

THE LILY OF LEYDEN.

BY THE LATE

WILLIAM H. G. KINGSTON,

*Author of "The Mate of the 'Lily,'" "The Settlers,"
"Ned Garth," &c., &c.*

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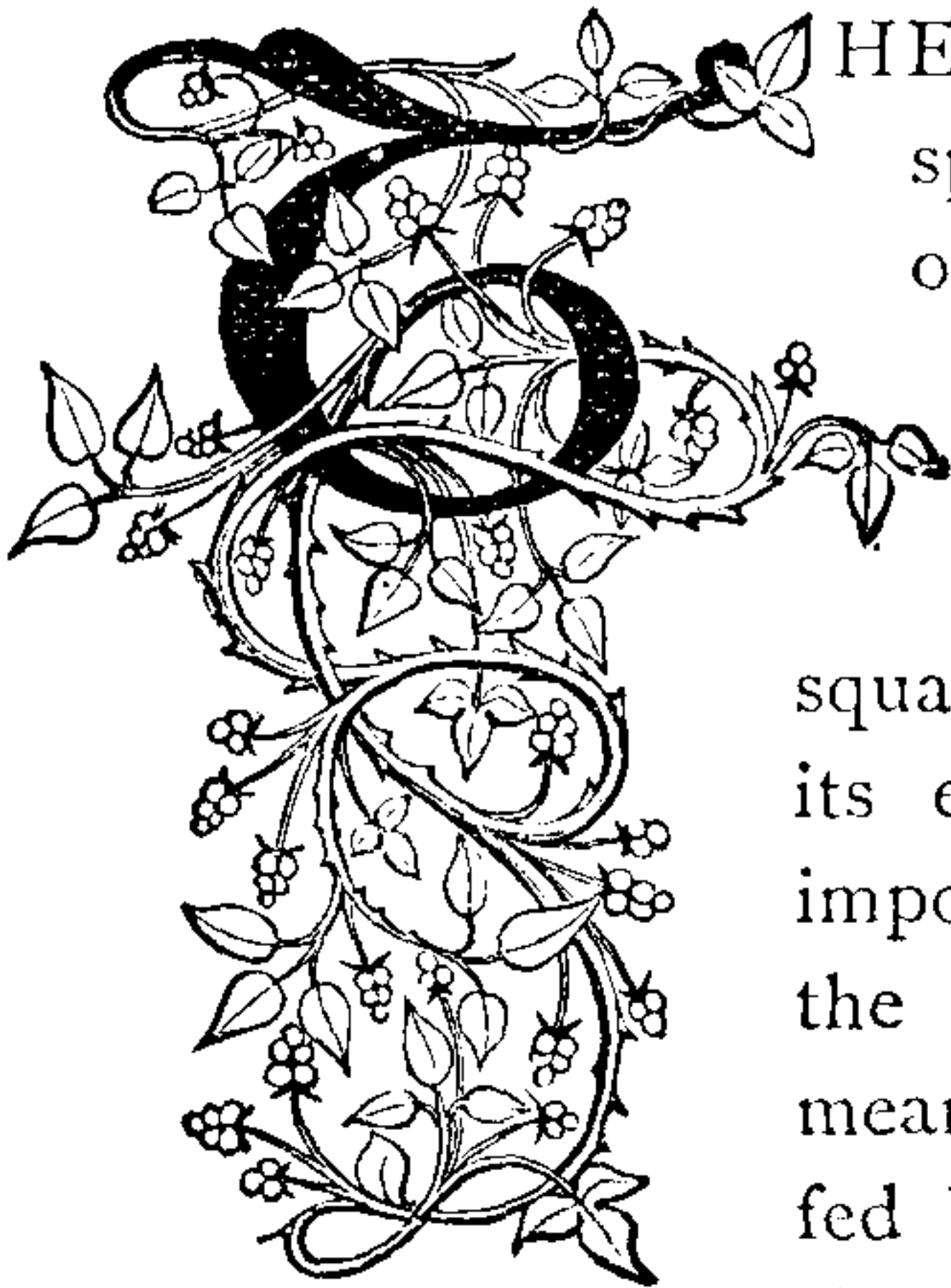


"It soon flew in at the window and alighted in her arms."



THE LILY OF LEYDEN.

CHAPTER I.



THE warm sun of a bright spring day, in the year of grace 1574, shone down on the beautiful city of Leyden, on its spacious squares and streets and its elegant mansions, its imposing churches, and on the smooth canals which meandered among them, fed by the waters of the sluggish Rhine. The busy

citizens were engaged in their various occupations, active and industrious as ever ; barges and boats lay at the quays loading or unloading,

some having come from Rotterdam, Delft, Amsterdam, and other places on the Zuyder Zee, with which her watery roads gave her easy communication. The streets were thronged with citizens of all ranks, some in gay, most in sombre attire, moving hurriedly along, bent rather on business than on pleasure, while scattered here and there were a few soldiers—freebooters as they were called, though steady and reliable—and men of the Burgher Guard, forming part of the garrison of the town. Conspicuous among them might have been seen their dignified and brave burgomaster, Adrian Van der Werf, as he walked with stately pace, his daughter Jaqueline, appropriately called the Lily of Leyden, leaning on his arm. She was fair and graceful as the flower from which she derived her name, her features chiselled in the most delicate mould, her countenance intelligent and animated, though at present graver than usual. After leaving their house in the Breede-strat, the principal street of Leyden, they proceeded towards an elevation in the centre of the city, on the summit of which rose the ancient tower of Hengist, generally so called from the belief that the Anglo-Saxon conquerors of Britain crossed over from Holland. Mynheer Van der Werf and Jaqueline reaching the foot of the

mound, slowly ascended by a flight of winding steps, till they gained the battlements on the top of the ancient tower, the highest spot for many miles around. Here they stood for some minutes gazing over the level country, of which they commanded a perfect panoramic view. Below them lay the city, surrounded by a moat of considerable width and stout walls, which had already been proved capable of resisting the attack of foes eager to gain an entrance. Here and there bridges led over the moat, protected by forts of no mean strength. In all directions were silvery threads glittering in the sun, marking the course of the canals which led to Haarlem and Amsterdam on the north, and Delft, Rotterdam, Gouda, and many other towns on the banks of the Yessel and the Meuse on the south, while occasionally wide shining expanses showed the existence of meers or lakes of more or less extent, while westward the blue ocean could be seen, and to the south-west Gravenhague, or The Hague, as the place is more generally called. On every side were smiling villages, blooming gardens, corn-fields, and orchards, betokening the industry and consequent prosperity of the inhabitants. The city at this time bore but few traces of the protracted siege it had endured for a whole year, and which had been raised

only three months before, when the Spanish force under Valdez, a lieutenant of the ferocious Alva, had been summoned to the frontier, in consequence of the rumoured approach of a patriot army under Prince Louis of Nassau.

At the period when our story commences, the heroic Prince William of Orange, loyally aided by his brothers, Louis, Henry, and John, and by other noble patriots, had struggled for seven long years to emancipate Holland from the cruel yoke imposed upon her by the bigot Philip of Spain and the sanguinary Duke of Alva. Their success had been varied; though frequently defeated, they had again rallied to carry on the desperate struggle. Several of their most flourishing cities had been besieged by the hated foe, some had fallen, and the inhabitants had been mercilessly slaughtered; others had successfully resisted, and the Spaniards had been compelled to retire from their walls. Count Louis had been defeated in a campaign in Friesland, but had escaped into Germany, where he had lost no time in endeavouring to raise another army. The Prince of Orange himself was then in possession of Rotterdam, Delft, and the intermediate country. Between those two cities was the important fortress of Polderwoert, which secured him in the control of the quad-

rangle watered on two sides by the Yessel and Maas or Meuse. The Spaniards meantime occupied the coast from the Hague to Vlaardingen, on the bank of the Maas. It should be understood that the country extending northward from the rivers which have been mentioned towards Leyden was generally level, and considerably lower than the ocean, which was kept out by enormous banks or dykes, and that it had been, by the industry of the inhabitants, brought under a perfect state of cultivation. There were certain spots, however, raised slightly above the surrounding flat, on all of which villages had been built. Enormous sluices existed at Rotterdam, Schiedam, and other places, by which the supply of water in the canals could be regulated; over these, as well as the dykes along the banks of the river, the Prince of Orange held perfect control. Besides the small force which enabled him to hold Rotterdam and Delft, he possessed a fleet of broad, flat-bottomed vessels, well suited for the navigation of the shallow waters of Zealand, where, under the brave and able Admiral Boisot, they were able to bid defiance to the ships sent against them by the Spaniards. Their crews consisted of those hardy sons of the ocean who, under the name of "The Beggars of the Sea," had already

rendered such good service in the cause of Freedom by the capture of Brill, the first place in Holland where the Prince of Orange was proclaimed Stadtholder, and in many other enterprises, when, according to their rule, no quarter was given to their hated foe. Besides Rotterdam, Delft, and Leyden, many other towns in various parts of Holland were garrisoned by the partisans of the Prince of Orange, and had either, with some exceptions, not been attacked by the Spaniards, or had successfully resisted the forces sent against them. Two, unhappily, had fallen; the fearful cruelties to which their inhabitants had been subjected by their conquerors showed the others what they must expect should they be unable to hold out. Of these, in Naarden, a small city on the coast of the Zuyder Zee, scarcely a man had been left alive, the whole population having been given over to indiscriminate slaughter. Haarlem, after an heroic defence of seven months, had been compelled to capitulate, when, notwithstanding the promises of Don Frederic, Alva's son, a large number of the principal citizens, as well as others of all ranks, and every man who had borne arms, were cruelly put to death, the survivors being treated with the greatest cruelty. The mind shrinks from contemplating such

horrors, and the Hollanders might well desire to emancipate themselves from the rule of a sovereign capable of allowing them.

The burgomaster and his daughter had stood for some minutes without speaking, their eyes gazing down on the smiling landscape which has been described, yet the minds of neither of them had been engaged in admiring its beauties.

“Would that I had been more determined in endeavouring to induce our citizens to level those forts and redoubts left by the Spaniards, and had also taken steps to re-victual the city and to strengthen our garrison. I have just received a letter from our noble Stadtholder, urging me to see to these matters, and I must do so without delay.” The burgomaster, as he spoke, pointed to several redoubts and forts which in different directions had been thrown up by the Spaniards during their former investment of the place. To the south-east and east were two of especial strength—Zoeterwoude and Lammen, the first about 500 yards from the walls, the latter not more than half that distance. From these forts a bank or causeway ran westward towards the Hague.

“I ought to have exerted all the influence I possessed to get the task accomplished,” continued the burgomaster. “By God’s merciful

providence we were before preserved, but He helps those who, trusting to Him, labour as He would have them. The Spaniards may not return, but it is our duty to be prepared for them, though I trust that we shall soon hear of a glorious victory gained over them by the noble Count Louis."

"Heaven defend him and his brave troops," murmured Jaqueline; and she thought of one who had accompanied the Count to the field and who had from his earliest days engaged in the desperate struggle both at sea and on shore. Again the burgomaster was silent, and Jaqueline's thoughts wandered far away to the army of Count Louis. The chief magistrate had come up, as was his wont, to consider the measures which it might be necessary to take for the benefit of the city over which he presided. Here, under ordinary circumstances, he was not likely to be interrupted by visitors. Jaqueline's thoughts were recalled to the present moment by hearing a light footstep ascending the stairs of the tower. A young boy appeared, whose dress showed that he belonged to the upper orders, his countenance animated and intelligent

"Why, Albert Van der Does, what has brought you here in so great a hurry?" asked Jaqueline, as she cast a glance at the boy's

handsome face glowing with the exertion he had made.

“I had gone to your house, and finding that you had come up here, I thought you would give me leave to follow you,” he answered.

“You have taken the leave, at all events,” she said, smiling; “but what object had you in coming here this morning?”

“A very important one; I want you to accept the remainder of my pigeons; those I before gave you have become so tame and look so happy that I am unwilling to deprive the others of the privilege of belonging to you.”

“Is it only affection for your feathered friends that induces you to make me the offer?” she asked, archly.

“I confess that I have another reason,” he answered. “I shall no longer have time to attend to my pets; I heard my father say that we shall soon be engaged in more stirring work than we have had since the Spaniards marched to the eastward. As soon as Count Louis forms a junction with the Prince, every person capable of bearing arms should be prepared to engage in the struggle, and I want, therefore, to practice the use of weapons and to learn to be a soldier.”

“You will make a brave one, I am sure,” said Jaqueline.

“And will you accept my birds?” asked Albert.

“I cannot refuse what you so freely offer, though, if you repent, you shall have them again,” said Jaqueline.

“Then may I bring them to you this evening?” asked Albert.

“Thank you, Albert; we are always glad to see you; and if you bring your pigeons, I promise to train and pet them as I have those you before gave me,” she answered.

“Then I will come this very evening, with your cousin Berthold, whom I left at his books in my father’s study. Fond as he is of his books, he says that he must lay them aside to learn the use of arms with me; for as soon as Count Louis appears, we intend to go out and join him. We have but a short time to prepare, as, before many days are over, the Count and his army will have fought their way to Delft, and we must commence the work of driving the Spaniards out of our country or into the rivers and meers, where they have sent so many of our brave Hollanders.”

Jaqueline smiled approvingly, admiring, as she did, the enthusiasm of the gallant boy, so consonant with her own feelings.

“I am much obliged to you for your readiness

to accept my birds, and now I must deliver a message I have brought from my father to the burgomaster. My father desires to see him about the fortifications, and as he bade me say that the matter is of importance, I ought to have given it first."

The burgomaster had been so pre-occupied with his own thoughts that he had not observed young Albert Van der Does, and now started as the boy addressed him with that deference due to his age and rank.

"Tell your father that I will at once visit him. Although a man of letters and devoted to study, I know that he possesses, among his other talents, a military genius, which makes me value his opinion; say also that it is the very subject which has been occupying my thoughts."

"My father is more out of spirits than I have ever seen him," said Albert. "It is owing to a letter he lately received from a friend at Utrecht, detailing an extraordinary circumstance which occurred in that city some time ago. It is said that five soldiers of the Burgher Guard were on their midnight watch, when, the rest of the sky being as dark as pitch, they observed, directly over their heads, a clear space, equal in extent to the length of the city, and of several yards in width. Suddenly two armies, in battle array

were seen advancing upon each other ; one moved rapidly up from the north-west, with banners waving, spears flashing, trumpets sounding, accompanied by heavy artillery and squadrons of cavalry ; the other came slowly from the south-east. They at length met and joined in a desperate conflict for a few moments ; the shouts of the combatants, the heavy discharge of cannon, the rattle of musketry, the tramp of foot soldiers, the rush of cavalry, were distinctly heard. The very firmament trembled with the shock of the contending hosts, and was lurid with the fire of their artillery. Then the north-western army was beaten back in disorder, but, rallying again, formed into solid column, and once more advanced towards the south-eastern army, which was formed into a closely-serried square, with spears and muskets. Once more the fight raged, and the sounds were heard as distinctly as before ; the struggle was but short, the lances of the south-eastern army snapped like hemp-sticks, and their firm columns went down together in mass beneath the onset of their foes. The overthrow was complete. Scarcely had the victors and vanquished vanished, than the clear blue space where they had stood appeared suddenly streaked with broad crimson streams flowing athwart the sky. The five soldiers

reported the next day what they had witnessed to the magistrates of Utrecht, who examined them separately, and each swore to what he had seen. My father said that he should not have been inclined to believe the account had not the evidence been so strong in favour of its truth."

