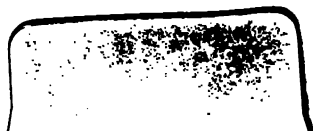


www.libtool.com.cn



www.libtool.com.cn

48.952.



www.libtool.com.cn



www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

EGMONT:

A Tragedy,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY GOËTHE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

LONDON:

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1848.

www.libtool.com.cn



PREFACE.

THE following translation of GOËTHER'S Egmont is believed to be the first entire English version of that esteemed production. It was commenced some years ago, then laid aside, and only resumed since the continent of Europe has again become, as at the epoch of this drama, the theatre of popular struggles. It was deemed that this congeniality of subject, so far, with the matters which now agitate the public mind, might render the translation acceptable.

In offering it to the English reader, the translator ventures to hope that, should it fail to present as adequate a transcript of the eloquent original as might be desired, it may yet be the medium of promoting in some degree an acquaintance with the beauties of the latter, and also that the task will be found to have been faithfully and correctly executed.

With reference to the drama itself, it is much to

be regretted that Goëthe should have so widely departed from the pure truth of history in portraying the character of Egmont ; that, instead of exhibiting him in the honourable position of a fond husband, and the parent of a numerous family, he should have represented him engaged in a questionable intrigue, and immersed in merely frivolous pursuits, at the moment he became the victim of a tyrant's vengeance. Facts may be sometimes legitimately altered for the enhancement of dramatic effect ; but it is difficult to palliate, upon these grounds, the introduction of circumstances, which, like those in the drama, can add no lustre to the hero's fame ; while a stricter adherence to the particulars of his domestic life, would doubtless, in the hands of so great a poet, have lent new pathos and effect to the catastrophe, and increased our sympathy alike for the patriot and the man.

In the notes at the conclusion will be found an historical account of Egmont, and also of some of the other leading characters in the drama.

FRANKFORT-A-MAIN,

June, 1848.

www.libtool.com.cn

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MARGARET OF PARMA, Daughter of Charles the Fifth,
and Regent of the Netherlands.

COUNT EGMONT, Prince of Gaure.

WILLIAM OF ORANGE.

THE DUKE OF ALVA.

FERDINAND, his natural Son.

MACHIAVELLI, in the Service of the Regent.

RICHARD, Egmont's private Secretary.

SILVA,
GOMEZ, } Serving under Alva.

CLARA, beloved by Egmont.

HER MOTHER.

BRACKENBURG, the Son of a Citizen.

ZOEST, Shopkeeper,
YETTER, Tailor,
CARPENTER,
SOAPBOILER, } Citizens of Brussels.

BUYCH, a Dutchman, Soldier under Egmont.

RUYSAM, a Frieslander, an invalid and deaf.

VANSEN, a Clerk.

People, Attendants, Guards, &c. &c.

The Scene is in Brussels.

www.libtool.com.cn

EGMONT.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.—*Soldiers and Citizens with cross-bows.*

YETTER *advances and bends his cross-bow.*

SOEST, BUYCH, RUYSAM, &c.

Soest. Come, shoot, only shoot on, and make an end of it; you wont win the prize, I can tell you. In the three black rings! You never shot that in your life. So, for this year, I am master.

Yet. Master and king too, who envies you? You will have to pay double for it: it's only fair you should pay for your success.

Buych. Yetter, let us make a bargain; let me purchase the shot of you, share the prize, and treat the gentlemen; I have been here so long, and stand

indebted for so many courtesies. If I miss, it shall be as if you had shot.

Soest. I should have a word or two to say in the matter, for, in point of fact, I lose by it. However, on with it, Buych! [BUYCH shoots.

Buych. Now, then, one—two—three—four!

Soest. Four rings! So be it!

All. Long live the king! Long live the king!

Buych. Thanks, my masters! Thanks—thanks for the honour.

Yet. You have to thank yourself for that.

Ruy. I tell you——

Soest. What, old man?

Ruy. I tell you he shoots like his lord—like Egmont.

Buych. Oh, compared with him, I am but a poor bungler, indeed! None in the world can match him at the rifle, not only when fortune favours him—no, no, whenever he shoots he is always victor. I learnt it from him; *he* must be indeed a fool who could serve under him without learning something. But come, my masters, we must not forget, a king entertains his followers; so to the king's reckoning. Wine here! .

Yet. It is our rule that——

www.libtool.com.cn

Buych. I am a foreigner, and a king, and care nothing for your laws.

Yet. Why you are worse than the Spaniards. Hitherto, at least, they have been obliged to respect them.

Ruysam. What?

Soest. (*Aloud.*) He insists on treating us. He will not hear of our clubbing together, and leaving only a double share for the king to pay.

Ruy. Let him have his own way. 'Tis his lord's fashion to be munificent. [*Wine is brought.*]

All. Hail to your majesty! Long live the king!

Yet. (*To Buych.*) It is your majesty. 'Tis to you they are drinking.

Buych. Thanks, my masters!—thanks, if it must be so!

Soest. 'Tis well. For a good Fleming could scarcely drink the health of his Spanish Majesty from his heart.

Ruy. Who?

Soest. (*Aloud.*) Philip the Second, King of Spain.

Ruy. Our most gracious lord and master! God bless him!

Soest. Did you not like his father, Charles the Fifth, better?

www.libtool.com.cn

Ruy. Heaven help him! There was a king for you! Why, he held his hand over the whole universe, and yet, when he met you, he greeted you as one neighbour greets another. And if he saw you abashed or frightened, he managed to reassure you in so kind a manner. Yes, yes! Why he rode out just when it came into his head; sometimes with a few followers, sometimes with none. How we all wept when he gave up the reins of government to his son. He is quite another man; you understand me—he is more majestic.

Yet. When he was here, he never suffered himself to be seen without a train of royal splendour. People say he speaks but little.

Soest. He is no lord for us Flemings. Our princes must be blithe and merry, as we are. Live, and let live!—that's our maxim. We will be neither despised nor oppressed, good-natured fools as we are.

Yet. The king, methinks, were gracious enough had he but better counsellors.

Soest. No, no; he has no heart for us Flemings; he loves us not. How, then, can we love him? Why is the Count of Egmont so dear to all? Why do we love him so devotedly? Why? In his very glance

www.libtool.com.cn

we read he wishes us well. Gaiety, joyousness, conviviality, sparkle in his eyes ! All he possesses would he gladly share with the needy—ay, and even with those who need it not. Long live Count Egmont ! Buych ! 'Tis yours to give the first toast, let us have your master's health !

Buych. From my very soul !—long live Count Egmont !

Ruy. Conqueror at St. Quentin.

Buych. Hero of Gravelines.

All. Hip ! Hurrah !

Ruy. St. Quentin was my last battle ; I could scarcely march—scarcely hold the heavy musket ; still I managed to give the French one sound drubbing more, and, as a parting present, received a shot in the right leg.

Buych. Gravelines ! my friends, that was the day : the victory was ours, and ours alone. Did not the French dogs carry fire and sword through all Flanders ? But we gave it them, I trow : their stout disciplined soldiers held out bravely for awhile, but on we pressed, and shot, and hewed, till at length their lines began to waver ; then Egmont's horse was killed under him, and still we fought, pell-mell—man to man, horse to horse, troop to troop, on the broad

www.libtool.com.cn

flat sand of the sea-shore? When lo! all at once, as though it fell from heaven, bang! bang! down came the cannon shots from the mouth of the river among the French! It was some English ships which happened to be sailing by from Dunkirk True, they did not help us much, only their smaller vessels could come up at all, and those not near enough — some of their shots fell among us, too. But still it did good, it broke the spirit of the French, and raised ours. Then it went rick-rack, over and under, all shot dead or driven into the sea: and the fellows were drowned as soon as they caught a scent of the water, while we Hollanders dashed in right after them. As to us, amphibious animals as we are, we swam about in the water like so many frogs, hewing and shooting away at the enemy as if they were wild ducks. Even those who cut their way through were not much better off, for the peasants attacked them in their flight, with axes and pitchforks, and few lived to tell the tale. Why, was not his French majesty glad enough to hold out his paw and make peace directly? That peace you owe to us and to the great Egmont!

All. Hurrah for the great Egmont! Hurrah!
hurrah!

www.libtool.com.cn

Yet. If they had only given us *him* for Regent, instead of Margaret of Parma!

Soest. No, no, truth is truth! I will not hear Margaret belied. Now 'tis my turn? Long live our gracious lady!

All. Long live our gracious lady!

Soest. Yes, truly, she is an excellent woman—long live the Regent!

Yet. She is sensible and moderate in all her proceedings, if only she were not so wedded to those priests. It is her fault, too, that we have fourteen new bishoprics in the land? What is the use of that, I wonder? Only that they may shove strangers into all the good benefices, instead of choosing abbots from the chapters, as they used to do. And they would have us believe it is all for the sake of religion! Surely, three bishops were enough! We did very well with them. Everything went on orderly and comfortably. Now each of them must act just as if he were wanted. We shall have nothing henceforward but trouble and vexation, and the more they shake it the thicker it gets! (*They drink.*)

Soest. But that was the king's command; she had nothing to do with it.

Yet. Now we may not even sing the new

www.libtool.com.cn

psalms. They are really set in very pretty verses, and there's a great deal that's excellent in them, too; these are forbidden us, but we may sing as many profane songs as we choose—and why? They say there's heresy in them, and Heaven knows what all! I confess I have sung them myself, but there is something new now which I have not seen.

Buych. I should like to see myself asking their permission, indeed! In our province, we sing just what we choose, but then Count Egmont is our stadtholder, and he does not trouble himself about these matters. In Ghent, and through the whole of Flanders, they sing just what suits them. (*Aloud.*) Nothing can be more innocent than a sacred song. Eh, father?

Ruy. Certainly, it is a godly employment.

Yet. But they say it is not in the right fashion, not in their fashion; and as there is always danger in it, it is better to leave it alone. The servants of the Inquisition creep about where they are least looked for; and many an honest man has suffered already. Restraint of conscience was yet wanting! If I may not *do* as I like, at least they might let me *think* and *sing* what I please.

Soest. The Inquisition will never do here; we are

not like the Spaniards to let our consciences be tyrannized over! No, no; the nobles must take care to clip its wings betimes.

Yet. It is a bad business. Suppose it comes into their heads to break into my house, while I am sitting at my work humming a French psalm, thinking neither good nor harm, but singing it just to while away an hour or so; directly I am a heretic, and am thrown into a dungeon; or if I chance to travel across the country, and linger a few minutes near a crowd of people who are listening to one of the new preachers—one of those come from Germany, I mean—I am instantly called a rebel, and in danger of losing my head. Have ye ever heard one of them speak?

Soest. They are fine fellows! A little while ago I heard one of them preaching in a field, before thousands and thousands of listeners. That was a very different story from what they thunder down to us from the pulpit, choking the people with scraps of old Latin. He spoke boldly out. He told us how they had hitherto led us by the nose, and kept us in utter darkness, for their own purposes; he told us, too, how we could procure light: and all that he proved from the Bible.

www.libtool.com.cn

Yet. Yes, there may be something in it after all. I have often turned the matter over in my own mind, and tried to make it out.

Buych. Every one runs after them.

Soest. No wonder, when they can hear something new and true, at the same time.

Yet. And why should not every one be allowed to preach after his own fashion?

Buych. Come, my masters, in this tattle you forget the wine, and the Prince of Orange, too!

Yet. Oh, he is not to be so easily forgotten; he is a regular wall, behind which one always fancies one could hide oneself, and the devil himself could not get at one. Long live the Prince of Orange!

All. Long live the Prince of Orange! Hurrah! hurrah!

Soest. Now old man—let us have your toast!

Ruy. Soldiers, soldiers! War for ever!

Buych. Bravo, old man! Here is a health to all brave soldiers! War for ever!

Yet. War! War! Know you what you are shouting? That it should *come flowingly* from *your* lips is natural enough; but how miserable we feel at the sound, I can scarcely tell you. To have the beating of the drum in one's ears from year's end to year's

end, to hear nothing but how one army marches here and another there; how they mount this hill or halt at that stream, how many are left on this field, and how many on that; how *one* wins and another loses, without even understanding what they are fighting about; how some town is taken, the inhabitants put to the sword, and what befalls the poor women and helpless children! Oh, that is terrible! And then every instant comes the reflexion—there they are! now it is our turn!

Soest. Therefore a citizen should always be ready to bear arms if necessary.

Yet. Very fine, indeed, for those who have wives and children!—but yet I would rather hear of soldiers than see them.

Buych. I should take that ill—

Yet. It was not meant for you, countryman. When we got rid of the Spanish soldiers we seemed to draw breath again.

Soest. Ay—they had sharp quarters with thee——

Yet. Hold thy noise.

Soest. They drove him out of house, home, kitchen, cellar—*(They laugh.)*

Yet. You are a rascal!

Buych. Peace, my masters—must the soldier call for peace? Well, then, as you will not hear of us, let us have your toast!

Yet. With all my heart. Peace and safety!

Soest. Order and freedom!

Buych. Bravo! to that we all agree!

[They clash their glasses together and merrily repeat the words, but yet in such a manner that each utters a different one, and by that means form a chaunt. The old man listens and at last joins in.]

All. Peace and safety. Order and freedom!

SCENE II.

Palace of the Regent.

*Enter MARGARET of PARMA in a hunting-dress,
Courtiers, Pages, and Servants.*

Marg. Put off the chase; I shall not ride to-day. Bid Machiavelli instantly attend me. [*Courtiers, &c. exeunt.*] The thought of these fearful events leaves me no peace: nothing can gladden—nothing divert my mind. These dreadful images and fears are ever before mine eyes:—and now the king will say, that these are the fruits of my mildness, my untimely clemency. Yet my conscience tells me that in all things I have taken the best, the only course, within my power. Should I have earlier fanned the flames of discord? No! I hoped to extinguish them—to choke them—ere yet they burst forth in all their fury. Ay, this deep-felt conviction justifies my conduct in my own eyes, but will it in my brother's? For can it be denied, the insolence of these heretic ministers is daily increasing. They have blasphemed our sanctuaries! inflamed the minds of the people, and incited them

www.libtool.com.cn

to open rebellion. Spirits of evil have mingled among the seditious, and deeds have been committed, the very thought of which makes me shudder! Yet, of these must I transmit an exact and detailed account to court. Ay, and at once, lest the universal report forestall my tidings, and the King believe that something is still withheld. I see no means, stern or gentle, to stem the torrent. Oh! what are the mighty ones of earth upon the waves of humanity? We fancy that we rule them, while they bear us hither and thither at their pleasure.

Enter MACHIAVELLI.

Marg. Are the dispatches for the King in readiness?

Mach. Another hour, and they await your signature.

Marg. Have you taken heed that the details be sufficiently ample?

Mach. Ample and circumstantial, as the King loves them. I have told how the mutinous spirit first broke out at St. Omer; how a furious multitude, armed with staves, stones, hammers, axes, and supplied with cords, ladders, &c., accompanied by a few

www.libtool.com.cn

armed men, assailed the churches, chapels, and cloisters, drove out the worshippers, broke open the gates, tore down the altars, dashed the statues of the saints to atoms, defaced the pictures, and utterly destroyed everything holy and consecrated they could lay their hands on. How the crowd rapidly augmented, and the inhabitants of Ypres threw open their gates to admit them. How, with incredible celerity, they destroyed the cathedral, and burnt the bishop's library to ashes: how an immense multitude, seized with the same madness, dispersed themselves over Menin, Comines, Verviers, Lille, nowhere meeting with the slightest opposition; and how, in one brief moment, the insurrection spread like wildfire from one end of Flanders to the other.

Marg. Oh, what new anguish seizes me at the repetition of the tale! And alas, will not the evil daily increase instead of diminishing? Give me your opinion, Machiavelli.

Mach. Pardon me, madam. My opinions are always so much like mere fancies, and though you usually appear well satisfied with my services, it is but rarely you deign to follow my counsel. How often have you jestingly said, you look too far into futurity, Machiavelli,—you should be an historian;

www.libtool.com.cn

We, who have to act, must confine our care to that which lies immediately before us ! And yet, did I not predict all that has occurred ? Did I not warn your Highness long, long ago ?

Marg. I likewise foresee much I cannot prevent.

Mach. One word for a thousand ; all efforts to extirpate the new faith will fail. Leave it unmolested ; separate the heretics from the true believers ; give them their own places of worship ; make them amenable to the same law as their fellow-subjects, and you will see the tumult at once subside ; every other means will be fruitless, and serve only to desolate the land.

Marg. Hast thou forgotten the horror with which my brother rejected the very mention of such a means ? Know'st thou not how, in every letter, he renews his commands for the rigorous execution of his edicts ? How strenuously he urges on me the maintenance of the true faith ? That he will not even hear of the restoration of peace and order at the expense of religion ? Does he not entertain spies in the provinces, unknown even to us, for the purpose of ascertaining who favours the new doctrines ? Has he not often, to our utter amazement, named this

or that person who secretly inclines to heresy? Commands he not the utmost severity, and dare I adopt mild or lenient measures? Dare I let them imagine he will ever make concessions? Should I not at once forfeit his confidence and his esteem?

Mach. I know it well. The King demands implicit submission: you are to restore peace and tranquillity through measures which will only embitter still more the public mind, and inevitably kindle the flames of war, from one end of the country to the other. Consider well what you do. Think how widely these opinions are diffused! Nobles, citizens, soldiers, merchants, none have escaped the contagion! What avails persisting in one's own ideas, when everything around is changing. Would to Heaven some good genius would whisper into Philip's ear that it better beseems a king to govern citizens of two different faiths than to destroy them through each other.

Marg. Never let me hear such words again. Too well I know that policy can but rarely preserve either truth or faith; that it closes our heart alike to candour, charity and mercy. But shall we dare to sport with the Almighty as with each other? What! shall we become indifferent to that holy faith for which so

many have offered up their lives? Shall we forsake it for the uncertain, contradictory tenets of this new religion?

Mach. Think not the worse of me for my counsel.

Marg. I know thee and thy fidelity; I know a man may be both wise and honest, and yet miss the best way of salvation to his soul. There are others, Machiavelli, whom I at once esteem and blame.

Mach. Whom mean you?

Marg. I must confess, Egmont has caused me the deepest vexation to-day.

Mach. Indeed!—and how?

Marg. Oh, by his usual demeanour, by his mingled indifference and thoughtlessness. The fatal tidings reached me as I was leaving mass, attended by him and many others. I sought not to conceal my anguish, I broke forth into loud and bitter complaints; and turning towards him, exclaimed. “See what occurs in your province. You, Count, from whom the king hoped so much.”

Mach. And what his reply?

Marg. Oh, as though it had been the merest trifle! answered he; let but the Flemings be satisfied as to their constitution, and the rest will soon follow!

Mach. Perchance there was more truth than pru-

www.libtool.com.cn

dence in his words. How should confidence exist while the Flemings but too clearly perceive how much more we care for the acquisition of their wealth than for the salvation of their souls! Have not the new bishops eaten up ten times as many fat benefices as they have saved souls? And are not most of them foreigners? As yet, the post of Stadtholder is occupied by Flemings only; but do not the Spaniards plainly evince their ardent desire to supplant them even in this office? Is it surprising, that a nation should prefer being governed by its own people, and according to its own laws, to being ruled by strangers who seek to obtain footing in the land, at the cost of its legitimate possessors, who bring their own scale of actions with them, and rule alike without sympathy and without compassion?

Marg. You place yourself on the side of the adversary.

Mach. Not with my *heart*, certainly; and would my reason could be completely on ours!

Marg. Were it deemed needful I would resign the regency into their hands, for both Egmont and Orange once openly aspired to this high station; then they were foes, now are they united against me, and are friends—inseparable friends.

www.libtool.com.cn

Mach. A dangerous pair.

Marg. To speak plainly, I fear Orange, and I fear for Egmont. Orange plots some deep-laid scheme; he is silent and secret—seems to agree to everything, and, with the affectation of the deepest respect, does exactly what it pleases him.

Mach. Egmont, on the contrary, bears him as boldly as if the world were his own.

Marg. He holds his head as loftily as though the hand of majesty hovered not over it.

Mach. The eyes of the people are fixed upon him, and he is the darling of every heart.

Marg. Never has he shunned appearances, as though none dared to call him to account. 'Tis by the title Count Egmont that he loves to hear himself called, as though he were resolved not to forget that his ancestors were lords of Guelderland. Why does he not assume the title of Prince of Gaure, as is his right? What! would he fain renew these half-forgotten claims?

Mach. I hold him for one of the king's most faithful servants.

Marg. If he but chose, how deeply might he render the government his debtor, but 'stead of this, he causes us unspeakable vexation; why his feasts, his

www.libtool.com.cn

banquets, his entertainments, do more towards uniting the nobles than all the secret meetings in the world. How often have his jests disturbed the minds of the populace! and what a sensation was created by his last new liveries, and the absurd devices of his servants!

Mach. I feel convinced it was mere inadvertence.

Marg. Bad enough! he injures without serving us. The gravest matter he treats as a mere jest, and we, to avoid the semblance of neglect, are forced to treat trifles as matters of importance. He is far more dangerous than the acknowledged head of a conspiracy, and I very much mistake if they are not of the same opinion at court. I must confess that he constantly causes me the greatest vexation.

