for the son; and, at first, their relations, though not cordial, were at least not of the irreparable type. Philip appointed William Stadtholder for the provinces of Holland, Zealand, and Utrecht. He raised him to the position of Knight in the Order of the Golden Fleece; and Philip also used Orange as a diplomat.

"Philip's ambition on his accession was to make peace with Europe in order to be able to devote himself to putting down what he called heresy."<sup>21</sup> This necessitated the

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19. Birkhead, Alice, Heroes Of Modern Europe, pp. 79  
 20. Hulme, Ed. N., The Renaissance And The Reformation, pp. 468  
 21. Pensonby, op.cit., pp. 44



ending of the war with the French. The signing of the treaty was placed into the hands of Orange and other nobles. This treaty of Gateau-Cambreses was signed in 1559; and it was chiefly due to the efforts of Orange that it was so favorable to Philip and Spain.

However, it was this service which resulted in the ultimate struggle between Philip and Orange. To insure the carrying out of the treaty terms, Philip sent hostages to France. One of these was Orange; and, while in France, Orange became acquainted with the ambition of Philip to cut down heresy. While riding, Henry II told Orange of the concerted action that he and his ex-foe were proposing to take in order to uproot heresy effectually from their respective realms. Henry felt certain that this protege of Charles knew of this plan of Philip, but it was a surprise to Orange. However, Orange did not reveal his ignorance; and, thus, it is said, he gained the name: William, the Silent, by which he is known to all the world. It was at this time that Orange decided on his course. Upon his return to the Netherlands, he worked with every means at his command to keep Philip's aim from being realized. Egged on by this knowledge, Orange set himself three aims for the Low Countries: "to convoke the States-General; to moderate or abolish the edicts; and to suppress both the council of finance and privy council, leaving only the council of State, which he could make the body of Reform."<sup>22</sup>

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\*Putnam mentions looking unsuccessfully for contemporaneous use of this name. It was first used by enemies. In a footnote,



The country in which these men fought for their ideals lay between France and Germany. It was a valuable possession because of its wealth. In it Protestantism "spread rapidly in spite of persecution to which its adherents were early subjected. The spirit and occupations of the people, the whole atmosphere of the country, were singularly favorable to the reception of the evangelical doctrine. They were sober, industrious, liberty-loving. Their intelligence was so remarkable that common laborers, even fishermen who dwelt in the huts of Friesland, could read and write and discuss the interpretation of Scripture."<sup>23</sup> "Nor did the Rhine from Germany or the Meuse from France, send more water into the Low Countries, than by the one the contagion of Luther, and by the other that of Calvin, was imported into the same Belgic provinces," says the Jesuit historian, Strada.<sup>24</sup> "The inhabitants were remarkably quick-witted and attracted by anything which appealed to their reason. Their breadth of mind and cosmopolitan outlook, was no doubt, largely due to the extensive trade they carried on

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on pp. 74, Putnam also adds: "There are, however, indications in other letters showing that his attention was turned to the persecutions at this time and that he strongly disapproved of them." Belloc disparages this entire incident. Most historians accept the incident as one which inspired Orange in his work.

<sup>22</sup>, Birkhead, op. cit., pp. 81

<sup>23</sup>, <sup>24</sup>. Fisher, G.F., The History Of The Christian Church, pp. 341

<sup>25</sup>. Birkhead, op. cit., pp. 74

<sup>26</sup>. Foxworthy, op. cit., pp. 48



with eastern and western nations. The citizens of the well-built towns studding the Low Countries, had become very wealthy. They could send out fine soldiers, as Charles V had seen; but their chief pursuit was commerce. Education rendered them far superior to many other Europeans, who were scarcely delivered from the ignorance and superstition of the Middle Ages.<sup>25</sup> Divided as their country was into seventeen provinces, they had no king of their own; but had been governed by feudal lords and treated as slaves and dependents, with no power of voice in their own government. "Seeing their great wealth and prosperity, neighboring countries were desirous of adding these riches to their own territories, and thus, through war and purchase, the Netherlands fell under the dominion of Burgundy with its powerful reigning dukes, and under Austria through further wars, and finally, by a marriage of a Prince of Burgundy with a Princess of Spain, they became subjects of the latter country,"<sup>26</sup> and finally into the hands of Philip. However, in the course of years, through much striving, these provinces had gained a certain degree of independence. They had charters which insured various privileges to them; and, upon taking the reins of government, Philip swore to protect and preserve these charters even more than had his father.

However, with the coming of Philip, the provinces headed for trouble. He was already hated from his first appearance in the Netherlands, and this hatred increased among the people and among the nobles. Much of this hatred

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25. Birkhead, op. cit. pp. 74  
 26. Fensonby, op. cit. pp. 46



stemmed back to the time of Charles, but the typically Spanish attitude of Philip, his obvious dislike for the Low Countries, the presence of Spanish soldiers, and the fact that the Estates were only figure heads all increased this hatred. Foremost among the nobles who objected to the high-handed ways of Philip was Orange, together with Egmont and Hoorne. These men succeeded in hindering Philip's work while he was in the Netherlands; but, when Philip left, never to return, he showed that he recognized his true opponent, speaking to Orange: "Nos los estados, na vos, vos, vos."<sup>27</sup>

To rule as regent, Philip left his half-sister, Margaret of Parma, who was to rule with three councils: the council of finance, the privy council, and the council of State. Her chief advisors were to be Granvelle, who "gave advice and issued instructions when he seemed to be only receiving them,"<sup>28</sup> Viglius, and Berlaymont; but it was not long until all knew that Granvelle was the actual power in the Netherlands.