"This is strange," observed the burgomaster. "Your father will assuredly show me the letter, and I shall then the better be able to judge how far I can give the account credence. We know that strange portents have appeared in the sky before great events, at the same time these men of the Burgher Guard may have allowed their imaginations to run riot. They knew that a battle was likely ere long to take place should the Spaniards attempt to impede the march of Count Louis, and some passing clouds may have appeared to them to represent the scene they have described. Grant that they beheld something extraordinary, yet they may have been mistaken, and the south-eastern army—for from that direction the Count must be advancing—may prove victorious."

"My father would fain hope as you do, Mynheer Van der Werf, but his friend, one of the magistrates of Utrecht, fully believes in the apparition, and has imbued him with his own desponding spirit."

“Bear to him my regards, and beg him to cheer up,” said the burgomaster. “He must not allow his brave spirit to be agitated by a tale which may after all have originated in the heated imaginations of a few ignorant men. Had the whole city witnessed the spectacle it might have been different.”

While the burgomaster and Jaqueline were looking out from the summit of Hengist’s tower, two gentlemen approached it from opposite directions; the one was of good figure, handsomely dressed in silken doublet and cloak, with a feather in his cap, and a rapier, apparently more for ornament than use, by his side. He walked with no laggard step, looking up ever and anon towards the top of the tower. The other came on at still greater speed, his appearance contrasting greatly with that of the first; a heavy sword hung by his side, and over his shoulders was an orange sash, which partly covered a breastplate showing many a deep dent, while his dress was travel-stained and bespattered with dark red marks, while his frank and open countenance wore an expression of grief and anxiety. The two as they met exchanged salutes, the manner of the latter being hurried, as if he desired not to be stopped.

“Why, what has happened, Captain Van der

Elst?" exclaimed the young gallant who has just been introduced.

"I am in search of the burgomaster, and have been told that he was seen going to the Tower of Hengist," said the other, without answering the question.

"I am also bound there, and will gladly accompany you," was the reply.

"Pardon me, Van Arenberg, but the business I am on is of too great importance to brook delay." And Karl Van der Elst sprang on up the ascent at a rate which Baron Van Arenberg, without lowering his dignity, could not venture to imitate. A blush rose for a moment on the Lily's fair cheek as she saw him coming; her countenance, however, the next moment assumed an expression of alarm when she remarked his appearance. He bowed as he approached, gazing at her with a look of sorrow in his dark eyes which did not tend to reassure her, and without offering any other greeting, much as he might have desired it, he addressed himself to the burgomaster, who inquired in an anxious tone, "What news do you bring, Captain Van der Elst? Has Count Louis defeated the Spaniards? Has he yet formed a junction with the Prince?"

The young officer, his feelings almost mastering him, could with difficulty reply, "Count

Louis with his brother, Count Henry, the brave Duke Christopher, and the whole army have been annihilated. We met the foe near the village of Mookie, where we were hemmed in; in vain we tried to cut our way through the ranks of the Spaniards. Count Louis, his brother, and Duke Christopher, with four thousand gallant men, fell in the attempt. I had just before been despatched to make a circuit in order to get upon the enemy's flank, which I was ordered to attack. Before I could reach it the day was lost; the victorious cavalry of the Spaniards charged over the field, butchering all they met. many of our men were suffocated in the marshes or in the river, and others were burnt in the farm-houses where they had taken refuge. Finding that success was hopeless, and that I could do nothing to retrieve the day, I drew off my shattered troop, and I have deemed it my duty to hasten on to warn the inhabitants of Leyden that the enemy are rapidly advancing again to lay siege to their walls." At first the burgomaster seemed inclined to discredit the intelligence.

"Surely all could not have been destroyed, some of the soldiers may have cut their way through, and escaped as you have done?" Karl shook his head.

"I obtained too distinct a view of the fatal

field to allow me to indulge in such a hope," he answered. "I would gladly have sought for an honourable death myself among my friends had I not reflected that the safety of my brave band depended on me, and that we might yet render service to our country."

While he was speaking, Baron Van Arenberg joined the party, and, after saluting Jaqueline in a self-confident manner, stood listening with a supercilious air to the young soldier.

"That you have escaped from the field, Captain Van der Elst, is evident; but I fain would doubt that so many brave men would have yielded to the Spaniards," he observed.

"They yielded not to the Spaniards, but to death," answered Captain Van der Elst. "I myself visited the field of slaughter at night, when the Spaniards had withdrawn, in search of my beloved leader. His body, if it was there, lay among the heaps of slain, most of whom had been stripped by rapacious plunderers, and disfigured by the hoofs of the enemy's horses."

"I believe your report, captain," said the burgomaster, stretching out his hand and pressing that of Van der Elst. "Our duty is clear, not a moment is to be lost in preparing for the defence of our city, and the burghers of Leyden

must resist to the last. You will remain and aid us with your advice?"

"Would that I could," answered Karl, glancing for a moment at Jaqueline; "but I must hasten to the Prince of Orange, to give him a full account of the events which have taken place, and to receive his orders. Bereaved as he is of his brothers, it is the duty of every true-hearted man to rally round him."

"You are right," said the burgomaster; "but I must beg you to bear a message from me to the Prince, requesting that he will allow you to return, and, if possible, to bring some men-at-arms with you. Lay before him the weak state of our garrison; say that we have but five companies of the Burgher Guard and a small corps of freebooters; but that our walls are strong, the hearts of our citizens staunch, and that they will, I feel assured, fly to arms the instant they receive the summons. Assure him that we will endeavour to imitate the example of the brave citizens of Alkmaar, and hold out till he can send us succour."

"I will faithfully deliver your message, mynheer, and you may rest assured that if it depends on my freedom of action I will gladly return to render you such assistance as I can give," answered Captain Van der Elst, his

countenance brightening as he spoke, his eyes once more turning towards Jaqueline, who, with Baron Van der Arenberg and Albert, stood a little distance apart.

“The citizens of Leyden can well dispense with the service of one who, by his own showing, seems to have fled from the scene of battle,” whispered Van Arenberg to Jaqueline in too low a tone for Captain Van der Elst to hear him. On hearing this, without replying, she turned away, and moved closer to her father.

“He is as brave a soldier as ever lived,” exclaimed Albert, who had overheard the remark, his countenance flushing as he spoke. “My father knows and admires him, and was only the other day speaking of the many gallant deeds he has performed. He was with De la Marck on board the fleet of the ‘Beggars of the Sea’ when they captured Brill, he was at Flushing when the standard of liberty was raised there, he assisted in the defence of Alkmaar, and I scarcely know how many sea battles he has been engaged in, while he served with Prince Louis during his campaign in Friesland; and I am very sure that it was his good fortune, or rather his courage and discretion, enabled him to escape from the Battle of Mookerheyde.”

The Lily’s bright eyes sparkled, and she

gave Albert an approving look as he was speaking.

“You would make out this young captain a very Amadis,” said Van Arenberg, in a sarcastic tone. “Your father must have obtained the report of his heroic deeds from himself I suspect, for I never heard him spoken of in the same laudatory manner.”

“Why, Baron, one would suppose, from the way you speak, that you were jealous of him,” said Albert, with the boldness of a brave boy who felt that he was defending a maligned friend. “You insinuate that he ran away from Mookerheyde, and I am very sure that he did nothing of the sort. He went back to the field to look for the dead bodies of the Count and his brother, and he could not have done that without running a great risk of being killed or taken prisoner, and it was not till he had assured himself of the sad fact that Count Louis and the rest were dead that he led off his men, and came here to give us warning that we might prepare for the enemy.”

The baron, whose features were flushed with annoyance, for Jaqueline overheard all that was said, was about to make an angry reply, when the burgomaster called Albert. “Hasten to your father, my good Albert, break the sad news you have heard, and say that I shall esteem it a

favour if he will come forthwith to meet me at the council hall, as I would desire to have some time to speak with him on these matters before the rest of the councillors arrive. I will, on my way, send round to summon them, as we must lose no time in preparing to defend our city."

Albert, with the activity of youth, leaped down the steps, while the burgomaster prepared to descend with greater caution. "Baron Van Arenberg," he said, "I must request you to escort my daughter to her home, while Captain Van der Erst accompanies me to the Stadhuis, as we have matters of importance to discuss on our way. I hope that you will afterwards join us there, and will offer your services to aid in the defence of the place."

Baron Van Arenberg expressed the honour and pleasure he felt at the charge committed to him, although Jaqueline, while bowing her head in acquiescence, showed by her manner that the arrangement afforded her no especial satisfaction. The Lily, as may be conjectured, had many admirers, for not only was she fair and graceful, with a sweet disposition, but it was supposed that she would inherit the wealth of the burgomaster; hitherto, however, as far as was known, her heart was untouched, and she had favoured no one.



CHAPTER II.



ON reaching the foot of the mound the burgomaster and Captain Van der Elst proceeded to the Stadhuis, while Baron Van Arenberg accompanied Jaqueline in the direction of her own house. She walked on, though with graceful step, far more rapidly than her companion wished, looking directly before her without turning her head, unless it was absolutely necessary to do so.

“I am still not altogether satisfied as to the entire truth of the report brought by this young captain regarding the destruction of Count Louis and his army. The Spanish troops are undoubtedly brave and disciplined, but it seems incredible to me that they should have cut to pieces in so short a time the large number of levies the Count is reported to have had with him. If they allowed themselves to be so easily defeated all I can say is, that they deserved their fate. In my opinion it is a pity that we

Hollanders should so persistently hold out against the troops of our lawful sovereign; far better by yielding with a good grace to bring the fighting to an end."

"And share the fate of the unhappy inhabitants of Haarlem," answered Jaqueline, for the first time turning her head and glancing at him with a look which betokened as much contempt as her features were capable of exhibiting. "Think of the thousands of our countrymen who have been cruelly butchered because they were determined to hold fast to our Protestant faith rather than confess that of our foreign tyrants. I should say, let every man and woman perish bravely, fighting to the last rather than basely give up their birthrights."

"I will not venture to argue with you on that point, fair Jaqueline," answered Van Arenberg. "I wish as much as any Hollander can do to preserve our birthrights, as well as my castle and broad estates, but I assure you that you underrate the power of the Spaniards. Our cause, the patriot cause, is desperate; it is on account of the deep admiration I feel for you, if I may use no warmer term, that I would save you from the horrors to which others have been exposed."

"I speak the sentiments held by my father

and every right-minded man in our city—aye! and woman too,” answered Jaqueline, in a firm tone. “We would imitate our sisters in Haarlem and Alkmaar and join the citizens in defending our walls.”

“But should the city be again besieged—and it assuredly will be should the report of the total defeat of Count Louis prove correct—how can Leyden hope to hold out against the disciplined and experienced troops of the king? The Prince of Orange has no force sufficient to relieve the city, and be assured that the fate which overtook Haarlem will be that of Leyden, though the inhabitants are not likely to be treated with that measure of forbearance which those of Haarlem received.”

“If you speak of the measure of forbearance awarded to Haarlem, that was small indeed,” said Jaqueline. “You seem to forget that every citizen of wealth was massacred, that every Hollander who had borne arms in the siege was put to death, while many hundreds of other citizens were afterwards murdered by the savage Spaniards who desired to strike terror into the hearts of the survivors. I should say, rather than submit to so terrible a fate, let us struggle to the last, and then perish amid the ruins of the town.”

“ You are indeed, lovely Jaqueline, worthy of being a heroine of romance, and already you inspire me with some of the enthusiasm which you feel, though I cannot pretend to believe that the efforts which the citizens of Leyden may make will be crowned with success; yet believe me that I was prompted entirely by my earnest desire to preserve one I prize so highly and her family from impending destruction to give the advice I venture to offer.”

“ I am well aware of the admiration in which you hold me, Baron Van Arenberg,” answered Jaqueline, “ but whatever are your motives, even were I certain that our cause is desperate, and I do not believe that it is (for I feel assured that God will prosper the right in the end), I would not by word or act counsel my father and the citizens of Leyden to yield while a single man remains alive to strike a blow for freedom.”

Gentle as Jaqueline looked while she spoke, her voice and manner were firm and determined, while she showed that she was anxious to bring the discussion to an end. It might have afforded more encouragement to the baron had she endeavoured to win him over to the opinions she held, but beyond expressing them she made no attempt to do so. The baron, however, fancied that he was too well acquainted with

the female heart to despair of success ; he was young, good-looking, and wealthy, and as far as was known his moral character was irreproachable. The burgomaster, deceived by his plausible manners, trusted him fully, and considering from his rank and wealth that he would be a suitable husband for his fair daughter, invited him frequently to the house, and had always received him in a cordial manner. The baron had therefore good reason to believe that his suit would be successful.

On reaching her father's house, Jaqueline politely, though somewhat stiffly, thanked him for the service he had rendered in escorting her home, and the door opening, she entered without expressing the slightest wish that he would remain. He lingered, expecting that she would at last remember what he looked upon as her neglect, but she ascended the steps without further notice of him. He stamped impatiently as he walked away, muttering, "It is clear that I have a rival, or the fair Lily would not treat my advances so coldly, supported, as she knows I am, by her father. Instead of feeling honoured, as she ought, at being sought in marriage by a noble, she seems utterly regardless of my rank and personal qualifications. I am very sure that I can make myself as agreeable to women

as can most men, and from her beauty alone, independent of her fortune, she is well worth winning, so I must not despair. Still it will never do to have her cooped up in this hapless town should it be again invested by the Spaniards ; I have no fancy indeed to stay in it myself, and I must bend all my efforts towards finding the means of carrying her away before the siege commences. There is not a day, however, to be lost. She appears to have no fear herself, but I may work upon the feelings of her father, and induce him, for the sake of preserving her from the horrors of the siege, to entrust her to my care. I must venture upon some warmer expressions of love and devotion than I have hitherto exhibited, and by describing the horrible fate which may be hers should she remain, and the happiness which awaits her if she will consent to accompany me, as my wife, out of the country, I may induce her to yield more willingly than she at present seems inclined to do." Such were the thoughts which occupied the mind of the baron as he proceeded with leisurely step towards the Stadhuis, where he had no great desire to make his appearance, although having been expressly invited by the burgomaster he could not avoid going. He found the chief magistrates, most influential citizens, assembled.