Mach. He seems to me in all things to follow the dictates of his own conscience.

Marg. His conscience has a most convenient mirror. Why, his demeanour is sometimes absolutely insulting. He bears him as though he were master of the land, and nothing but his own sense of courtesy withheld him from making us fully sensible that our stay in it depends solely on his gracious will and pleasure.

Mach. Nay, madam, lay not the worst construction

on his actions—on his frank and careless bearing; you but injure yourself and him.

Marg. I speak but of the inevitable results of his conduct. His Flemish nobility and his golden fleece, confirm his pride and daring: both would shield him against any sudden outbreak of the king's anger. Consider the matter attentively: of all the disturbances in Flanders, he is the cause, and he alone. 'Stead of exerting himself with vigour to suppress the new doctrines and punish their propagators, he either connived at or neglected their proceedings, and perhaps, at heart, was by no means sorry to find us something to employ our hands. Leave me alone, I will avail myself of this opportunity to let them know all I think, nor will I throw the dart in vain. I know where he is vulnerable; he, too, is mortal!

Mach. Have you summoned the council? Will Orange attend?

Marg. I have sent for him from Antwerp: they shall share the awful responsibility, they shall unite with me, heart and hand, in stemming this fearful evil, or at once declare themselves traitors and rebels. Haste, finish the despatches and bring them hither for my signature. Then send the trusty Vasca at

www.libtool.com.cn
the instant to Madrid (he is faithful and unwearied), that my brother may learn through him these tidings, and that common report may not forestall them. I would speak with him ere his departure.

Mach. Your commands shall be obeyed. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III.

In the house of a Citizen. CLARA and her MOTHER;
BRACKENBURG sitting in an arm-chair.

Clara. Will you not hold the thread for me, Brackenburg?

Brack. Excuse me, Clara, I entreat you——

Clara. What ails you? Why deny me this trifling service?

Brack. You bind me to you so closely with the thread, I cannot shun your eyes.

Clara. Nonsense!—come, and hold.

Mother. Give us a song, Clara—Brackenburg sings such a good second: once you used to be so merry, I always had something to laugh at.

www.libtool.com.cn

Brack. Once!

Clara. Yes, we will sing.

Brack. What you please.

Clara. Only right merry, and dash away. It is a soldier's song—my favourite piece.

[*She winds thread, and sings with BRACKENBURG.*

“ The drums are loud beating,
The clarions playing,
My love his troops
For the battle arraying,
He rules with a glance,
As he poises his lance.

My heart, how 'tis beating
To wend with its lord,
Oh, had I a jacket, a plume, and a sword!

How blithely I'd follow
With courage and speed,
Through country, through province,
Where'er he may lead.
The foe yield before us—
They tremble, they flee:
To be but a soldier,
What rapture, what glee!”

[*During CLARA'S song, BRACKENBURG has often looked at her; at last, his voice fails him, his eyes fill with tears, he starts up, and*

www.libtool.com.cn

rushes to the window—CLARA finishes the song alone; her MOTHER looks at her half angrily; she rises, takes a few steps after him, and turns back, half irresolutely, and resumes her seat.

Mother. What's going on in the street, Brackenburg? I hear the sound of soldiers marching by.

Brack. It is the Regent's body-guard.

Clara. At this hour! What can that mean? (*She rises, and goes to the window to BRACKENBURG.*) This is not the usual guard: it is much larger—almost all their troops! Oh, Brackenburg! go, and hear what is the matter. It must be something unusual,—go dear Brackenburg—oblige me!

Brack. I go; I shall be back immediately.

[*He extends his hand — she gives him hers.*

Exit.

Mother. You send him from you again.

Clara. I long to hear what is going on; and besides, do not chide me, his presence gives me pain. I never know how to demean myself towards him. I have wronged him, and it breaks my heart to see how deeply he feels the wrong. Alas, I cannot alter it!

Mother. He is such a good, faithful fellow.

www.libtool.com.cn

Clara. I cannot help bearing me kindly towards him, and at times my hand unconsciously closes when I feel the soft—the gentle pressure of his. I reproach myself that I deceive him — that I nourish hopes I never can fulfil. Yet, God knows, I deceive him not; I would not let him hope, yet cannot bid him despair.

Mother. That is not well.

Clara. He was once very dear to me, and still in my heart I wish him well. I might have become his wife, and yet I never really loved him.

Mother. You would have been sure of happiness with him.

Clara. Yes, I should have been provided for, and led a calm and tranquil life.

Mother. And all that your own folly has forfeited.

Clara. I am in a strange position ; when I reflect on what has chanced, I scarcely know how it all came to pass ; yet I have only to gaze on Egmont, and everything becomes clear at once. Oh, what a man is he! All the provinces adore him ; and should not I be the happiest of human beings in his arms.

Mother. But what will come of all this by and by?

Clara. Ah! I only ask if he loves me ;—oh, if he loves me! Is that a question?

www.libtool.com.cn

Mother. One has nothing but grief and disappointment with one's children. How can all this end? Unceasing care and anxiety!—it cannot turn out well; you have made yourself and me wretched.

Clara. (*Carelessly.*) You permitted it in the beginning.

Mother. Yes, to my sorrow; I was indulgent—always too indulgent.

Clara. When Egmont rode by, and I ran to the window to gaze on him, did you chide me? Did you not follow me yourself? When he looked up, nodded, and greeted me with smiles and bows, were you angry? Did you not feel yourself honoured in your daughter?

Mother. Ay, reproach me, too.

Clara. (*Moved.*) When his visits to this street became more frequent, and we could no longer doubt it was for my sake he came, did you not mark it with secret joy? Did you call me away when I stood behind the lattice to await him?

Mother. Could I dream it would go so far?

Clara. (*With stifled voice and repressed tears.*) And when, at evening, he surprised us seated o'er our solitary lamp, who was busied in receiving him, while I sat as if fettered to my chair, silent and trembling?

www.libtool.com.cn

Mother. And could I dream this fatal love would make the prudent Clara so soon forget herself? Now must I endure the thought that my only daughter——

Clara. (*Bursting into tears.*) Mother, you wish it; you love to grieve me!

Mother. (*Weeping.*) Ay, weep; make me still more wretched with thy grief: is it not anguish enough to know that my only daughter is a lost, abandoned——

Clara (*coldly rising.*) Lost—abandoned—Egmont's beloved! Where is the princess who would not envy poor Clara her place in his heart? Oh, mother—dear mother! It was not thus you were wont to speak! What the people think!—what the neighbours report!—what is it to us? Is not this house a very paradise, since Egmont's love has dwelt here?

Mother. One cannot help liking him, to be sure, he is so kind, so frank, so joyous!

Clara. There's not a drop of false blood in his veins. And then, mother, he is the great Egmont! When he comes hither, how soft, how gentle is his demeanour! How he strives to make me forget his rank, his glory! How anxious is he for my health, for my happiness. Prince, hero, statesman—all are merged in the man, the friend, the lover!

www.libtool.com.cn
Mother. Comes he hither to-day?

Clara. Have you not seen me often at the window? Have you not marked me listen to every sound? Though I know he cannot be here till night; yet not an hour has passed since day-break but I have expected him! Were I but a boy, to follow his steps,—to attend him at court!—to bear his colours in the battle-field!

Mother. Thou wert ever a hoyden, even while yet a child; by turns wild with spirits, and rapt in melancholy! Will you not make yourself a little smarter?

Clara. Perchance, mother—perchance, if I have leisure. Do you remember? Yesterday some of his followers marched by singing songs in honour of him—at least, his name was in the song; the rest I could not understand! My heart throbb'd as though it would have burst; I would fain have called them back, only shame withheld me.

Mother. Take heed; thy thoughtlessness will ruin all; thou wilt betray thyself before thine acquaintances. But lately, at thy cousins', when thou sawest the wood-cut and the description underneath, and called out "Count Egmont!" I grew as red as fire.

Clara. And how could I help it? It was the battle

of Gravelines, and the figure was that of Count Egmont with the letter E; and underneath I read, "Count Egmont, when his horse was shot under him;" it overcame me for the moment, and then I could not help laughing at the great wood-cut of Egmont, as tall as the tower of Gravelines hard by, and the English ships at the side. When I think——

Enter BRACKENBURG.

Clara. Well, how goes it, Brackenburg?

Brack. Nothing certain is yet known; it is rumoured that disturbances have lately broken out in Flanders, and the Regent is terrified lest they should spread hither; the castle is strongly garrisoned, the citizens are pouring to the gates, and the people crowding in the streets; I will hasten to my aged father! (*About to go.*)

Clara. Shall we see you to-morrow? I must arrange my dress a little; I expect my cousins presently—I look such a figure! Help me a moment, dear mother. Take the book with you, Brackenburg, and bring me another such a story to-morrow.

Mother. Farewell!

Brack. (*Offering his hand.*) Your hand!

www.libtool.com.cn
Clara. When we meet again. (*Exeunt Mother and daughter.*)

Brack. I had resolved to leave her,—to leave her instantly. Yet now she takes me at my word, and bids me hence—my very brain seems to turn with agony! Wretched man, does not the fate of thy native land—does not the rising tumult move thee? Is it alike to thee whether countryman or Spaniard rule over thee? Oh, how far otherwise in boyhood's days! Then when the exercise was given out, "Brutus's speech for freedom," was Fritz ever the first; and the rector used to say, if only it were more quietly repeated, not hurried so, one word over another! Then my blood boiled for action. Now my whole being seems wrapped up in this one girl! I cannot leave her! Yet, she cannot love me! Ah, surely she has not quite rejected me? Not quite! Can it be true? The fatal tale a friend but lately whispered in my ear, that by night she secretly admits a man, while she forces me to bid her farewell ere evening closes! No; it cannot be! It is a lie, a base calumnious falsehood! Clara is as pure as I am wretched. But she has rejected me!—has banished me from her heart, and shall I live on? No, I can bear it no longer! Already is my native land

www.libtool.com.cn
convulsed with civil strife ! Yet I remain unmoved amid the tumult ! I can no longer bear it ! When the trumpet sounds, when a shot falls, how it thrills me through bone and marrow ! Yet it arouses me not from this shameful trance ? It nerves not my heart to rend its toils asunder ! Degrading bondage ! Better at once to end it ! A little while ago I leapt into the stream—I sank—but nature was too strong for me ; I felt I could swim, and saved myself in my own despite. Could I but forget those days when she loved me, or seemed to love me ! Why did these bright delusive hopes wither up all other earthly enjoyment, by the glimpse of Paradise they disclosed from afar ? And that first kiss—that only one ! Here (*laying his hand on the table*) she had ever borne her kindly towards me—but then she seemed touched by softer emotions—she gazed on me—our eyes met—my brain seemed to reel, and I felt her lips on mine ; and now ! die unhappy ! Why lingerest thou ? (*He draws forth a bottle from his pocket.*) I will not have stolen thee in vain from my brother's medicine chest, thou healing poison ! *No!* thou shalt end these hopes—these doubts—this deadly anguish, and for ever !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Square in Brussels.**YETTER and CARPENTER enter, meeting.*

Carp. Did I not say so before ? Eight days ago, at the Guild, I warned you there would be sad doings.

Yet. Is it true, then, they have plundered the churches in Flanders ?

Carp. Churches and chapels ! all destroyed ! Nothing left but the bare walls. The worthless rabble ! And that injures our good cause ! We should have laid our just grievances before the Regent in a firm but moderate tone, and insisted on their redress before-hand ; now if we speak, if we assemble, 'twill be said we belong to the rebels !

Yet. Yes ; so thinks every one at first. Why

should you thrust your long nose into it. Remember, the neck is not so very far off!

Carp. I am always terrified when the rabble, those who have nothing to lose, take matters into their own hands; they use as their pretext those very grounds of complaint which we must likewise invoke, and thus bring misfortune on the country.

Enter SOEST.

Soest. Good day, my masters! Is it true that the rioters are bending their course straight hitherwards?

Carp. Here they shall touch nothing, I promise you.

Soest. A soldier came into my shop just now to buy tobacco, so I asked him about the matter. They say that the Regent, courageous and prudent as she is, seems, for once, quite discomposed. Affairs must be bad, indeed, for her to hide herself thus behind her guards. The citadel is carefully garrisoned. They say she even means to leave the town.

Carp. That she shall not. Her presence is our safeguard. We will protect her better than all her

soldiers; and if she only upholds our rights and privileges, we will defend her to the death.

Enter SOAP-BOILER.

Soap. Bad business—bad business! Sad riots—sad disturbances! Mind you remain quiet, or they will take you for rebels, too.

Soest. There they come—the seven wise men of Greece.

Soap. I know there are many who have secret dealings with the Calvinists, who blaspheme the bishops, and do not spare the king himself; but a faithful subject, and a good Catholic——

[*A crowd joins the speakers.*]

Enter VANSSEN.

Van. God greet you, gentlemen! What news?

Carp. Do not talk to that fellow—he is a bad subject.

Yet. Is he not Dr. Wiet's secretary?

Carp. Oh, he has had many masters. First he was a clerk; and, as one patron after another dis-

www.libtool.com.cn

missed him, on account of his roguery, he now dabbles in the trade of attorney and lawyer.

[More people join them, and congregate in knots.

Van. So you, too, assemble to put your wise heads together! It is certainly worth talking about.

Soest. I think so, too.

Van. Now, if only one of you had heart, and the other head enough, we might break the Spanish fetters at once.

Soest. Sir, you must not prate thus wildly. Did we not take our oath to the king?

Van. Ay, and the king to us—mark that!

Yet. That is worth hearing; out with it, friend!

Several. Yes, he understands it. He is a sharp fellow.

Van. I had a patron once, who was fond of collecting old parchments and papers of ancient constitutions, laws, and contracts; and he set a high value on rare books. In one of these, I found our whole constitution. How we Netherlanders used to be ruled by separate princes—how our ancestors paid all due reverence to their sovereign, while he governed them as he was bound to do, but were on their guard the very moment they perceived he wanted

to kick over the traces. If there was but a sign of it, the states were after him instantly; for every province, however small, had its own municipality and its own stadtholder.

Carp. Hold your tongue—we have known that long ago. Every honest citizen is acquainted with the constitution as much as need be.

Yet. Let him speak; we shall always learn something.

Soest. He is quite right.

Others. Tell us—tell us! We do not hear that every day.

Van. Oh, you are regular citizens—you live only for the present day; and as your trade descended to you from your ancestors, so you will let any one rule over you who has the will and the power; you ask neither as to the descent, nor the history, nor the right of a Regent; and the Spaniards have taken advantage of your negligence, to draw the net tight over your ears.

Soest. Who has time to think of that? if one can only get one's daily bread!

Yet. The devil! Why did not some one step forward in time, and tell us all that?

Van. I tell you it now. The King of Spain

www.libtool.com.cn

who, by good fortune, has all the provinces under his sway, has no right to govern them otherwise than the petty princes to whom they once separately belonged. Do you understand that ?

Yet. Explain—explain !

Van. Why, is it not as clear as the sun in heaven ? Must not each of you be governed according to your peculiar rights ? Whence comes that ?

Citizen. True.

Van. Has not Brussels a different law from Antwerp, Antwerp from Ghent ? Whence came that ?

Other Citizens. By heavens !

Van. But if you let matters go on in this way, they will soon tell you a different story. What Charles the Bold, Frederick the Warrior, and Charles the Fifth, vainly sought to accomplish, Philip will carry out through a woman's hand.

Soest. Yes, yes ! The old princes tried it, too !

Van. Ay, our ancestors were ever on the watch ; if they but began to suspect their prince, they took his son and heir, kept him as hostage, and restored him only on the most satisfactory conditions. Yes, our fathers were proper men. They knew what was good for them. They knew how to get what they wanted, and establish it ; that is why our privileges are so distinct, our liberties so well secured.

www.libtool.com.cn

Soap. What did you say about our rights ?

People. Tell us of our rights—tell us of our privileges.

Van. Though all the provinces have advantages, none are so highly distinguished as we of Brabant. I have read it all.

Soest. Say on !

Yet. Let us hear !

Citizen. I beg of you !

Van. First, it stands written thus : the Duke of Brabant shall be to us a true and faithful lord.

Soest. Are those the words ?

Yet. Faithful ! Is that true ?

Van. As I tell you. He is pledged to us as we are to him. Secondly, he shall neither himself exert any arbitrary authority over us, nor permit it to be exerted by others in any manner whatsoever.

Yet. Admirable ! he shall not exert any arbitrary authority over us himself, nor allow it to be exerted by others, in any manner whatever.

Van. In express words.

Yet. Get us the book.

A Citizen. Yes, we must have it.

Others. The book ! the book !

Another. We will go to the Regent with the book.

Another. You, Mr. Doctor, shall be the spokesman !

Soap. Oh, the blockheads!

Others. Something more from the book!

Soap. I'll knock his teeth down his throat, if he says another word.

Citizens. We will see who dares lay hand on him. Tell us something of our privileges. Have we more privileges?

Van. Yes, many and valuable ones. Thus it stands: the lord of the country shall neither increase nor alter the number of the clergy, without permission of the nobility and the people. Mark that!—nor is he to change the constitution of the land.

Soest. Is it so!

Van. I will show it to you—written two or three hundred years ago.

Citizen. And we endure the new bishops! The nobles must protect us, or they will soon find whom they have to deal with.

Others. And we suffer the Inquisition to bully and frighten us!

Van. That is your own fault.

People. We have Egmont and Orange still—they will guard our rights.

Van. Your brothers in Flanders have already begun the good work.

Soap. Thou dog! (*Strikes him.*)

People. Art thou, too, a Spaniard ?

Another. What, that worthy man !

Another. The learned man !

[*They rush upon the SOAPBOILER.*

Carp. For heaven's sake ! (*Others mix in the struggle.*) Citizens, what means this ?

[*Boys whistle, throw stones, and set on dogs. The citizens stand and look on. People run up ; some walk quietly up and down : others play all sorts of tricks, shout, and hurrah.*

Citizens. Freedom and privilege ! privilege and freedom !

Enter EGMONT, with followers.

Egm. Peace, peace, good people ! What is the matter ? Separate them from each other.

Carp. My good lord, you come like an angel from heaven ! Hush ! See you not the Count Egmont ? Reverence to Count Egmont !

Egm. Here, here too ! What now ? Citizen against citizen ! Cannot even the neighbourhood of our august Regent keep this madness within bounds ? Separate directly, and go to your business—'Tis a bad sign when you keep holiday on working days.

www.libtool.com.cn

What is the matter ?

[The tumult gradually subsides, and all surround him.]

Carp. They are quarrelling about their privileges.

Egm. Which their own folly will endanger. And who are you?—you seem respectable people.

Carp. We seek to be so.

Egm. What is your trade?

Carp. Carpenter, and head of a guild.

Egm. And you?

Soest. Grocer.

Egm. And you?

Yet. Tailor.

Egm. I recollect; you helped to make the liveries for my people—your name is Yetter.

Yet. I am honoured by your recalling it.

Egm. I seldom forget any one whom I have once seen or spoken with. Now, hear me, good friends; do your best to keep the people quiet! Believe me, you are in bad report enough already: do not provoke the King still more. After all, the power is in his hands. An honest and industrious citizen has everywhere as much freedom as he can need.

Carp. Ah, true; but that is the misfortune! The thieves, the drunkards, the lazy knaves, with your

www.libtool.com.cn
Grace's permission, who quarrel because they have nothing to do, rave for their privileges, and impose on the credulous and curious. To get a can of beer, they create disturbances which are the ruin of thousands; but that is just what they want. We keep our chests and houses too well locked to please them, and they would fain drive us thence with firebrands.

Egm. You shall find all due support and protection. Means have been taken to stem the evil. Keep firm against the new doctrines, and do not fancy that rebellion will confirm your privileges. Remain at home, nor suffer the people to collect in the streets. Sensible men can effect much.

[By this time the greater part of the crowd has disappeared.]

Carp. Thanks to your excellence—thanks for your good opinion. All that is in our power shall be done. *[Exit EGMONT.]* A gracious lord! a right Fleming! nothing Spanish about him.

Yet. If we had only him for Regent! how willingly would all obey him!

Soest. That the king would not hear of. He always takes care to fill this place with his own people.

Yet. Did you not see his garb? 'Twas after the newest fashion—the Spanish cut.

www.libtool.com.cn

Carp. A noble-looking gentleman!

Yet. His neck would be a delicious morsel for the headsman.

Soest. Are you mad? How came such thoughts into your head?

Yet. Strange enough, but so it is, I never see a fine long neck now without thinking involuntarily how well that would do for the block! These cursed executions!—I cannot get them out of my mind. In my dreams at night, I feel twinges in every limb. I have not a single hour's enjoyment; as to jest and pleasure, I have almost forgotten them. These fearful images seem burnt as if in letters of fire upon my brow!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

EGMONT'S dwelling. A SECRETARY seated at the table with papers; he rises impatiently.