The first thing to arouse the nobles and people was the reorganization and enlarging of the ecclesiastical affairs of the Lowlands which were being conducted by three archbishoprics. This plan was not new. It had already been conceived by Charles but had not been put into effect because of pressing political affairs. It was a step forward in the nationalization of the country and also a step toward better

27. Motley, John Lothrop, The Rise Of The Dutch Republic, vol. 1, pp. 192. "Vos" is a discourteous form.

28. Motley, *ibid.*, pp. 218



ecclesiastical rule, since no person was to be considered for high ecclesiastical honor without an university degree.<sup>29</sup>

This plan was now put into effect by Philip upon the publishing of the Papal Bull of Paul IV in 1559; and the number of bishoprics was increased from three to seventeen.<sup>\*</sup> This brought protests from the nobles, because it brought a change in representation and also because the need for a university degree meant that many a young brother could not be taken care of through the services and wealth of the Church. At once the blame was laid upon Granvelle, who was really innocent of this particular act.<sup>30</sup> However, his luxurious life, together with the fact that he received the best position as Archbishop of Mechlin, plus the present of a Cardinal's hat from Margaret, sealed his fate. The nobles were positive he was at fault.<sup>#</sup> So were the people. All hated him. All worked against him. The results of this hatred were soon evident. The nobles protested to Margaret. Montigny was sent to Spain to place the grievances before Philip; but his mission was a failure. Later Orange, Egmont, and Hoorne joined in a strong protest statement which also had little result. The luxury of the Cardinal was mocked with the "fools cap" livery which the nobles now began to employ for their retinues; and the people ridiculed the Cardinal in verse and in caricature.

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29. Putnam, op. cit., pp. 123

30. Edmundson, Geo., The Cambridge Modern Dictionary, pp. 133

\* Some authors say 4 to 16.

#Perhaps another reason for hatred of Granvelle can be found in the regard for social position by nobles and their wives. Such may have been the case with Orange, whose wife keenly felt the



While this was going on, the ancient placards issued by Charles in 1580 - the last of several forms of the Inquisition - were republished in the language of Charles. These placards had never been too well enforced during the reign of Charles for political and financial reasons; but now Philip ordered them strictly enforced. "No one shall print, write, copy, keep, conceal, sell, buy or give in churches, streets, or other places, any book or writing made by Martin Luther, John Ecolampadius, Ulrich Zwingli, Marint Bucer, John Calvin, or other heretics reprobated by the Holy Church. ...Moreover, we forbid all lay persons to converse or dispute concerning the Holy Scripture, openly or secretly, especially on any doubtful or difficult matters, or to read, teach, or expound the Scriptures unless they have duly studied theology or have been approved by some renowned university; ... or to preach openly or secretly, or to entertain any of the opinions of the above mentioned heretics...on pain...to be executed, to wit: the men with the sword and the women to be buried alive if they do not persist in their errors; if they do persist in them, then they are to be executed with fire, all their property in both cases being confiscated to the crown." <sup>31</sup>

"Against the arbitrary policy embodied in the edicts, the new bishoprics, and the foreign soldiery, the

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fact that her husband, the son-in-law of the Great Elector was now socially outranked by a low-born Cardinal.  
31. Motley, op. cit. pp. 228-230



Netherlanders appealed to their ancient constitutions. These charters were called "Handvest" in the vernacular Dutch and Flemish because the sovereign had made them fast with his hand.<sup>32</sup> Nearly all the provinces possessed privileges equally ample, duly signed and sealed; and, as far as ink and sealing wax could defend a land against sword and fire, the Netherlands were impregnable against the edicts and the renewed episcopal Inquisition. But Philip had decided; and, in spite of protest from the nobles and unrest among the people, he gave orders to enforce the edicts to the letter and that the Inquisitors should go hard to work. When his decision arrived, the nobles wanted to again seek some clemency; but Orange, convinced of the uselessness of such an attempt, suggested the publication of the Placards, remarking to a companion, "Now we shall see the beginning of a fine tragedy."<sup>33</sup> Upon their publication the people were aroused to cartoons against Granvelle and to calling upon Orange and the other nobles to do something.

One group of nobles, led by Brederode and Louis of Nassau formed the Compromise League, which was a defensive league among the Catholic and Protestant nobles against the Inquisition. Most of these nobles were young and wild and eager for fighting. Orange was not consulted in the formation of this league, nor did he commend it. Concerning his relation to the league, Orange wrote Margaret that he was "at all times desirous to obey the commands of his majesty and her highness and to discharge the duties of a good Christian."<sup>34</sup> Thus a

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32. Motley, op. cit., pp. 238

33. Putnam, op. cit., pp. 154

34. Motley, op. cit., pp. 424



beginning of spiritual interest was growing within Orange. A few years before he would have said, "a good Catholic," which shows that the great question of the reformation was now forcing itself into his mind, not only as a political problem but as a personal moral one, which he felt that he could not much longer neglect solving. Many nobles signed the Compromise and on March 3, 1566 they presented their Request to Margaret. It was at this occasion that Berlesmont is to have said: "What, madam, is it possible that your highness can entertain fears of these beggars?" Later, at a banquet, amid the wild revelings of the Compromise signers, this name "Beggars" was riotously accepted and became the watchword of the rebelling party in the Netherlands. Orange had no connection with this group, fearing its wild ways; and, though the Beggars did much talking, promising, shouting, and drinking, they never accomplished anything for the cause of the people and eventually disbanded.

As time went by, Margaret, who at first had been friendly to Granvelle, became angered at his power; and, together with the nobles, suggested his recall to Philip. This was accomplished by Philip and Granvelle under the pretense of a trip to visit his aged mother. With the departure of Granvelle, Margaret was more dependent upon the nobles, and especially upon Orange. In 1566 came the iconoclast uprising in Antwerp, which should have been handled by Margaret, but which was settled by Orange. This act of terrorism sealed the doom

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35. Motley, op. cit., pp. 438

36. Putnam, op. cit., pp. 140



of the Netherlands, for Philip said, "It shall cost them dear."