The burgomaster had informed them of the sad intelligence he had just received, and Captain Van der Elst, at his desire, had described the battle, and its disastrous termination. One circumstance alone afforded satisfaction, it was that Count John, now the Prince's only surviving brother, who had already done so much for the cause, although expecting to participate in the battle, had, at the urgent request of the other leaders, left the army two days before the action, in order to obtain at Cologne money to pay the troops. The young captain had just finished his account. The first point to be settled was the selection of a military chief whom all would be ready to obey.

The burgomaster rose. After expressing his readiness to devote his fortune, his life, and everything he possessed to the cause, he acknowledged that he had no military experience or talents, and urged upon his fellow-citizens the importance of selecting a man who possessed the talents in which he was wanting. "There is one," he said. "John Van der Does, Seigneur of Nordwyck, a gentleman of distinguished family, but still more distinguished for his learning, his poetical genius, his valour and military accomplishments; if we select him, the Prince I am sure will sanction our appointment."

Without a dissentient voice the Seigneur of Nordwyck was elected military commandant. The burgomaster did not conceal from them the dangers and the sufferings which perchance they would have to undergo, but he added, "Remember Naarden, my friends, we cannot too often reflect on the fate of Naarden; although the inhabitants offered no resistance, they were indiscriminately slaughtered, and such may be our lot even if we go humbly forth to sue for pardon from the conquerors of Mookerheyde. Remember Haarlem, which, although defended with the heroism which ought to have inspired respect and consideration in the hearts of the conquerors, was treated with cruelties from the bare contemplation of which the mind shrinks back with horror; then let us think of Alkmaar which so bravely and successfully resisted, and imitate the example of its citizens with the hope and confidence that we shall be equally successful in driving back the hated foe."

Other patriotic magistrates spoke in the same strain, and all were unanimous in their resolution to defend their city to the last, while it was agreed that steps should instantly be taken for that object. Unhappily much precious time had already been lost; the forts and redoubts thrown up by the Spaniards still remained, and at present

the defenders of the city had too much to do within the walls to attempt levelling them. The new commandant urged them to strengthen the fortifications, and in the meantime to obtain such stores of provisions from the immediate neighbourhood as could be collected. There were a few, however, who, although they did not vote in opposition to the opinions of the majority, yet spoke of the hopelessness of the undertaking in which they were about to engage. Among these was Baron Van Arenberg, although he expressed himself carefully he did his best to persuade the citizens that their wisest course would be to yield before proceeding to extremities.

“I say not that such is what I advise,” he observed. “But conciliatory measures might prove successful; if they fail let us by all means endeavour to keep out the enemy as long as we can.”

“The Spaniards have already shown us the uselessness of conciliatory measures as well as the utter worthlessness of their guarantees for the safety of those who submit,” said the burgo-master. “It would be suicidal madness to trust them; let us put faith in God, who defends the right, in our own resolute courage and power of endurance, in our strong walls, and in the

assistance which the Prince of Orange will afford us at our need.”

The baron was silent; he was especially anxious not to say anything which might offend the burgomaster by openly differing from him; but his remarks encouraged others connected with certain persons, their relations or friends, recreant Hollanders, who had sided with the Spaniards and professed to have returned to the Faith of Rome. These men were familiarly called Glippers; their object was to induce their countrymen to follow their example. A few holding their opinions remained in the city, either kept there by business or with the intention of creating dissension among the patriots. Although Baron Van Arenberg openly professed to be a patriot, yet from the expressions he let fall many already began to suspect his designs. When those who followed him spoke, their opinions were received with loud expressions of disapprobation. He saw that in the present state of the public mind it would be prudent for the future more carefully to conceal his sentiments than he had hitherto done. “I must bide my time,” he said to himself.

Numerous matters of importance were discussed, and the persons supposed best suited for certain duties were selected to superintend

the various tasks which had to be performed to prepare the city for the expected siege. One undertook to procure cattle, another fodder, a third corn ; others to collect arms and ammunition. The strengthening of the fortifications was allotted to several who had some experience in such matters. The guns and their carriages had to be looked to, such buildings as were suited for storehouses were to be prepared, and hospitals fitted up to receive the sick or wounded ; indeed, no point was neglected. All these arrangements having been made, the brave John Van der Does, the newly-elected commandant, rose.

“ We have not concealed from ourselves the difficulties and dangers of the task we have undertaken,” he said. “ But, my friends and fellow-citizens, on God, on your stout arms, and on the energy of our Prince we will rely to defend our city against all the foes who may appear before our walls,” he exclaimed, as he drew his sword ; and raising it above his head, he added, “ Never will I again sheathe this weapon till the hated Spaniard has been driven from our country, and we may henceforth repose in peace.”



CHAPTER III.



NOT a moment was lost after the Council broke up in commencing the all-important tasks which each member had undertaken. The burgomaster, however, did not forget the duties of hospitality ; taking the arm of Captain Van der Elst, he said—

“Come with me, my friend, and partake of some refreshment, which you must sadly need. You have ridden hard all this morning, and have still a long journey to perform before you can reach Rotterdam, with the risk of encountering marauding parties of Spaniards, who may have ventured forth from Grabenhague. I will give orders in the meantime that you may be provided with the best horse the city affords, for your own steed has scarcely had sufficient time to rest to carry you as rapidly as you desire on your journey.”

Karl acknowledged that his horse was well-nigh knocked up, and thankfully accepted the

burgomaster's invitation, though he was anxious not to delay a moment longer than was necessary before proceeding on his journey. Directly the burgomaster, accompanied by Van der Elst, arrived at his house, the repast, which had long been ready, was placed on the table, and Jaqueline appeared to preside at it. She received the young captain with less frankness than she might generally have bestowed on her father's friends. There was a slight timidity in her manner, which, in spite of herself, she could not help exhibiting, and a blush rose for a moment to her cheek as she replied to his greeting.

"And are you able to remain and assist us in preparing for the defence of our town?" she asked.

"Would that I were able to remain," he answered. "But I must hurry on as fast as my steed can go to see the Prince and to receive his directions for my future guidance; but I will not fail to suggest to him that I may be of service in assisting in the defence of Leyden, and unless he should require me for important work elsewhere, I hope that he will allow me to return."

"I trust so," murmured Jaqueline, raising her eyes and casting a momentary glance at him.

The meal was soon concluded, for Captain Van der Elst was unwilling to spend a moment

longer than was necessary at the table, though he would fain probably have enjoyed a longer conversation with Jaqueline. He had to wait a short time for the arrival of his horse, which enabled him to exchange a few more words with Jaqueline. While they were speaking Berthold and Albert arrived, each laden with a cage containing some beautiful white pigeons, which might easily, from the gracefulness of their form, have been mistaken for doves.

“You see, *Vrouw Jaqueline*, that I have not forgotten my promise, and I am sure that you will take better care of them than I could do,” said Albert. “They each have got their names, and will come when you summon them, besides which, if they are carried to any distance, however great, they will always fly back as fast as their wings can bear them. I have trained them carefully to perform this duty; see here is one I call the Lily, because it is the fairest and most beautiful of all. See how smooth and glossy are its feathers, every one of the most snowy white.”

Jaqueline thanked Albert for the birds, and promised to tend them carefully.

“They will be content, however, at present to remain in their cage, so you need not trouble yourself about them,” he observed.

Captain Van der Elst did not fail to admire

the pigeons. "Should the city be beleaguered they may be of the greatest possible use some day, if you can send them to the head-quarters of the Prince, as beneath their wings they can carry the messages far more securely and rapidly than the fastest runner," he remarked. "At present the country is open, and I shall have to ride hard. I will not ask your permission to carry any of the birds with me, but perhaps in a few days before the Spaniards gather round the city you will allow four of them to be taken to Delft or Rotterdam that they may return with such messages as the Prince may desire to send."

"It did not occur to me when I undertook to tend the pretty birds that they might prove of the service you suggest," said Jaqueline. "You are indeed most welcome to take as many as you can employ. I shall prize them more than ever when they have thus assisted our glorious cause."

Suddenly Berthold, on hearing that Captain Van der Elst was about to set out for Rotterdam, started up. "If my uncle will give me leave may I accompany you?" he exclaimed. "I know all the crossways and cross cuts better probably than you do, or indeed than anybody you can find, and I might be useful in guiding you."

“Will you have my nephew as your companion?” asked the burgomaster.

“I would gladly have his society, but I am unwilling to expose him to the risks I may incur,” answered Captain Van der Elst. “The Spaniards are likely to be more vigilant than ever, and their light horse will probably be scouring the country either to forage or to interrupt the communication between the cities.”

“That is the very reason why I wish to go with you,” said Berthold. “I know the roads thoroughly, for as soon as the Spaniards had retired, feeling like a bird set free I scoured over the whole country, and amused myself in making a plan of them.”

“As Berthold knows the country so well, surely it will lessen the risk you would have to run alone if you will take him with you,” observed Jaqueline. “I am sure that he will feel it an honour to accompany you, and he can return speedily with any message the Prince may have to send.”

Captain Van der Elst's scruples being overcome by these arguments, he no longer hesitated to accept the offer made by Berthold, who hurried out as soon as he had snatched some food to see that his horse was got ready.

“I quite envy you,” said Albert to him. “I

should like to go also, but I know that my father will require my services, and I must even now hurry back to him."

In a short time, the two steeds being brought to the door, Captain Van der Elst and his young companion, having bid farewell to the burgo-master and Jaqueline, proceeded towards the Cowgate, the southern entrance to the town, leading towards Rotterdam. Jaqueline watched them eagerly as they rode off, undoubtedly a prayer ascended from her heart for their safe arrival. The country was green with the bright grass of early spring, the fruit trees in numerous orchards were covered with bloom, giving fragrance to the air. For the first part of the distance there was but little risk of their encountering enemies, and by the time they had got further on the sun would already be setting, and they would have the advantage of being concealed by the shades of evening. The village of Zoeterwoude, standing on a slight elevation above the surrounding plain, was soon passed, and that of Zuidbrunt, close to a large and shallow meer, was next reached, but they neither of them entered lest a party of Spaniards might have ventured thus far from their head-quarters. They had already passed three enormous dykes running across their road, one beyond the other,

built for the purpose of protecting the city from the inroads of the sea. Roads, of course, ran along the top of these, some towards the Hague, others towards Delft, Gouda, and numerous towns and villages to the right and left. Although hitherto not a Spanish soldier had been seen, at any moment some might be encountered. There were no heights or even tall trees from the top of which a view could be obtained of the surrounding country, so that they might know how to avoid their foes. Their anxiety was much relieved when they saw the sun sinking into the not distant ocean. The Prince frequently visited Delft, but Captain Van der Elst believed that he was now to be found at Rotterdam, and although the former city was but slightly out of their course, he proposed avoiding it and riding directly for Rotterdam. More than half the distance had been performed. A short way to the left lay the village of Zoetermeer, raised, like others, slightly above the plain, and they already perceived the green trees and red roofs of the houses peeping up among them, lighted up by the last rays of the setting sun.

“Too much haste the less speed,” observed the captain. “It is a true saying, and we must therefore bait our horses and give them a short

breathing time, or they may break down before we reach our journey's end."

"Might we not push on without stopping, and trust to the animals to keep up their strength to the last?" asked Berthold. "They are both good nags and sound in wind, and can manage a pretty broad ditch when pressed at it."

"We may have to try their mettle even yet," said the captain. "And they will the better do their work after a feed of corn; besides, we may have to ride back, and we shall probably find no horses to exchange for them in Rotterdam."

"As you think best," said Berthold. And they rode along a causeway which seemed to lead directly for the village. On reaching it they pulled up at the door of a small inn, the only one the place afforded. The landlady hurried out to meet them, and desired to know whether they intended to stop there the night.

"No, friend, we wish only to bait our horses, and must be in the saddle again as soon as they are rested. It may be more prudent than remaining, for we cannot tell at what moment we might receive a visit from those savage hounds the Spaniards."

"Reports have been brought in of several foraging parties being out, who take what they can find without paying a styver in return,

besides which they ill-treat the people on all occasions," observed the landlord. "It would be a satisfaction if some of our young fellows were to break their heads, but if they were to make the attempt our village would to a certainty be burnt down, so we must humbly submit to save our skins."

"I cannot advise you for the present to do otherwise," answered Captain Van der Elst. "But the time may shortly arrive when we shall drive our hated foes into the sea."

"Would that it may come soon before they have, like a flock of locusts, eaten up every green thing in the land," exclaimed the landlord.

"The information you give shows me the importance of our being on the road again without delay," said Captain Van der Elst, as he and Berthold accompanied the landlord to the stable, where room was at once made for their horses by turning out a couple of others. The landlord then pressed them to come in and take some refreshment, but they both declined.

"Not even a glass of Rhenish wine? I have some of the best," said mine host. But they refused, considering that their time would be better occupied in rubbing down their steeds, and moistening their lips from a bucket of water, after they had finished their corn.

“You can still render us a service, friend, by sending out to learn if any Spaniards are yet in the neighbourhood,” said the captain.

“Surely that I will do,” answered the landlord, and he summoned a couple of active-looking lads and directed them to run out as far as their legs could carry them in ten minutes, and to try and discover if any cavalry were near at hand. “Foot soldiers are not likely to venture thus far, so we need have no fear of them,” he observed.

The lads clearly understood what was required of them, and started together in opposite directions. They had not been gone the allotted time when one of them came hurrying back, covering the ground with long, rapid strides.

“If the mynheers do not wish to be made prisoners, they had better be out of the village as soon as they can saddle up,” he said. “I caught sight of a party of horsemen just passing the border of the Meer where the willows grow; there must have been a dozen of them or more; but I only stopped to count thus far and then took to my heels, expecting every moment to have a shot whistle by my ears.”

“You have done well, Hans,” said the landlord.

“And here is a reward for your service,” added Berthold, giving the youth a coin.

“I did it of my own free will,” answered Hans. “It is not the first time I have been set to watch the Spaniards, or that they have tried to catch me, and found that they had a will-o’-the-wisp to deal with; but this was an easy task, and nothing to boast of.” Hans was saying this while he was assisting Berthold to replace the bit in the horse’s mouth, and to tighten the girth of his saddle, the landlord rendering the same service to Captain Van der Elst. The next moment they were in the saddle and pushing full speed through the village to the southward. Should they be discovered, they would not only run the risk of being shot at, but would expose the landlord to punishment for having entertained them. Looking back, they could see no one following, and hoped, therefore, that they had escaped observation, while their horses, refreshed, made up for the short delay by getting on at full speed. They soon passed the village of Bleiswijk, between which and the next place ran a broad causeway forming the high road to Rotterdam. Though the gloom of evening was increasing, there was still sufficient light to enable them to see objects at some distance. Berthold, who knew the road

best, was leading, when suddenly he reined in his horse, and made a sign with his right hand for his companion to do the same.

“See, just coming from the right, are a score of horsemen; they may be Hollanders, or Free Lances, though from the height of their helmets they look more like Spaniards,” he exclaimed. “We had better avoid them.”

“How is that to be done?” asked Captain Van der Elst.