Sec. Still he comes not! Here have I waited these three mortal hours, pen in hand, the dispatches before me! Just to-day, too, when I would fain

be gone so early—I burn with impatience! Be punctual to the moment, was his last command when he left me, and yet he comes not! There is so much to be done, it will be midnight ere my task is over. True, he is a gracious master, but I would rather he were ever so severe, so he dismissed me at the appointed hour. One could then arrange accordingly. It is now full two hours since he left the Regent. Who knows whom he may have got hold of in the mean time.

Enter EGMONT.

Egm. Well?

Sec. I am ready, my lord; and three couriers are waiting.

Egm. I have kept thee too long: thou seem'st somewhat annoyed.

Sec. In obedience to your command, I have been in readiness for some hours. Here are the papers.

Egm. Doña Elvira will be angry with me when she learns I have detained thee.

Sec. You jest, my lord!

Egm. No! no! Why blush, man? I laud thy taste. She is very fair; and I am right glad thou hast a friend in the castle. Well, what say these letters?

www.libtool.com.cn

Sec. Much ; and nothing very cheering.

Egm. 'Tis well, then, we have joys at home,—
we have the less need of cheering news from abroad.
Is there much to be done ?

Sec. Yes, my lord ; three couriers are in waiting.

Egm. Out with it—the most important.

Sec. It is *all* of importance.

Egm. One after the other. Only dispatch.

Sec. Captain Breda sends an account of what has
lately taken place in Ghent, and the surrounding dis-
tricts. The tumult is almost appeased.

Egm. I suppose he relates individual crimes and
misdemeanours.

Sec. Oh, abundance of them !

Egm. Spare me the recital.

Sec. Six of those who tore down the image of the
Virgin at Verviers have been taken prisoners ; he
asks if they are to be hanged, like the others ?

Egm. Oh, I am weary of hanging : let them
be flogged through the town, and sent about their
business.

Sec. There are two women among them. Are
they to be flogged ?

Egm. Why, no ; let him reprimand them severely—
that will be enough.

Sec. Brink, of Breda's company, wishes to marry. The captain hopes you will not permit it. He says there are already so many women in the camp, that when the troops march, they resemble a horde of gipsies more than a body of soldiers.

Egm. Let it pass for him. He is a gallant young fellow! He entreated it so earnestly, ere my departure; but this is the very last time, though it grieves me to refuse the poor devils their only comfort.

Sec. One of the Protestant leaders was discovered passing through Comines in disguise. He swore he was about to leave for France. According to law he should lose his head.

Egm. Let him be taken over the borders in secrecy. But bid him beware!—he will not escape so easily a second time.

Sec. There is a letter from your steward. He writes, little money is forthcoming; that he can scarcely contrive to send you the sum you require this week; that the late tumult has thrown everything into the utmost confusion.

Egm. We must have the money; he must procure it how he can.

Sec. He says he will do his best, and will arrest

www.libtool.com.cn

Raymond, who has been so long in your debt, and send him to prison.

Egm. But methought he had promised to pay?

Sec. The last time he himself fixed a fortnight as the date of payment.

Egm. Well, grant him a fortnight longer: if by that time the debt is not discharged, he may proceed against him.

Sec. You will do well; it is not want of power, but of inclination with him. Doubtless he will change his tone when he sees you are in earnest. Besides, the steward says he will keep back the pensions you allow the old soldiers' widows for a month. Perhaps, in the meantime, you may devise some other plan, and arrange.

Egm. What is to be arranged here? These poor creatures need the money more than I. He must give it them as usual.

Sec. But, my lord, whence is he to procure the gold?

Egm. He must care for that. I told him so in a former letter.

Sec. For that very reason he makes the proposal.

Egm. It will never do—he must find some other expedient; let him make proposals which are admis-

sible, and, above all, let him send me money forthwith.

Sec. I have laid Count Oliva's letter here again. Pardon my recalling it to your memory. The venerable Count surely deserves an explicit answer. You said you would write to him with your own hand. He loves you as a father.

Egm. No, no; of all things I detest writing the most. Thou imitatetest my hand so admirably, write in my name. I am expecting the Prince of Orange. I only wish that something may be said to calm his fears.

Sec. But just give me an outline of what you desire. I will prepare the answer, and lay it before you. It shall be written so, that in a court of justice it might pass for your hand.

Egm. Give me the letter. (*After having looked over it.*) Oh! dear, kind, old man — wert thou so prudent in thy younger days? Didst thou ne'er scale a dangerous rampart? Didst thou ever remain in the rear of battle when prudence counselled thee? Good, faithful friend. His sole aim is my welfare and safety, forgetting that the man, whose only care is his life, is already more than half dead. Bid him have no fears for me. I act as I am forced to act;

www.libtool.com.cn

nor am I heedless of my own safety. Let him use his influence at court in my behalf, and assure him of my warmest gratitude.

Sec. Is that all? oh, he hopes for more!

Egm. What more can I say? Thou mayst amplify it if thou wilt: he ever harps on the same string; he would have me live as I cannot live; that I am of gladsome mood; that I take matters lightly, 'tis my good fortune, nor would I exchange it for the silence and safety of the sepulchre. Not a drop of Spanish blood runs in my veins. I have no inclination for the Spanish mode of life, nor does it suit me to regulate my motions by the new court cadences. Do I live, then, only to care for life? Must I deny myself the enjoyment of the *present* hour, the better to secure the next? and must that, too, when it comes, be consumed in care and anxiety?

Sec. I beseech you, my Lord! bear you not so harshly towards the good old man — you who are wont to be so kind to all; let me but write and calm his fears. See, how anxious he is for your welfare, yet with how much delicacy——

Egm. Ay, but he ever touches the same string; he knows of old, how I detest these exhortations. They serve but to perplex, and never aid me. What

if I were a somnambulist, and in my slumber climbed to the summit of some lofty tower? Say, were it an act of friendship to call me by my name, to warn, to wake, and perchance, by waking, kill me? Let every man choose his own path, and guard himself as best he may.

Sec. You it may beseem to disregard your own safety, but those who know and love you——

Egm. (*Looking into the letter.*) There, he recalls the old story of our boyish follies; one evening, in the overflow of wine and mirth, and the sensation it created throughout the kingdom!—Well, we had a cap and bells embroidered on our followers' shoulders, and then changed this silly device into a bundle of arrows! A still more dangerous symbol for those who are resolved to find some meaning where, in reality, there is none. We committed these, and similar follies, in a moment of mirth and revelry. Ours was the blame, that a noble troop with beggars' bags and self-chosen nicknames, recalled, with ironical humility, the monarch's duty to his mind. What then? Is a carnival game to be transformed at once into high treason? Are we to be grudged the few gay ornaments which youthful mirth and fancy twine around the nakedness of life? No; if we take ex-

istence too gravely, what is its worth? If the morning is to wake us to no new joys, the evening to bring no new pleasures in its train, is it worth the trouble of dressing and undressing? Does the sun shine for me to-day only that I may reflect on what passed yesterday? or that I may plan and arrange that which is utterly beyond my power to determine—the destiny of the morrow? No, no; leave these reflections to scholars and courtiers! Let them ponder, meditate, ruminare,—obtain what they may, by cunning and by trickery. If thou canst make any use of all this without turning thy letter into a sermon, 'tis well. The good old man takes matters too much to heart. The friend who long has clasped our hand, presses it more warmly than ever, when about to bid us farewell.

Sec. Pardon me! The pedestrian turns giddy when he beholds a man ride past with frantic speed.

Egm. No further, friend! As if urged by invisible spirits, on rush the steeds of time, bearing along the frail car of our destinies, and nothing remains to us, but with firmer hand to grasp the reins and seek to guide their course; to control it lies beyond our power—whither it goes, who shall dare to say? Who can a right remember whence it came?

Sec. My lord, my lord!

Egm. I stand high, but I will soar still higher. My soul is nerved with courage, hope and strength: not yet have I reached the summit of my greatness; but once attained, I will stand firm, not totter; and should such be my doom, what matters it whether the tempest's blast, the lightning's flash, or a false step precipitate me into the abyss beneath? I shall but lie there with thousands of others. Never have I shunned to throw the bloody die of war with my brave comrades for a paltry stake, and shall I haggle now that all most dear, most precious in existence hangs on the balance?

Sec. My lord—my lord! You know not what you say: may God preserve you!

Egm. Well! Collect thy dispatches—the Prince of Orange comes—finish those of the most importance, that the messengers may be sent off before the gates are closed. There is time enough for the rest. The Count's letter may lie over till to-morrow. Omit not thy visit to Elvira, and bear her my greetings—inquire after the Regent's health. I fear me she is ill, though she would fain conceal it. [*Exit* SECRETARY.]

Enter PRINCE OF ORANGE.

Egm. Welcome, Orange! You seem somewhat gloomy.

Orange. What say you to our interview with the Regent?

Egm. I marked nothing extraordinary in her reception. I have oft-times seen her thus before. She seemed somewhat indisposed.

Orange. But marked you not she was more reserved than is her wont; at first, she slightly praised our conduct in the late disturbances; then observed, that it might still be represented in a false light; then turned the conversation to her favourite theme, that we were not sufficiently sensible of the attachment and kindness she has ever evinced towards us Flemings, and have always treated it too lightly; that nothing turned out as she could have wished; that she was becoming weary of it, and that the king would be compelled at last to have recourse to other measures. Did you hear all that?

Egm. Not exactly—I was thinking of something else. She is a woman, good Orange, and all women expect that every neck should bow beneath their gentle yoke; that every Hercules should lay aside his

lion's skin, to swell their female train; that because *they* are inclined to peace, the frenzy that has seized a nation, the storm that mighty rivals invoke against each other, should be hushed by a single gentle word, and the most discordant elements blended into sweetest harmony, at their command. So it is with her; and as she cannot succeed in carrying out her plans, she has no resource but to lose her temper; to complain of ingratitude and folly; to menace us with terrible evils in perspective, and threaten to leave us——

Orange. Believe you not, she will this time fulfil her threat?

Egm. No, no; how often have I seen her absolutely prepared to set off—why, whither should she go? Here she is Stadtholder, queen—think you she could brook living unnoticed, unhonoured, at her brother's court, or returning to Italy to creep in among old family connexions?

Orange. You hold her incapable of this resolve, because you have so often seen her form, and as often abandon it. But I tell you she may do it yet—new circumstances may force her to fulfil her determination. What if she were to go, and the king send us another?

Egm. Why he would come, and find enough to do.

He would arrive, his head full of mighty plans and projects, to subdue, govern, and humble all before him; and to-day he would be busied with *this* trifle, and to-morrow with *that*. Next day he would find some other obstacle—one month would be consumed in forming mighty designs; the next in vain vexation at their failure; and half a year in cares for a single province. Time would pass on; his head grow dizzy, and things hold their accustomed course, till at length instead of sailing out triumphantly into the open sea in line of battle order, he might thank God, if amid the tempest he could keep his own vessel from the breakers.

Orange. Ay, but what if the king were advised to try a new plan?

Egm. What?

Orange. To see how the body can work without the head?

Egm. How!

Orange. Egmont, for years our situation has never been absent from my mind—I ever stand as if watching a game of chess, and consider no move of my adversary as unimportant—and as men with no definite pursuits of their own are still most curious in their researches into the secrets of nature, even so do I

hold it the bounden duty, the most sacred calling of a prince, to make himself master of the opinions and sentiments of every class and every party. I have reason to dread a great and fearful outbreak. The king has long acted on certain principles—he finds they do not attain the end desired—what is more probable than that he should try some other plan?

Egm. I do not believe it. When a man is advanced in years, has tried so many experiments, and finds none of them succeed, he at length grows weary of it, and allows matters to take their own course.

Orange. One thing yet remains to be tried.

Egm. And what?

Orange. To spare the people, and destroy the princes.

Egm. How long has that been dreaded? There is no danger of it.

Orange. With me it was at first doubt; then suspicion; now it is absolute certainty.

Egm. And where will the king find more faithful servants than we?

Orange. True, we serve him after our own fashion, and between ourselves, it must be confessed we generally take good care to balance the king's rights and our own pretty equally.

Egm. And who does not? We are submissive and obedient in all, in which he has a right to claim submission.

Orange. Ay, but what if he expect *more*, and call what we term our just rights a want of loyalty?

Egm. We can spurn the charge; let him summon the Knights of the Golden Fleece, and we will submit our conduct to their decree.

Orange. Ha! and what think you of a sentence before trial; an execution before sentence?

Egm. As a piece of injustice of which Philip would scorn to be guilty, as a folly too gross to be imputed to him or his counsellors.

Orange. And what if they were unjust and foolish?

Egm. No, Orange! 'Tis impossible. Who will dare lay hand on us? To attempt to take us captive were a lost and fruitless scheme. No, no, they will not venture to raise the standard of tyranny so high; the wind that wafts these tidings o'er the land, would kindle a flame they never could extinguish. And what could be their aim? The king alone can neither judge nor sentence us! And would they dare to take our lives by secret assassination? Impossible! Our death would be the signal for a general insurrection; our blood would unite the people in a fearful bond.

Hate and eternal separation from the Spanish name !
This would be the inevitable result.

Orange. It may be, but the flame would rage o'er
our tombs, and the blood of our foes would be but an
empty expiation. Let us reflect, Egmont.

Egm. But what could be their aim ?

Orange. Alva is on his way hither.

Egm. I do not credit it.

Orange. I know it.

Egm. The Regent declared she had heard nothing
of it.

Orange. That only strengthens my conviction.
The Regent must make room for him. I know
his thirst for blood, and he brings an army with
him.

Egm. What, to harass the provinces anew ? The
people will soon be weary of it.

Orange. He will secure the *heads* of the people.

Egm. No, no !

Orange. Let each one retire to his own province.
There will we strengthen our forces : he will not begin
with open violence.

Egm. But must we not bid him welcome on his
arrival ?

Orange. We can delay.

Egm. And if he summon us in the king's name?

Orange. We will find some excuse.

Egm. And if he insist on it?

Orange. We will come still less.

Egm. And war is declared—and we are the rebels.

Orange, let not thy prudence mislead thee. I know it is not fear makes thee retire from the scene of danger; consider well this step.

Orange. I have considered.

Egm. Reflect on all the misery for which thou wilt have to answer, if thou errest. The most fearful war that ever yet devastated a land. Thy refusal will be the signal for all the provinces to rise to arms, and justify every cruelty for which Spain hitherto has ever been so anxious to find some plausible pretext. The flames we have with such pains extinguished, a single nod of thine will at once rekindle. Think on the towns, the nobles, and the people. Think on trade, manufactures, and agriculture; remember the murder, the desolation that must ensue! In the battle field the soldier may calmly behold his comrade fall by his side; but the river that bathes these walls would waft towards thee on its bosom the bleeding corpses of unoffending citizens, innocent virgins, and helpless infants, till overwhelmed with anguish and remorse,

www.libtool.com.cn
thou forgettest the cause thou hast defended, while those for whose freedom thou hast drawn the sword perish in thy very sight ; and what will be thy reflection when conscience whispers—"Twas for my safety I unsheathed it !

Orange. Egmont, we are not solitary men. If it beseems us to sacrifice our lives for the welfare of thousands, not less does it beseem us to guard them for their sake.

Egm. He who spares his own person must become an object of suspicion even to himself.

Orange. He who knows himself may advance or retreat alike with firm and certain step.

Egm. Thy precipitation will hasten the very evil thou darest.

Orange. 'Tis both wise and bold to confront inevitable danger.

Egm. In such imminent peril, the slightest chance of escape should be taken into computation.

Orange. We have no room for a single step, we are on the very brink of the abyss.

Egm. Is the king's favour such narrow ground ?

Orange. Not so narrow, perchance, but somewhat slippery.

Egm. By heavens, you wrong him ! I will not

hear him thus belied. He is Charles's son, and incapable of baseness!

Orange. Kings *can* do nothing base.

Egm. You should learn to know him better.

Orange. We do know him; and it is this very knowledge warns us not to await a dangerous trial.

Egm. No trial is dangerous which one has courage to brave.

Orange. You are angry, Egmont?

Egm. I must see with my own eyes.

Orange. Oh, couldst thou see but this once with mine! Oh, my friend, because thine eyes are open, thou deemest thou canst see! I go; wait thou Alva's coming, and God be with thee! Perchance, my refusal may save thee—perchance, the dragon will not deign to seize his destined prey, unless at one fell swoop he can devour both his victims—perchance, he may delay, the better to ensure success; and, meantime, thou mayst see the matter in its true light. But, then, haste—oh, haste, to save thyself! Farewell! Let nothing escape thy vigilance—learn how many troops he brings with him—what power the Regent is permitted to retain—what resolution thy friends may form. Send me intelligence of all. And now, Egmont——

Egm. What wouldst thou?

Orange. (*Seizing his hand.*) Be persuaded. Go with me!

Egm. How! *tears,* Orange?

Orange. To weep a lost friend, is not unworthy the spirit of a man.

Egm. Thou deemest me lost?

Orange. Thou art. Reflect!—but little space is left thee. Adieu! [*Exit.*]

Egm. (*Alone.*) Strange, that other men's opinions should exercise such influence over our minds. I should never have dreamt of it; yet this man has half infected me with his own suspicions. Away!—this is foreign to my nature; and a joyful method yet remains to chase this unwonted gloom from my brow. [*Exit.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Palace of the Regent.*

MARGARET OF PARMA.

Marg. I might have foreseen it. He whose life is devoted to constant toil and anxiety, ever deems he does all that can be done; while he who looks on, and commands from afar, fancies he requires nothing but what is perfectly feasible. Oh, these kings! I could not have thought it would have grieved me thus! 'Tis so delightful to rule;—and to abdicate! I know not how my father could resolve on such a sacrifice. Yet I must make it, too. (*MACHIAVELLI appears in the background.*) Approach, Machiavelli; I am pondering on my royal brother's letter.

Mach. Dare I ask what its contents?

www.libtool.com.cn

Marg. Oh, as much tender consideration for me as anxiety for the welfare of his kingdom. He lauds the firmness, the industry, the fidelity, with which I have hitherto maintained the rights of Majesty in this land; he condoles with me on the care and vexation this rebellious people have caused me. He is so completely convinced of the depth of my views, so unusually pleased with the prudence of my conduct throughout, that I must confess the letter is too flattering for a king—certainly for a brother.

Mach. It is not the first time, madam, he has expressed his perfect satisfaction with your conduct.

Marg. No. But the first time he has done so as a mere figure of speech.

Mach. I do not understand you.

Marg. You will presently; for he proceeds to hint, that without troops—without, indeed, a small army, I shall always make but a sorry figure here. We did wrong, he says, in withdrawing our soldiers at the murmur of the inhabitants; and intimates a yoke which should weigh heavily on the necks of the citizens would effectually prevent their making any very mighty leaps.

Mach. It would exasperate the people to the uttermost.

www.libtool.com.cn

Marg. Ay, but the king deems that a clever general—one, for instance, who will never listen to reason—might soon manage all parties—princes and people, peasants and citizens; therefore, with a mighty host, he sends—the Duke of Alva.

Mach. Alva ?

Marg. Thou art amazed ?

Mach. You say, he sends. Surely he asks your consent ?

Marg. By no means. He asks nothing—he sends.

Mach. Well, then, you will have an experienced warrior in your service.

Marg. In my service? Speak out, Machiavelli !

Mach. I would not anticipate your meaning—

Marg. And I would fain dissemble. It wounds me—wounds me deeply. I had rather my brother would speak plainly what he means than merely send me a formal epistle—with his signature, indeed, but indited by a secretary of state.

Mach. Could not one have an insight ?

Marg. And I know the secret of the whole affair : they would fain sweep, and clear the way; and as they can devise no plan of doing it themselves, why every one is admitted into their confidence who comes

forward, besom in hand, to perform the operation. I almost fancy I see the king and his counsellors embroidered on this tapestry.

Mach. So vividly !

Marg. Oh, not a single stroke is wanting ! There are good men amongst them, too ! The noble Roderigo, with his experienced moderation, who neither aims too high nor sinks too low. The upright Alonzo—the indefatigable Freneda—the determined Las Vargas and some others, who join them when the good cause is triumphant. But there sits the hollow-eyed Toledaner, with his iron-brow and glance of fire, muttering ever and anon something between his teeth of woman's weakness, of untimely concession ; intimating that women, though they may ride palfreys broken in for their use, are little fitted to curb or rule the wild and fiery steed : and such like pleasantries, which I, too, have oftentimes been forced to hear from these politic lords.

Mach. You have painted the scene in somewhat gloomy colours.

Marg. Nay, now confess the darkest of my tints is light itself compared with the hues in which Alva is wont to paint his pictures ; with him every one is

www.libtool.com.cn

either a traitor or a blasphemer, for under these heads they may be hanged, drawn, and quartered at pleasure. All the good I have done here makes but little figure in the distance, even because it is *really* good, while every trifling discontent, even though entirely subsided, every little disturbance, though completely quelled, is set before the king till his mind is so filled with murders, rebellions, insurrections, and so forth, that he fancies the people here are devouring each other, instead of regarding the affair in its true light, as a mere passing disturbance, common enough among a rude people, and long since forgotten. By this means he learns absolutely to hate the poor creatures ; regards them with horror as wild beasts and monsters, sends against them fire and sword, and fancies thus men can be governed!