Through his Regent, Philip next demanded a new oath of allegiance by all officials of the government "to obey the orders of the government everywhere and against every person without limitations or restrictions."<sup>38</sup> Most of the nobles signed, but Orange refused, feeling that he had always been a loyal subject which did away with the need for a new oath. Besides he had a Lutheran wife and this oath might mean striking against her. This oath presented a choice to all the nobles. Either they would become blindly obedient or they would declare themselves rebels. Many tried to convince Orange to sign, but failed. Even Egmont, a close friend failed, being told by Orange, "Alas, Egmont, the king's clemency, of which you boast, will destroy you. Would that I might be deceived, but I foresee too clearly that you are to be the bridge which the Spanish will destroy so soon as they have passed over it to invade our country."<sup>39</sup> A few days after this parting, Orange left the Netherlands for a period of exile at the ancestral house in Dillenburg, Germany. He wrote Philip that he was leaving and resigning all his offices, but that "he was always ready to place himself and his property at the king's orders in everything which he believed conducive to the true service of his majesty."<sup>40</sup> Penning up consciences through force was not his ideal of high service to his king, so he left; and not too much too soon, for his private agent, who was private secretary to Philip, wrote that Alva,

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37. Motley, op. cit., pp. 485

38. Motley, *ibid.*, pp. 530

39. Motley, *ibid.*, pp. 568



who was soon to arrive in the Netherlands, was to "arrest the prince as soon as he could lay hands upon him and not to let his trial last more than twenty-four hours." <sup>40</sup> During his stay in exile, Orange spent a great amount of time and energy soliciting the aid of German and French princes; and at length he succeeded in getting the good will of some and promises of help from others, notably from Coligny, the leader of the French Huguenots. But his time was also occupied with spiritual things. He was convinced that the rift between Philip and his subjects was to increase; and he began to prepare himself for leadership which would knit him more closely to the German princes whose alliance he desired. Within a few days after his arrival at Dillenburg, he wrote to William of Hesse, asking for the loan of the Lutheran minister, Nicholas Zell, to give him religious instruction. Wrote Orange, "We are heartily desirous of using the time we are to stay here out of the Netherlands for strengthening our character and for studying the Holy Scriptures." <sup>41</sup> This and other words and actions brought him the interest and friendship of the German Lutheran princes, who took up his cause in their meetings with other nations.

As said before, Orange left the Netherlands none too soon, because, less than a month after his leaving, Alva, the most renowned of Spanish generals, arrived with his well trained and cruel troops, which included a corps of musketeers <sup>42</sup> and two thousand disciplined prostitutes. His coming was a blow

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40. *ibid.*, pp. 570

41. Putnam, *op. cit.*, 189

42. Cambridge Modern, pp. 224

\* first time in history



to the pride of Margaret and their relationship grew steadily more bitter until Margaret finally retired from office.

The first step of Alva, coming as the man who had tamed men of iron and expecting no trouble from these "men of butter", was the founding of the Council of Troubles, which speedily gained the descriptive name, "Council of Blood." The express purpose of this Council was the extermination of heresy and no person was safe, regardless of how small their connections with heresy had been. Those especially sought out were the wealthy, whose properties were naturally confiscated for the benefit of the crown. So quickly did Alva and his helpers, Vargas and Del Rio, capture, condemn, and execute heretics, that it sometimes happened that executions took place without even the regular farce of a trial. When such an instance was found, Alva said, "It will be better for him when he takes his trial in the other world."<sup>43</sup> The unrest which took hold of the people was multiplied when Egmont and Hoorne were captured and removed to prison in Ghent, where they were later executed after a meaningless trial. Alva soon sought to take care of Orange and the other nobles by summoning Williem, Louis of Nassau, Count Van den Berg, Hoogstraaten, Culember, and Montigny to appear before the Council within forty-five days or to be banished and have their property confiscated. None of the nobles appeared/<sup>and Orange</sup> replied to the summons in his Justification, declaring that he could be tried only by his peers of the Order of the Golden Fleece. In this paper, Orange separated Philip as far

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43. Motley, op. cit., pp. 615



as possible from the acts committed in his name; but, while addressing him as "the most Catholic King," there is, for the first time, no mention of the "one true and ancient religion."<sup>44</sup> Obviously, the Prince was not yet ready to openly declare against his sovereign, nor to proclaim his adherence to the new religion. "He was, in truth, not for a new doctrine, but for liberty of conscience. His mind was already expanding beyond any dogmas of the age. The man whom his enemies stigmatized as atheist and renegade, was really in favor of toleration, and, therefore, the more deeply criminal in the eyes of all religious parties."<sup>45</sup> This answer of Orange resulted in the kidnapping of his eldest son, who was taken out of the Netherlands and raised in Spain. In February, 1568, a sentence of the Holy Office condemned all inhabitants of the Netherlands to death as heretics, but only a few were executed; and, at last, Orange decided. Proscribed, outlawed, his property confiscated, his eldest son kidnapped, "he saw sufficient personal justification for at last stepping<sup>46</sup> into the lists, the avowed champion of a nation's wrongs," and at once went to work raising funds and troops. He received promises of aid from the Landgrave of Hesse and from the Elector of Saxony and was secretly or openly in league with half the sovereigns of Germany and had very high hopes in England and in France. He had also the friendship of the French Huguenots. Two hundred thousand florins were needed for an army; and, of this sum, Orange gave 50,000, Hoogstraaten 30,000,

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44. Putnam, op. cit., pp. 196  
 45. Motley, op. cit., pp. 625  
 46. *ibid.*, pp. 645



Louis 10,000, Culemborg 30, 000, Van den Berg 30,000, Dowager Countess Heerne 10,000; and the various cities also gave much. Orange sold his jewels, plate, tapestries, venturing his luxury, his fortune, his family, his life, his children, his honor, "not with the recklessness of a gambler, but with the calm conviction of a statesman."<sup>47</sup> He recruited daily and gave a commission to his brother, Louis, authorizing him "to levy troops and to wage war against Philip, strictly for Philip's good," and "to show our love for the monarch and his hereditary provinces, to prevent the desolation hanging over the country by the ferocity of the Spaniards, to maintain the privileges sworn to by his majesty and his predecessors, to prevent the extermination of all religions by the edicts, and to save the sons and daughters of the land from abject slavery."<sup>48</sup> Thus Orange waged war not as a rebel against his king, but as a loyal servant against the disloyal servant of the king. The attack was to come from the French and German frontiers at three places; but only the expedition under Louis of Nassau was successful. Even that failed finally because of a lack of funds. Alva got his revenge by banishing all the rebellious nobles and by personally defeating Louis' army at Jemminghen. Orange, bearing a banner showing a pelican tearing her breast to feed her young, sought to engage Alva with no success other than brief skirmishes. Alva would not fight, so Orange was finally forced to disband his army, while Alva returned to Antwerp to erect a huge bronze statue to his own honor.