“We passed just now on the left a narrow dyke, which runs, I know, in a south-westerly direction; at the farther end is a bridge which leads across the Rotte. If we are pursued, we must leave the road and ride across the country. We can without difficulty swim the river, when the Spaniards, with the heavy trappings of their horses, would not be able to follow.”

Scarcely had Berthold said this when they could see against the sky the figures of a large number of horsemen moving along a road to the right.

“We might even now, by dismounting, lead our horses down into the plain, and perhaps escape observation,” said Berthold.

“No, no, as we can see them they must have discovered us,” said the captain. “Lead the way across the dyke you spoke of; I will follow closely at your heels.”

As there was no time for further deliberation, Berthold, turning his horse's head and passing the captain, galloped along the way they had come for a few minutes and then turned off along the top of the dyke he had described. The moment they turned they heard shouts, evidently coming from the horsemen they wished to avoid.

"Those are Spanish voices," said the captain. "I know them well. Push on, Berthold!" But the road along the top of the dyke was much rougher than the one they had left, and it made it necessary for them to keep a careful hand on their reins to prevent their horses from falling. From the way the dyke ran it formed an angle with the high road, and they were soon again brought within sight of the Spanish horsemen, who shouting out to them to stop, fired several shots in rapid succession.

"The fellows are not bad marksmen," said Berthold, "for I heard two or more bullets whistle close to my ears."

Captain Van der Elst continued shouting out, "Ride on! ride on!" more to show that he himself was unhurt than that there was any necessity to urge on Berthold. The Spaniards were evidently unwilling to trust themselves to the low ground for fear of finding that it was a

morass, into which their steeds might plunge with little hope of extricating themselves. On seeing that the fugitives had a good chance of escaping, although some of the Spaniards galloped after them along the road, the others continued firing their carbines, though fortunately they missed their aim. The two fugitives were soon beyond the range of the Spanish musketeers, but Captain Van der Elst still cried out to his companion, "Go on! go on!" for, glancing behind him, he saw indistinctly through the gloom the heads of several horsemen following them.

"We shall soon be at the bridge," cried Berthold. "I do not think the Spaniards will attempt to cross it." Just as he had announced that they were close upon it they saw a body of horse who had evidently galloped round to take possession of the post. This discovery was made, however, in time to enable Berthold to ride his horse down the side of the dyke, the captain following his example. "Come along," he cried out, "the ground is somewhat soft, but these horses are accustomed to it, and we may get over it much faster than our pursuers." Having proceeded some distance, they had good reason to hope that they had not been seen.

“We must now make for the river, and a few minutes will carry us safe across it,” said Berthold.

The horses as they reached the bank, without hesitation plunged in, and bravely breasted the smooth water. They had got more than half-way across when again they heard the shouts of a number of Spaniards ordering them to return.

“You may shout yourselves hoarse, my men,” cried Berthold. “We have no intention of obeying you.” Finding that their shouts produced no effect, they fired several bullets from their fire-arms, and the bullets came spattering into the water like a shower of hail, but the gallant steeds bore their riders to the opposite bank unhurt, and soon scrambling up, the captain and Berthold continued their course over the fields.

“Will not the Spaniards cross the bridge and attempt to overtake us?” asked the captain. “We must be prepared for the contingency.”

“I think not,” answered Berthold. “They might encounter some of the Prince’s cavalry, and are not likely to venture further south.”

They at length gained another dyke, on the summit of which the road ran directly for Rotterdam. They now galloped forward with less apprehension of meeting an enemy, and at length, about two hours after dark, entered Rotterdam.

They immediately inquired the way to the house where the Prince was residing. From the remarks they heard made, they discovered that the news of the disaster at Mookerheyde had already reached the city, for which the captain was thankful, as it would save him from the painful necessity of announcing it to the Prince. They found guards before the door, and several grooms and other servants, to one of whom they committed their horses. Captain Van der Elst at once delivered to a gentleman-in-waiting his name and the object of his visit, and they had no time even to shake off the water which still clung to the lower part of their garments, when they were informed that the Prince desired to see them. They followed their guide into an apartment plainly furnished, with several writing-tables; at one of these sat a tall, dignified man with brown hair, moustachios and beard, a forehead broad and lofty, and eyes bright and full of expression. The captain advancing, bowed, and introduced his young companion as the nephew of the Burgomaster of Leyden. The Prince, who had risen, received them gravely, but at the same time in a cordial manner.

“You bring further intelligence, Captain Van der Elst, from the field of Mookerheyde?” he said. “Of the main particulars I have already

been informed by some few who escaped and made their way here.”

Captain Van der Elst briefly explained how he himself had escaped, and being well assured that Leyden would again be attacked that he had considered it his duty to ride round to that city in order to prepare the inhabitants for what was likely to occur. He then gave an account of the meeting of the Council, stating that John Van der Does had been elected military commandant, subject to his approval.

“They could not have made a better choice,” remarked the Prince. “It shall be confirmed.” In a few brief sentences he questioned the captain regarding the battle of Mookerheyde. A tone of melancholy pervaded all he said, but he in no other way showed the deep grief which weighed him down. The Prince sat silently listening, his countenance unmoved, while the captain made his report, and Berthold began to fear that his friend might be blamed for his conduct. He was, therefore, greatly relieved when the Prince remarked, “You have exhibited courage and discretion, Captain Van der Elst, qualities we greatly need in the present emergency. I must send you back with a message to the citizens of Leyden to urge them to maintain the town against the foes of our country to

the last gasp. They ought to have destroyed the forts the Spaniards left, to have amply provisioned the city, and to have secured an efficient garrison; but I will not now speak of what is passed. Remind them from me that they are about to contend not for themselves alone, but that the fate of our country of unborn generations may, in all human probability, depend on the issue about to be tried. Eternal glory will be their reward if they manifest the courage worthy of their race, and of the sacred cause of religion and liberty. Say that I implore them to hold out at least three months, and I pledge my word that I will within that time devise the means of delivering them. Advise them immediately to take an account of their provisions of all kinds, including the live stock, and let the strictest economy be employed in their consumption. Stay, I will sign the commission appointing the Seigneur of Nordwyck as Commandant, and write what I deem necessary to confirm the message I verbally send by you. When can you again set out?"

The captain acknowledged that he and his young companion had had no refreshment or rest since they left Leyden, but that he himself was willing to start immediately could a fresh horse be found for him. He, however, considered

that he ought to mention having encountered several parties of Spaniards, and that there would be some risk of being captured on the return journey. When he also explained the energetic measures the burgomaster and commandant were already taking, the Prince replied, "Wait, then, till to-morrow, when you may get over the most hazardous part of the distance during the night."

The Prince having spoken a few words of encouragement to Berthold, which he was never likely to forget, signified to them that they might retire, and gave orders to one of the officers to attend to their wants.





CHAPTER IV.



HE brave commandant, attended by young Albert, set an example of enduring energy to his fellow-citizens. From morning till night he was to be seen going round and round the fortifications, showing where points might be strengthened with advantage, and to encourage the labourers, often himself taking a spade or pick in hand. Where fresh batteries had to be thrown up, the work was one which greatly taxed the strength of the citizens, but they all knew that their lives depended on their repairing and strengthening their defences before their foes should again attack them. Not only the citizens of all ranks, but their wives and children assisted, many who had never before engaged in manual labour offering their services to carry baskets of earth to the ramparts, and otherwise aiding in the work going forward. In this task the commandant was ably supported by the burgomaster and other magistrates. Jaqueline often accompanied the burgo-

master, and set an example to the citizens' wives and daughters by carrying baskets of earth, nor did her father, tenderly cherished though she had always been, attempt to prevent her from performing the task which she considered right. He felt the importance of the example she set to others, for when they saw the fair Lily, the admired of all, engaged in manual labour for the common good, no one, not even the most delicate, could venture to hold back. It would have been well for the citizens if they could have obtained provisions as easily as they could repair their walls, but the country had already been drained by the Spaniards, mounted parties of whom were even now ranging as near as they could venture, to prevent supplies from being sent into Leyden. Barges laden with corn, and carts, however, were constantly arriving at the city, and occasionally a few oxen, while horsemen rode out in various directions to induce the peasantry to send in all the provisions they could spare, reminding them that they would before long fall into the hands of their foes, who would take them without payment. Still the amount of food collected fell far short of what was required. The citizens did not labour with the dull apathy of despair, but with warm enthusiasm, they all being resolved to rival their countrymen

at Alkmaar. The men sang at their work, and the girls chatted as if they were engaged in some holiday task. The only person who appeared not in any way to partake of the general enthusiasm was the Baron Von Arenberg, who excused himself on the plea that he was out of health, and that any exertion would be exceedingly injurious to him, though he had no objection to standing still and watching others at work, which he declared ought to afford the labourers ample encouragement. He did not, however, make his appearance in public as often as he had been accustomed to do. He was greatly put out from the circumstance that when calling at the house of the burgomaster he had seldom found him at home, and that Jaqueline had invariably excused herself from seeing him during the absence of her father. He had therefore not known how she was employed. Curiosity had, however, prompted him one bright morning to take a walk round the ramparts, and he arrived at a spot where a new battery was being thrown up. On a high mound stood the burgomaster, and near him a number of men were engaged in the more severe labour of the undertaking, while troops of women, some with full baskets, were bringing up earth from the trench which was being dug, while others were returning with the empty ones.

The baron started with astonishment, for at the head of one of the parties appeared the Lily of Leyden carrying with a companion a basket of earth; her dress, though not ungraceful, was suited to her occupation. He gazed as if at first unable to believe his senses, a flush mantled on his brow.

“Can her father thus allow her to degrade herself?” he exclaimed to one of the eldest and chief citizens who was standing by, whose daughters and grand-daughters were similarly employed, though the baron was not aware of the fact. “The task too is utterly useless; should the Spaniards again lay siege to the town, they will, before two weeks are over, have gained an entrance, and they have already shown the penalties they intend to exact from those who resist their authority.”

“Baron Van Arenberg, such I am bound to believe is your honest opinion, but understand that we trust in God, in the true courage which animates the breasts of patriots, and in that aid which our noble Prince will most assuredly send us,” answered the old man, in a stern tone. “The task in which the fair Jaqueline is engaged raises her higher than her beauty, her position, or her wealth can do in the eyes of her countrymen. Look at my daughters and grand-children,

they feel proud of imitating her; when you communicate with your friends, the 'Glippers,' tell them how the matrons and maidens of Leyden are employed, and let them warn the Spaniards of the death which awaits them should they assail our ramparts."

The baron again started, but with a different feeling than before, and declared that he was no "Glipper," though he was not inspired, he confessed, with the same enthusiasm which at present animated the citizens of Leyden.

"It may be that you are not a 'Glipper,' but your remarks savour much of the principles which animate them," observed the old citizen, in a dry tone. "Speak them not aloud to others, or you may chance to be looked upon as a traitor and be treated as such."

By a strong effort the baron quelled his rising anger; he could gain no credit by a dispute with the aged and highly esteemed citizen who had thus spoken to him, and turning aside he directed his steps homeward. He fancied that it would be derogatory to his rank to engage in manual labour, and yet he could not stand by and see the fair Jaqueline and other young ladies of position thus employed without offering to assist them, unless he was prepared to be regarded as destitute alike of all chivalric and patriotic feel-

ings. On reaching the handsome mansion he inhabited, after pacing several times across the room, he threw himself into a chair to consider what course he should pursue. The old citizen's remarks had warned him of the danger he would incur should he be supposed to advocate a surrender to the Spaniards, and he would be in still greater danger should it be discovered that he was carrying on a secret correspondence with Valdez through his "Glipper" friends; he was also mortified and annoyed at seeing Jaqueline so degrading herself, as he considered, by labouring like any peasant girl at the fortifications. "How can her father, who dotes on her as the apple of his eye, allow her thus to demean herself?" he exclaimed, "to exhaust her health and strength, to soil her fair hands with the moist and black earth; the very thought is unbearable!" He again rose and paced across the room, half inclined to order his servants to prepare for an instant journey. "If I remain I shall have to share the sufferings these obstinate citizens are preparing to bring down on themselves, or indeed I may lose my life. I would rather sacrifice my property than do that. I may by joining General Valdez at once gain better terms for them, little as they deserve it at my hands, at all events I shall secure my own

possessions." He rang a bell to summon an attendant, but no one answered to the call. At length he inquired of the old one-legged porter who had admitted him, when, to his disgust, he found that the whole of his establishment had gone out to labour at the fortifications. "They will soon get tired of the work and return," he said to himself, but the delay gave him further time for reflection. "If I go I must abandon all hope of winning the Lily of Leyden, unless the city is speedily captured and I am able to save her from the terrible danger she would incur during the assault. For her sake I must not allow her to run that risk; no, the only safe course, as far as she is concerned, for me to follow is to remain either to gain her father's consent to our immediate union, or to persuade her to fly with me, while there is yet time, to a place of safety. She might be unwilling to go to the Hague, but I might take her to Delft or Rotterdam, where she would be equally safe; and although she might at first regret having left her father and other friends in this city, a very few weeks will show her what a merciful escape she has had. It may yet be some days before Valdez and his army can reach the neighbourhood, I will remain and employ the time in endeavouring to persuade her to take the only

step which can secure her safety. I cannot bear the thought that one so lovely should be doomed to the fearful fate in which she will be involved when the Spaniards capture the city."

Fortunately there were few in Leyden who entertained the baron's opinions. While he remained at home, his mind agitated by conflicting doubts and fears, the rest of the inhabitants were engaged as has been described. The commandant, accompanied by his son Albert, remained chiefly on the ramparts; he had to inspect the firearms as they were repaired or manufactured by the armourers, ceaselessly working day and night, and he had likewise to examine the few recruits who could be collected from the country round to assist in the defence, and especial attention had to be given to the exercising of the men at the great guns placed in the various forts. The burgomaster, among his many other duties, daily visited the storehouses to see the progress made in collecting food, both for man and beast, and he also inspected the pens and sheds in which the cattle were placed as they were driven in, while he made preparation for all the various contingencies which might occur. And, although he desired his daughter to set the example to the women and girls of Leyden, remembering that

she was utterly unused to manual work, he, after a time, summoned her home to take the rest and refreshment she required.

“Go, my sweet Jaqueline,” said Vrouw Margareet de Munto, the wife of one of the chief magistrates. “You have shown us how the most delicate can work, and we will not be idle during your absence.”

Jaqueline, whose arms and shoulders were aching with the unwonted labour, was, it must be confessed, thankful to obey her father's summons to return home. She was rewarded with the consciousness that she had performed her duty, and she hoped to have strength to continue it, but she was more out of spirits than was usual with her. Some days had passed since her young cousin Berthold had accompanied Captain Van der Elst to Rotterdam and they had not again made their appearance. The burgomaster could not account for the delay, but felt sure that the Prince would immediately send them back with despatches confirming John Van der Does in his appointment as Commandant, and stating what plans he proposed for their relief. The Lily cast many a glance over the plain in the hopes of seeing the two horsemen approaching; but though occasionally trains of carts and baggage-horses laden with

sacks of corn, and small herds of cattle were seen on the roads, the two absent ones whose safe return would have relieved her anxiety failed to appear. As the foragers brought in word that parties of Spaniards who had come from the direction of the Hague had been met with, some fears were entertained that Captain Van der Elst and Berthold might have fallen into their hands.