Mach. Nay, Madam, you look upon the affair in too serious a light : do you not remain Regent ?

Marg. Of that I am fully aware. Alva will bring instructions with him. I am sufficiently versed in state affairs to know how a minister can be supplanted without being exactly driven from office ; first, he will produce a royal commission, couched in indefinite terms ; he will exceed it, for he has the power ; and when I complain of this encroachment on the prerogative,

will allege secret instructions as the pretext for his conduct; if I request a sight of these instructions, he will evade compliance; if I insist on it, he will produce a paper, the contents of which are completely at variance with his former declarations; and if this fail to satisfy me, he will pay no further heed to my representations, but proceed just the same as if I had never made any. Meanwhile, he will have carried into effect all I most dread, and disregarded all I most desire.

Mach. I wish I could dispel your fears.

Marg. Harsh and tyrannical measures will utterly destroy all my care and patience have effected with such difficulty. I shall see the work of years ruined before my eyes, without power to stop the devastation, and shall have to bear the blame of his enormities besides.

Mach. It is better for your highness to await it with patience.

Marg. I have still sufficient self-command to bear it in silence. Let him come; I will resign my place before he drives me from it.

Mach. How, madam!—take so important a step thus hastily?

Marg. 'Tis harder than thou deemest it. To him

www.libtool.com.cn

who is used to empire—to hold in his hand the destiny of thousands—the descent from the throne is as the entrance to the grave itself! But better thus than to linger a spectre among the living; seeking to maintain a place already in the possession and enjoyment of another. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Clara's dwelling.—CLARA and MOTHER.

Mother. Such a love as Brackenburg's I have never yet seen! I thought it was to be found only in romances.

Clara. (*Paces up and down the chamber, humming*)

“Happy alone is the spirit that loves.”

Mother. He suspects thine attachment to Egmont, yet, I really believe, if thou wouldst but speak one kind word to him, he would marry thee yet.

Clara. (*Singing.*)

“Joyful and sorrowful, thoughtful and glad,
Hoping and doubting, now blithesome now sad;
Now rapture entrances, now agony moves,
Happy alone is the spirit that loves.”

Mother. Leave off this nonsense.

Clara. Nay, chide me not, mother; many a time have I lulled a great baby to sleep with it.

Mother. Ay; you think of nothing but your love. If only you did not forget everything in this. I tell you, you should value Brackenburgh more highly. He may make you happy one day still.

Clara. He?

Mother. Yes; a time will come! You children think of the present only, and despise our experience. Youth and love both have an end, and a day comes when one is glad if one can find a hole to creep into.

Clara. (*Shudders and starts.*) Mother, if that time must come, let it come like death! To think on it beforehand is horrible. When we must, then we will bear it as we may. Egmont!—*I resign thee!*—*I live without thee!* (*With tears.*) Never! It cannot be.

Enter EGMONT, dressed in a riding cloak, with his hat slouched over his face.

Egm. Clara!

Clara. (*Utters a cry, and starts back.*) Egmont!
(*She runs to him, embraces and leans upon him.*)

Thou dear, good, sweet one! My own love, art thou here?

Egm. Good even, mother!

Mother. God save you, my noble lord! My little girl has almost pined to death because you stayed away so long. She has done nothing but sing and talk of you the livelong day.

Egm. You will give me some supper?

Mother. You do me too much honour. If only we had anything worth——

Clara. Oh, mother, be not uneasy; I have arranged all that. I have prepared something for him. Do not betray me, mother?

Mother. Poor enough.

Clara. Besides, when I am by his side, I never know what hunger is, so should he not have any great appetite when he is with me——

Egm. What meanest thou?

Clara. (*Stamps with her foot, and turns angrily round.*) How cold you are to-day! You have not offered me a single kiss. Why keep you your arms thus muffled in your mantle, like an infant a week old? It beseems neither soldier nor lover to keep his arms muffled.

Egm. Nay, at times, love!—at times! When the

www.libtool.com.cn

soldier stands in ambush to pounce upon the foe, then he folds his arms, gathers up his mantle, and prepares for the attack. And a lover——

Mother. Will you not be seated? Will you not make yourself comfortable? I must to the kitchen. Clara thinks of nothing when you are by. You must take the will for the deed.

Egm. Your good will is the best repast.

[*Exit MOTHER.*]

Clara. And what, then, is my love?

Egm. E'en what thou wilt.

Clara. Compare it, if thou hast the heart.

Egm. But first——

[*Flings aside his mantle, and displays himself in a splendid dress.*]

Clara. Ah, me!

Egm. Now my arms are free! [*Embraces her.*]

Clara. Leave me! You will spoil your rich attire. (*She takes a step backwards.*) How splendid! I dare not touch you.

Egm. Art content, my love? I promised to come one day in Spanish costume.

Clara. I had ceased to entreat it. I thought you liked it not. Ha!—the Golden Fleece!

Egm. Thou seest, sweet one——

Clara. Was that the emperor's gift?

Egm. Ay, my love. And this chain and order endow their wearer with the noblest privileges. Over *my* actions, I acknowledge no judge on earth, save the grand master of the order, and the assembled chapter of knights.

Clara. Oh, thou mightest let the whole world sit in judgment on thee! How costly is this velvet, and the fringe, too, and the embroidery!—I know not which to admire first.

Egm. Look thy fill.

Clara. And the Golden Fleece! You told me the tale, and said it was the badge of everything great and costly, to be won by industry, and toil. 'Tis, indeed, splendid! I may compare it to thy love. 'Tis even thus I wear it next my heart, and then——

Egm. What sayst thou, dearest?

Clara. Alas, there is no further resemblance!

Egm. Why not?

Clara. 'Tis by no merit of my own that I have won it.

Egm. 'Tis otherwise with love. Thou deservest it e'en because thou hast not sought it; and they who seek it least are ever most sure to win it.

www.libtool.com.cn

Clara. Hast thou made this proud remark from thine own experience? Thou, the beloved of all?

Egm. Would I had done aught to merit their favour! Could I but do aught to deserve it! 'Tis their good pleasure to love me.

Clara. You have had an audience with the Regent to-day?

Egm. I have.

Clara. You are on good terms with each other?

Egm. So it appears. We are very polite and friendly towards each other.

Clara. And in your heart?

Egm. I wish her well. Every one has his own views. That is nothing to the purpose. She is an excellent woman, knows her men, and might be accounted wise were she a little less suspicious. I give her plenty of employment. She always fancies some secret meaning lurks behind my words, when, in fact, there is none.

Clara. What, none, my Egmont?

Egm. Nay, love, one little exception, perchance—every wine leaves some lees in the cask, if it stand long enough. Orange, now, is a better subject for her suspicions—an ever-new problem. He has got credit for always having some secret, and now she looks at

his forehead to read his thoughts, and watches all his steps to learn his intentions.

Clara. Does she dissemble?

Egm. She is Regent. Canst thou ask?

Clara. Pardon me; I should say, is she false?

Egm. Neither more nor less than every one who has objects of his own to attain.

Clara. I shall never understand the world. But she has a manly spirit, and is quite a different woman from us cooks and sempstresses: she is firm, calm, and resolved.

Egm. Yes, when matters do not go too far; but this time she is a little discomposed.

Clara. How?

Egm. She has a little beard on her upper lip, and sometimes an attack of the gout. A regular Amazon.

Clara. A majestic woman. I should tremble to appear before her.

Egm. Why so, my love?—thou art not wont to be so timid! 'Twould be only maiden bashfulness, not fear. (*CLARA casts down her eyes, takes his hand, and leans on him.*) I take thy meaning, dearest—thou mayst raise thine eyes. (*He kisses her.*)

Clara. Let me be silent. Let me lean on thee! look in thine eyes, and there find all—hope, joy, com-

fort, sorrow ! (*She embraces, and gazes on him.*) Tell me, oh! tell me, am I in a dream?—am I in a dream? Art thou, indeed, Egmont?—the great, the glorious Egmont—the beloved of every heart—his country's hope and pride! Can it be?

Egm. No, Clara, that I am not!

Clara. How?

Egm. I will tell thee; but first, let me seat me. (*He sits down, she kneels before him on a footstool, places her arms on his lap, and gazes at him.*) That Egmont is cold, haughty, and unbending. Forced to disguise his feelings, to assume sometimes one aspect, sometimes another, often overwhelmed with care and vexation, when the crowd deem him gay and happy;—loved by a people who know not what they seek—courted and exalted by a multitude who will not be controlled—surrounded by friends in whom he dares not confide—watched by foes who only wait some opportunity to injure and ruin him—wearing and toiling often without aim, still more often without reward. Oh, let me not tell thee how it fares with him; but *thy* Egmont, Clara, is calm, tranquil, happy, loved, and valued by the best and purest of human hearts—a heart whose every thought lies open to his view, and which, with boundless love and

www.libtool.com.cn

confidence, he presses to his own. (*He embraces her.*)

This is *thy* Egmont!

Clara. Then let me die! The world has no joys
like this!

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A street.*

YETTER *and* CARPENTER.

Yet. Hist! neighbour—a word!

Carp. Go thy ways, and be still!

Yet. Only one word. Nothing new, eh?

Carp. Nothing: but that it is forbidden us to speak of what's going forward.

Yet. Eh!—but how so?

Carp. Step under the shadow of this house. Take heed—the Duke of Alva, instantly on his arrival, gave notice that whatsoever persons should be found holding converse together in the streets shall be declared guilty of high treason, without trial!

Yet. Ah, me!

Carp. All speech on state affairs is forbidden, on pain of imprisonment for life.

www.libtool.com.cn

Yet. Oh, our liberty!

Carp. Death is denounced against all who dare blame the acts of government!

Yet. Oh, our heads!

Carp. And large promises are held out to induce parents, children, friends, kindred, and servants, to betray all that passes in the bosom of our families!

Yet. Let us home!

Carp. And a solemn promise is made, that they shall not suffer in life, limb, or property!

Yet. How gracious! My heart boded ill when the duke entered the town! Since then, it has seemed to me as though the sky were covered with black crape, and hung down so low, that we must stoop to avoid knocking our heads against it!

Carp. And how did his soldiers please you? Ah, they are another kind of fellows to what we have been used to!

Yet. Fie! it chokes one's very heart when one sees such a troop march up the streets—straight on, with fixed eye and step, looking neither to the right nor the left; and when they are standing sentinel, and you pass one of them, you feel as though he would pierce you through and through; and he looks so fierce and angry, that you fancy you see a task-master

at every corner. They do not please me at all. Our militia were a merry set ; they allowed themselves a little liberty, stood with their legs stretched out, and their hats over their ears, lived and let live ; but these fellows are like a machine, on every one of which a devil is sitting.

Carp. If any of them cried " Halt," and presented fire, do you think one would halt ?

Yet. I should be a dead man directly.

Carp. Let us go home !

Yet. It cannot end well. Adieu !

Enter SOEST.

Soest. Friends ! Gossips !

Carp. Hush ! Let us away !

Soest. Have you heard ?

Yet. Too much—too much !

Soest. The Regent is gone !

Yet. God help us !

Carp. Our last hope.

Soest. All in an instant, and quite privately. She could not settle matters with the Duke—she left a message to the nobles, promising to return. No one believes it.

Carp. God forgive the nobles: that they have let us fall a prey to this new scourge—they might have hindered it. Our privileges are gone!

Yet. For God's sake, not a word about privileges. I smell an execution already? The sun hides his face; the fog covers the earth.

Soest. Orange, too, is gone!

Carp. Then we are quite deserted.

Soest. Count Egmont still is here.

Yet. God be thanked! May all the saints strengthen and support him! He is the only one who can do anything for us.

Enter VANSSEN.

Van. Do I find, at last, a few who have not yet crouched beneath the rod of tyranny?

Yet. Be so good, and pass on.

Van. You are not very courteous.

Carp. This is no time for compliments. Are your stripes already healed?

Van. Ask a soldier after his wounds! Had I cared for stripes, I never should have been anything worth speaking of.

Yet. It may become more serious.

www.libtool.com.cn

Van. The rising storm affects you with a terrible weakness in your limbs, it seems.

Carp. Thy limbs will soon move elsewhere, if thou'rt not quiet.

Van. Poor mice! Do you shake with fear, because the master of the house sends a new cat among you? Don't be alarmed, we shall go on just as well as before.

Carp. Thou art an audacious scoundrel!

Van. Gossip, I tell you what! Let the Duke have his own way. The old cat looks just now as though he had swallowed half a dozen devils instead of mice, and could not very well digest the meal. Leave him alone; he must eat and drink and sleep, like other men. All will be well if we only bide our time. At first, indeed, it may go hard with us; but, by and by, he will find it more pleasant to feast by day and rest by night, than to waste his time in entrapping a few poor little mice, like we are. Go, go! I know these Stadtholders.

Carp. See, how such a fellow as this gets through the world! Now, if I had ever said such a thing in my life, I should not hold myself safe from one moment to another.

www.libtool.com.cn

Van. Don't alarm yourself. God, in heaven, takes no heed of you, poor worms, much less the Regent.

Yet. Caitiff!

Van. I know some others for whom 'twere better if, instead of their heroism, they had a little tailor's blood in their veins.

Carp. What mean'st thou?

Van. Hum!—it is the Count, I mean.

Yet. Egmont! Why, what has he to fear?

Van. I'm but a poor devil, and what he loses in play during one evening, would serve me a whole year; and yet, perhaps, 'twould be worth his while to give me his revenues for the next twelvemonth to have my head for a quarter of an hour on his shoulders.

Yet. A likely story, indeed! Why, there is more wisdom in one hair of Egmont's head than in all thy brains put together.

Van. Perhaps so; but not more wit. These gallant lords are most likely to deceive themselves. He should not be so fool-hardy.

Yet. How he prates!—Such a noble gentleman!

Van. For that very reason,—because he is no tailor.

Yet. Hold thine audacious tongue!

Van. I only wish he had a little of your courage, for an hour or two, I warrant his limbs would ache, and plague him till he got safe out of the town.

Yet. Thou talkest folly—he is as safe as the stars in heaven.

Van. Hast never seen a falling star? Whew! 'twas gone in an instant!

Carp. Who would dare to lay hands on him?

Van. Who? Wilt thou hinder them? Wilt thou raise an insurrection if they take him prisoner?

Yet. Ha?

Van. Will you run the risk of your bones to save him?

Soest. Eh?

Van. (*Mimicking them.*) Ah! Eh! Oh! Go on with your interjections through the whole alphabet! So it is, and so it will remain! God help him!

Yet. Shame on your insolence! What can such an upright, gallant man have to fear?

Van. The rogue has everywhere the advantage—as culprit, he makes a fool of his judges—as judge, he delights in convicting the accused, however guiltless. I had a protocol to write out, in which the commissary received both praise and reward for having cross-examined a poor devil, against whom the court had some grudge, till he made him out a rogue——

www.libtool.com.cn

Carp. That is again a falsehood; what can they manage to get out of one, when one is innocent?

Van. Oh, you noodle! Where there is nothing to be got out of a fellow by questions, they question something into him. Honesty makes a man inconsiderate and rash. Then they first question gently; and the prisoner, proud of his innocence, as they call it, discloses much that a sensible man would keep to himself; then, from these very answers, the inquisitor frames new questions, eagerly seizing on the faintest contradiction; there he fastens his line, and if the poor devil lets himself be surprised, and says a word too much here, or too little there, or—if, God knows why—he happens to withhold some trifle, or allow himself, at some point of the evidence, to be frightened and lose his self-possession, then are they on the right scent; and I swear to you, the beggar-woman seeks not more eagerly in the gutter for rags than such a fabricator tries, from trifling, silly, distorted, delayed, or concealed information, or circumstances, to form a scarecrow, by means of which he may contrive to get the prisoner hanged—at least, in effigy. And the poor devil may thank God if he lives to see himself hanged!

Yet. Your tongue wags fast!

Carp. For flies, this may be well enough! But wasps laugh at your spider's web.

Van. Ay, that depends on what sort of spiders they are. See you that tall duke has just the look of a great garden spider—not a thick heavy one, they are less vicious—but a long-footed, small-bellied creature, that never thrives on its food, that spins slender threads indeed, but spins them so much the tougher.

Yet. Egmont is knight of the Golden Fleece—who dare lay hand on him? His peers, and the assembled Chapter of Knights, can alone sit in judgment on him. 'Tis thy loose tongue and evil conscience put such nonsense in thy mouth.

Van. Do I wish him evil? Far otherwise! He is a gallant gentleman—a couple of good friends of mine, who elsewhere would have been hanged, he let off with a sound beating—now away with you! I advise it myself—there, see the watch on their rounds, and they do not look as though they would drink hail-fellow well-met with us. Well, we must bide our time! Farewell, comrades! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Palace of Eulenburg—Residence of the Duke of Alva.

SILVA and GOMEZ meet each other.

Silva. Have you obeyed the Duke's commands?

Gomez. To the letter—all the patrols have received orders to meet at a certain spot at the appointed hour—meantime, they will march through the streets as usual, to maintain order—no one knows anything of the other—each believes the command refers to him alone; and in a moment the line of troops can be formed, and every avenue to the palace blocked. Know you the reason of this strange command?

Silva. I am used to blind obedience; and whom is it more easy to obey than the Duke? Does not the issue ever prove the wisdom of his commands?

Gomez. Well, as you are always about his person, I marvel not that you are become as silent and reserved as your lord; but to me, who am used to the lighter Italian service, it seems somewhat strange; in truth

and obedience, I am ever the same; but I have become accustomed to talking and reasoning; here you are all silent as the grave, and never seem to enjoy yourselves—the Duke is like an iron tower without gates; the garrison of which must have wings to get out of it. A little while ago, I heard him say of a gay and mirthful man, that he was like a bad inn, whose sign only serves to attract beggars, thieves, and idlers.

Silva. And has he not led us hither in silence?

Gomez. Why, true — nothing can be said against that; whosoever witnessed the consummate skill with which he led the army hither from Italy, has seen something worth seeing. How he made his way through friends and foes, through the French, the royalists and the heretics, through the Swiss and the allies, maintaining the strictest discipline, and accomplishing a march which was deemed fraught with peril, without meeting the slightest impediment. We have learned something by it.

Silva. And here, too,—is not everything as calm and tranquil as though there had been no disturbance whatever?

Gomez. Why, it was pretty much so when we came.

www.libtool.com.cn

Silva. No, no; the provinces were not nearly so quiet; if any one moves now, it is only to fly: but if I deem rightly, the duke will soon block up every avenue of escape.

Gomez. Then will he win the king's favour.

Silva. And what better can we do than retain his? When the king comes, doubtless the duke and those he recommends will not remain unrewarded.

Gomez. What, thinkest thou the king will come?

Silva. There are such mighty preparations made that it appears highly probable.

Gomez. *Me* they will not persuade.

Silva. Well, then, keep thine opinion to thyself; for if it be not the king's purpose to come hither, this at least is certain—he desires that it should be believed it is.

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. Is not my father yet here?

Silva. We wait his commands.

Ferd. The princes will be here anon.

Gomez. Come they to-day?

Ferd. Orange and Egmont.

Gomez. (*Aside to SILVA.*) Ah! I mark something.

www.libtool.com.cn

Silva. Keep it to thyself, then.

Enter ALVA; as he advances, the others draw back.

Alva. Gomez!

Gomez. (*advancing.*) My lord!

Alva. Hast thou arranged the sentinels according to my commands?

Silva. I have, my lord, the daily patrols——

Alva. Enough. Attend my orders in the gallery. Silva will let thee know when thou art to draw them together, and occupy all the avenues leading to the palace—the rest thou knowest.

Gomez. Yes, my lord.

[*Exit.*

Alva. Silva!

Silva. I am here, my lord.

Alva. To-day, all those qualities which I ever prized in thee—courage, resolution, and fidelity, will be put to the test.

Silva. My lord, I thank you for affording me an opportunity of proving that I am still the same.

Alva. As soon as the princes have entered the presence-chamber, hasten to arrest Egmont's private secretary. You have made all the necessary preparations to seize those I have indicated?

Silva. Trust to us, their destiny will overtake them like a well reckoned eclipse, surely and silently.

Alva. Hast thou had them all carefully watched ?

Silva. All, and Egmont in particular. He is the only one in whose demeanour your arrival has wrought no change. The live-long day he spends vaulting from horse to horse, and inviting guests ; he is gay and mirthful, as is his wont at table, games, hunts ; and at night steals to his mistress's arms. The others, on the contrary, have made a great and evident pause in their mode of life : they keep at home, and by the appearance of their houses, you might fancy the inmates stretched on the bed of sickness.

Alva. Quick then to work, ere they recover in our despite.

Silva. My lord, by your command we overwhelm them with officious respect ; they tremble, and strive to appear grateful, while all feel the safest plan would be to fly, yet none venture to move. There is no bond of union betwixt them, yet their habits of acting in concert prevent any individual taking a bold and decisive step. They would fain withdraw themselves from suspicion, and thus serve only to increase it. Already do I see thy whole scheme happily carried out.

www.libtool.com.cn

Alva. I rejoice in the past only, and not lightly in that. Something ever remains to give us subject for thought and anxiety. Fortune is capricious : common and frivolous deeds she oft-times crowns with her favour, and deeply laid schemes she degrades with mean results. Wait till the princes arrive : then give Gomez orders to blockade the streets, and haste thyself to arrest Egmont's secretary and all those noted down. When that is done, return hither, and bid my son bring me the tidings in council.