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47. *ibid.* 648

48. *ibid.* 647



Orange's first attempt had failed. Nassau blood had been given in the life of Adolph of Nassau. The German princes now grew cold and advised William to quit. Philip had answered their petitionson behalfof Orange saying that his aim "had been to maintain the Catholic faith throughout his states."<sup>49</sup> The situation was black for Orange, but Alva received a jeweled sword and hat from the Pope which was "a gift rarely conferred by the Church, and never save upon the highest dignitaries or upon those who had merited her most signal rewards by themost shining exploits in her defense."<sup>50</sup> The Pope told Alva to remember that"when he put the hat upon his head, that he was guarded with it as with a helmet of righteousness, and with the shield of God's help, indicating the heavenly crown which was made for all princes who supported the Holy Church and the Roman Catholic Faith."<sup>51</sup>

Alva continued his butchery with but a little let-up in a half hearted amnesty in which "not a man or woman was pardoned who had ever committed a fault."<sup>52</sup> Instead of calming the people, it incited them more; and, in wry humor, they spoke of this Pardon as "Pandora."<sup>53</sup> The anger of the people was even more aroused in March, 1569 when Alva, to get goldfor Philip, who could according to the charters levy no taxes, announced three taxes: One per cent on all property, real or personal, to be collected instantly; five per cent on every transfer of

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49. *ibid.* 722

50. *ibid.* 732

51. *ibid.*

52. *ibid.* 746

53. *ibid.* 748, cf. Pandora's Box



real estate, which was to be a perpetual tax; a tax <sup>often</sup> per cent upon every article of merchandise or personal property to be paid as often as it should be sold. <sup>54</sup> Obviously, such taxing would ruin the country. So Alva was told by his advisors. So he learned from the objections and the stopping of labor and emigration of the people. Finally, Alva was forced to make a compromise.

Orange, meanwhile, was suffering from lack of funds and from the coldness of desired allies. But before going to Germany, he had commissioned the first Dutch navy under Admiral de la Marek, which was to war only against Alva and his adherents. Strict rules of conduct were given these "Sea Beggars," who were enjoined to follow the Articles of War strictly and whose spiritual care was given over to regular ship chaplains; but these orders were forgotten quickly; and the "Sea Beggars" often were more of a hindrance than help. However, it was these "Sea Beggars" who gave Orange his first real step to ultimate success, when a comparatively small force, starving on their ships, took the city of Brill on April 1, 1572, with the assistance of a fisherman who lied <sup>55</sup> about their numerical strength. The capture of this city inspired the inhabitants of Flushing to drive out the Spanish. Other cities followed suit until nearly all the important cities of Holland and Zealand had come under the banner of Orange. On July 19, 1572, Orange resumed his stadthoderate

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54. *ibid.*, pp. 740

55. Motley, John Lothrop, The Rise Of The Dutch Republic, vol. 2, pp. 30



over Holland and Zealand to which he had been appointed in 1559; and gave his lieutenant, Sonoy, instructions "to see that the Word of God was preached without however suffering any hindrance to the Roman Church in the exercise of its religion" and to "restore fugitives and the banished for conscience sake, and to require of all magistrates and officials of guilds and brotherhoods an oath of fidelity."<sup>56</sup>

Thus these cities remained loyal to Philip through his legally appointed Stadtholder. Louis of Nassau had, meanwhile, taken the city of Mons. Don Frederic, Alva's son, was assisted by his father in the effort to retake this important place. Orange, expecting help from the French Huguenots, was on the way to help Louis; but the expected help was cut down in the horrors of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. This news of Catholic terror in France was received by the Pope with a Te Deum, and Philip was very gay; but it sealed the fall of Mons. Orange was unable again to engage Alva, who had the assistance of the Archbishop of Cologne with 2000 cavalry.<sup>57</sup> During this campaign, William was saved from capture at night by his dog. Orange finally had to retreat and Louis was forced to surrender Mons, which Alva entered with great butchery. The fall of this city meant the temporary end of revolution in the southern Netherlands. Alva now went north taking Mechlin, Zutphen, Naarden, and Haarlem. "Here, however, the triumph of the Spanish forces practically

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56. *Ibid.*, pp. 42

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 67



ended. They were defeated in their attempt to take Alkmaar; and the Beggars of the Sea destroyed the Spanish fleet and took its Admiral prisoner."<sup>58</sup>

The star of Orange was again rising. The reformed thinking of Calvin was predominate in the provinces loyal to Orange; and, in the autumn of 1573, William publicly embraced the Calvinist faith, because, "to his ideas of political leadership it seemed the act of wisdom to identify himself with the strongest political body and from one vantage point to protect the devotees of other theological creeds. Expediency, not dishonesty, was the mainspring of his action."<sup>59</sup> The officiating minister, Bertholdus Wilhelmi of Dordrecht, writes of this occasion, "The Prince of Orange, our pious stadtholder, has joined the congregation, broken bread with the faithful, and submitted to discipline."<sup>60</sup> But the liberality of Orange "often prevented his stricter brethren in the faith from wholly trusting him, after his enrollment among the faithful, as before."<sup>61</sup>

Alva, now convinced of the hatred of the people, "inadequately supported by his sovereign and broken in heart, at his own request, was recalled by Philip; and so, on December 18, 1573, the man with the heart of stone, who everywhere else had been a victor, left the land which for six years he had deluged with blood, baffled and defeated."<sup>62</sup> His successor, Requesens, sought to negotiate a settlement, but failed because

58. Hulme, op. cit., pp. 482

59. Putnam, op. cit., pp. 244

60. *ibid.*

61. *ibid.*, pp. 245

62. Hulme, op. cit., pp. 482



Orange stuck to three points: "freedom of worship and liberty to preach the Gospel according to the Word of God; the restoration and maintenance of all the ancient charters, privileges, and liberties of the land; the withdrawal of all Spanish and other foreigners from all posts and employments, civil and military." <sup>63</sup> Orange was the meanwhile trying to win Elizabeth, Charles IX, the Emperor, and the German princes, who were all against each other and all against Philip. Elizabeth occasionally allowed men and money but would not take definite steps against Philip or give any promises to Orange even though he was ready to acknowledge her as sovereign of the Low Countries. It was the same with Charles IX; but little help came from the German princes. Louis, at this time, was sent to relieve the siege of Leyden, which was saved after a long period of starvation, when the Beggars of the Sea sailed in over the flooded land. Orange, himself, was sick with fever at the time, so could offer no assistance other than encouragement via pigeon. The news of the success came to him while he was at worship, and he caused the message to be read to the congregation after the service. In commemoration of this victory, the University of Leyden was founded in the name of Philip. However, the victory was dearly bought for it cost the life of Louis and Henry of Nassau.