“Berthold is too well acquainted with the country to allow himself and his companion easily to be caught,” observed the burgomaster. “Perhaps the Prince is waiting to decide on the plan he proposes to adopt for our relief. We shall see them in a day or two; though it is but natural that you should feel as anxious about your cousin Berthold as I do. They will arrive, I feel sure, before the Spaniards approach our walls, as the Prince, who keeps himself well acquainted with the enemy’s movements, will not detain them too long, so as to prevent them getting in with safety.”

The Lily sighed, for she feared there might be some miscalculation as day after day notice had been brought of the rapid approach of the hated foe, and at any hour it seemed that their advanced guard might appear before the walls. The burgomaster had thrown himself into an

armchair the first rest he had sought that day since early dawn, having especially desired his daughter to retire. Scarcely, however, had he taken his pen in hand to sign certain documents which had been brought to him, than the bells of the nearest church struck a peculiar note, which was taken up by the others in different parts of the city in rapid succession. It was the tocsin peal, announcing the approach of an enemy, and summoning the citizens to the ramparts. The burgomaster immediately rose, and sending word to Jacqueline on no account to leave the house, set forth to the Stadhuis, where he knew that the principal magistrates would quickly assemble. As he was leaving the door of his house he was met by young Albert Van der Does.

“The commandant has sent me, Burgomaster, to request your presence on the north-western rampart, where he, with several officers, is waiting your arrival. A body of troops has been seen approaching along the causeway from the direction of the Castle of Valkenburg.”

The burgomaster, notwithstanding his fatigue, accompanied young Albert at a rapid pace. From every direction people of all ranks were hastening through the streets, some girding on their swords as they left their doors, while their

wives or daughters handed to them their firearms. Many an eye was turned in the direction of the approaching troops.

“They march more quickly than the Spaniards are wont to do,” observed the commandant to the burgomaster.

“Can they be troops sent by the Prince to assist in the defence of the city?” asked the latter.

“They would not be coming from that direction,” said the commandant. “By their pennons, and the sombre appearance which pervades their ranks, I suspect that they are English.”

The foreign troops drew nearer, and no doubt longer remained that they were English, and as far as could be calculated numbered between five and six hundred men.

“They will be a welcome addition to our garrison,” observed one of the magistrates. “For those islanders are brave fellows and fight well on all occasions.”

“Notwithstanding, unless they bring a written order to me from the Prince to admit them, I will dispense with their services wherever they come from,” said the commandant. “The English are trustworthy enough, and fight well if they are well fed and are satisfied with their quarters, but I would not trust them should a famine get

within our walls; and should they begin to feel the pinchings of hunger, they would then cry out that we must surrender, and would induce others to follow their evil example. They well know that it is the policy of the Spaniards just now to behave courteously to the English, and these mercenaries would hope that their lives would be spared, though every other man in the place were put to death. No, no; even though our numbers be few let us rather trust to the stubborn hearts of our Hollanders than to such men as those probably are."

The burgomaster and the other magistrates, after a short consideration, fully agreed with the sentiments expressed by the commandant. In a short time the English commander, galloping ahead of his men, rode up to the walls and in the name of William, Prince of Orange, demanded instant admittance.

"Whence do you come, Colonel Chester?" inquired the commandant, who recognised the officer as the commander of a body of English troops in the service of the Prince.

"From Valkenburg," was the answer. "I have been obliged to abandon that fortress, from being assured that it would be hopeless to attempt holding out against the Spaniards, who I hear are advancing with an overwhelming force, and

I had neither provisions nor sufficient ammunition to stand a lengthened siege, I therefore judged it prudent to march here to assist you in the defence of your city."

"I regret that I cannot admit you or your men, Colonel Chester," said the commandant. "Our garrison is already of sufficient strength, and we have as many mouths to feed as we can find provisions for."

"But my men and I shall be cut to pieces by the Spaniards, who, if they overtake us in the open country, and we cannot hope to reach any other fortress in which we can defend ourselves, have threatened vengeance against all who side with the Prince of Orange."

"There was one fortress you might have defended, and that you thought fit to abandon, regardless of the interests of the noble prince whom you engaged to serve," answered the commandant, sternly.

In vain the English colonel pleaded that the lives of his whole band would be sacrificed if they were not admitted within the city. The commandant was firm in his resolution and declined their services, and they at length finding that they pleaded in vain, forming themselves into compact order moved on till they reached the causeway leading to the Hague. At length

they were lost to sight in the distance ; some few regretted that the commandant had refused the assistance of so many sturdy men-at-arms, but the act inspired the citizens with fresh courage, each man now feeling that on his own bravery and resolution the safety of the city depended.





CHAPTER V.



ACTIVE and intelligent scouts had been sent out to watch the movements of the enemy, and to bring back due notice of their approach to Leyden. The citizens meantime were labouring as before at their fortifications; they well knew that there was no time to spare to complete their work. Van Arenberg, who had still managed to retain the confidence of the burgomaster, was a constant visitor at his house during the short time in the evening that he was at home. The baron, however, was convinced that there was no longer a hope of persuading the stout-hearted magistrate to submit, and yet anxious as he was to get outside and avoid the miseries he saw impending, he could not bring himself to abandon the prospects of winning the fair Lily. He still, therefore, endeavoured to work on her feminine nature by pointing out to her the horrors and sufferings in which she must share with the other inhabitants of the place should she remain.

“You have often spoken to me on this subject, Baron Van Arenberg,” she answered, regarding him calmly; “but know that I would rather trust to the pikes and swords of the citizens of Leyden to defend our poor women and children from the clutches of the Spanish soldiery than I would to the tender mercies of their general. It is useless again to speak to me on the subject; but since you fancy that you see so clearly the dreadful doom prepared for those who remain, I advise you to quit the city while there is time.”

The baron could say no more, but he muttered as he walked homeward that evening, “I must take other means of carrying out my object.”

The next morning Jaqueline had repaired with her father to the ramparts on the south side of the town. They were soon joined by Albert.

“I met Arenberg just now,” he said to Jaqueline, “looking as sulky as a bear. He asked where you were gone, as he had not found you at home. I could not tell him, as I did not know, and would not have told him if I had known; but I saw him start off to the north side of the town, so there is no fear of your being troubled by his presence.”

“But how do you know his presence troubled me?” asked Jaqueline.

“Because I am very sure you cannot like a man who is a ‘Glipper’ at heart, whatever he may seem to be to people openly; and I have observed the way you always speak to him, and very glad I have been to see it.”

Jaqueline was inclined to smile, and she could not chide Albert for his frankness.

“Hulloa! look up there!” he exclaimed, pointing along the road. “I see two men on horseback and another on foot. What if they should prove to be the captain and Berthold with a guide? Perhaps they will bring us good news.”

“They do not come on as fast as I should have expected,” said Jaqueline, watching them intently. “Yet they seem to be cavaliers, not common horse soldiers. Perhaps they have to wait for their guide.”

The two horsemen and their attendant on foot drew near.

“It is Captain Van der Elst and my cousin Berthold!” exclaimed Jaqueline, in a more joyous tone than she had spoken for many a day. “The message they bring from the Prince will, I trust, encourage our citizens.”

“Encouragement they will certainly bring if they come from William the Silent, who is very

sure to inspire all whom he addresses with the spirit which animates his own dauntless mind. We will go down to the gate to meet them," said the burgomaster.

The captain and Berthold, with their companion, having answered the challenge of the sentries, were forthwith admitted. Perceiving the burgomaster and Jaqueline, they leaped from their steeds, and giving the reins to their companion, advanced towards them.

"We have been a much longer time in reaching the city than the Prince or we ourselves expected," said the captain, after the usual greetings. We were pursued by a party of Spaniards, and had to take refuge in the fortress of Polderwaert, from which for several days we were unable to make our escape; but the message we bring will, I trust, encourage the citizens and garrison of Leyden to defend the city until the Spaniards are compelled to retire."

"There is little doubt about that," said Berthold. "He has not told you how, after we had taken refuge in the fortress, through his vigilance and courage, the Spaniards, who attempted to surprise it, were driven off, and had he not been charged with the message from the Prince, he would have been detained to assist in its defence should it again be attacked."

“And who is that lanky fellow you brought with you, who is leading on the horses after us?” asked Albert of his friend, as they followed the burgomaster with Jaqueline and the captain.

“A first rate fellow, Hans Bosch, he has done us good service twice already, besides piloting us along last night by paths which I could not have found by myself, though I know the country pretty well; he volunteered to come in order to carry messages from the city, and very useful we are likely to find him.”

As it was important at once to communicate the message brought by Captain Van der Elst, the burgomaster summoned the chief inhabitants forthwith to the *Stadhuis*. The captain having delivered his written despatches, spoke as he had been directed, employing the very words the Prince himself had used, and advancing the most powerful arguments to induce the citizens not to yield to their foes. “He implores you,” he continued, “to hold out for at least three months, and he pledges his word that he will within that time devise the means of delivering you from the Spaniards.”

“For six months, if necessary, even if we have to eat the grass in our squares, the shoes on our feet, the rats and dogs to be found in the streets,” was the reply.

“I will announce your resolution to the Prince, and it will, I am sure, encourage him to continue the efforts he is making for your relief,” answered the captain. “Had Prince Louis lived and joined him he would have had an army at his disposal, but the forces he can at present muster are only sufficient for the protection of Rotterdam and Delft.”

The address of the Prince was printed and circulated throughout the city. After the meeting broke up, the burgomaster invited the young captain to accompany Berthold to his house.

“And who’s your attendant, he appears to be a strange being?”

“There are not many like Hans Bosch,” remarked Berthold. “He has twice saved us from falling into the hands of the Spaniards, and, if I mistake not, will still render us good service, he can run like a deer and leap like a young calf. There are few who can dodge the Spaniards as he can, and if we get shut up in the city, he will manage to get out again and slip through their ranks so as to let the Prince know what we are about.”

“Berthold does not over-praise Hans Bosch,” observed the captain. “I commend him to your care, Burgomaster, while he remains in the city, and he will be ready to make himself useful

when his services are required." It was the first evening since preparations for the defence were commenced, that any of the inhabitants were able to take rest. Though labourers were still employed on the works, they were nearly completed, and Jaqueline felt that she might, without neglecting her self-imposed duty, return home and resume her ordinary attire, so that she could preside at her father's table. There were no guests besides Captain Van der Elst and Albert—Berthold always resided with his uncle.

"Can you now remain with us?" asked the burgomaster of Captain Van der Elst.

"Would that I could," answered Karl, his eyes turning for a moment towards Jaqueline. "But our Prince requires my services and directed me to return without delay, he has, as you know, but few officers. His great object is forthwith to raise a force of sufficient strength to drive the Spaniards from your gates; he did not inform me how it was to be done, but it will be no easy task, for he has to garrison Rotterdam and Delft, and to guard the immediate country. Were he to leave those places unprotected, all might be lost."

"We will trust to his sleepless energy and determination, both to devise and carry out a project for our relief," observed the burgomaster.

"An idea has occurred to me, Captain Van der

Elst!" exclaimed Albert. "I lately gave four beautiful carrier pigeons to the Vrouw Jaqueline, and if she will consent to make them over to you, you can carry them with you, and by their means inform us what progress the Prince is making in his plans for our relief. Do you consent to give up your pets, Vrouw Jaqueline?"

"Most willingly," she answered, "if Captain Van der Elst will undertake the charge of the birds."

"I will tend them carefully, and trust that they may become the messengers of happy news," he said, a smile for a moment lighting up his countenance.

Albert proposed that they should at once visit the pigeons with Captain Van der Elst, and instruct him how they were to be fed and treated, as it was possible that he might have to depart at an early hour the next morning. As Jaqueline expressed her readiness to do as Albert proposed, the whole party, with the exception of the burgomaster, accompanied her to the tower of the house in which they were kept. In the same tower was situated her boudoir, and hence she could enjoy a wider view over the country than from any other part of the house.

"We must put them into two small cages, so that they may be carried easily on horseback, or by a man on foot, if necessary," said Albert.

“Come, Berthold, if your cousin will allow us, we will go and procure such cages. I know where they are to be found, and we will be back in a few minutes.” As Jaqueline did not forbid them, they set off.

It was the first time that Jaqueline and Karl Van der Elst had been together. They had never spoken of love, and the present moment seemed most inappropriate. Karl did not conceal from himself the dangers to which he must be exposed in carrying out the projects of the Prince, nor could he shut his eyes to the fearful risk all the inhabitants of Leyden must run, even though relief might soon be brought to them. He, almost against his intentions, spoke a few words to Jaqueline, the meaning of which she could not fail to understand.

“It may be weeks—months—before we meet again, but my feelings, when I have learned once to esteem, are not given to change,” she said. The young captain had reason to be content with the look which accompanied her words, even more than with the words themselves. The two lads soon returned with the cages, which were so small that two pigeons could only be pressed into each.

“They will be hurt, poor things,” cried Jaqueline.

“Oh, no, no,” said Albert, “they will support each other, and travel far more comfortably than if they had more space, and were allowed to tumble about.”

As the captain had to start the following morning, Arthur and Berthold undertook to carry the birds to his lodgings that evening.

Captain Van der Elst, accompanied by Hans Bosch, for whom a horse had been provided, and who carried the two cages, set off at an early hour the following morning. Secretly as his departure had been arranged, it was discovered by Baron Van Arenberg, who had that morning risen at an earlier hour than usual and gone out to the ramparts. The baron recognised him, and muttered, as he observed him leaving the gate, “It will be many a long day before he is again within the walls of Leyden, for ere long the Spaniards, if I mistake not, will be in possession of them.”

In the evening the burgomaster, accompanied by his daughter and nephew and Albert, had ascended to the top of the Tower of Hengist, when Albert, whose eyes were of the sharpest, exclaimed, pointing over the city to the eastward, “See, see, there come a large body of men; they must be either the troops the Prince has promised to send to our assistance, or the Spaniards.”

The rest of the party gazed in the same direction. "They form the advance guard of our foes," said the burgomaster. "Albert and Berthold, hasten and give the information to the commandant; he will take good care that the walls are forthwith manned, though the Spaniards, after a day's march, will be in no mood to make an attack when they know full well that we shall give them as warm a reception as did our friends at Alkmaar."