Silva. I trust this evening I shall dare to stand before thy presence.

[*ALVA goes towards his son, who hitherto has stood in the gallery.*

Silva. (*Aside.*) I scarcely venture to whisper it even to myself, but my hopes are far from sanguine. I fear all will not be as he expects. Methinks I see spirits before me, holding in their hands the scales in which they weigh the destiny alike of princes and of common mortals. The beam waves slowly to and fro ; the judges seem to ponder in deep and anxious thought ; at length, one scale sinks, the other rises, blown by the breath of destiny, and all is irrevocably decided.

[*Exit.*

ALVA and his SON step forward.

Alva. How didst find the town ?

Ferd. All is tranquil. I rode from street to street, as if for pastime. Your guards keep the people in such awe, that they scarcely dare even to whisper to each other. The town resembles a field when a distant tempest lowers; not a single bird or beast is visible, save one here and there seeking shelter from the impending storm.

Alva. Did nothing further chance ?

Ferd. Egmont came galloping through the marketplace with a few followers; we saluted each other; he was mounted on a fiery steed. I admired the noble animal. Let us haste to break in our horses, he cried; we shall soon need them. We should meet again, he said, to-day. He was coming hither at your desire to hold council with you !

Alva. You *will* meet again.

Ferd. Of all the knights I have met here, he pleases me best; methinks we shall be friends !

Alva. Thou art still too hasty and too careless in thy attachments. I recognise in thee thy mother's levity, which threw her without condition into my arms.

www.libtool.com.cn
Outward appearances have already led thee into full many a dangerous connexion.

Ferd. You have ever found me submissive to your will.

Alva. I forgive this thoughtless confidence, this inconsiderate levity in one so young; only, keep in mind the work I am called on to perform, and what part therein I would assign to thee.

Ferd. Remind me of my duty, and spare me not when you deem it needful.

Alva. [*After a pause.*] My son!

Ferd. My father!

Alva. The princes will be here ere long, Orange and Egmont. 'Tis not mistrust has hitherto hindered me from confiding this secret to thine ear. They will not depart hence!

Ferd. What mean'st thou?

Alva. 'Tis resolved to keep them prisoners. Thou startest! Hear what part thou hast to play; the reason, thou shalt learn hereafter,—*now*, time fails me to explain it; with thee, alone, would I confer on my most secret and mighty projects. No common bond links us together;—I love thee, Ferdinand,—on thee would I bestow all. 'Tis not alone the habits of obedience I would instil into thy mind! no, the far

www.libtool.com.cn
more difficult art of commanding and leading would I teach thee, and bequeath to thee a great inheritance, and to the king a useful servant. I would endow thee with all the best of my possessions, that thou mayst not blush to step boldly among thy fellows.

Ferd. How can I thank thee for this love, my father!—a love bestowed on me alone, while a whole nation trembles at thy frowns.

Alva. Now hear what is to be done : so soon as the princes have entered, every avenue to the palace will be closed. Gomez has the charge of this. Silva, meantime, will hasten to arrest Egmont's secretary, and all we hold in suspicion. Thou wilt keep the guards in the court and at the doors in readiness for action. Above all things, occupy the adjoining apartment with the most trusty soldiers; then wait in the gallery till Silva retires, and bring me some unimportant paper—a signal that this mission is fulfilled. Remain in the ante-room till Orange departs,—then follow him; I will keep Egmont here, as though I had something further to communicate. At the end of the gallery, demand Orange's sword! Summon the guards, and secure the more dangerous of the two. I will seize Egmont here.

www.libtool.com.cn

Ferd. I obey, my father, for the first time with a heavy heart.

Alva. I forgive thee! 'tis the first great day of thy young life.

Enter SILVA.

Silva. A message from Antwerp. Here is Orange's letter! He comes not!

Alva. Says the messenger thus?

Silva. No; but my forebodings do!

Alva. In thee speaks my evil genius. (*Reads, and then makes a sign to the two; they withdraw to the gallery; he remains alone in the front.*) He comes not. Till the very last moment he delays explanation! He *dares not* come! This once, then, the prudent man is wise enough to throw aside his habitual caution! The hour approaches—yet a few movements of the minute hand, and a great deed is done or missed—irrevocably missed—for it can neither be concealed nor repeated! Long had I carefully weighed all: considered the possibility even of this event, and arranged what was then to be done; yet now it comes, I can scarcely prevent a thousand reasons, for and against, from distracting my soul. Is it

www.libtool.com.cn

well to seize the others, if he elude me? If I delay, Egmont, and all those now in my hands, perhaps for *to-day* only, will escape me. Ha! does destiny control even thee, thou invincible! How long considered, how well prepared, how great, how mighty the plan! How nearly attained, the goal of all my hopes! and yet, at the final moment, behold me placed betwixt two evils; as in a lottery must I draw the stakes, and choose the unknown future, be it a prize or a blank. (*He becomes more anxious, and steps to the window like one who has heard something.*) 'Tis he! Egmont! did thy steed bear thee so lightly hither, nor shuddered at the scent of blood, nor started back at the spectre with naked sword that met thee at the gate! Ay, dismount! now, thou art with one foot in the grave—now with both! Ay, stroke thy gallant courser for the last time!—pat his arched neck! And for me no choice remains. The delusion which brings Egmont here to-day can never a second time deliver him into my hands. Hark! (*FERDINAND and SILVA hasten towards him.*) Do as I commanded! I have not changed my intent. I will keep Egmont here as best I may, till thou bringest tidings from Silva; then linger near me. Thee, too, fate has robbed of the

www.libtool.com.cn

proud merit of seizing thy monarch's greatest enemy with thine own hands. Haste to meet him.

[ALVA remains some moments alone, and paces up and down.

Enter EGMONT.

Egm. I am here to receive the king's commands—to learn what further proofs he demands of a loyalty that will ever be devoted to his service.

Alva. He wishes first of all to hear your counsel.

Egm. On what subject? Where is the Prince of Orange? I thought to have met him here.

Alva. I regret to find that at this momentous hour he denies us his aid. The king desires your counsel and opinion as to what means were best adapted to restore tranquillity to the Netherlands. He trusts you will lend your most efficient aid to allay these troubles, and secure lasting peace and order to the provinces.

Egm. You, my lord of Alva, must know better than I that everything is sufficiently tranquil, and was still more so, till the appearance of fresh soldiers filled the people's minds anew with distrust and fear.

www.libtool.com.cn

Alva. You seem to intimate, my lord, it were better if the king had never placed me in a position to question you.

Egm. Pardon me; whether the king did well in sending an army hither, or whether his own royal presence would not alone have proved a *more* efficient remedy, 'tis not for me to decide. The army is here, the king in Spain; but we must be indeed ungrateful could we forget all we are indebted to the regent. By a happy union of gentleness and severity, of decision and mercy, she completely quelled the tumults, and, to the astonishment of the world, in the space of a few months, brought back a rebellious people to their duty.

Alva. I deny it not. The disturbances are quelled; and the people have, or seem to have, returned within the bounds of obedience; but depends it not on their own free will to outstep them when they please? Who can hinder them from again breaking out into rebellion? Where is the power to restrain them? Who will answer for their remaining faithful and obedient? What pledge have we, save their own good will?

Egm. And is not the goodwill of a nation the best, the noblest pledge? When can a prince hold himself more secure than when one will stand for all,

and all for one—safe alike from foreign and domestic foes ?

Alva. But you would not have us persuade ourselves that such is the case here ?

Egm. Let the king publish a general amnesty. This will tranquillize the public mind ; and when confidence is once restored, we shall see how quickly loyalty and affection will ensue.

Alva. What ! and are all who have insulted the majesty of the king, all who have blasphemed our holy faith, to escape free and unchastised, as a welcome example how the most atrocious crimes may be committed with impunity ?

Egm. And is not a crime like this, committed in a moment of frenzy, rather to be pitied than severely chastised ? Above all, when there is hope—nay, more—absolute certainty that it never will recur. Are not those monarchs most loved and most revered, both by their contemporaries and by posterity, who can pardon, pity, and despise an insult to their dignity ? Are they not held most like to that Almighty Being who is far too great for the voice of blasphemy to reach his throne ?

Alva. And for that very reason, 'tis for the king to maintain the majesty of God and of religion, and

for us to maintain the authority of the king ; that which the ruler disdains to notice, it is our duty to avenge. If my counsel be followed, no traitor shall escape with impunity.

Egm. And think you, you can reach them all? Hear you not, daily, that terror is driving them hither and thither, far from their country and from their homes? The rich, with their wealth, their friends and children, will seek refuge in foreign lands. The poor will carry their industry, their knowledge of arts and manufactures, to their more tolerant neighbours.

Alva. They will, if means be not taken to hinder them. 'Tis for this purpose the king demands the aid and counsel of every prince and stadtholder; not only a recital of what has been, or what may be, if we leave matters to take their own course. To look quietly on a crying evil—to flatter oneself with vain hopes—to trust to time—to propose some empty expedient, as if in a masquerade, so as to make a noise, and have the appearance at least of doing something while one would fain remain inactive; is not all this precisely calculated to engender a suspicion that you regard the rebellion with secret satisfaction, and are by no means disinclined, if not to originate, at least to foster it?

www.libtool.com.cn

Egm. (*About to start up in a rage—but restraining himself, speaks slowly, after a little pause.*) Every design is not equally transparent, and it is easy to misinterpret men's aims. Were we to listen to all sides, it is loudly rumoured, that it is less the king's design to rule the provinces according to distinct and uniform laws, to maintain the majesty of religion, and restore universal peace to his people, than to subject them to arbitrary power, to rob them of their ancient rights, to make himself master of their wealth and possessions, to circumscribe the privileges of the nobles, those privileges for the sake of which alone they serve him, and devote life and limb to his cause. Religion, they say, is but a splendid pretext, under colour of which every enormity may be perpetrated with the greater safety. The people lie prostrate at the foot of the altar, adoring the image of the holy Virgin, while behind stands the fowler watching the opportunity to ensnare them.

Alva. Is it from you I hear these words?

Egm. Not my own sentiments; but merely what is everywhere repeated and believed by rich and poor, fools and wise men. The Flemings dread a twofold yoke, and who will answer for their liberty?

Alva. Liberty! a fair sounding word to those who

www.libtool.com.cn
understand it rightly. What freedom would they have? What is the liberty of the freest? To do *right*, and from that no monarch will hinder them! But, no; they never feel themselves free, but when they can injure themselves and others. Were it not better to resign the throne, than rule over such a people? When the enemy is thundering at their gates, and the king needs their support, then they quarrel with each other, and, as it were, conspire with the foe, of whom, occupied only with their own affairs, they never even think. No, no, 'tis wiser to circumscribe their power, to guide them like children for their own good. Believe me, a nation never grows old or wise : a nation continues ever in its infancy.

Egm. Nay, how rarely is a king blest with real wisdom; and is it not natural a nation should confide its liberties to the care of many, rather than of one? And not even to one! No! to that tithe of humanity which has grown old under the eyes of its lord. Truly, that alone has a right to arrogate wisdom to itself.

Alva. Perhaps, for that very reason because it is not left to its own guidance.

Egm. And would, therefore, fain leave no one else to his. But do as you will; I have replied to your

www.libtool.com.cn

questions, and I repeat, it will not succeed ; it never can succeed. I know my countrymen ; they are men worthy to tread God's earth ; each one in himself a little king ; firm, active, sagacious, faithful, and devotedly attached to their ancient customs ; to win their confidence may be somewhat hard ; to retain it when once won, is easy ; firm and true, they may be ruled, but never oppressed.

Alva. (*After looking round once or twice*) My lord of Egmont, would you venture to repeat those sentiments in the king's presence ?

Egm. Would I, my lord ? So much the worse for him if his presence terrifies me ; so much the better for him and his people, if he inspired me with courage and confidence to tell him far more.

Alva. What is useful, I can hear as well as he.

Egm. I would say, 'tis easy for the shepherd to drive a flock of sheep before him ; for the peasant to yoke the unresisting oxen to the plough ; but he who would rule the noble steed, must study his inmost thoughts, and neither require anything unbecoming, nor require it in an unbecoming manner. Why does the citizen wish to retain his ancient constitution, and be governed by his own countrymen ? Because he knows by experience how he will be ruled, and

www.libtool.com.cn

may hope for sympathy and forbearance from those whose interests are identified with his own.

Alva. And should not the Regent have authority sufficient to alter these ancient usages? Is not this the most precious of his prerogatives? What is permanent in this world? And why should a constitution alone remain unaltered? Must not everything change in the course of time; and an ancient form of government become, in itself the source of a thousand evils, from its utter incompetency to provide for the present exigencies of the people? I fear these ancient rights are valuable only in so far as they afford loop-holes through which the powerful and ambitious may creep, to the detriment both of prince and people.

Egm. And these arbitrary changes; this unbounded estimate of supreme power; is it not a prognostic that *one* will do what is forbidden to thousands? He would *alone* be free, that he may gratify every wish, however wild, and carry out every scheme, however oppressive. And could we even safely entrust our lives and liberties to him, a wise and just monarch, can he be answerable for his successors? Can he pledge himself that none of his descendants will rule without justice or mercy?

Who will save us from complete despotism, should he send his servants, his kindred hither, who, devoid of all knowledge of the country or its wants, would rule according to their own pleasure, find no opposition, and *know* themselves free from all responsibility?

Alva. (*Who has in the meanwhile again looked round.*) Nothing is more natural than that a sovereign should choose to hold the reins of government in his own hands, or that he should invest those only with power who are content to read his instructions as he wishes them read, to obey his orders to the letter and become the unconditional instruments of his will.

Egm. And is it not natural that the citizens should prefer being governed by those who are born and educated amongst them, whose ideas of right and wrong correspond with their own, and whom they may regard as brethren?

Alva. Ay, but the nobles have shared very unequally with these brethren of theirs, methinks.

Egm. That happened centuries ago, and is now endured without envy or repugnance; but if strangers are sent hither, uncalled for, to enrich themselves a second time at the expense of the nation—if the

Flemings see themselves exposed to their unrestrained and unbounded rapacity, it will rouse a spirit of indignation that will not be so easily quenched.

Alva. My lord of Egmont, these are words to which I must not listen: I, *too*, am a stranger.

Egm. From my addressing you thus, it is evident I allude not to you.

Alva. Be that as it may, I would not hear it from your lips; the king sent me hither in the hope that I should find the support of the nobles. The king *wills*, and must be obeyed. After deep consideration, he has at length discovered that which is most expedient for the people's welfare. Matters can no longer proceed as they have hitherto done. The king's aim is to restrict their power for their own ultimate advantage; to force them, if it must be, to their own good; to sacrifice the principal leaders of sedition, as a warning to the rest, convinced that when they are removed, the people will henceforth peaceably enjoy the blessings of a wise and efficient government. This is his determination. 'Tis this I am commanded to announce to the nobility, and in their sovereign's name, I require their counsel; not as to what is to be done, that is already resolved; but as to what

www.libtool.com.cn

methods are best adapted to carry these measures into execution.

Egm. Unhappily your words do much towards justifying the people's apprehensions. He has, then, resolved what no prince has a right to resolve; he would fain weaken and destroy the strength and spirit of the nation, that he may rule them more easily. He would trample on the innermost core of their nationality, with the view of making them happier; he would annihilate them, that they may become something different. Oh, if his aim be good, how fatally is he misled! 'Tis not the king we oppose—no, we would but save him from that fatal path on which he is about to take the first unhappy step.

Alva. With your present sentiments, any attempt to act in concert were but a fruitless task. You must hold the king in light esteem, and have but a mean opinion of his counsellors, if you doubt that everything has been already weighed and considered with the utmost care. I am not commissioned to answer every objection a second time; from the people, I demand obedience; and from you, the nobles and princes, I require aid and counsel as pledges of this unconditional duty.

www.libtool.com.cn

Egm. Ask our heads at once ; then 'tis ended, for to bend the neck beneath such a yoke, or to lay it on the block, is to a noble soul alike. I see I have spoken to little purpose : my words have all been lost in empty air.

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. Pardon my breaking in upon your conference ; here is a letter, the bearer of which requests an immediate answer.

Alva. (*Walks aside.*) Permit me to examine its contents.

Ferd. That is a noble horse your followers have brought to carry you home.

Egm. Yes, 'tis a fine creature ; I have had it some little time. I thought of giving it away ; if it pleases you, I dare say we shall soon agree as to the price. (*ALVA signs to his son, who retires into the background.*) Farewell ; let me depart, for, by heavens ! I know not what more to say.

Alva. 'Tis well for you, Count Egmont, that chance has hindered you from unfolding your sentiments more broadly : unconsciously have you betrayed your secret views, and your own words have accused

you far more strongly than the bitterest foe had dared to do.

Egm. This reproach affects me not. I know myself. I know how I am devoted to the king; far more than many who in serving him seek only to serve themselves. 'Tis with regret I see our interview terminated, without having induced you to coincide in my sentiments; and I only trust that the service of our master, and the welfare of our country, may soon unite us in the same cause. Perhaps, a second interview, and the presence of the other princes in a more favourable moment, may effect that which to-day appears impossible. With this hope I take my leave!

Alva. (*Who at the same time has made a sign to FERDINAND.*) Hold, Egmont!—your sword!

[*The centre door opens, and shows the gallery filled with the guards, who remain motionless.*]

Egm. (*After a pause, in astonishment.*) Was this your aim? was it for this I was summoned hither? (*Seizing his sword as if to defend himself.*) Am I then, defenceless?

Alva. In the king's name, you are my prisoner!

Egm. (*After a pause; at the same time, men at arms enter on both sides.*) The king! (*After a pause.*)

www.libtool.com.cn

Orange! Orange! (*After another pause, yielding his sword.*) Take it: it has served oftener to defend the king's cause than its master's breast.

[*He leaves by the centre door, the guards follow: then ALVA's son. ALVA remains. THE CURTAIN FALLS.*

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Street.—Twilight.*BRACKENBURG, CLARA, *Citizens.*

Brack. Dearest, for Heaven's sake, what wouldst thou?

Clara. Come with me, Brackenburg. Thou canst not know the people. Surely, we shall rescue him! What can equal their love for him! Oh, I could swear there is not one of them but burns with the desire to save him—to turn aside the danger from a life so precious, and restore to liberty him who has hitherto been the freest of mankind. Come, Brackenburg; nothing is wanting but a voice to rouse their energies—to lead them on! They cannot but remember all they owe him; they cannot but know that his mighty arm alone can save them from destruction. For his sake—for their own, they will

www.libtool.com.cn

run all risks to save him. And what do *we* hazard?—at most, our lives? Lives which will be worthless if he perish.

Brack. Unhappy girl! Thou seest not the secret power which holds us fettered in its iron bonds.

Clara. To me it seems not irresistible. But let us not waste the precious moments in idle lamentation. Ha! There come some of our old, upright, stout-hearted countrymen. Hist! Friends!—neighbours! Speak! how goes it with Egmont?

Carp. What would the girl? Bid her hold her peace.

Clara. Step nearer. Let us confer together awhile till we be united and strong; but not a moment must be lost. The audacious tyranny which has dared to bind him in fetters, already raises the dagger against his precious life. Oh, my friends! with every deepening shade of twilight my fears grow more terrible! I dread this night! Come, let us disperse ourselves—let us fly from quarter to quarter, and call the citizens to arms. Let every man seize his weapons. In the market-place will we meet again, and every one will be impelled forward with the stream. The enemy will see themselves at once surrounded and overwhelmed, and must yield before us. What resistance can a handful of mercenaries oppose

to our united strength? He will be saved! He will return among us!—will, for once, owe something to us who owe so much to him. Ay, perchance—nay, for certain—will he behold the morning dawn under the free canopy of heaven.

Carp. What ails thee, damsel?

Clara. Can you misunderstand me? 'Tis of the Count I speak! Of Egmont!—of Egmont!

Yet. Utter not the name—it is deadly!

Clara. Ah! Egmont's name! Not utter it! Why? Is it not in every mouth? Not utter it? What mean ye? What can ye mean? Friends—kind, gentle friends—are you dreaming? Recollect yourselves! Look not on me thus fearfully. Cast not such anxious, stealthy glances around. I only speak aloud what all desire. Is not my voice the voice of your own hearts? Where is the man who, ere he seeks his sleepless pillow this fatal night, will not on bended knee implore kind Heaven to grant this precious boon. Ask each other! Ask yourselves! And who will not echo my watchword—Egmont's liberty, or death!

Yet. God preserve us! Here is a misfortune!

Clara. Stay—stay!—and turn not from that name ye were wont to hail with such delight. When report

www.libtool.com.cn

announced his approach ; when 'twas but rumoured Egmont comes from Ghent, the inhabitants of the streets through which he rode held themselves but too blest. And when they heard the snorting of his steed, who did not fling aside his work to catch a glimpse of him ; while one radiant gleam of hope and joy, like a sunbeam from his noble countenance, lighted up the careworn faces that pressed from every casement to behold him,—then would you raise your children in your arms, and pointing to him cry,—“ See ! there is Egmont ! There is he from whom you may expect better times than your poor fathers have known.” Let not your children ask you in future days,—Where is he gone ?—where are those glorious times you promised us ? Oh, come—come ! We waste words—we do nothing—we betray him !