Now followed a period of quiet in which a conference was held at Breda which allowed the Protestants time to sell property and land and leave the country. Not many

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63. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 237



accepted these terms, since "Roman Catholic worship was to be reestablished at once exclusively throughout the Netherlands."<sup>64</sup> During this period the Articles of Union between Holland and Zeeland were signed granting Orange all power in defense as Count of Holland. He was "to protect the exercise of the Evangelical Reformed religion and to suppress the exercise of the Roman religion, without however, permitting that search should be made into the creed of any person."<sup>65</sup> Orange accepted this duty but insisted that his instructions be changed to read, "and to suppress the exercise of any religion at variance with the Gospel."<sup>66</sup> When the Breda conference failed because Philip refused to allow Calvinism, hostilities started all over. The Spanish were successful, and Orange found himself hemmed in on all sides. He was financially broken. His appeals to Elizabeth to accept the sovereignty failed. She, however, promised her secret support. Thus Elizabeth, the mistress of diplomacy, kept Orange and the Netherlands coming to her, because "she desired that Philip might thus find his hands filled and be prevented from taking steps on behalf of Mary Stewart, and secondly, that the Netherlands might not offer in despair the sovereignty of the provinces to the King of France."<sup>67</sup> At this time, Orange, beset by financial difficulties and rising successes of Spain and forced to stand alone, was thinking of ending the entire affair by putting all his

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64. Motley, op. cit., pp. 234

65. *ibid.*, pp. 239

66. *ibid.*, pp. 240

67. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 245



people into boats and setting sail for some new land to  
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 begin anew.

The sudden death of Requesens stopped this idea of an exodus, and the confusion which followed gave new hope to Orange and his followers. Philip continued to procrastinate in appointing a governor; and Orange took advantage of the ensuing confusion. He summoned a meeting of the States of Holland and Zealand at Delft to consolidate the union between the two provinces. This conference met April 25, 1576 about a month after the death of Requesens and ratified the Union of the previous year. This Act of Federation, consisting of 18 Articles, "may be regarded as the germ of the  
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 Republic of the United Provinces." It gave William authority, "should he deem it needful for the safety of the land, to confer the Protectorate of the Confederacy upon a foreign  
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 Prince," and Orange began negotiations with Anjou to take the Protectorate.

Orange was now supreme in the northern provinces and appealed to the other provinces to expel the Spaniards and to secure their local liberties according to the ancient charters. In his appeals, he always laid particular stress

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68. Motley, op. cit., pp. 263

69. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 243

70. Ibid.



on the necessity of allowing liberty of worship and conscience to all. He was convinced that union "close, fraternal, such as becomes provinces of common origin and with similar laws, could alone save them from their fate. Union against a common tyrant to serve a common fatherland. Union, by which differences of opinion should be tolerated, in order that a million breasts should beat for a common purpose, a million hands work out, invincibly, a common salvation."<sup>71</sup> He was helped in his pleas by the Spanish mutiny and outrages and by the Spanish success at Zierickzee; and by the mutiny at Allost, which forced Philip to outlaw his soldiers. Negotiations were continued by Orange through the Duke of Aerschot with the Council of State for "a union of all the Provinces on the basis of exclusion of foreigners and non-interference with religious beliefs."<sup>72</sup> The States met at Ghent in 1576 and the signing of the Pacification of Ghent was speeded along by the news of the Spanish Fury at Antwerp, which was a worse slaughter than St. Bartholomew's Day and which caused all minor differences to be forgotten in the face of a common danger. "This treaty established a firm alliance and inviolable peace between the Provinces represented by the States General assembled at Brussels on the one part, and by the Prince of Orange and the States of Holland and Zealand on the other. All were bound to unite their forces for the purpose of driving the Spanish soldiers and other foreigners out of the country. ... As soon

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71. Motley, *op. cit.*, pp. 295

72. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 245



as this should be accomplished, a new assembly of the States General of the seventeen Provinces after the likeness of that convoked by the emperor Charles V at his abdication was to be summoned to consider the religious question. ...The Prince was recognized as a governor with full powers and as Admiral-General in Holland and Zeeland; and the confiscation of the possessions of the Houses of Nassau and Brederode was revoked."<sup>73</sup>

Thus all the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands were united against the common foe which sought to bind their consciences and to limit their privileges. Orange was nearing the success which he desired. This was possible, no doubt, to the delay in the arrival of the new governor, Don John of Austria, the illegitimate son of Charles V, a warrior of the ancient type, who arrived disguised as a Moor. Don John arrived too late under instructions from Philip to conciliate the provinces while "always maintaining...the absolute authority of the crown and the exclusive exercise of the Catholic religion."<sup>74</sup>

The States General, acting under advice from Orange, declined to receive John as governor "unless he would consent to the expulsion of all Spaniards from the country, approve the Pacification of Ghent, and swear to maintain the ancient privileges of the country and to employ none but Netherlanders in his service."<sup>75</sup> After some time, John gave in and signed the Perpetual Edict in February, 1577. His signing was not approved

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73. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 246

74. Hotley, *op. cit.*, 243

75. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 246



by Orange, because it undid the work of the Pacification, so Orange refused to recognize the Perpetual Edict in Holland and Zealand. About the same time, the work of Orange was hindered to a certain extent by the signing of the Union of Brussels, January, 1577, signed by the southern provinces. This was meant as a support of the Pacification of Ghent, but its flaw was contained in the "determination to do all in their power to drive away the Spaniards from the Netherlands while maintaining the Catholic religion and the King's authority." However, it did rally all the provinces even more to the colors, so it was accepted by Orange.