In a few minutes the bells of all the churches were ringing forth the well-known call to arms, and the citizens, with their weapons in hand, were seen hurrying to man the forts and ramparts. The burgomaster, with Jaqueline, remained some time longer on the top of the tower that he might judge what positions the Spanish general was likely to take. The head of the leading column advanced till it reached a spot just beyond range of the guns in the batteries, then it halted to wait for the arrival of other troops; these quickly followed, the whole force numbering not less than eight thousand men, Walloons and Germans. Some immediately took possession of Leyderdorp, and of the other forts which ought to have been destroyed, while others, armed with pickaxes and spades, without a moment's loss of time began throwing up fresh

lines and forts, a third party being employed in pitching the tents and forming a camp just beyond them. All night long a vigilant watch was kept, as it was very possible that the Spaniards might attempt to surprise the city in the hopes of capturing it at once, and saving themselves from the annoyance and sufferings of a protracted siege. Young Albert and Berthold together went the rounds to see that the sentries were at their posts and wide awake, and that no post was left without a sufficient guard. No experienced officers could have been more on the alert. More than once they met the commandant, who, entrusting nothing of importance to others, was himself going the rounds.

He gave the lads some words of approval. "While the young ones show such zeal I feel confident that we shall keep the foe in check till they are compelled ignominiously to retreat," he observed.

For several days the citizens beheld the foreign troops gathering round them, bringing their batteries closer to the walls, till Leyden was invested by no less than sixty-two redoubts, while fresh troops were seen coming in to swell the ranks of the besiegers. The city was now placed on a strict allowance of food, all the provisions having been purchased by the authorities, with

an allowance of half a pound of meat, half a pound of bread allotted to each full-grown man, and to the rest in due proportion. At length the soldiers, and even some of the burghers began to murmur at their own inactivity; to give them confidence the commandant allowed a sortie to be made, promising a reward to each man who brought in the head of a Spaniard. The men of Leyden waited till nightfall, having previously carefully surveyed the point it was proposed to attack. All was still in the city, the Spaniards might have supposed that the besieged were sleeping, when suddenly the gate at which the sortie was to be made was thrown open, three hundred men eager for the fray noiselessly rushed out, not a word was spoken, not a shout raised till they were upon their foe. The Spaniards, the work of the day over, had piled their arms, and had scarcely time to fall into their ranks before their enemies were upon them; though a score or more fell yet they were too well disciplined to remain long in a state of confusion, and the officer leading the sortie deemed it prudent to call back his men. They returned without the loss of one of their number, bringing back at least a dozen Spanish heads, such was the savage commencement of the struggle. Night after night similar enterprises were undertaken, not

always with the same result, though the Hollanders were invariably successful, so silently and well executed were all their sorties, but several brave men fell, and the commandant, from fear of losing too many of his troops, deemed it necessary to prohibit any from leaving the gates without his express order.





CHAPTER VI.



THE inhabitants of Leyden were already fearfully hard pressed for food. Their bread was entirely consumed; they had but a small supply of malt cake, with a few cows—kept as long as possible for their milk—besides these an equal number of horses and sheep; but every day these provisions were becoming more and more scanty, and unless they could speedily be relieved, starvation threatened them. The burgomaster and Council were assembled when a letter which had been sent in from Valdez, with a flag of truce, was received. The burgomaster read it aloud. It offered an amnesty to all Hollanders, except a few mentioned by name, provided they would return to their allegiance; it promised forgiveness, fortified by a Papal Bull which had been issued by Gregory XIII. to those Netherland sinners who duly repented and sought absolution for their sins, even though they sinned more than seven times seven. Besides

this public letter were received epistles despatched by the "Glippers" from the camp to their rebellious acquaintances in the city, exhorting them to submission, and imploring them to take pity upon their poor old fathers, their daughters, and their wives.

"What say you, my friends?" exclaimed the burgomaster, who read these letters aloud. "The Spanish general offers us free pardon for defending our hearths and homes as we have hitherto done, and by God's grace we will continue to do. The same plausible offers Don Frederic made to the citizens of Haarlem. And what happened? The slaughter which overtook old and young alike, their city plundered, their homes ruined, can testify as to the value of such offers. Shall we share their fate, or shall we hold out like men until the relief, which assuredly will come, arrives, although we have only malt cake to live upon, and but little of that, and a few cows, horses, goats, and dogs; and as to the remark of these 'Glippers,' the best pity we can show our poor old fathers, daughters, and wives is to keep them from the clutches of the Spanish soldiery."

"We will fight to the last! We will fight to the last!" was the unanimous response taken up by all the citizens in the streets. It was agreed

that no answer should be sent to the Spanish general; indeed some proposed hanging the herald, who was glad to make his escape with a single line in Latin, on a sheet of paper, handed to him—

“When the trapper seeks to lure his bird, he softly plays
his pipe.”

Good care was taken that the herald should see nothing going on within the walls, or be able to report a word about the haggard countenances of the defenders. From their frowning looks and taunting expressions he was probably glad to escape with his life. Meantime the condition of the inhabitants became worse and worse.

Jaqueline, with other maidens and matrons of rank, had formed themselves into a band to carry such relief as they could obtain for the sufferers. Day after day they nobly prosecuted their self-imposed duties, and many by their means were aided who might otherwise have perished. Returning one evening to her tower to attend her remaining pigeons, which as yet she had not allowed to be killed in the hopes that they might serve some useful purpose, after feeding them as was her wont, she was seated at the window, inhaling the pure air which the lower part of the city had failed to afford, when she observed a white spot in the sky glittering in the rays of

the setting sun. Nearer and nearer it came till she perceived that it was a bird. It soon flew in at the window and alighted in her arms. It was one of her own pigeons; beneath its wing she discovered, securely fastened by a silken thread, a small folded paper. Quickly untying and releasing her bird, which she placed with its companions, she hurried down with the document to her father. It was, as she hoped, from Captain Van der Elst, written by the directions of the Prince. He assured the citizens that he was already preparing the promised aid, and that he hoped all difficulties would soon be overcome. He again reminded the garrison of Leyden that the fate of their country depended on their holding out. The captain did not say, what was really the case, that the Prince himself was lying ill of a fever at Rotterdam, and that unforeseen delays had occurred. As may be supposed he added a few words of his own to be read only by Jaqueline, who would, he trusted, receive the epistle. The burgomaster lost no time in communicating the contents of the letter to the brave commandant. The despatch served to revive the drooping spirits of the garrison; still there was a further delay. Again the Spaniards attacked the walls and were once more repulsed, but the numbers of the garrison were slowly

though surely decreasing, yet neither the burgo-master nor John Van der Does entertained a thought of submission. As only one of the pigeons had returned, Jaqueline hoped that another might soon appear bringing more certain news of relief. She paid, as may be supposed, frequent visits to her tower, gazing in the direction when she hoped her winged messenger would appear. Her numerous duties compelled her frequently to be absent, but each time she returned home she hurried there, as often to be disappointed. She had risen one morning rather later than usual from her couch, when going to the tower she perceived that the number of her pigeons was increased, quickly searching out the new arrival she discovered, as she had expected, a letter below its wing, it was longer than the previous one. As the burgo-master, to whom she carried it, read the news it contained his eyes brightened. It was from the Prince himself; it said that the sluices at Rotterdam and Schiedam had been opened, that the dykes were all pierced, that the water was rising upon the Land-Scheiding, the great outer barrier which separated the city from the sea; that he had a fleet of two-hundred vessels in readiness stored with provisions, under the command of Admiral Boisot, and that as soon as there was

sufficient depth of water, the fleet would fight its way to the walls of Leyden and bring the citizens relief.

“This is indeed joyous news!” exclaimed the burgomaster. He at once directed Berthold to summon the city musicians to meet him, with their instruments, in the market-place, to which, accompanied by Jaqueline, he immediately repaired. He knew that many of the chief citizens would soon collect there. Taking the letter, he read it publicly, when the bands of music striking up, marched through the streets playing lively melodies and martial airs. The bells rang out merry tunes, and salvos of cannon were fired not at the foe but at brief intervals, to give indubitable signs that the city was rejoicing.

“These scenes will astonish our enemies, who will at first be unable to comprehend their import, but I’ve an idea they will soon find out, and may deem it wise to decamp,” exclaimed Berthold. Albert proposed making a sortie to attack the Spaniards before they had recovered from their astonishment at hearing the joyful sounds from the city, and seeing the waters flowing over the land.

“No! no!” answered the commandant. “Many valuable lives might be sacrificed, and the

ocean will ere long fight for us far more effectually than our swords."

The burgomaster, generally accompanied by Jaqueline, paid frequent visits to Hengist Tower.

Already from its summit the waters could be seen covering spaces which had hitherto been dry land, the canals having in many places risen ten inches and were overflowing their banks, though the great dyke five miles off still prevented the flood from reaching the Spanish camp. The had one evening gone there with Berthold and Albert, who were especially eager in watching the rise of the flood. Already in the far distance the rays of the sun glittered on the rising waters, where hitherto only green fields and orchards had been seen, but between that shining expanse and the city lay about five miles off the Land-Scheiding, a strong dyke which had been spoken of, and within it were also several circumvallations thrown up to defend the city from the encroachments of the ocean. These all had to be passed before the fleet could reach the walls. Though there were canals navigable at all times by vessels of small burden, the Land-Scheiding was still a foot and a half above the water, forming an impassable barrier, besides which in the intermediate space were numerous villages held by the king's troops. While the

two lads were standing somewhat apart from the burgomaster and Jaqueline they observed a person approaching the tower. "It is that fellow Van Arenberg," whispered Albert. "I wonder he has ventured to remain so long in the city, he might all this time have been with the Spaniards, whom he is so constantly praising and advising the people to confide in. When the fighting is going on he is never to be seen on the ramparts, and though he receives his rations I suspect that it is only a make-believe, and that he has a secret store of provisions in his own house."

"It would not do to say that to the burgomaster," observed Berthold. "He still believes him to be honest, though wanting in spirit, and would, I suspect, even now let Jaqueline marry him if he were to press his suit and she were to consent."

"That is not very likely to happen," said Albert. "She would be more ready to marry Captain Van der Elst."

"I do not know," answered Berthold. "During our journey he never, that I recollect, once spoke to me about her; but here comes the baron, we had better keep out of his way, for if I meet him I shall be inclined to say something he won't like."

The baron, who certainly seemed to have suffered less than most of the inhabitants of

Leyden from scanty food and constant watching, now reaching the top of the tower approached the burgomaster and Jaqueline. Having in his usual courteous and polished manner paid his respects to the Lily and her father, he pointed southward.

“You are looking out there, I conclude, for the appearance of Admiral Boisot and his Sea Beggars, but I fear that we shall look in vain ; his flotilla may reach the Land-Scheiding, but beyond that no mortal power can enable his ships to advance ; even should they pierce it, as the Prince expects, it is impossible that they can pass all those other barriers with the victorious troops of Valdez opposing them and garrisoning every village and fort.”

“God can make a way if man cannot,” answered the burgomaster.

“But He may not think fit to make one for those daring outlaws to reach Leyden,” said the baron. “Would that I could hope that relief was likely to come, but I have long despaired, as you know, of obtaining it, and I have sought you, Burgomaster, to entreat you that even should you consider it your duty to remain you will allow me to escort your fair daughter to some place where she may escape the unspeakable miseries which are gathering round the inhabi-

tants of this unhappy city. I can, through some influential friends, obtain a safe pass from Valdez, and can also through their means arrange for her secret departure from the city, so that whatever happens she will at all events be preserved."

"Even should she wish it, my duty to my fellow-citizens will prevent me from permitting her to go," answered the burgomaster. "Her departure would tend to dishearten those who have already sufficient to try them; but you may ask her."

Jaqueline had, while the baron was speaking to her father, withdrawn from his side, and was about to join her cousin and Albert when the young noble approached her. In carefully measured words he spoke of his love and devotion, and offering his hand and heart, entreated her at once to become his wife that he might be able to rescue her from the dangers by which she was surrounded.

"I have your father's permission," he added, "and whatever opinion he may consider it his duty to express publicly I cannot but believe that his mind will be greatly relieved when he knows that you are beyond the reach of harm."

"It may be that you have my father's permission to speak to me," she answered, "but he would never counsel me to play a dastard's

part and dishearten my fellow-citizens, whom I am bound to encourage. Understand, Ernst Van Arenberg, sooner would I remain among those who are stricken down every day by famine and pestilence, and share their fate, if God so wills it, than wed one who traitorously counsels submission to the foe.”

As she spoke she fixed her clear blue eyes on him with a look the meaning of which he could not misinterpret, for it showed the scorn his proposal had inspired. He might have seen that his cause was hopeless, yet he could not even now abandon her, and was again about to speak when Berthold and Albert came up with an independent air, the former exclaiming—

“Look out there, Jaqueline! Look out, your eyes are keen enough to see the sun shining on some score of white sails far away to the southward; they form, I doubt not, the vanguard of a relieving fleet, and before long the Spaniards, the ‘Glippers,’ and their friends will be scampering off to escape being overwhelmed by the rising tide.”

“It is high time for you, Baron, to go and give the Spaniards warning if you wish to serve them a good turn,” said Albert.

The baron frowned at the lad, who looked so unconscious of having said anything disagreeable

that he did not venture to reply. At length the burgomaster, addressing Jaqueline, proposed to return home, and desired his nephew and Albert to follow him, but a word from Jaqueline prevented him from inviting the baron, as he might otherwise have done, to his house. Van Arenberg descended the steps close behind them, but receiving no intimation that he might accompany them from Jaqueline or her father, he was compelled to lift his beaver, which he did with a somewhat haughty air, and without taking the slightest notice of the lads, walked away in an opposite direction. The burgomaster, who had overheard some of the boy's remarks, chided them for speaking so rudely to the baron.

“Though the opinion you have formed of him is, I fear, right, it becomes you not thus to address a person so much your senior in age as well as in rank,” he said.

Jaqueline, however, interfered, and told her father that she was thankful to them for coming so opportunely to her assistance, and preventing her from uttering expressions which the baron might have deemed far more severe than anything her cousin and Albert could say.



CHAPTER VII.



JAQUELINE had welcomed a third of her white-winged birds to her tower. The pigeon bore a letter dictated by Admiral Boisot, though she recognised the handwriting of Captain Van der Elst. It stated that the fleet led by an enormous vessel, the "Ark of Delft," with shot-proof bulwarks, and moved by paddle-wheels turned by a crank, had reached the Land-Scheiding, and that he hoped, ere long, the large dyke would be broken through and that the way would be opened to the very walls of the city. The Prince also sent a message urging the citizens yet longer to hold out, reminding them that with Leyden all Holland must also perish. This letter for a time greatly encouraged the suffering garrison; those who understood the nature of the undertaking were aware that much depended on the direction of the wind. An easterly gale was calculated to blow back the waters and prevent their rising, while one from the south or west

would force them on towards the city. The wind was now blowing from the east and the tides were at their lowest, so that the waters were making but slow progress. Still the loyal-hearted among the population, trusting to their Prince's promises, were assured that if it was in the power of human help they would in time be relieved. The "Glippers," however, who professed to know the country well, ridiculed the desperate project. Those in the town taunted their fellow-citizens, frequently crying out, "Go up to the tower and tell us if you can see the ocean coming over the dry land to our relief." Day after day they did go up, hoping, praying, fearing, and at last almost despairing of relief from God or man. Letters were also daily received from those with Valdez urging the inhabitants to spare themselves further suffering. Young Albert and Berthold had made themselves especially useful by going round the ramparts, not once or twice a day, but many times during the day and night, at all hours, so that they might not only see that the sentinels were keeping a vigilant watch, but that they might be able to discover treachery should any have been attempted. They had one evening gone to the top of Hengist's Tower, a spot they were especially fond of visiting at all hours of the day and

night, when they saw the hitherto dark sky to the southward suddenly illumined by bright flashes of light following one another in rapid succession.