Soest. Fie on you, Brackenburg,—stop this mischief—take her away !

Brack. Dear Clara, let us home ! What will thy mother—say perchance ?

Clara. Ah, unhand me ! Am I a child, or dost thou deem I have lost my senses ? What avails thy “ perchance ?” From this fearful certainty no empty hopes can draw my thoughts ! You *shall* hear, and you will ; for I see you are touched ! Oh, 'mid the pre-

sent peril, cast but one glance to the past—turn but your thoughts to the future! Would you live when he is destroyed? With his breath flies the last spark of freedom! What was he not to you? For whom has he so often exposed himself to the most imminent dangers? For you, and you alone, flowed that noble blood—a dungeon now confines the heroic soul that sustained you all, and the horrors of secret assassination hover around him! Perchance, he thinks on you—hopes in you; he who was wont only to give, to bestow!

Carp. Come, gossip!

Clara. And I have not arms and strength as you have; but I have that which fails you all—courage and contempt of danger! Oh, that my breath could kindle one spark in your souls! Oh, that on this bosom I could warm and vivify you! Come, countrymen, let not a woman shame you! Come, I will go with you, and, as a banner, though in itself defenceless, leads on a band of gallant warriors to the fight, so shall my spirit shine like a guiding light before you, and love and courage change a timid and dispersed people into a fearful host!

Yet. Take her away! I pity her from my very soul!

[*Exeunt Citizens.*]

www.libtool.com.cn

Brack. Clara!—Clara! Seest thou where we are?

Clara. Where? Beneath those heavens which seemed to array themselves in richer beauty when the noble Egmont passed beneath them! Here at these windows have I seen them, four and five heads, one above the other, only to catch a glimpse of him as he passed! At these doors would they stand bending and bowing—oh! the dastards!—if he deigned to cast but a look at them! Oh, had he been a tyrant! Then might they have turned from his ruin with cold indifference! But he, the good, the kind, the noble; and they loved him! Oh, ye hands that could so deftly wave your bonnets, are ye too weak to grasp the sword? And yet, Brackenburg, do we chide them? These arms which have so often clasped him in their fond embrace, what do they do for him? Now, hear me. Cunning has accomplished so much in this world; thou knowest the old castle, knowest every secret path and bridge. Nothing is impossible—only propose some plan!

Brack. Let us home?

Clara. Good!

Brack. See, there come Alva's sentinels! Hear the voice of reason—deem'st thou me a coward?—doubtest thou whether I would gladly die to save thee? But here we are both mad, I as well as thou.

Seest thou not what thou askest is impossible ? Come, dearest, grief has made thee frantic—calm thyself—let us home !

Clara. Frantic, Brackenburg ! 'Tis you—you have lost your reason ! While you loaded the hero with honours, while you hailed him as your friend, your hope, your saviour, and rent the air with shouts of triumph when he passed, I stood behind my case—ment listening in silence, though my heart beat higher than all those who cheered him ! Now, too, it beats higher ! Now that he needs your aid, you conceal yourselves and forsake him, nor feel that if he perish you perish with him !

Brack. Come home !—come home !

Clara. Home !

Brack. Reflect only. Look around thee ! These were the streets in which thou wert never seen, save on the Sabbath day ! Through which thou wert wont to pass to church, with downcast eyes, angry if I but ventured to join thee with a friendly greeting ; and now thou standest, speakest, and actest in the eyes of the world ! Recollect thyself, love. What can this avail us ?

Clara. Yes ; let us go home. I remember me. Come, Brackenburg, knowest thou where my dwelling lies ?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Prison, lighted by a small lamp ; a couch in the back-ground.

EGMONT. (*Alone.*)

Egm. Old friend—ever faithful Sleep! Oh! dost thou shun me now, like every other friend? How gently wert thou wont to descend on my free brow, even as a wreath of myrtle, woven by the hand of love. Amid the clang of weapons, on the tumultuous waves of life, still sweetly as an infant on its mother's bosom did I repose within thine arms; when the tempests howled through boughs and branches, and the tall forest-trees trembled beneath the shock, the inward core of thy heart remained unmoved. And what should shake me, now? What should unnerve my firm and resolute soul? Ha! 'tis the sound of the murderous axe, striking at the very root of the stately tree,—still, still I stand erect; and yet a secret shudder runs through every vein. Ay! treacherous power prevails! It undermines the firm and lofty trunk, and ere the rind crack, the crown falls, with a

www.libtool.com.cn

mighty crash, unto the earth. Yet wherefore, now! Thou, who hast so often thrown the weightiest cares aside, like bubbles from thy brow, why canst not banish now this strange foreboding—this secret dread? Since when hast thou trembled at the thought of death? Thou, to whom that death, in all its varying forms, is as familiar as the other shapes of the earth thou treadest. But, no! 'tis not the common foe: he whom the heroic bosom pants to meet!—No! 'tis the dungeon! That emblem of the grave, fearful alike to the brave and to the coward. Even when reposing at ease in my velvet-cushioned chair, I could scarcely restrain my impatience at beholding the princes wasting hours in discussions on matters which required scarcely a moment's deliberation; and when pent up within the narrow walls of a saloon, the rafters of the vault seemed to stifle me. Then forth would I hasten, as soon as might be, and with deep-drawn breath vault on my gallant steed, and away—away, to that spot to which we both belong—to the fields, where Nature sheds her balmy blessings, and beauty breathes above and around us; amid the pure gales of heaven, where, like the earth-born giants of old, we gather fresh strength from our mother's touch. Where, in every vein, glows the

www.libtool.com.cn

pride of manhood, and of man's noblest impulses—where the soul of the young huntsman glows with the desire still to press onward, to conquer, to subdue. Where, with hasty step, the warrior assumes his inborn claim to conquest o'er the world; and like a hailstorm, sweeps with devastating freedom, through forest, field, and glen, spurning all boundaries raised by human hand. Alas! thou art but an empty shadow.—Oh, vain remembrance of lost delights! Whither has the treacherous hand of Destiny led thee? Did it deny thee the death thou never shunned in the open face of day, only to give thee a better foretaste of the grave in a wretched dungeon. How its rank smell meets me from every stone! Life itself seems to stagnate, and the foot draws back, shuddering from the couch as though it were the grave. Oh! care, care, thou who beginnest murder ere the time, avaunt! Since when is Egmont thus alone—so utterly alone in this wide world? Doubt renders thee callous, not happiness. What! is the king's justice, in which, during thy whole life, thou hast so implicitly confided, is the Regent's friendship, which, thou mayst confess it, almost bore the hue of love!—have they in an instant vanished, like a brilliant exhalation of the night? Have they left thee alone

upon thy gloomy path in utter darkness? Will not Orange lead on thy friends to the rescue? Will not the people assemble, and, with resistless might, break thy prison doors asunder? Oh, ye walls, which thus enclose me, resist not the well-meant efforts of so many noble spirits. Oh, may the courage my glance was wont to kindle in their hearts, now return from theirs to mine. Yes, yes; they rise in thousands! they come!—they stand at my side! Their earnest prayers ascend to heaven, and implore a miracle in my behalf! And if no angel descends to rescue me! Oh, I see them grasp the lance and sword. The doors spring open—the bolts fly back with a mighty crash—the walls fall beneath their hands, and the rising morn beholds Egmont restored to liberty! How many a well-known face greets me with rejoicing? Oh, Clara! wert thou but a man—then surely, among the very first should I behold thee, here, and owe to thee that which 'tis hard to owe, even to a king—my freedom.

SCENE III.—*Clara's House.*

CLARA enters with a lamp and a glass of water from her chamber. She places the glass on the table, and approaches the window.

Clara. Brackenburg!—is it you? What did I hear?—No one yet! No one! I will place the lamp in the casement, that he may see I am yet awake, and watching for him. He promised me tidings! Alas, what tidings do I seek? A fearful certainty of ill! Egmont condemned! What court dare call him to account—yet they condemn him! The King condemns him, or the Duke! And the Regent withdraws herself, and Orange hesitates, and every other friend. Is this the world, of whose falsehood—of whose treachery I have heard so much, and know nothing? Is this the world which can be base enough to bear ill-will to him—the beloved of every heart? Can villany itself be mighty enough to hurl him so quickly from his proud eminence! Yet thus it is! Oh, Egmont! I held thee safe before God and man, as in mine arms! What was I to thee! Thou hast called me thine! My whole existence

www.libtool.com.cn

I dedicated to thee! What am I now? Vainly I stretch my hands towards the toils which have ensnared thee—Thou a captive, and I free! Here is the key of my door. My egress, my ingress, depend upon my own pleasure, and yet I cannot aid thee. Oh, bind me, if ye would not have me despair! Throw me into the deepest dungeon, that I may dash my head against the dripping walls, groan for freedom, and dream how I would save him, were I not bound in fetters! Now I am free; and in this freedom lies the anguish of impotency, conscious I cannot move a limb to aid him. Alas! this little portion of thy being, thy Clara, is like thee, a prisoner, and struggles in the agonies of death. I hear steps—a cough. Brackenburg! 'Tis he—'tis he! Good, but unhappy man!—thy destiny remains unchanged! Thy loved one opens thee the door by night, and, oh! to what a fearful interview!

Enter BRACKENBURG.

Clara. Thou art so pale, so trembling, Brackenburg; speak! How goes it?

Brack. I have reached you through by-ways and perils; all the principal streets are lined with soldiery, and it is by alleys and corners I have stolen to you!

www.libtool.com.cn

Clara. Say, how goes it ?

Brack. (*Seating himself.*) Oh, Clara ! Let me weep ! I loved him not : he was the rich man, and tempted the poor man's only lamb from his fold to richer pasture, yet I never cursed him ! God gave me a kind and forgiving heart : my life wasted slowly away in hopeless grief, and each day I trusted would be my last !

Clara. Forget that, Brackenburg—forget thyself—tell me of him ! Is it true ? Is he condemned ?

Brack. He is. I know it but too surely.

Clara. And lives still ?

Brack. Yes, he still lives !

Clara. How canst thou answer for that ? Tyranny will murder the noble victim in the dead of night : his blood will flow concealed from every eye, and while the people, stunned and helpless, lie buried in sleep, dreaming of his safety and the fulfilment of their own impotent wishes, his noble spirit, indignant with us, has left this world ! Deceive not thyself or me—he is no more !

Brack. No, no ; he lives ; and alas ! the Spaniards prepare a fearful spectacle for the people they fain would trample on—to crush every heart that yet beats for liberty at once, and for ever !



Clara. Proceed, and pronounce my death-warrant, too! Nearer and nearer I approach the realms of bliss, and feel already the breath of consolation wafted from those regions of eternal peace! Say on!

Brack. I could perceive by the sentinels and by certain hints, dropped here and there, that some fearful spectacle was secretly preparing in the market-place. I stole through back streets to my cousin's house, and from the back window looked out into the market-place; beneath, a band of Spanish soldiers, ranged in a wide circle, were waving blazing torches to and fro. I strained my unaccustomed eye, and amid the gloom a dark scaffold rose slowly on my sight, spacious and high. Many around were busied in covering whatever woodwork yet remained visible with black cloth. The steps they likewise covered with black. I saw it well. They seemed as if preparing some dreadful sacrifice. A white crucifix, glittering like silver amid the darkness, was raised high on one side. I gazed, and the conviction of the dreadful truth grew stronger and stronger. Still waved the torches, here and there around; gradually they faded and disappeared, and in an instant, this fearful offspring of night sank back into its mother's womb!

www.libtool.com.cn

Clara. Hush, Brackenburg! let this veil rest o'er my soul! The spectres are vanished! and thou, gentle night, lend thy mantle to the shuddering earth! The fearful burden she can bear no longer, but tearing open her deep abyss, swallows up the murderous scaffold in her fathomless depths! and that God, whom in their frenzy they have insulted, sends his angel down to earth! At his holy touch bolts and bars spring back! With a halo of radiant glory, he surrounds the loved one's brow, and gently through the gloom leads him to eternal life and freedom! And my way, too, goes secretly through the darkness to meet him there!

Brack. (*Stopping her.*) My child! where wouldst thou?

Clara. Hush, my friend, lest we awake any one. Knowest thou this flask, Brackenburg? I took it from thee, jestingly, when in thy impatience thou wert wont to menace thyself with destruction: and now, my friend——

Brack. In Heaven's name——

Clara. Thou canst not hinder it! Death is my portion; and grant me the swift and easy death thou hadst prepared for thyself! Give me thine hand! At the moment I am about to unclosethat

www.libtool.com.cn
gloomy portal, whence there is no return, I may tell thee, with this pressure, how tenderly I have loved, how deeply I have pitied thee! My brother died in early youth, and thee I selected to supply his place. Thine heart, alas! was not contented with a sister's love, but sought with ever-increasing ardour for that which was not destined for thee. Forgive me, and farewell! Let me call thee brother!—it is a name comprising many holy names in one! Accept the last fair blossom of the departing spirit! Take this kiss!—death unites all things, Brackenburgh!—let it unite us too!

Brack. Then let me at least die with thee!—there is enough for both!

Clara. Hold!—thou must live! Thou *canst* live! Support my mother, who, without thine aid, would pine in abject poverty!—be to her what I can be no longer! Live together, and mourn for me! mourn for our native land, and for him who could alone have saved her! Farewell! The present generation must bear the burthen of this crime! Vengeance itself cannot efface it! This day the universe suddenly stands still!—it pauses in its accustomed course, and my pulse beats but for a few moments longer! Farewell!

Brack. Oh, live for us, as we live for thee alone !
Thou kill'st us in thee ! Oh, live and suffer ; we will
stand beside thee, and ever-anxious love shall offer
thee the sweetest consolation in its living arms ! Be
ours—be ours—I dare not say be mine !

Clara. Hush, Brackenburt ! thou know'st not what
thou say'st ! Where hopes shines to thee—to me all
is despair !

Brack. Share hope with the living. Pause on the
brink of the abyss ; look down into the fearful gulf
beneath—then turn thy glance back to those thou
wouldst leave behind !

Clara. I have conquered. Bid me not resume the
struggle.

Brack. Thou art blinded ; all joy is not for ever
lost for thee. Many a day yet——

Clara. Alas, what hast thou said ? With cruel
hand thou tearest the veil from my eyes ; yes ! it will
dawn, that day ! Vainly will it seek to shroud itself
in mist ! It must dawn ! Fearfully the citizen
looks forth from his casement, for the night has left
one dark spot behind. He gazes, and the scaffold
looms in the morning light. Suffering anew, the
desecrated image of the Saviour turns towards his
Father his imploring glance, the sun hides its beams

www.libtool.com.cn
 it will not mark the hour of Egmont's doom ; slowly the hand goes its way, and one hour strikes after another ! Hold !—the thought of that morning plunges me in the grave !

[She approaches the window, as if to look around, and drinks secretly.]

Brack. Clara, Clara !

Clara. *(Goes to the table, and drinks the water.)*

Here is the remainder—I lure thee not after me—do as thou wilt—farewell !—Extinguish the lamp silently, and without delay—I go to rest—steal softly away and close the door after thee—wake not my mother—go, save thyself, if thou wouldst not appear my murderer ! *[Exit.]*

Brack. She leaves me here for the last time as ever ! Oh, could she feel how she rends the heart that loves her ! She leaves me here to die alone, and life and death are alike hateful to me ! To die alone ! Oh, where is fate so hard as mine ? She shares the death-drops with me, and sends me from her side ! She draws me after her, yet forces me back to life ! Oh, Egmont, how blissful is thy lot ! She goes before thee to prepare the victor's palm for thy brow. And shall I follow ? to stand aloof, to bear this unextinguishable envy even unto yonder realms of

www.libtool.com.cn

light? On this earth is no resting-place for me, and heaven and hell present like torture to my soul! Oh, how welcome were the hand of annihilation to the wretched! [Exit.

(The stage remains some time unchanged; then music begins; the lamp flares once and then is suddenly extinguished; the scene changes to EGMONT'S PRISON. EGMONT lies sleeping on the couch; the door opens; servants, with torches, enter; FERDINAND and SILVA follow, accompanied by armed men; EGMONT starts from his slumber.

Egm. Who are you who rouse me thus rudely from my slumbers? What mean your vague and insolent glances? Why this fearful train?—with what dream of horror would you cheat the scarcely wakened senses? Speak!

Silva. The duke sends us to announce thy doom.

Egm. Bring'st thou the headsman with thee to execute it?

Silva. Hear it; and thou wilt know what awaits thee!

Egm. Ay, this beseems you and your shameful proceedings—planned and carried out alike in darkness—thus would this act of dire injustice hide itself

from the light of day. Step boldly forward, thou who bearest the sword concealed beneath thy mantle—here is my head—the freest that ever fell beneath the stroke of tyranny.

Silva. Thou errest! The sentence of the righteous judge shuns not the light of day.

Egm. Then their audacity oversteps all bounds of belief.

Silva. (*Takes the sentence from one of the bystanders, unfolds it and reads.*) “In the name of the King, and with power, commissioned by his Majesty to judge all his subjects, of whatever rank—even Knights of the Golden Fleece—we declare——”

Egm. Can the king transfer *that* power?

Silva. “We, after a long, careful, and legal investigation, declare thee, Henry, Count Egmont, Prince of Gaure, guilty of high treason, and pronounce this sentence: that thou be led at break of day from this prison to the market-place, and there in the sight of the assembled people, thine head be severed from thy body, as a warning to all traitors. Given at Brussels, the——— (*Date and year so imperfectly read, that the audience cannot understand them.*) Ferdinand, Duke of Alva, President of the

Court of the Twelve." Thou knowest now thy fate—but little time is left thee to call up all thy resignation, to put thine house in order, and take leave of thy friends.

[*Exeunt all, except FERDINAND and EGMONT—
the stage is but imperfectly lighted.*

Egm. (*Stands for a time as if sunk in thought, and allows SILVA to depart without looking round him. He imagines himself alone, but raising his eyes, perceives ALVA'S son.*) Thou lingerest here—wouldst thou by thy presence increase my amazement, my dismay? Wouldst thou bear thy father the welcome tidings, that I am sunk in unmanly despair? Go and tell him he can deceive neither the world nor me. 'Twill be murmured at first in secret, then spoken more loudly, and at length, when one day he is degraded from his proud eminence, a thousand voices will exclaim, that neither the welfare of the state, the dignity of the king, nor the tranquillity of the provinces, has brought him hither. They will tell him it was for his own purposes he has excited this monstrous confusion, that his services might be required; and I fall a victim to his contemptible hate—to his paltry, low-minded envy. Yes, I know it. I, the doomed, the dying man, may speak it

aloud! Long has he envied me, long has he sought every means to hurl me into ruin! Years ago, while yet youths, we played dice together, and the piles of gold fell one after another from his side to mine, he stood in grim silence, affecting carelessness, while inwardly burning with rage, less at his own loss than at my success. Well do I remember the fiery glance, the treacherous paleness of his countenance, when we shot together at the target at a public festival, in the presence of assembled thousands. He had challenged me to the contest, and both nations stood by to watch the result — Spaniards and Flemings, betting and hoping. I was victor. His rifle missed; mine hit the mark, and loud shouts of triumph from my friends rent the air—now his shot strikes me. Tell him I know him; that the world despises every monument of victory a petty spirit surreptitiously erects in its own honour; and thou, if it be possible for a son to avoid following in his father's steps, avail thyself betimes of the shame that now compels thee to blush for him whom thou wouldst fain revere and honour.

Ferd. I hear thee without interruption. Thy reproaches fall like a club on the warrior's helm! I feel the concussion, but I am armed against the blow. They strike but cannot wound me. I feel

nothing but the pang that rends my heart—Alas! alas! Have I lived to behold such a spectacle? Am I sent hither to such a scene?

Egm. Thou breakest out into complaints? What moves—what troubles thee? Is it late repentance at having lent thine aid to this shameful conspiracy? Thou art so young—thy mien was so winning—thou wert so kind, so friendly towards me. So long as I beheld thee, I felt at peace with thy father; and false, aye, falser than he, thou hast lured me into the toils. Thou art the monster! He who confides in *him*, does it at his own peril; but who could fear danger in trusting thee? Go!—rob me not of the few moments that yet remain to me. Go! that I may collect my scattered senses, and forget the world, and *thee* first of all.

Ferd. What shall I say to thee? I stand and gaze on thee, and yet it seems as though I saw neither thee nor myself. Shall I attempt to exculpate my conduct?—shall I swear that I never knew my father's intents till too late to prevent them?—that only at the very last moment his whole fearful scheme was disclosed to me—that I have been the mere passive instrument of his will! What matters it now whether thou thinkest good or evil of me!

Thou art lost!—and I, unhappy man, stand here only to assure thee of thy doom, and to lament thee!

Egm. What strange voice—what unexpected consolation meets me on the very brink of the tomb? Thou, the son of my greatest—nay, almost only enemy—thou pitiest me! Thou art not leagued with my murderers? Say, for what shall I hold thee?