Meanwhile, Don John, who had worked his way into the confidence of many of the people through his pleasing personality, was becoming dissatisfied with his lot. He had come to the Netherlands looking upon his position as being a stepping stone to what he hoped would be a marriage with Elizabeth of England. Seeking to advance his authority, John took the city of Namur, which was an act of war; and then failed in his attempt to take Antwerp. His failure increased the prestige of Orange, who was now invited by Brussels to come to that city where "acclaimed as their leader by Catholics and Protestants, by south and by north alike, Orange undoubtedly

76. Cambridge Modern, Edmundson, pp. 247



reached the culminating point of his career." <sup>77</sup> However, personal ambitions entered again at this point, when the Catholic nobles, jealous of the popularity and prestige of Orange, secretly invited Archduke Matthias, brother of the emperor, to come to the Netherlands as sovereign. This could easily have meant the end of all that Orange had accomplished, but the Prince was up to the occasion. He received Matthias in friendly fashion; and then, with Machievellian diplomacy, saw to it that the young Archduke received only shadowy powers while Orange, himself, retained the power as Lieutenant-Governor and Ruward.

Everything looked fine now for the plans of the Prince. The provinces were to be united more firmly under the nominal rule of a Hapsburg Prince with all the reins of administration in the hands of William. But Philip was far from satisfied with the state of affairs and sent Alexander of Farnese with 20,000 veterans to help Don John. Together they were immediately successful, routing the federal armies at Gamblours and causing great confusion and terror among the land. To add to the confusion the Duke of Anjou came in and took the city of Mons and John Casimer also forced his way into the country. "The one came as the champion of the malcontent Catholics; the other as that of the ultra-Calvinist sectaries." <sup>78</sup> The result was that the antagonism between Catholics and Protestants, which had calmed a bit, rapidly became acute.

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77. *ibid.*, pp. 248

78. *ibid.*, pp. 249



Orange, in the meantime, had been carrying on negotiations with Germany, France, and England at the same time; and finally, in August, 1578, succeeded in getting the Duke of Anjou to accept the title: Defender of the Liberties of the Netherlands. At the same time, he managed to secure the alliance of Elizabeth; of Henry of Navarre, and of John Casimir; and "this curious combination of selfish aims formed a confederacy that was not likely to last, but at any rate, it served the purpose of a makeshift."<sup>79</sup>

Don John died suddenly October 1, 1578 and Alexander of Farnese succeeded him as governor. He at once set about to sow dissension among the confederates to undo the work of Orange. The result of Farnese's efforts was the Union of Arras, January 5, 1579, which was a defensive league of southern provinces for the protection of the Catholic religion "with the avowed purpose of effecting a reconciliation with the King on his approving of the political stipulations of the Pacification of Ghent and the Union of Brussels."<sup>80</sup>

A little later, January 29, 1579, found the northern provinces desiring the leadership of Orange, uniting in the Union of Utrecht "as if they were one Province for the defense of their rights and liberties to fight with life, blood, and goods against all foreign potentates, including the King of Spain, while granting freedom of worship in each Province and permitting no

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79. *Ibid.*, pp. 250

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 251



persecution of any man for his religious beliefs." Thus the split between the north and the south widened, because of religious conditions. The southern states had not yet progressed to a degree of toleration, while the northern states had begun to understand the spirit of toleration under the leadership of Orange. The signing of the Union of Arras sealed the southern states for Catholicism and subjection to foreign yoke for many years, while the Union of Utrecht served as the germ for the Constitution of the later United Netherlands. As far as union between the provinces was concerned, things went from bad to worse. During this time attempts were made to bribe Orange into giving up, but they failed. He continued to prepare the people for the coming of Anjou.

At this time, 1580, Grenville urged the assassination of Orange as the best means of gaining Philip's goal. Philip took the advice and, on March 15, 1580, the ban against Orange was published. He was accused of originating the Request of the Compromise Confederates and of encouraging the image breaking and public preaching. Philip censured him for his marriage to Catherine of Bourbon during the lifetime of Anne of Saxony. He was accused of rebellion against Alva and was thus held responsible for the Spanish massacres which were necessitated by his treason. He was further accused of introducing liberty of conscience, of procuring his appointment as Ruward; of violating the Pacification of Ghent; of

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51. *ibid.*, pp. 251

\* This Union was the product of John of Nassau and Anne, a shrewish type, had left Orange. There was an affair and Orange wanted nothing to do with her. She became insane and died imprisoned in a cubicle by her family.



foiling the efforts of Don John; and of frustrating all efforts of the conciliatory councils by his distrust. Finally, the Ban charged Orange with the newly organized conspiracy in the erection of the Utrecht Union. Piling up this list of accusations, Philip declared Orange "traitor, miscreant, enemy of ourselves and of the country. As such we banish him perpetually from all our realms, forbidding all our subjects, of whatever quality, to communicate with him openly or privately...to administer to him victuals, drink, fire, or other necessaries. We allow all to injure him in property or life...giving his property to all who may seize it. And if any one of our subjects or any strangers should be found sufficiently generous of heart to rid us of this pest, delivering him to us, alive or dead, or taking his life, we will cause to be furnished to him immediately after the deed shall have been done, the sum of twenty-five thousand crowns in gold. If he have committed any crime, however heinous, we promise to pardon him; and, if he be not already noble, we will ennoble him for his valor." This complete and tempting Ban was at once answered by the Apology of Orange in which he defended himself against all the accusations, denounced the king as lascivious, incestuous, adulterous, and murderous, ridiculed the price upon his head saying, "I am in the hand of God. My worldly goods and my life have long since been dedicated to His service. He will dispose of them as seems best for his glory and my salvation." Finally Orange offered to go into exile if it could

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82. Motley, op. cit., pp. 637

83. ibid., pp. 639



be demonstrated that his absence would benefit the cause of the country. This Apology was translated and sent to nearly every potentate in Christendom. When it was read before the Estates at Delft, they took it as an insult to themselves and denounced the Ban in favor of Orange.