“Hark, I can hear the roar of guns,” exclaimed Berthold. They listened, there was no doubt about it. The flashes continued, now fires blazed up in various directions. There was more firing, not always in the same place, the tide of battle was evidently moving on. The lads were at length joined by several citizens.

“The Sea Beggars are coming!” shouted Albert, unwittingly, “they are fighting their way towards us.”

“We must not be too sanguine,” observed one of the citizens. “There may be fighting taking place, but we cannot tell who is gaining the victory. It may be that the Spaniards are driving back our friends.”

“I am very sure that they are not,” cried Albert. “Admiral Boisot and his gallant followers are victorious—of that I am certain.”

“Count Louis and his whole army were cut to pieces not long ago,” remarked this citizen, in a melancholy tone. The mystery was not solved that night, and the whole of the next day went by without any information having been received of what had taken place.

The following night the two lads were passing along the top of the wall in the neighbourhood of the Cowgate, looking southward, when they caught sight of the figure of a person close below them who had suddenly come into view.

“Send me down a rope and be quick about it, or I may be caught by the Spaniards, for they are close upon me,” he exclaimed.

“They will scarcely venture within range of our guns,” said Berthold. “But we will haul you up as soon as we can get a rope.”

“I know where to find one not far off,” said Albert, and he hurried away, while Berthold summoned two or three of the guard to the assistance of the stranger. Albert quickly returned with a rope of sufficient length and strength. Scarcely was it lowered when the stranger hauled himself up with the agility of a monkey.

“Don’t you remember me?” he said, looking at Berthold. “I am Hans Bosch, you know that you can trust me; I have accompanied Captain Van der Elst, and he will be up here before long. I have led the Spanish guard a pretty dance to draw off their attention, that he might the more easily pass by them. I don’t think they are likely to have caught him, though if he does not appear soon I must go back again. I know part of his message, which I may give if

he does not appear, but I hope that he will deliver it himself."

This news so greatly excited Berthold and Albert that they were much inclined to set out with Hans to look for their friend, but he advised them to do nothing of the sort.

"They might as well try to catch a Will-o'-the-Wisp as me," he said, "but they would trap you in a moment. No, no; if I go, I go alone."

At length, to their great joy, another figure was seen.

"Quick! quick! That's him!" exclaimed Hans. "That's the captain. Quick! quick! The chances are he has a dozen Spaniards at his heels!"

The rope was lowered, and the captain was quickly hauled up to the top of the wall. He shook Albert and Berthold warmly by the hand.

"I must lose no time," he said, "in reporting to the burgomaster and commandant the steps the Prince has taken for the relief of the city. You are undoubtedly eager to hear, but I must reserve my report for your elders."

The two lads hastened on with their friend, and fortunately found the burgomaster in consultation with the commandant. The boys stood eagerly listening while the captain delivered his message.

“You heard that the admiral had received directions from the Prince to take possession of the Land-Scheiding. This was done two nights ago. But a few Spaniards were found stationed on the dyke, and they were quickly driven off when we fortified ourselves upon it. In the morning the enemy endeavoured to recover the lost ground, and attacked us in considerable force, but we drove them back, they leaving hundreds of dead on the field. No time was lost in breaking through the dyke in several places. The water rushing on, the fleet sailed through the gaps; but, to our disappointment, we found another dyke, that of the Greenway, three quarters of a mile further on, rising at least a foot above the waters. This had also been left ill-protected, and our admiral promptly attacking it, took possession, and levelling it in many places, brought the flotilla over its ruins. Soon afterwards, however, the further progress of the fleet was arrested by the shallowness of the water; but our admiral, knowing the anxiety you must be feeling, dispatched me to inform you of this, and to assure you that he waits but the rising of the tide and a favourable wind to bring you succour.”

The news was thus far satisfactory, and the captain was warmly thanked for bringing it, but

that he received his reward when at the burgo-master's invitation he accompanied him home, there could be little doubt.

The wind, however, still blew from the east, and the inhabitants well knew that as long as it came from that quarter they must look in vain for the wished-for ocean to reach their walls.

Day after day the siege continued; the inhabitants were suffering not only from famine, but from pestilence, produced by the scantiness of their food. Hapless infants were starved to death, mothers dropped dead in the streets with their dead children in their arms, and in many a house the watchmen in their rounds found whole families of corpses, father, mother, and children, lying side by side, struck down by pestilence. Bread, malt cake, and horse-flesh had entirely disappeared. A small number of cows had been kept as long as possible for their milk, but a few of these were killed from day to day, and distributed in minute proportions, scarcely, however, sufficient to support life among the famishing population, while their hides chopped and boiled were greedily devoured. Green leaves were stripped from the trees, every living herb was converted into human food; dogs and rats were caught and eaten. Still, although papers offering

a free pardon were sent into the city, the inhabitants spurned them, and refused to listen to treacherous promises of the foe.

The commandant was anxious to send a trusty messenger to the Prince, and while pointing out the urgent necessity for relief, promising to resist to the last.

“Will you return, Captain Van der Elst?” he asked of Karl, who was in attendance on him. “I dare not order any man on so desperate an undertaking, for the Spaniards keep a vigilant watch, and will have no mercy on any one whom they capture.”

“If it were to certain death, I would go,” answered Karl. “And I place my services at your disposal. At the same time the danger is not so great as you suppose. Several of the forts in the lower ground have been flooded, and the trenches filled with water, so that the Spaniards have been compelled to evacuate them, and thus to those who are acquainted with their position the way is far more open than it has been heretofore, while numerous sentries at the outposts have been withdrawn.”

“To-night be prepared to set out; a skiff shall be in readiness; having served at sea, you know well how to manage her,” answered the commandant.

Karl took his leave, and repaired to the house of the burgomaster to receive any message he might desire to send. He might have had another motive. He found the chief magistrate and his daughter seated alone. Though suffering from the severe privation she had undergone in common with the rest of the population, if possible the Lily looked more lovely than ever. She smiled as the young soldier entered, but her lip trembled on hearing of the duty he had undertaken, yet not a word did she utter to dissuade him from it.

“My prayers will be offered that Heaven protect you,” she murmured, in a low voice as he approached her, while the burgomaster was writing some brief notes.

“I trust that I may return, perhaps ere many hours are over, on board the fleet to bring you succour,” he answered. “You will know of our approach, for our guns will thunder against the fortresses of the enemy when the waters rise sufficiently to enable us to advance.”

“The wind still blows from the east and keeps back the fleet,” she observed.

“But the wind may ere long change, and depend upon it our brave admiral and his ‘Sea Beggars’ will not linger the moment there is sufficient water to float their ships,” said Karl,

in an encouraging tone. When her eyes were lifted towards his countenance, their expression was very different to that with which she had regarded the baron. With natural reluctance Karl, having received his dispatches, at length rose to take leave and prepare for his enterprise. As there were traitors within the gates he kept all his arrangements secret. They were known only to his two young friends and Hans Bosch, who undertook to accompany him. Not till late on the following day was it even known that he had set out when the burgomaster announced that he had despatched another messenger to entreat their friends to hasten to their relief. Desperate as had been the state of matters in the besieged city, they hourly became worse. Leyden, indeed, appeared to be at its last gasp. The noble burgomaster maintained his heroic bearing, ever moving about to encourage the wavering and to revive the drooping spirits of the loyal; but a trial greater than any he had yet had to endure was in store for him.

Jaqueline had from the first employed herself in going among the sick and suffering, and carrying such relief as she was able to afford, and consoling the afflicted ones from that Book in which true comfort alone can be found. In these active duties she found her chief solace.

Not only was she enduring physical suffering, but no certain tidings had been received of Captain Van der Elst, and reports were current that he had been captured by the Spaniards, it being well known that if such was the case a cruel death must have been his fate. One evening the Lily was returning to her home from one of her expeditions of mercy, attended by Margaret, an old and faithful servant, who was her constant companion. As darkness was already overspreading the city, she hurried on, unwilling to be out so late at night, when she was accosted by a poor woman, who, with a piteous tale, too likely to be true, entreated that she would visit her perishing family. Without hesitation she desired Margaret to return home and obtain such scanty provisions as remained, while she accompanied the suppliant. Margaret, having collected a small amount of food, hurried back to rejoin her mistress at the address given by the woman who had spoken to her, but no living beings were in the house; three corpses alone lay on the floor. Margaret, without a moment's loss of time, went to all the neighbouring houses, inquiring for the Vrouw Jaqueline, but no one had seen her. Almost frantic she hurried through the streets of the city, but her search was fruitless. At last she went back with the

overwhelming intelligence, which she entreated Berthold to break to his uncle. The burgo-master, who had hitherto held out so bravely, for a moment seemed stunned, but quickly recovering himself he directed Berthold to send all the servants of the house to him, but no one was able to afford the slightest information to account for Jaqueline's disappearance.

"I would lay my life that the Baron Van Arenberg has had something to do with it," exclaimed Berthold. "If you will let me I will get Albert and we will go to his house. We shall soon judge by the way he receives the intelligence whether he knows anything about the matter." Berthold received the leave he requested, while the burgomaster himself forthwith sent a band of watchmen round in all directions through the town in search of Jaqueline, while he called at numerous houses and visited all the friends on whom he could rely to obtain their assistance in the search. The first to make their appearance at his house were Albert and Berthold.

"We were right," they exclaimed. "The baron's servants know nothing of him; he left home at an early hour this afternoon, and has not since returned. Most of his domestics, who were 'Glippers,' have long ago made their escape. The watchmen in the course of the night came

in with equally unsatisfactory reports—not a trace of the *Vrouw Jaqueline* had been discovered.”

“May God protect my child,” exclaimed the burgomaster, bowing his head. “She is beyond human aid.”

No one would have believed from his appearance the next morning, when he left his home to attend to his magisterial duties, that a deep domestic sorrow had overtaken him. He started as he quitted his door, for there, on the very threshold, lay a dead body, thus placed as if to reproach him for his stern determination in holding out.

“We shall all soon be like him who lies there,” cried many voices.

“It were better to have yielded than have been compelled to endure such suffering,” shouted others.

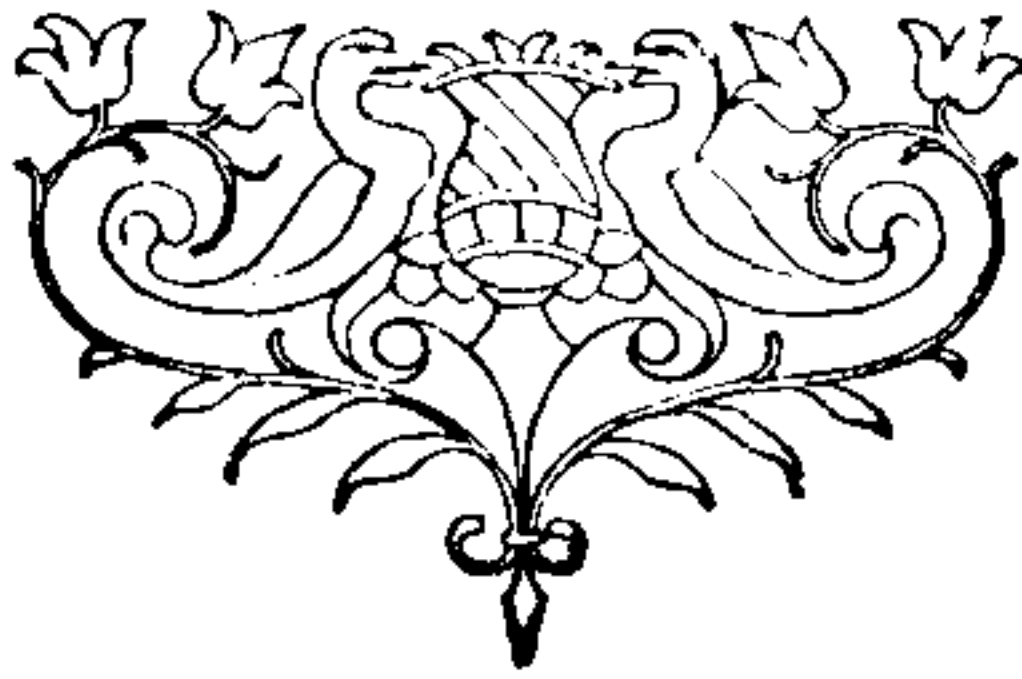
Unheeding them, the burgomaster proceeded to a triangular space in the centre of the town, into which many of the principal streets opened, and in which stood the church of *St. Pancras*, two ancient lime trees growing on either side of the entrance now stripped bare of leaves by the famishing people. Ascending the steps, *Adrian Van der Werf* stopped while he regarded the numberless angry faces turned towards him.

For a moment he stood there, his figure tall and imposing, his visage dark and haggard, his eye yet tranquil and commanding, and then waving his broad-brimmed hat for silence, he exclaimed, "What would you, my friends? Why do you murmur that we do not break our vows and surrender our city to the Spaniards, a fate more horrible than the agony which she now endures? I tell you I have made a vow to hold the city, and may God give me strength to keep it. I can die but once, whether by your hands, by the enemy's, or by the hand of God. My own fate is indifferent to me, not so that of the city entrusted to our care. I know that we shall soon starve, but starvation is preferable to the dishonoured death which is the only alternative. Your menaces move me not. My life is at your disposal. Here is my sword, plunge it into my breast and divide my flesh among you, take my body to appease your hunger, but expect no surrender as long as I remain alive."

The words of the brave burgomaster inspired a new courage in the hearts of those who heard him. Shouts of applause and defiance rose from the famishing, but enthusiastic crowd, they hurried to the ramparts to hurl renewed defiance at the enemy.

"Ye call us rat-eaters and dog-eaters," they

cried ; “so long as ye hear a dog bark or a cat mew within the walls ye may know that the city holds out ; when the last hour has come, we will with our own hands set fire to the houses and perish in the flames rather than suffer our homes to be polluted and our liberties to be crushed.”





CHAPTER VIII



TRULY it has been said that Leyden was sublime in its despair. Day after day went by and yet no relief came, but the wind, which had long blown steadily from the east, suddenly changed to the westward. At length Albert and Berthold, who had regularly visited Jaqueline's tower, discovered the fourth pigeon. They eagerly examined its wing, beneath it was a letter which came from the admiral. The fleet had reached North Aa, and in a few days at furthest he expected to reach the gates of the city. The burgomaster read the letter as before in the market-place, and the bells rang out a joyous peal. Once more, however, the wind shifted, and the hopes of the garrison of Leyden sank to the lowest ebb.