Ferd. Cruel father! Yes; I recognise thee in this command! Thou knewest my heart, the gentle feelings thou hast so often chided as the sole inheritance of a too tender mother. Thou hast sent me hither to form me like thyself; thou hast forced me to behold this man, on the very brink of a yawning grave, the victim of an arbitrary doom, that after enduring this bitterest of earthly pangs, my heart may become steeled against every other sorrow—insensible alike to pity and to grief, happen what may!

Egm. I am amazed! Calm thyself—speak like a man!

Ferd. Oh, that I were a woman!—that they might ask what ails thee? Tell me a greater, a more frightful evil; make me spectator of a more horrid deed; I will thank thee—I will say 'twas nothing!

www.libtool.com.cn

Egm. Thou forgettest thyself? Where art thou?

Ferd. Let this passion have way—let me lament! I will not seem composed when my very heart is broken within me! Must I see thee here! It is terrible! Thou canst not understand me—and shouldst thou? Egmont! Egmont!

[He falls on his neck.]

Egm. Unravel this mystery?

Ferd. No mystery.

Egm. How can the destiny of a mere stranger move thee thus?

Ferd. Not a stranger; thou wert no stranger to me. It was thy name which, like some guiding star, shone before me—e'en from my earliest youth. How often have I listened to thy praises! The youth is the model of the boy—the man of the youth. Thus didst thou step before me, ever before me, and I watched thee without envy, and slowly followed step by step; at length, I hoped to see thee. My heart flew to meet thee! I had destined thee for my friend! And I selected thee anew, when I beheld thee! And now all is over—I see thee here!

Egm. My friend; if it can soothe thee, be assured that the very first moment we met, a secret sympathy

impelled me towards thee. And now hear me—let us speak a few quiet words together. Is it thy father's real fixed determination to kill me?

Ferd. It is!

Egm. This sentence is not a mere phantom of terror to alarm me?—to glut his revenge in witnessing my fear—my degradation—to humble, and then raise me again by the royal mercy?

Ferd. No, no; at first I, too, clung to this fond, delusive hope, and even then my heart trembled with anguish, to behold thee thus; but now I feel 'tis real—too real.

Egm. Then, hear me: if thy heart plead so warmly in my behalf—if thou abhorrest the tyranny which has enchained me—then save me! The moments are precious. Thou art the son of the all-powerful, and thyself mighty, here. Let us fly. I know the paths; the means of escape cannot be unknown to thee. These walls once passed, a few miles only separate me from my friends. Break these fetters,—lead me to them, and be ours. Doubtless the king will one day thank thee for mysafety. Now, he is surprised into consent, or perhaps all this is unknown to him. Thy father ventures it on his own responsibility, and the sovereign must seem to approve what is irrevocable

even though it fill him with horror. Thou ponderest—thou deliberatest. Oh, devise some means of freedom! Speak, oh, speak! and nourish my hopes!

Ferd. Hold—hold! Every word but deepens my despair; here are no means of escape; here, wisdom itself were unavailing. 'Tis this tortures me—this rends my heart. I have myself aided to lay the toils—I know how firmly, how inextricably the knots are tied. I know with what cunning, with what boldness, every avenue of escape is cut off. I feel myself fettered like thee, and all the rest. Think'st thou I should waste the hours in idle lamentation, had I not already tried every means of saving thee? I have lain at his feet, remonstrated, implored in vain. He sent me hither to crush, in one fatal instant, every joy, every hope, every bright anticipation of my youth.

Egm. And no means of rescue?

Ferd. None!

Egm. (*Stamping with his foot.*) No hope! Sweet life—sweet habit of action and of being! must I part from thee—so calmly part with thee? Not amid the tumult of the fight, the clang of weapons, the distractions of the battle field, dost thou fling me a rapid farewell! Thou biddest me no hasty adieu!—thou

www.libtool.com.cn

shortenest not the moment of departure. Once more must I press thine hand, gaze into thine eyes, feel in my inmost soul, all thy worth and all thy beauty; then tear me from thee, and say—go hence!

Ferd. And I must stand by and behold all this! I cannot aid, I cannot save thee! what heart but must break beneath such a stroke?

Egm. Calm thyself.

Ferd. Thou canst be calm—thou canst take this fatal step, forced on thee by necessity, with all a hero's fortitude; but what can I?—thou subduest thyself; thou leavest the world as victor, I survive myself and thee. I have lost the light that cheered me in the festal hall, the banner that led me on in the battle field—and for ever! What is life to me, now? A dark and dreary wilderness.

Egm. Young friend! whom, through so strange a destiny, I lose and win at the same moment—who sufferest for me the pangs of death—look on me; thou dost not lose me now; if my life was a mirror in which thou lovedst to gaze, so be my untimely doom. Men are not together only when side by side. No; the distant, the departed, still exist to us; for thee I shall not be dead, and for myself I have lived long enough: each hour, as it fled, I have

enjoyed, each day have I fulfilled my duty,—such as my conscience dictated it. And now my life but ends as it might have terminated long ago, on the sands of Gravelines. I shall cease to live, indeed; but then I *have* lived. Follow my example, my friend: enjoy existence while thou canst, and when death comes, meet its approach without dismay.

Ferd. Thou shouldst have preserved thyself for us!—alas, thou art thine own destroyer! Oft-times I listened, when the wise and prudent spoke of thee. Friends and enemies, they disputed long as to thy merits, but in one thing they all agreed—none dared deny thou trod'st a dangerous path. How often have I longed to warn thee! Hadst thou no friends?

Egm. I *was* warned.

Ferd. And I found all the accusations, point for point, in the indictment, and thine answers; good enough to excuse thee before impartial judges, but not sufficiently cogent to clear thee from all imputations of guilt, when——

Egm. No more of this! Man fancies he directs his own steps, and rules his own actions, while he is but the puppet of fate, and impelled onwards by a power he can neither resist nor control. Let us

not dwell on this: these reflections I can easily banish; not so my anxiety for my native land; but that, too, will be cared for. If I but thought my blood could save that of thousands, or restore peace to my people, how gladly would I shed each drop within my veins! But, alas! this will not be! But it ill becomes poor mortals to indulge in vain speculations, when the power to act is no longer their own. If thou canst restrain—or, if that be hopeless, canst guide—thy father's devastating power, so, do—but who can? And now, farewell!

Ferd. I cannot leave thee!

Egm. Let me commend my followers to thy care. I have good men in my service. Let them not be scattered, nor persecuted. How stands it with Richard, my secretary?

Ferd. He is gone before thee—they have beheaded him as accomplice of high treason.

Egm. Poor soul! One word more, then I have done. Whatever mighty thoughts engross the mind, nature at length irresistibly claims her right, and as an infant, coiled in the serpent's deadly folds, still sleeps sweetly on; so the weary pilgrim lays him down once more before the gates of death, and sinks into deep repose, as though prepar-

ing for a long and toilsome journey. One word more: I know a maiden—thou wilt not despise her, for she was mine;—now, I have commended her to thy care, I die in peace. Thou art a man of honour—with thee I know she will be safe. Lives my old Henry still?—is he free?

Ferd. The gallant old man, who always accompanied you on horseback?

Egm. The same.

Ferd. He lives!—he is free!

Egm. He knows her dwelling; let him lead thee thither, and, till the latest hour of his existence, reward him for having shown thee the way to such a treasure; and now, once more, farewell!

Ferd. I cannot go!

Egm. (*Urging him towards the door.*) Farewell!

Ferd. Oh, let me yet one moment?—

Egm. No adieu, friend! (*He accompanies Ferdinand to the door, then tears himself away, and Ferdinand, confounded, disappears hastily.*) Vindictive man! how little didst thou think to confer on me this benefit through thine own son! Through him am I delivered from every care and every sorrow; from fear, and all lingering feeling of anxiety for the world I am about to leave; gently and urgently,

www.libtool.com.cn

Nature demands her last tribute! 'tis over!—'tis resolved! And those very thoughts which last night held me waking on my couch, now with resistless power lull my senses to repose. (*He seats himself on the couch—music.*) Sweet sleep, like the purest joys of life thou comest most willingly when uninvited! thou loosenest the chains of gloomy thought—minglest conflicting images of joy and sorrow, and lulled in sweet delirium, we sink to forgetfulness, and cease to be.

[He falls asleep; music accompanies his slumber; behind his couch the wall opens—a brilliant vision appears. Freedom, arrayed in a celestial robe, surrounded by a glory, is seen leaning on a cloud—her features are those of CLARA, and she bends over the sleeping hero; her countenance expresses compassion—she seems to pity him. Soon she recovers herself, and with an encouraging sign, exhibits the emblems of liberty—the arrows, staff, and cap—motions him to be of good cheer, and while she signifies to him that his death will procure the freedom of the provinces, salutes him as the victor, and presents him with the laurel wreath. As she approaches nearer with the wreath, EGMONT moves as one in slumber, so as to recline with his face towards her. She holds the wreath impending over his head—a warlike music of trumpets and other instruments is heard in the distance: at the faintest sound of the latter, the vision disappears. Egmont's first impulse is to raise his hand to his head, as if to grasp the wreath; he then rises and gazes around, with his hands uplifted.

Egm. The wreath has vanished! Thou loveliest of visions—the light of day has frighted thee away. Yes, 'twas they! they were united—the two dearest joys of my heart. Freedom, the heavenly goddess, borrowed the form of my beloved one—the beauteous maiden arrayed herself in Freedom's heavenly garb. She stepped before me with blood-stained feet—the waving folds of her garments dyed with gore! It was my blood, and the blood of many patriots. But no, it will not flow in vain. On, gallant people—on! The goddess of victory leads you! And as the sea breaks through your barriers, so break through the wall of tyranny—tear it down, and hurl the scattered fragments far from the land it has defiled. (*Drums approach.*) Hark, hark. How often have these sounds summoned me with unfettered steps to the field of strife and victory. How gallantly did my brave comrades step forth on the sward to glory and honour. What, then! I too go to meet a glorious death even from these dungeon walls. I die for freedom—for the freedom to which I have devoted my existence; for which I have fought and conquered, and which I now seal with my blood. (*The background is filled up with Spanish soldiers carrying halberets.*) Yes, lead them together! Me ye cannot appal. I have been

wont to stand amid the ranks of war, and while death threatened on every side to feel existence tenfold more vivid within me. (*Drums.*) On every side, the foe surrounds thee! swords are flashing. Courage, my friends! Your parents, your wives, your children, are behind you. Think of these, and onwards, onwards, in the cause of Freedom! (*Pointing to the guard.*) And these are urged only by a hollow word of their ruler, not by their own free will. Protect your hearths and homes, and to save the loved ones, fall joyfully, as I fall.

[*Drums, as he advances towards the guards at the back-door; the curtain falls: the music strikes up, and closes with a symphony of victory.*

www.libtool.com.cn

NOTES.

NOTE A, PAGE 13.—*Margaret of Parma.*

MARGARET was a natural daughter of Charles the Fifth, by a Flemish lady, of the name of Vangeest, and born in 1522. To spare the reputation of her house, she was at first brought up in obscurity; but her mother, who appears to have had more vanity than honour, cared little to conceal the secret of her origin, and, subsequently, a princely education betrayed the daughter of an emperor. While yet a child, she was sent to Brussels for her education, and entrusted to the care of the Stadtholder Margaret, her great aunt; but losing the latter in her eighth year, she was placed under the protection of her successor, Queen Maria of Hungary, a sister of the emperor. When only in her fourth year, her father had already affianced her to the Prince of Ferrara, but this connexion being dissolved, she was betrothed to Alexander of Medici, and the marriage was celebrated at Naples, after the triumphant return of the emperor from Africa. A violent death deprived her of a husband she could not love, in the first year of an unhappy marriage, and for the third time was her hand destined to serve as an instrument to her father's policy. Octavius Farnese, a boy

www.libtool.com.cn

of thirteen, and nephew of Paul the Third, received with her person the duchies of Parma and Piacenza as dowry, and by a strange freak of destiny, was Margaret, in the bloom of womanhood united to a boy, in the same way as, while yet a mere child, she had been disposed of to a man of mature age. A mind but little feminine rendered this last connexion still more unnatural, for all her inclinations were masculine, and her whole manner of life seemed a mockery of her sex. After the example of her instructresses, the Queen of Hungary, and her great aunt, the Duchess Maria of Burgundy, (who met her death in the pursuit of her favourite amusement,) she was a passionate lover of the chase, and had so hardened her constitution by the exercise, that she was able to endure all the fatigues inseparable from it. Her carriage displayed so little grace, that one was tempted to mistake her rather for a disguised man than a masculine woman; and nature, whom she seemed to scorn through the violation of her laws, at length avenged herself by afflicting her with a disease, usually confined to the other sex—viz., the gout. All these extraordinary qualities were crowned by a vehement bigotry, with which Ignatius Loyola, her confessor and teacher, had had the honour of inspiring her mind. Among the penances and works of grace with which she crucified her vanity, one of the most remarkable was washing the feet of a certain number of poor people during Lent every year, waiting on them at table like a servant, and dismissing them with rich presents. This last trait of character is in itself sufficient to explain the preference given her by the king, but that preference might have been justified by the best motives of state policy. Margaret had been born and educated in the Netherlands; she had passed her early youth among their inhabitants, and adopted much of their manners and customs. Two stadtholders, under whose eye she had grown to womanhood, initiated her into those maxims by

which that peculiar people were best governed, and which might have served her as models for her future course. She was not deficient either in natural ability or in a peculiar talent for business, which she had acquired from her instructresses, and afterwards brought to greater perfection in the Italian school.

The Netherlands had been for many years accustomed to the rule of women, and Philip, perhaps, might have hoped that the sharp iron of tyranny which he was now resolved to use against them, would be better endured from a woman's hand.

NOTE B, PAGE 33.—*Attacks on the Churches.*

The attack on the images began in West Flanders and Artois, in the provinces between the Lys and the sea. A furious mob of workmen, sailors, and peasants, women of the town, thieves, and beggars, about three hundred in number, provided with clubs, staves, hammers, ladders, ropes, and a few of them armed with muskets and daggers, urged by fanatical fury, entered the towns and villages, burst open the doors of the churches and convents, threw down the altars, dashed the images of the saints to pieces, and trod them under foot; becoming still more inflamed by these guilty acts, and strengthened by the accession of numbers, they rushed on at once to Ypres, where they reckoned upon a strong body of adherents among the Calvinists. There they broke into the principal church, scaled the walls with ladders, dashed the pictures to atoms with hammers, hewed the pulpit and pews with axes, stripped the altar of its decorations, and stole the holy vessels. This example was instantly followed in Menin, Comines, Verviers, Lille, Oudenarde, and in a few days the same blind fury seized all Flanders. It so happened that, just as the first tidings arrived at Antwerp, the city was thronged by multitudes of strangers without homes,

whom the Feast of the Assumption had congregated together. Even the presence of the Prince of Orange scarcely sufficed to check this unruly concourse, burning to follow the example of their brothers of St. Omer. But a command from court recalling him in all haste to Brussels, where the regent had just assembled her council of state, in order to lay the royal letters before them, left Antwerp a prey to their wanton mischief. His departure was the signal for the tumult to break out. From a dread of the extravagance of the people, which from the very first day had manifested itself in mockery and derision, the image of the Virgin, after being carried a few rounds, had been placed for safety in the choir, without being set up, as usual, in the middle of the church. This induced some mischievous boys to ask it, mockingly, why it had lately absented itself; others soon invaded the pulpit, where they mimicked the preacher and challenged the papists to the contest; a Roman-catholic mariner, incensed by this mockery, endeavoured to drag them away, and they came to blows in the pulpit.

Similar scenes took place the following evening; the numbers increased, and many came provided with secret weapons and suspicious instruments. At last, it occurred to some one to cry, "Long live the beggars;" instantly the whole rabble repeated the words, and the image of the Virgin was desired to do the same. The few worshippers present, resigning all hope of effecting anything against these madmen, left the church after closing all the doors but one. As soon as the rioters found themselves alone, it was proposed to strike up one of the Psalms of the new melodies, which were prohibited by Government; during the singing of which they all, as if by a given signal, cast themselves furiously on the image of the Virgin, pierced it through with swords and daggers, and struck off its head. Thieves and prostitutes tore the huge tapers from the altar, to

light them to the goodly work ; the magnificent church organ, a master-piece of the skill of those days, was utterly destroyed, and the pictures and statues dashed to atoms. A Christ crucified between the two thieves, of the size of life, an ancient and highly esteemed piece, which was erected opposite the high altar, was dragged to the ground by cords, and broken to pieces with hatchets ; while the two murderers at his side were carefully respected. The Host was strewed on the ground and trodden under foot ; the wine destined for the celebration of the communion, employed to drink the health of the beggars, and with the holy oil, the rabble polished their shoes. Even the graves were not spared ; the half-corrupted bodies were dragged forth and trodden under foot. This was all effected with such wonderful order, that it seemed as if the parts were distributed before hand. Notwithstanding the perilous nature of their occupation, and the heavy weights that fell upon and around them, none sustained the slightest injury ; though many stood side by side on the very highest steps of the ladders. Notwithstanding the numerous tapers that lighted them to their work of destruction, not a single one of the perpetrators of the work of demolition was recognised ; the deed was accomplished with incredible celerity, and a band of men not exceeding a hundred at the utmost, devastated in a few hours a temple of seventy altars, and, next to the church of St. Peter's at Rome, one of the largest and most splendid in Christendom. They did not, however, content themselves with the cathedral ; with torches and tapers which they purloined from its sacred precincts, they rushed forth at midnight, to prepare a similar destiny for all the remaining churches, convents, and chapels. With every fresh act of villany, the rabble increased in number ; and the opportunity enticed thieves to mingle among them. Whatever they found, they carried away,—money, clothes, garments, and ves-

sels; they got drunk afresh in the cellars of the convents. The nuns and monks left everything behind them, in order to escape the worst of outrages. The hoarse tumult caused by these transactions had roused the burghers from their first sleep: and darkness made the danger appear still more terrible than it was in reality. But instead of hastening to the defence of their churches, they entrenched themselves within their houses, and, with doubt and terror, awaited the dawn. The rising sun at length manifested the destruction that had taken place, but the night's work was not yet ended. A few churches and cloisters had yet been spared; these were to meet a similar destiny. Three days the work of destruction lasted. Fearful, at length, that this mad rabble, when nothing holy was left to lay hands on, would make a similar attack on what was profane, and thus endanger the safety of their warehouses, and rendered somewhat more courageous by discovering the insignificant amount of their enemies, the rich citizens ventured at length to exhibit themselves armed at the doors of their dwellings. All the gates of the town were closed, except one through which the mob burst, in order to renew the same horrors in the neighbouring districts. During the whole time, the authorities had not once ventured to make the slightest use of their power, so completely were they held in awe by the superior force of the Calvinists, by whom as they believed this mob of thieves had been hired. The amount of the injuries caused by these devastations was almost incredible; at the cathedral alone it was estimated above one hundred thousand florins. Many costly works of art were entirely ruined; many valuable manuscripts, many monuments, important for the ends of history and diplomacy, were completely lost. The burgomaster, indeed, instantly issued commands, that the stolen articles should be returned, under pain of death, and the reformed preachers, who blushed

for their co-religionists, emphatically assisted his efforts. By this means, much was saved, and the leaders of the mob, either less impelled by a love of plunder than by revenge and fanaticism, or guided by foreign influence, in order to prevent such excesses for the future, resolved henceforth to conduct their attacks in better order and in regular bands. The town of Ghent meanwhile trembled at the prospect of a similar destiny; and immediately on the receipt of the intelligence of the disturbances in Antwerp, the principal burghers assembled and bound themselves by an oath to drive back the desecrators of the temple by force of arms. But on a similar oath being proposed to the people, the voices were divided; and many declared, in plain terms, that they were by no means inclined to impede so godly a work. In such a state of affairs, the priests held it advisable to secure the most valuable jewels in the citadel; and some families were permitted to receive back what their ancestors had presented to the church. Meanwhile, all ceremonies were suspended; the courts of justice were at a standstill, as if in a conquered town, and every one trembled at the expectation of what was to follow. At last an insolent rabble went so far as to send a deputation to the government, with the following audacious proposition. They were commanded by their superiors, they said, to pull down the images in the churches, according to the example of other towns: if no opposition was offered, it should be effected quietly and without injury; but if opposed they would take them by force. Their impertinence went even so far as to demand the help of the officers of justice, in their undertaking. At first, the governor was thunderstruck by this insolence; but after considering that the excesses might perhaps be held in check by the authority of the law, he no longer hesitated to grant their demands. At Tournay the churches were robbed of their decorations, in the very face of the gar-

rison, who could not be induced to march against the insurgents. On the latter being informed that the gold and silver vessels, together with the sacerdotal ornaments, had been buried under ground, they pierced through the whole floor of the church ; and thus the body of the Duke Adolph, of Gueldreland, who had fallen at the head of the rebellious inhabitants of Ghent, and been buried at Tournay, was brought once more to the light of day. This Adolph had made war on his own father, and having overcome him, had actually dragged the grey-headed old man many miles barefoot to his prison. Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, however, rewarded him with a similar destiny. Now, after more than half a century, fate avenged a crime against nature, by another crime against religion ; and it was only when fanaticism dared to desecrate all that was most holy, that the bones of a parricide were once more exposed to universal execration. With the insurgents at Tournay, others from Valenciennes combined themselves to lay waste all the convents of the surrounding districts ; and thus a costly library of many centuries became a prey to the flames. The pernicious example extended itself even to Brabant. Malines, Breda, Bergengop-zoom, suffered the same destiny ; the provinces of Namur and Luxemburg alone, together with a portion of Artois and Hengel, had the good fortune to keep themselves clear from these disgraceful deeds. In the space of four or five days, above four hundred churches were destroyed. In Brabant and Flanders alone, the same madness that had seized the south of Germany, soon extended itself to the north. The Dutch towns, Amsterdam, Leyden, and Grovenarde, were allowed the alternative of depriving their churches of their adornments with their own hands, or beholding them forcibly torn away. Delft, Harlaam, Gouda, and Rotterdam, escaped the destruction, owing to the determined conduct of the magistrates. Similar

www.libtool.com.cn

acts of violence were perpetrated in the islands ; the town of Utrecht, and some few places in Oberwesel and Groningen, suffered from the same storms. Friesland was preserved by the Count of Arenberg, and Gueldreland by the Count of Megin, from a like destiny.

