

THE RISE
OF THE
DUTCH REPUBLIC.

THE RISE
OF THE
DUTCH REPUBLIC

A HISTORY

BY
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IN THREE VOLUMES
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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 organized 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 civilized 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 Zeland 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 civilized world are pressed more closely together, and as the struggle for pre-eminence becomes more feverish. Courage and skill in political and military combinations enabled William the Silent to overcome the most powerful and unscrupulous monarch of his age. The same hereditary audacity and fertility of genius placed the destiny of Europe in the hands of William's great-grandson, and enabled him to mould into an impregnable barrier the various elements of opposition to the overshadowing monarchy of Louis XIV. As the schemes of the Inquisition and the unparalleled tyranny of Philip, in one century, led to the establishment of the Republic of the United Provinces, so, in the next, the revocation of the Nantes Edict and the invasion of Holland were avenged by the elevation of the Dutch stadholder upon the throne of the stipendiary Stuarts.

To all who speak the English language, the history of the great agony through which the Republic of Holland was ushered into life must have peculiar interest, for it is a portion of the records of the Anglo-Saxon race—essentially the same, whether in Friesland, England, or Massachusetts.

A great naval and commercial commonwealth, occupying a small portion of Europe, but conquering a wide empire by the private enterprize of trading companies, girdling the world with its innumerable dependencies in Asia, America, Africa, Australia—exercising sovereignty in Brazil, Guiana, the West Indies, New York, at the Cape of Good Hope, in Hindostan, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, New Holland—must always be looked upon with interest by Englishmen, as in a great measure the precursor in their own scheme of empire. For America the spectacle is one of still deeper import. The Dutch Republic originated in the opposition of the rational elements of human nature to sacerdotal dogmatism and persecution—in the courageous resistance of historical and chartered liberty to foreign despotism. "To maintain," not to overthrow, was the device of the Washington of the sixteenth century, as it was the aim of our own hero and his great contemporaries.

The great Western Republic, therefore—in whose Anglo-Saxon veins flows much of that ancient and kindred blood received from the nation once ruling a noble portion of its

territory, and tracking its own political existence to the same parent spring of temperate human liberty—must look with affectionate interest upon the trials of the elder commonwealth. These volumes recite the achievement of Dutch independence, for its recognition was delayed till the acknowledgment was superfluous and ridiculous. The existence of the Republic is properly to be dated from the Union of Utrecht in 1581, while the final separation of territory into independent and obedient provinces, into the Commonwealth of the United States and the Belgian provinces of Spain, was in reality effected by William the Silent, with whose death three years subsequently, the heroic period of the history may be said to terminate. At this point these volumes close. Another series, with less attention to minute details, and carrying the story through a longer range of years, will paint the progress of the Republic in its palmy days, and narrate the establishment of its external system of dependencies and its interior combinations for self-government and European counterpoise. The lessons of history and the fate of free states can never be sufficiently pondered by those upon whom so large and heavy a responsibility for the maintenance of rational human freedom rests.

I have only to add that this work is the result of conscientious research, and of an earnest desire to arrive at the truth. I have faithfully studied all the important contemporary chroniclers and later historians—Dutch, Flemish, French, Italian, Spanish, or German. Catholic and Protestant, Monarchist and Republican, have been consulted with the same sincerity. The works of Bor (whose enormous but indispensable folios form a complete magazine of contemporary state-papers, letters, and pamphlets, blended together in mass, and connected by a chain of artless but earnest narrative), of Meteren, De Thou, Burgundius, Heuterus, Tassis, Viglius, Hoofd, Haraeus, Van der Haer, Grotius—of Van der Vynckt, Wagenaer, Van Wyn, De Jonghe, Kluit, Van Kampen, Dewez, Kappelle, Bakhuyzen, Groen van Prinsterer—of Ranke and Raumer, have been as familiar to me as those of Mendoza, Carnero, Cabrera, Herrera, Ulloa, Bentivoglio, Perez, Strada. The manuscript relations of those Argus-eyed Venetian envoys who surprised so many courts and cabinets in their most unguarded moments, and daguerreotyped their character and policy for the instruction of the crafty Republic, and whose reports remain

such an inestimable source for the secret history of the sixteenth century, have been carefully examined—especially the narratives of the caustic and accomplished Badovaro, of Suriano, and Michele. It is unnecessary to add that all the publications of M. Gachard—particularly the invaluable correspondence of Philip II. and of William the Silent, as well as the “Archives et Correspondance” of the Orange Nassau family, edited by the learned and distinguished Groen van Prinsterer, have been my constant guides through the labyrinth of Spanish and Netherland politics. The large and most interesting series of pamphlets known as “The Duncan Collection,” in the Royal Library at the Hague, has also afforded a great variety of details by which I have endeavored to give color and interest to the narrative. Besides these, and many other printed works I have also had the advantage of perusing many manuscript histories, among which may be particularly mentioned the works of Pontus Payen, of Renom de France, and of Pasquier de la Barre; while the vast collection of unpublished documents in the Royal Archives of the Hague, of Brussels, and of Dresden, has furnished me with much new matter of great importance. I venture to hope that many years of labour, a portion of them in the archives of those countries whose history forms the object of my study, will not have been entirely in vain; and that the lovers of human progress, the believers in the capacity of nations for self-government and self-improvement, and the admirers of disinterested human genius and virtue, may find encouragement for their views in the detailed history of an heroic people in its most eventful period, and in the life and death of the great man whose name and fame are identical with those of his country.

No apology is offered for this somewhat personal statement. When an unknown writer asks the attention of the public upon an important theme, he is not only authorized, but required, to show that by industry and earnestness he has entitled himself to a hearing. The author too keenly feels that he has no further claims than these, and he therefore most diffidently asks for his work the indulgence of his readers.

I would take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to Dr. Klemm, Hofrath and Chief Librarian at Dresden, and to Mr. Von Weber, Ministerial-rath and Head of the

Royal Archives of Saxony, for the courtesy and kindness extended to me so uniformly during the course of my researches in that city. I would also speak a word of sincere thanks to Mr. Campbell, Assistant-Librarian at the Hague, for his numerous acts of friendship during the absence of his chief, M. Holtrop. To that most distinguished critic and historian, M. Bakhuyzen van den Brinck, Chief Archivist of the Netherlands, I am under deep obligations for advice, instruction, and constant kindness, during my residence at the Hague; and I would also signify my sense of the courtesy of Mr. Charter-Master de Schwane, and of the accuracy with which copies of MSS. in the archives were prepared for me by his care. Finally, I would allude in the strongest language of gratitude and respect to M. Gachard, Archivist-General of Belgium, for his unwearied courtesy and manifold acts of kindness to me during my studies in the Royal Archives of Brussels.

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