From here it was a comparatively short step to the Act of Abjuration, July 26, 1581, which in the preamble stated: "All mankind know that a prince is appointed by God to cherish his subjects as a shepherd to guard his sheep... when he oppresses his subjects, destroys their ancient liberties, and treats them as slaves, he is to be considered not a prince, but a tyrant. As such the estates of the land may lawfully and reasonably depose him and elect another in his room." <sup>84</sup> This may seem like an openly rebellious act; but it was merely a reference to actual contracts, signed and sealed and sworn to by many successive sovereigns which were not fulfilled by Philip. Philip was therefore deposed justly, legally, and formally: "Justly because it had become necessary to abjure a monarch who was determined not only to oppress but to exterminate his people; legally because he had habitually violated the constitutions which he had sworn to support; formally because the act was done in the name of the people by <sup>85</sup> the body historically representing the people." This Act of Independence could easily have served all the Netherlands,

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84. Motley, op. cit., pp. 655

85. *ibid.*, pp. 656



but it was kept from this "by the ambitions of a few nobles; the frenzy of the Ghent democracy; religious intolerance; the consummate military and political genius of Alexander of Farnese; and by the exaggerated self-abnegation and the tragic fate of Orange." Orange had been offered the complete sovereignty; and, with his prestige, could perhaps have effected a complete independence for all the provinces; but he refused, says his brother, John, "That it may not be thought that, instead of religious freedom for the country, he has been seeking a kingdom for himself and his own private advancement."<sup>86</sup>

Orange also felt that France would be a better ruler for his land; and, in 1582, Anjou became the protector of the provinces.<sup>87</sup> Now there were three parties in the Netherlands: the provinces under Alexander of Farnese; the provinces under Anjou; and, allied to Anjou, the provinces under Orange. By urging Anjou as sovereign for the provinces, Orange made a great mistake. The past reputation of the man was not one to inspire confidence in the people; but Orange felt that he could control Anjou as he had done Matthias. It was not long until the people were proven correct. Anjou, dissatisfied with his limitations under the Pacification of Ghent and the Union of Utrecht, plotted to take control. He was successful in taking some cities; but his attempt to take Antwerp and Orange with it failed. Orange was again offered the sovereignty but still supported Anjou. However, the Estates had had enough; and,

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86. *Ibid.*, pp. 657

87. *Ibid.*, pp. 659

\* This meant the end of the rule of Matthias.

# Called the "French Fury" in comparison to the "Spanish Fury."



within a few months, Anjou returned to France. In 1583 Orange finally accepted the hereditary countship of Holland and Zealand which were strictly Calvinistic and determined to perish rather than to submit to the Spanish. In this same year, Orange married Louise de Coligny, who was accepted by her adopted country, and took up his residence in Delft.

At least a portion of Orange's ambitions for conscience liberty were satisfied in the provinces of Holland and Zealand. The other provinces remained Catholic and subject to Spain's intolerance. Had Orange so will, he perhaps could have continued until he had united all the Provinces in a spirit of toleration; but he did not live long enough for this. The tempting offers of the Ban of Philip brought out many desirous of gaining wealth for themselves or of doing a good turn for the Catholic Church.

Most of the attempts upon the life of Orange were unsuccessful because of his excellent spy system and because of his careful choice of servants. However, shortly after the installation of Anjou, an attempt nearly succeeded. While at a birthday party of Anjou, Orange was shot at close range, the bullet entering under the right ear, passing through the roof of the mouth, and coming out under the right ear, taking some teeth with it. Though in severe pain for some time, he recovered, partly due to the fact that the flash of the gun had cauterized the wound. This attempt was thought to be the work of Anjou; but it was soon discovered that the criminal was a bankrupt merchant, Anestro, who had agreed with Philip to do the deed for 30,000 ducats and the Cross of Santiago. The hired assassin, John Janreguy, the servant of Anestro, was killed before he had



a chance to escape, while Anastro escaped out of the country.

As the result of care and worry, the wife of Orange died.

Within two years five attempts were made upon the life of Orange. The attempt of July 10, 1594 was a success. This attempt was made by Balthazar Gerard, alias Francis Guion, a fanatical Catholic, who, before reaching maturity, had formed the design of murdering the Prince of Orange, "who, so long as he lived, seemed like to remain a rebel against the Catholic King and to make every effort to disturb the repose of the Roman Catholic Church." <sup>88</sup> When the Ban against Orange was published, he had gone to Luxemburg to work as a clerk to Count Mansfeld. Taking wax models of Mansfeld's seals to offer to Orange's party, he came to Treves, where he revealed his plan to the regent of the Jesuit college, who gave his blessing. Another Jesuit in the same college, sought to turn Gerard from his purpose "on the ground of the inconveniences which might result from the forging of Mansfeld's seals." <sup>89</sup> Gerard next revealed his plan to the celebrated Franciscan, Father Gery, who strengthened him in his plan. By letter he informed Parnese of his plan. Parma was already supplying four other would-be assassins in Delft, so gave little encouragement; but finally authorized an attempt without advancing any financial support. Now Gerard came to Delft and through the village clergyman, Villers, came into contact with Orange. From here he was sent to France to show the seals to Biron, who it was thought, was to be appointed governor of Cambrey. When Anjou died, Gerard was

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88. Sommer, M.S., The Voice Of History, pp. 227

89. ibid., pp. 228



sent with the message to Orange, delivering it to the Prince who was alone, unarmed, and in bed. Upon leaving Orange, Gerard loitered in the yard until challenged by a soldier. He said he desired to go to worship but could not because of his shoddy appearance. This was made known to the Prince, who ordered him a sum of money, thereby sealing his death. Next morning Gerard purchased a pair of pistols from a soldier of Orange and got some bullets elsewhere. The following day, as Orange was going to his noon meal, Gerard appeared asking for a passport. The meal finished, Orange was leading the way to his upper private apartments, when Gerard emerged from his hiding place and fired three times, one bullet going completely through Orange. Falling, the Prince exclaimed, "O, my God, have mercy upon my soul. O, my God, have mercy upon this poor people." <sup>90</sup> He spoke only once more to confess that he commended his soul to Jesus Christ; and, in a few moments, died, at the age of 51 years and 16 days. The murderer had escaped to the outside, but stumbled over a heap of rubbish and was caught. He was subjected to cruel torture which he bore courageously, even blasphemously, crying: "Ecce homo." <sup>91</sup> "His right hand was to be burned off with a hot iron; his flesh to be torn from his bones in six places; he was to be quartered and disemboweled alive; his heart torn from his bosom and thrown in his face; and his head was to be taken off." <sup>92</sup> The execution was carried out on July 14. The reward promised by Philip was paid

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\* This soldier killed himself after the assassination.