We must now return to the evening when Jaqueline, having sent her attendant Margaret to obtain provisions for the suffering family, accompanied the woman who had supplicated her.

Suddenly, as she was passing close to a canal, she found herself lifted from her feet, while a thick cloak was thrown over her. In vain she attempted to shriek for help, in another instant she heard the splash of oars.

“Do not fear, you are in the safe keeping of one who desires to save you from horrible suffering and death,” whispered a voice in her ear. Notwithstanding these assurances, Jaqueline entreated that she might be placed on shore, and endeavoured by her cries to attract the attention of any who might be passing. Vain were her efforts, the thick folds of the cloak prevented her voice being heard, while a heavy mist, together with the shades of night, shrouded the canal as the boat glided forward. Jaqueline knew that the canal extended out beneath the city walls, and she hoped that the boat would be challenged as it passed under them and be compelled to put to shore. Keeping silent, she resolved to take the opportunity of making another effort to escape from her captors; as the spot was approached, however, she felt a hand pressed on her mouth. In vain she struggled to free herself, she heard the sign and counter-sign given, and the boat impelled by four sturdy rowers soon left the city walls behind. Strange as it might seem, thinking more of the safety of

her townsmen than of herself, the idea occurred to her that if persons could thus, undiscovered, leave the city, an armed force might be introduced by the gates, and disastrous might be the consequences. She was, she had reason to fear, being carried to the Spanish camp, but who could have been guilty of so treacherous an act? She was not left long in doubt, the person who had before addressed her in a subdued tone now raised his voice, and she recognised it as that of Van Arenberg. For some time she could not sufficiently command herself to speak, at length, however, she said in a calm tone, "I will not pretend to be ignorant that it is you who have committed this unwarrantable act of violence, and I insist that you carry me back to the city and restore me to my father, his mental anxiety already so overwhelming, when he finds that I am lost, may bring him to the grave."

"I have but acted, my beloved Jaqueline, as you would secretly wish, to save you from that destruction which must, ere many days have passed, descend on the city. My object is to carry you to a place of safety, all I ask being your hand and love."

"The former I will not give, the other I cannot bestow," answered Jaqueline, firmly. "Had I before been willing in obedience to my father's

wishes to try and love you, the outrage you have committed would have changed my sentiments, and I again insist that you return with me to the city."

"To do so is utterly impossible," answered Van Arenberg. "The sentries, as we passed beneath the fortress of Zoeterwoude, nearly detected the boat, and we should certainly be captured were we to make the attempt. We will now, therefore, proceed towards Delft, where you will be among friends, and safe from the foes you dread."

Jaqueline greatly doubted that the baron spoke the truth. Again and again she insisted, notwithstanding all the risks they might run, that they should return to the city. She saw at length that all expostulation was useless, the darkness of night prevented her from observing the direction they were taking. Suddenly the sound of heavy guns broke on her ear, followed by the rattle of musketry. Looking southward she saw bright flashes glancing over the water in rapid succession; she thought, too, that she could even hear the shouts of the combatants, the clashing of swords and battle-axes. It was evident that a fierce fight was raging in that direction. The rowers, who had hitherto been exerting themselves to the utmost, paused, and exchanged a few hurried words. It appeared to her that they had

lost their way, for many new channels, deepened by the inflowing waters, branched off on every hand.

Van Arenberg ordered them to row on.

“In what direction shall we go?” asked one of the men. “We may chance to run our noses into the lion’s den. See, fires are blazing on all sides, and friends and foes are likely to treat us in the same fashion.” Van Arenberg, anxious for Jaqueline’s safety, and perhaps for his own, urged his crew to row away from the point where the engagement appeared to be raging most furiously. Already round shot and bullets came flying across the water, and a stray one might chance to hit the boat. The men appeared undecided which way to go, when one of them cried out, “There’s a boat astern! She may, perchance, be that of an enemy, and if so we shall to a certainty be knocked on the head.”

“Row then for your lives!” cried Van Arenberg, for he had equally to fear the Hollanders and Spaniards; the latter, not aware of his treachery, might, before he could show his pass, shoot him down or run him through with their pikes, while his own countrymen would treat him as a hated renegade. The crew, needing no second bidding, bent to their oars with all the strength they possessed. Their flight was, however, dis-

covered by the boat they had seen, which immediately gave chase. Jaqueline believed that their pursuers were Spaniards, and was as eager to escape as the baron, but sturdily as the crew of the villagers whom he had hired plied their oars, the others came on faster. The night was so dark that it was impossible to distinguish objects ahead. At any moment they might find themselves stranded on the shore, or stopped by some impassable shallow. The baron now urged the men to be cautious, now to row with might and main.

Ever and anon the glare from the burning villages, and from fires on the dykes, showed that the boat in chase was gaining on them.

“It were far better to stop and fight,” cried the chief man of the crew. “As to escaping, there is no chance of that in the end, for the fellows astern have a much lighter boat than ours.”

“Fifty guilders if you beat them off,” cried the baron. “Lady, you must lie down at the bottom of the boat, or you may chance to be struck by a shot, or injured by the pikes of our pursuers, should they overtake us.”

“I fear less the weapons of our foes than I do your designs,” answered Jaqueline, with a tone of scorn, retaining her seat. There was little time to hold parley on the subject. In another

moment the boat was alongside, and a voice in Dutch shouted, "Yield! inform us whither you are bound."

"Treachery! treachery!" cried the baron. "They are Spaniards; we may yet escape them."

But Jaqueline recognised the voice. "Karl," she exclaimed, "save me, save me!" and she sprang towards the boat.

Van Arenberg would have prevented her reaching it, but his sword whirled from his hand, the next instant he was driven overboard by a thrust from a pike through his breast. A despairing cry was heard, and before the people could clutch his clothes he was swept away by the current. In a few words Jaqueline told of the outrage to which she had been subjected. Captain Van der Elst accounted for the circumstance of his having so providentially rescued her by saying that he had been sent to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and supposing that the boat was manned by Spaniards he had given chase. She entreated that he would proceed in his duty.

"No harm can come to me while I am by your side," she said, scarcely thinking of the interpretation which might be put upon the words she uttered. He pressed her hand. Having

ordered the villagers' boat to follow at a distance, warning them of the punishment they would receive should they attempt to escape, he continued on till he had performed the duty on which he had been despatched. Morning was approaching when he returned to the fleet, which had just broken through the second great dyke and destroyed the villages of Zoetermeer and Benthuyzen, and now borne on by the rising waters was advancing towards Leyden. Karl conveyed Jaqueline on board the admiral's ship, manned by a savage-looking crew, the wild Beggars of the Sea. Ferocious, however, as they were to their foes, to her they were civil and courteous. Eight hundred of them, mostly Zealanders, manned the fleet. The greater number were scarred, hacked, and even maimed in the unceasing conflicts in which their lives had been passed, while they were renowned far and wide as much for their nautical skill as their ferocity. Their appearance was both eccentric and terrific; they wore crescents in their caps with the inscription, "Rather Turkish than Popish." They were known never to give nor take quarter; they went to mortal combat only. They had sworn to spare neither noble nor simple, neither King, Kaiser, nor Pope, should they fall into their power. Each ship carried ten guns, and was

propelled, the smaller by ten, the larger by eighteen oars, the whole fleet having on board 2,500 veterans, experienced both on land and water. Jaqueline was conducted to the admiral's cabin; it boasted neither of magnificence nor elegance; indeed, very little of comfort, for the vessels had been fitted out for rough work, and no ladies had been expected on board. The stout old admiral welcomed his guest.

“You may rest here in security, my pretty maiden,” he said; “and I trust ere many days are over to restore you to the arms of your brave father.”

Not long afterwards the order was issued for the fleet once more to advance, and Jaqueline's heart beat high with hope, for the second dyke was attacked. The Spaniards, scarcely stopping to encounter the enemy, flung away their arms as they saw the dreaded sea rovers approaching. The barrier was quickly broken, and again the fleet pushed forward over the submerged country till it reached North Aa. Scarcely, however, had the ships arrived there than once more the easterly wind began to blow, driving the waters away from the city. Lower and lower they sank, until the ships grounded, and further progress became impossible. The delay sorely tried the patience of the eager crews, and many leap-

ing into the water, attempted to lift their ships over the shallows, but their strength was unequal to the task. There they lay stranded, with scarcely nine inches of water round them. Jaqueline's anguish of mind was increased from knowing too well the consequences of the delay to the starving inhabitants of the beleaguered city. Though confident of the resolution of her father and the commandant, she was aware of the direful effect which starvation had already produced among the inhabitants. Would they continue to hold out? Ten thousand Spaniards still surrounded the walls, and at any moment might break in, and massacre and rapine would sweep over her native city. Night and day she prayed that the dreaded catastrophe might be averted, yet day after day passed, and the fleet lay in sight of the walls, but too far distant for their cannon to reach the enemy. Even Admiral Boisot was in despair. He despatched a letter to the Prince, stating his belief that if the spring tides, soon to be expected, should not, together with the strong south-westerly wind, come immediately to their relief, he should be compelled to abandon the expedition. Not many hours after the letter had been despatched a large boat was seen rowing swiftly towards the fleet from the southward. She soon came alongside the ad-

miral's ship. A cry, "It is the Prince! our noble Prince," burst from the throats of the sea rovers as they welcomed him on board, though they observed with sorrow that his commanding figure was fearfully emaciated, his noble face pale as death. He had, indeed, only just risen from a bed of sickness, and few knew how near to death's door he had been, his disease aggravated by a report which had reached him that Leyden had fallen, yet all the time he had been directing the plans for bringing the fleet across the land. His countenance assumed a cheerful aspect as he spoke to the almost despairing admiral and his officers.

"I know the people of Leyden," he said, "they will hold out till you can reach them. Ere long the sea will rise. Already the water is deeper than when I came on board."

The Prince was right, he had observed clouds gathering in the south-western horizon, and ere long a strong wind from that quarter began to blow, the tide flowed in, the water swept over the dykes, cheers rose from the throats of the seamen. Once more their ships were afloat, sails were spread, the oars run out, and now they went gliding on led by the "Ark of Delft," until Zoetermeer was reached. Here a desperate effort was made by the Spaniards to stop their

progress, but that village and others in the neighbourhood were attacked, the enemy driven out, and they were set on fire. The blaze lighted up the midnight sky, announcing to the fainting garrison that relief was approaching. Barrier after barrier was passed, and for many an hour in the midst of the howling storm and pitchy darkness a fierce battle raged. The victorious Hollanders pushed further on, but still two forts of great strength, those of Zoetwoude and Lammen, lay between them and the city, garrisoned by the enemy's best troops and armed with heavy artillery. They must be captured before the city could be gained. Stout as were the rovers' hearts, their vessels, though large, were slightly built, and, except the "Ark of Delft," were incapable of standing the heavy shot which would be hurled against them. The Spanish vessels, hitherto kept in reserve, advanced to the fight, but were quickly sunk, their crews miserably perishing, and ere a shot was fired against Zoeterwoude the Spaniards were seen in full flight along the top of the dyke leading towards the Hague. The rovers followed, leaping from their vessels and slaying all whom they could overtake, many of the fugitives perishing in the fast advancing waves as the dykes crumbled beneath their feet. But yet

another fort, that of Lammen, the strongest of all, remained, held by the main body of the enemy. The fleet approached, but the admiral dared not expose his ships to the storms of shot hurled towards them, and therefore waited for the return of night, resolving either to make a desperate assault—though he almost despaired of success—or, should the waters rise, to carry his ships round by a circuitous way to the opposite side; but this as yet the depth of water would not allow.

That day was one of the deepest anxiety, although the rain and wind which came from the south-west were undoubtedly causing the waters to rise. As evening drew on the storm increased, the night became darker and darker. Loud crashes were heard, lights were seen flitting across the black face of the waters proceeding from the direction of the fort, but no one could account for the cause of these sounds and appearances. At length a fearful report ran through the fleet that the enemy had burst into the city, and thus that all the efforts they had made were in vain. Still the strange lights appeared and vanished in the darkness; what they portended no one could say. At dawn the admiral issued the order to assault the fortress; the eager crews sprang into their

boats fully expecting a desperate encounter, but no shot saluted them, all was silent within. Had the Spaniards really then, at the last moment, captured the city? The fleet pushed on, though it was believed that some fearful treachery was intended and that they might suddenly be attacked by an overwhelming force.

As soon as the ships got near enough, Captain Van der Elst, who had undertaken to lead the assault, plunging into the waters waded towards the fort. As he was striding on a voice from the summit hailed him and he saw young Albert Van der Does who, having crossed from the city and climbed to the top of the embankment, was waving his cap and loudly cheering. Karl soon joined him, and they were in time to see the rear-guard of the Spaniards escaping towards the Hague. Albert's shouts quickly attracted the attention of the inhabitants of Leyden and gave them the first intimation that the enemy had fled. In a few minutes, led by Albert, Karl was in the presence of the burgomaster, and had assured him both of the success of their enterprise and of his daughter's safety.

"God be praised, for He has fought for us," exclaimed the burgomaster. "Had not the Spaniards fled when they did, what earthly powers could have prevented them from entering

our city?" And he pointed to a large portion of the wall which had fallen during the night and left a breach through which the foe might have poured into the streets. The fleet now sailed up through the canals, the famishing people who lined the quays stretching out their hands to receive the food bestowed on them by the rough Sea Beggars, many of whom dashed aside their tears as they beheld the emaciated forms of the citizens, the corpse-like look of the women and children, and heard their plaintive cries for food. The first act of the brave admiral and his crew was to repair to the great church, accompanied by the commandant, the chief magistrate, and other citizens, to return thanks for their success, then a hymn arose which was abruptly terminated by the sounds of weeping though the tears were those of joy and gratitude. Among the first to land, escorted by the brave Captain Van der Elst, who had returned on board for the purpose of conducting her to the shore, was the Lily of Leyden; he had the happiness of restoring her to her father's arms. The burgo-master, who had hitherto sternly refused to yield to the foe, melted into tears as he embraced his daughter, then turning to Captain Van der Elst, he said—

“You have proved yourself worthy of the

fairest in the land; I can no longer refuse to bestow my daughter's hand on one who will, I am sure, in these times of danger protect her with his life."

Thus was Leyden saved after enduring a siege of five months, having experienced sufferings never surpassed by any recorded on the page of history. The Prince was the first to acknowledge the deep debt of gratitude Holland owed to the heroic fortitude of the noble burgomaster and his fellow-citizens. The people of Holland and Zealand, to show how much they were indebted to the citizens, established that university which, thus founded at the darkest period of their country's struggle, was in after times to become so celebrated. Imposing as were the ceremonies which took place on its establishment, the following winter they were, in the opinion of many, surpassed by the magnificence of the entertainment given on the occasion of the marriage of Captain Van der Elst and the fair Lily of Leyden.

THE END.

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