NOTE D, PAGE 45.—*Orange.*

William, the first Prince of Orange, was descended from the princely house of Nassau. His father, Count of Nassau, had adopted the Protestant religion, and desired to educate his son in the same tenets ; but Charles V., who early took a fancy to the boy, sent for him, while yet very young, to court, and brought him up in the Roman-catholic faith. This monarch, who in the child already foresaw the future greatness of the man, retained him for nine years about his own person, condescended himself to instruct him in affairs of state, and honoured him with a confidence far beyond his tender years. He alone was permitted to remain beside the emperor, when he gave audience to foreign ambassadors ; a proof that, even as a boy, he must have begun to deserve the famous name of the "Silent." The emperor, indeed, did not blush once openly to confess, that this stripling often proposed plans that would have escaped his more mature wisdom. What expectations might not be formed of the mind of a man educated in such a school ? William was three-and-twenty when Charles laid down the reins of government. He had already received two public testimonials of Charles's high esteem. It was to him that, to the exclusion of all the grandees of his court, he confided the honourable office of delivering the imperial crown to his brother Ferdinand. When the Duke of Savoy, who led the Spanish army in the Netherlands, was summoned to Italy, by the pressing affairs of his own country, it was to him that the emperor

entrusted the command of these troops, contrary to the representations of his whole council of war ; who considered it the height of rashness to oppose a mere youth to the experienced French general. In his absence, and without any recommendation, did the monarch adjudge him the preference before all his laurelled throng of hearers, and the result gave him no cause to repent his choice. The distinguished favour in which this prince had been held by his father, was in itself almost sufficient to exclude him from the confidence of his son. Philip, it seemed, had made a law to avenge the Spanish grandees on the nobility of the Netherlands, for the preference with which Charles the Fifth had always distinguished the latter ; but his secret motives flowed from a deeper source. William of Orange belonged to that class of pale and haggard men, as Cæsar called them, who do not sleep o' nights, and think too much ; one of those before whom the most fearless spirits have oftentimes quailed. The silent calmness of his unchanging countenance, concealed an active fiery soul, which never raised the veil behind which it pursued its course, and was inaccessible alike to cunning or to love—a creative, fearless, untiring spirit, sufficiently flexible and plastic to mould itself in an instant to every new form, sufficiently steady never to lose its own identity, sufficiently strong to bear unmoved every change of fortune. In the art of reading the characters, and winning the hearts of men, there was no greater adept than William ; not that, according to the usual customs of courts, he profaned his lips with an affectation of submission, which his haughty spirit would have belied ; but because he was neither chary nor prodigal of the marks of his favour and esteem ; and through this wise economy of the means through which men are most easily won, increased, instead of diminishing his store. The results of his deliberations were perfect in proportion as their birth was slow. When he had once fixed

upon any plan as the best, no oppositions could weary—no accident could frustrate it—for all such had already presented themselves to his mind, before they actually occurred. But in the same proportion as his soul was exalted over joy or terror, even so was it subject to the influence of fear ; but his fears always preceded the danger, and in the midst of tumult he was calm and unmoved, because in security he had trembled. William was profuse with his gold, but niggard with his time ; the hour of repast was his only leisure hour ; but this belonged entirely to his hearth, his family, and his friends. Under the genial influence of the bowl, which inspired him with fresh courage and vivacity, his countenance lighted up, and the cares of state were not here permitted to cloud the joviality of his soul. His household was maintained on a scale of unparalleled magnificence ; the splendour of his retinue, the number and consideration of those who surrounded his person, gave his residence the appearance of a sovereign court. A brilliant hospitality, that mighty spell of the demagogue, was the presiding deity of his palace. Foreign princes here found a reception and entertainment which exceeded all that luxurious Belgium could offer. An affectation of humility and submission to the government served to dissipate the suspicions which this profuse expenditure might otherwise have excited. But this prodigality maintained the splendour of his name among the people, who are never more flattered than by beholding the treasures of their country displayed before the eyes of strangers. The lofty pinnacle of fortune on which he stood, enhanced the value of that affability which he condescended to assume. No one was ever more completely born to be the leader of a conspiracy than William the Silent. A rapid and unerring survey of the past, present, and future, an intuitive comprehension of the opportunities to be seized, bold calculations, vast plans capable of assuming form

www.libtool.com.cn

and symmetry only to the eye which could penetrate far into futurity, the supreme influence which he exercised over the minds of all who approached him,—all these were united under the control of an enlightened and noble mind, which could stand with firm and unfaltering steps even on the very verge of the abyss. The prince had already excited the suspicions of the wise and enlightened by the equivocal opinions extensively entertained of his religion. William believed in the Pope, as long as the emperor, his benefactor, lived; but it was feared, with good reason, that the preference his young heart had early imbibed for the reformed religion, had never entirely forsaken it. To whatever church he may have given the preference, during different periods of his life, each might have consoled itself with the assurance that none ever entirely possessed it. We behold him in later years adopting the Calvinistic faith, with as little hesitation, as in his childhood he forsook the Lutheran for the Roman. He defended the rights of the Protestants, as men, against the tyranny of Spain, far more than their opinions. It was not their faith, but their suffering, which had made them his brethren.

NOTE D, PAGE 45.—*Egmont*.

Of not less noble extraction than William, was Lamoral, Count of Egmont, and Prince of Gaure, a descendant of the Dukes of Gueldreland, whose warlike spirit had wearied out the weapons of the House of Austria. His lineage shone in the annals of his country. One of his predecessors had exercised the office of Stadtholder of Holland under Maximilian. Egmont's union with the Duchess Sabina of Bavaria, enhanced still further the splendour of his name, and rendered him powerful through his great connexions. Charles the Fifth had

created him Knight of the Golden Fleece in the year 1546. The wars of this emperor were the school of his future fame, and the battles of Quentin and Gravelines rendered him the hero of his age. The blessings of peace, to which of all others commercial people are the most sensible, recalled the recollection of that victory through which it had been accelerated; and the Flemings, like a proud mother, exulted in the glories of the son, who had already filled Europe with his fame. Nine children, blooming in beauty beneath the eyes of his fellow-citizens, served to draw still closer the ties that united him and his native land; and the universal attachment towards his person was kept in full vigour by the continual contemplation of the beings most dear to him. Every public appearance was a new triumph. His exploits lived in the praises of his contemporaries; in all knightly games, mothers pointed him out to their children. Courtesy, affability, a noble demeanour, and all the more amiable virtues of knighthood, contributed to adorn his real merits with a still brighter lustre. His frank and manly nature was painted on his open brow; but his excessive candour made him rule his secrets no better than his extreme liberality administered his estates; and no sooner did a thought become his own than it belonged to others likewise. Men whom fortune overwhelms with favour, for which their actions afford no legitimate grounds, are but too apt to forget the necessary connexion between cause and effect, and to attribute the natural consequences of events to a higher and more miraculous agency, to whose favour, like Cæsar, they rashly confide their fate. Egmont was one of these men. Intoxicated by the consciousness of merits which the gratitude of his fellow-citizens greatly exaggerated, he revelled in this sweet delusion; as if in a fairy world of dreams, he knew no fear, for he confided in the precarious pledge which destiny had given him, in the uni-

www.libtool.com.cn

versal affection of his fellow-men; and he believed in justice, for he was happy. Not even the most terrible experience of Spanish perfidy could extinguish this fatal confidence; and on the very scaffold hope lingered still. A tender anxiety for his family likewise held his patriotic spirit fettered to minor duties; he could not venture much for the commonwealth, for he had to tremble for his own life and property. Orange broke with the throne, because his pride revolted against mere arbitrary power; but Egmont's natural vanity led him to set a high value on royal favour. Orange was a citizen of the world; Egmont was never more than a Fleming. His religion was mild and gentle, but little enlightened, for it sprang not from his understanding, but his heart. He had more conscience than principle; he had not formed his own standard of morality; he had only learned it by heart. Hence, the mere name of an action was often sufficient to interdict the action itself. With him men had not simply good or bad qualities they were all absolutely bad or good. In his morality there were no shades betwixt crime and absolute virtue; therefore a single good quality was often sufficient to exalt an individual to the highest pinnacle of merit in his eyes. Egmont united all those advantages which combine to form the hero: he was a better soldier than Orange, but inferior as a statesman; the latter saw the world as it really was; Egmont beheld it only in the magic mirror of his own brilliant fancy.

NOTE E, PAGE 51.—*The Beggars.*

It was a banquet that called this confederation into existence; and it was a banquet that gave it form and completion. Brederode entertained the conspirators. Three hundred guests were present. Intoxication made them wanton, and their courage

rose with their numbers. It so happened that some of them remembered to have heard the Count of Bymont whisper in French to the regent, who had changed colour at the delivery of the petitions, "You should not tremble before a troop of beggars." In truth, a great portion of them had fallen so low through their bad economy, that they too well justified this appellation. Being somewhat at a loss for a name for their new fraternity, they eagerly seized upon this expression, which clothed the audacity of the enterprise in a humble garb, and which was besides most consonant with the truth. They instantly drank to each other under this appellation, and "Long live the beggars!" resounded amid universal shouts of approbation throughout the hall. When the banquet was concluded Buderode appeared with a bag, such as strolling pilgrims and mendicant-friars were then in the habit of carrying—hung it around his neck, drank the health of the assembled company from a wooden goblet, thanked them all for their accession to the confederation, and loudly assured them, he was ready to venture life and fortune for every one amongst them. All, with one accord, shouted the same; the goblet went the round of the table, and each member, as he placed it to his lips, repeated the oath. Then one after the other received the beggar's scrip, and hung it to a peg which had been appropriated for that purpose. The noise occasioned by this buffoonery drew the Prince of Orange, the Counts Egmont and Horn, who chanced to be passing by at that moment, into the house, where Buderode vehemently insisted on their remaining and drinking a glass with him. The arrival of these three important personages renewed the rejoicings of the guests, and their merriment rose at length to the pitch of extravagance. But matters did not rest here; what had been determined in the madness of intoxication, was carried out in more sober hours. It was necessary to ren-

www.libtool.com.cn

der the existence of their defenders perceptible to the people, and to stimulate the zeal of the party by a visible sign. No better means of effecting this purpose offered itself than by openly parading this name of "beggars," and adopting it as their emblem of fraternity. In a few days the streets of Brussels swarmed with gray gowns, such as were worn by mendicant friars and penitents; the whole family and household of each confederate assumed the costume of the order, some carried wooden bowls and other paraphernalia of the beggar tribe, overlaid with thin silver, likewise knives in their hats, or suspended to their girdles. Round their necks they hung a gold or silver coin, afterwards called the beggar's penny, one side of which bore the likeness of the king, with the inscription, "Faithful to the king;" on the other were two clasped hands, which held a bag of provisions, with the words, "Even to the beggar's bag."

NOTE F, PAGE 112.—*Egmont's Arrest.*

A dead silence now reigned in Brussels, broken only by the unaccustomed clang of weapons. The duke had been but a few hours in the town when his followers, like loosened bloodhounds, dispersed themselves in every direction. Nothing was to be seen but strange faces and empty streets, every house was closed, every game suspended, all places of public resort deserted, and the whole city resembled a region over which pestilence has spread its devastating power. Acquaintances passed each other without, as formerly, lingering to exchange a social greeting; men quickened their steps as soon as a Spaniard appeared in the streets. Every sound brought terror, as though an officer of justice were knocking at the door, and the nobility confined themselves in anxious expectation to their houses, in order to avoid exposing themselves to the inauspicious notice of the new

www.libtool.com.cn

stadtholder. The two nations seemed to have exchanged characters : the Spaniards were now the loquacious ; the Brabantines the taciturn ; and fear and distrust effectually scared away the national spirit of mirth and gaiety. Since the city had welcomed within its walls the leader of the Spanish host, it resembled a man, who, having just drained a poisoned goblet, awaits with panting heart the consequences of his fearful draught. This universal excitement of the public mind urged the duke to hasten the completion of his designs, lest they should be anticipated by a timely flight. The first step to be taken was evidently to secure the most suspicious among the nobility, and thus, for once and all, deprive the party of its head, and rob the people, whose freedom it was his object to destroy, of their best support. By an affectation of friendship, he had succeeded in lulling their first alarms, and restoring the Count of Egmont in particular to all his former security. To effect this end, he had made use of his sons, Frederick and Ferdinand Toledaner, whose youth and social disposition blended themselves more easily with the conviviality of the Flemings. In this respect he succeeded so well, that even Count Horn, who had hitherto held it advisable to keep aloof, was now allured by the good fortune of his friend, and induced to return to Brussels. Some of the nobles, Count Egmont at their head, began to resume their hospitable mode of life ; but without finding many imitators. The Eulenburg house was incessantly besieged by a numerous assemblage, that thronged around the person of the new stadtholder, and sought to deck their faces with counterfeit cheerfulness. Egmont in particular affected to enter with spirit into every proceeding ; entertaining the sons of the duke, and accepting their entertainments in return. Meanwhile the duke reflected that so fair an opportunity for the execution of his project might never again present itself, and that a single act of imprudence on his part

would be sufficient to dispel the security which was to deliver both victims of their own accord into his toils. But he desired also to decoy Hoygst into the snare, and for this purpose summoned him on a plausible pretext to the capital. When the day destined for the completion of his long-cherished design arrived, he convened all the councillors of state and knights, under the pretext of holding a consultation with them, on the affairs of the kingdom. The duke did all in his power to protract the conference, and await the arrival of the courier from Antwerp, who was to bring tidings of the arrest of the others, and to carry out this plan without exciting suspicion, the military engineer, Barotto, had been summoned to the conference, to lay before him the drafts of certain fortresses. At last, tidings were brought that Lodrona's schemes had been crowned with success. On learning this, the duke managed to break off the debate, and dismiss the assembly. As Count Egmont was about to repair to the apartments of Don Ferdinand, which he had left to attend the council, the captain of the duke's body guard, Sancho de Avala, stepped before him, and in the king's name demanded his sword. At the same moment he beheld himself surrounded by a troop of Spanish soldiers, who, according to previous arrangement, had suddenly emerged from the background. This utterly unexpected blow so completely stunned Egmont, that for some moments he lost the power of both speech and reflection ; but soon recovering his self-possession, with calm dignity he loosened his sword from his side. "This steel," he said, as he delivered it into the hands of the Spaniards, "has more than once successfully defended the king's cause." At the same moment, another Spanish officer seized Count Horn, who, without the slightest apprehension of danger, was on the point of returning home. Horn's first inquiry was after Egmont. When informed that his friend was at that

very moment undergoing a similar fate, he surrendered without resistance: "I have suffered myself to be led by him," he exclaimed; "'tis but fair I should share the same destiny." Both counts were confined in separate chambers. While these proceedings were being enacted, the whole garrison had been marched out, and now stood before the Eulenburg Palace under arms. No one knew what had taken place within those walls: a secret dread pervaded all Brussels, till at length, rumour gradually spread abroad the particulars of these unhappy occurrences.

NOTE G, PAGE 132.—*Egmont's Death.*

In the night before the 14th and 15th of June, their sentence was brought to the victims in their prison, after they had already betaken themselves to rest. The duke had delivered it to the Bishop Martin Rithov, whom he had summoned to Brussels expressly for the purpose of preparing the prisoners for death. On receiving this commission, the bishop threw himself at the duke's feet, and, with tears in his eyes, supplicated for mercy, or at least for a brief respite for the prisoners; but the duke, in a stern and angry voice, replied, "that he had been summoned from his bishopric not to oppose himself to the sentence, but through his exhortations to mitigate the dread nature of its import to the unhappy prisoners." To the Count of Egmont, he first showed the sentence of death. "This is, indeed, a harsh sentence," exclaimed the Count, with pallid cheek and faltering voice; "I did not think I had offended his majesty so deeply as to deserve such a doom; but if it must be, I will submit with resignation to my destiny: may this death atone for all my sins, and not act prejudicially on the fortunes of my wife and children. So much, at least, I venture to think my past services

give me a right to claim. I will suffer death with firmness, since such is the will of God and my king." He then implored the bishop to tell him openly and seriously if there was no hope of mercy. On receiving a reply in the negative, he confessed, and received the sacrament at the hands of the priest, repeating the responses after him with great devotion. He inquired what prayer was now suitable to recommend his soul to God at the last moment; the bishop replying, that no prayer could be more impressive than that which Christ our Lord had taught us—"Our Father, which art in heaven;" he immediately prepared to repeat it, but the thoughts of his family interrupted him, and he called for pens and paper. He then wrote two letters, one to his wife, the other to the King of Spain; the latter was to the following effect:

"Sire,—This morning I have learned the sentence, which it has pleased your majesty to pronounce upon me. However far it has been from my thoughts to undertake anything against the service of your majesty, or against the holy true catholic religion, I yet resign myself with submission to the destiny which it has pleased God to ordain. If, during the late disturbances, I have permitted, or done anything which appeared contrary to my duty, believe me, it was from the very best intentions, and forced upon me by the pressure of circumstances. Therefore, I entreat your majesty to pardon it, and in consideration of my past services, to have compassion on my unhappy wife, my helpless children, and servants. In this firm hope I recommend myself to the infinite mercy of the Almighty.

"To the last moment,

"Your Majesty's most faithful vassal and servant,

"EGMONT.

"Brussels, 5th June, 1568."

This letter he committed to the charge of the bishop, beseech-

ing him in the most urgent manner to deliver it. For greater security, he also sent another copy, written with his own hand, to the Councillor of State, Villiers, the most moderate man in the Senate, and there was no doubt it was delivered to the King. The family of the Count were restored to all their estates, rights, and privileges, which, according to the sentence, would have been confiscated to the crown. Meanwhile, a scaffold had been erected in the market-place, before the Stadthouse, on which two poles with iron spikes had been fastened, all completely covered with black cloth. Two-and-twenty squadrons of the Spanish garrison surrounded the scaffold; a precaution by no means superfluous. Between ten and eleven o'clock, the Spanish guard appeared in the chamber of the duke, provided with cords to bind him, as was usual; but he refused, declaring he was ready and willing to die. He had himself cut off the collar of his doublet, in order to facilitate the duty of the executioner. He wore a night-shirt of crimson damask, and over it a black Spanish mantle, edged with gold lace, and thus arrayed, he appeared upon the scaffold. Don Julius Romero, an aidecamp, a Spanish captain named Silenus, and the Bishop of Ypres, followed him. The grand provost of the court, with his red staff in his hand, sat at the foot of the fatal block. The executioner was concealed. Egmont had at first displayed some desire to address the people; but on the bishop's representing that he either would not be heard, or should he succeed in this, his address, might easily, in the people's present frame of mind, excite them to acts of violence, and plunge his friends in ruin, he abandoned the idea. For some moments, he paced up and down the platform with a calm and noble demeanour, regretting that it had not been granted to him to die a nobler death. Even to the last instant, he could not persuade himself that the king was in earnest in these stern proceedings

nor that the execution would be carried farther than the mere threat. When the decisive moment in which he was to offer the last sacrifice arrived, he was still looking anxiously around as if expecting a reprieve. But no messenger appearing, he turned to Julius Romero, and once more inquired if there were no mercy to hope for. Julius Romero shrugged his shoulders, cast his eyes to the ground, and was silent. Biting his teeth together, Egmont then cast off his mantle, knelt down on the cushion, and disposed himself to perform his last devotion. The bishop presented him the crucifix to kiss, and gave him the extreme unction, after which the count made him a sign to leave him. He then drew a silken cap over his eyes, and awaited the fatal stroke. A black cloth was instantly thrown over the body and over the blood that streamed from it. All Brussels, which had thronged around the scaffold, seemed to feel individually that deadly blow. Heavy sobs interrupted the awful silence that had hitherto reigned around. Even the duke, who had witnessed the execution from a window, was unable to stifle the emotions which disturbed his own relentless bosom, and hastily wiped away an involuntary tear.

THE END.

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn

www.libtool.com.cn