90. Sommer, op. cit., pp. 234

91. ibid., pp. 235

92. Motley, op. cit., pp. 736



to the parents of Gerard, who received the Orange estates of Lievremont, Hostal, and Damparten. When Orange's oldest son, Philip, returned from Spain, "the restoration of these very estates was offered to him by Philip II, provided he would continue to pay a fixed proportion of their rents to the family of his father's murder." <sup>93</sup> The son refused.

Thus ended the life of the man who had dedicated himself to freedom of conscience for his people. His work, no doubt, began as a political measure - perhaps even because of selfish motives - but it deepened into a matter of personal faith and practice of that faith as well as into a struggle for liberty for all in matters of faith. It was the Catholic Reform as embodied in the reign of Philip which forced Orange into action; it was this same Catholic dominance of all things which spurred Orange on in defeat; and it was a Catholic fanatic, egged on by his Catholic superiors, who finally ended the life of him who through his work had founded the Dutch nation.

Considering the work of this man, one must wonder that so many failures on the field of battle did not result in repudiation by the people. That such did not happen, is, however, a tribute to the greatness of the man. It shows that a realization of his tolerant nature was becoming a part of at least some of the people; but it especially shows that the movement of which he was the leader was a popular one which mixed together hatred against foreign tyrannical rule with a hatred against spiritual oppression. He has been attacked as one who

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93. *ibid.*, pp. 738



sought his own benefit, but his life shows otherwise. His was the energy and hope for his people which willingly suffered separation from family, the kidnaping of a son, the death of brothers, the loss of property and position, the enmity of those of like faith, the jealousy of nobility, and even his own death as the price to be paid for liberty for all. Men do not give up so much for personal gain. His aim was toleration for all; and it is only sad that his people did not more fully imbibe of his spirit.

Various men look upon his spy system as a blot upon his character which was not in line with his avowed high purpose. Rather, it seems to us, to be an application of the idea of "fighting fire with fire." Spies were common; and we can only admire the man who was able - with such limited resources - to build up an espionage system which included the private secretary of his arch-enemy. Success would have been impossible without spies.

That he was a poor general and cowardly are also unfounded attacks. He received training in the service of Charles and served him well. Even though it is true that Orange spent a great deal of time not fighting, still he did show bravery in the field and also a certain tendency toward originality in leadership in his engagements with Alva and at the relief of Leyden. It is sufficient defense that he succeeded against the most powerful and best equipped armies led by the best generals of the time - with mercenaries and untrained villagers and in spite of financial difficulties.



One of the most fascinating things to watch in the work of Orange were his diplomatic measures. He had had good training at the court of Charles; and, in the struggle with Philip, one marvels at the tactful handling of the Regent, Margaret; the reception of Matthias; the alliances with foreign princes; and, above all, at the way in which Orange managed to conduct a rebellion against Philip while at the same time appearing to be legal and loyal through the manipulation of the charters. One almost chuckles to think of the University of Leyden being found in commemoration of a victory over the troops of Philip and yet in the name of Philip. Orange, if not the greatest, was one of the best diplomats of his age; and used this ability for the good of his people.

Concerning his faith, one must wonder. Raised in tolerant Lutheranism; in youth turned to Catholicism for political reasons; in young manhood uninterested in anything but form, he gradually became personally interested in Christianity; and, we must admit, died a Christian. Whether he was convinced within his heart of the Calvinistic Reformed religion, one must doubt. There are too many things which point to a choice of this religion for political reasons. It took him a long time to do so publicly; and, we feel, that had the German princes been more helpful, Orange would have embraced that religion. It does seem that he was an opportunist; and Putnam even offers the names of his children as proof of this: "They reflect the color of successive phases of his career. In 1554, when the eldest boy was baptized, the Nassau William yielded first place to the Spanish Philip. Naturally, too Marie was named for the Queen,



under whose regency her father was loyal lieutenant to the Emperor. It was also natural that he should permit the great Elector's daughter to remember her father in Maurice and herself in Anne. Then came Charlotte's six daughters. It was hoped that Louise would please the Duke of Montpensier, but Juliana was not chosen for political reasons.... During the years when the others were born, one after the other, new friends were to be won to the cause. The second girl, Elizabeth, was godchild to the English Queen, who, it was hoped, would prove a fairy god-mother to the Netherlands. The Catherine Belgia symbolized the brief union of all the seventeen provinces and the States-General were her sponsors. Flandrina, Brabantina, and Antwerpiana were all three named in the hopes of exciting especial feelings of loyalty from provinces and cities for the father's plan, and the godfathers were numerous in the official capacity. Last came Frederick Henry, whose godfathers, the kings of Denmark and Navarre, were chosen, perhaps, with the intention of showing that the alliance with the French Catholics was to be definitely abandoned." <sup>94</sup> Whether Orange was an opportunist like this also in his choice of religion, or whether he chose from sincere conviction of the heart, this much is certain, he was a Christian not only in his faith, but also in his practice. The real spirit of the Lutheran Reformation had reached his heart; and he, in his turn, sought to pass this conscience freedom to his people. "His soul was full of piety; it was tolerant of error.... for no man ever felt more keenly than he that the Reformer who <sup>95</sup> became in his turn a bigot is doubly odious."

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94. Putnam, op. cit., pp. 490

95. Motley, op. cit., pp. 740



From indifference, he developed into deep religious appreciation; and, fighting against Philip's determination to plant the inquisition in the Netherlands, Orange succeeded so well, that, at his death, only two provinces acknowledged Philip. "His life gave existence to an independent county - his death defined its limits." <sup>96</sup> "The success of the United Provinces ruined all Spanish hopes of employing the vast commercial and industrial resources and the geographically strategic position of the Low Countries to perpetuate and extend Spanish international power. The failure of these ambitious policies also made impossible King Philip's scheme of reestablishing Catholicism in northern Europe." <sup>97</sup> Freedom of religion in the Netherlands was the result of the work of William of Orange; and "it is not too much to say that freedom and the fate of the Protestant religion in northern Europe was bound up with it." <sup>98</sup> He stands out as one of the greatest champions of the Protestant religion, a man of Evangelical Faith and of great Christian tolerance.

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96. Motley, op. cit., pp 739

97. Lucas, Henry S., The Renaissance And The Reformation, pp. 590

98. Mowat, R.B., A History Of Europe, pp. 422



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