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George Edmundson
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CAMBRIDGE HISTORICAL SERIES

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HISTORY
OF
HOLLAND

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HISTORY
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BY

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GENERAL PREFACE

The aim of this series is to sketch the history of Modern Europe, with that of its chief colonies and conquests, from about the end of the fifteenth century down to the present time. In one or two cases the story commences at an earlier date; in the case of the colonies it generally begins later. The histories of the different countries are described, as a rule, separately; for it is believed that, except in epochs like that of the French Revolution and Napoleon I, the connection of events will thus be better understood and the continuity of historical development more clearly displayed.

The series is intended for the use of all persons anxious to understand the nature of existing political conditions. 'The roots of the present lie deep in the past'; and the real significance of contemporary events cannot be grasped unless the historical causes which have led to them are known. The plan adopted makes it possible to treat the history of the last four centuries in considerable detail, and to embody the most important results of modern research. It is hoped therefore that the series will be useful not only to beginners but to students who have already acquired some general knowledge of European History. For those who wish to carry their studies further, the bibliography appended to each volume will act as a guide to original sources of information and works of a more special character.

Considerable attention is paid to political geography; and each volume is furnished with such maps and plans as may be requisite for the illustration of the text.

G. W. PROTHERO.

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PROLOGUE

THE title, "History of Holland," given to this volume is fully justified by the predominant part which the great maritime province of Holland took in the War of Independence and throughout the whole of the subsequent history of the Dutch state and people. In every language the country, comprising the provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Gelderland, Overijssel and Groningen, has, from the close of the sixteenth century to our own day, been commonly spoken of as Holland, and the people (with the solitary exception of ourselves) as 'Hollanders¹.' It is only rarely that the terms the Republic of the United Provinces, or of the United Netherlands, and in later times the Kingdom of the Netherlands, are found outside official documents. Just as the title "History of England" gradually includes the histories of Wales, of Scotland, of Ireland, and finally of the wide-spread British Empire, so is it in a smaller way with the history that is told in the following pages. That history, to be really complete, should begin with an account of mediaeval Holland in the feudal times which preceded the Burgundian period; and such an account was indeed actually written, but the plan of this work, which forms one of the volumes of a series, precluded its publication.

The character, however, of the people of the province of Holland, and of its sister and closely allied province of Zeeland, its qualities of toughness, of endurance, of seamanship and maritime enterprise, spring from the peculiar amphibious nature of the country, which differs from that of any other country in the world. The age-long struggle against the ocean and the river floods, which has converted the marshes, that lay around the mouths of the Rhine, the Meuse and the Scheldt, by toilsome labour and skill into fertile and productive soil, has left its impress on the whole history of this people. Nor must it be forgotten how largely this building up of the elaborate system of dykes, dams and canals by which this water-logged land was transformed into the Holland of the closing

¹ Hollandais, Holländer, Olandesi, Olandeses, etc.

decades of the sixteenth century, enabled her people to offer such obstinate and successful resistance to the mighty power of Philip II.

The earliest dynasty of the Counts of Holland—Dirks, Floris, and Williams—was a very remarkable one. Not only did it rule for an unusually long period, 922 to 1299, but in this long period without exception all the Counts of Holland were strong and capable rulers. The fiefs of the first two Dirks lay in what is now known as North Holland, in the district called Kennemerland. It was Dirk III who seized from the bishops of Utrecht some swampy land amidst the channels forming the mouth of the Meuse, which, from the bush which covered it, was named Holt-land (Holland or Wood-land). Here he erected, in 1015, a stronghold to collect tolls from passing ships. This stronghold was the beginning of the town of Dordrecht, and from here a little later the name Holland was gradually applied to the whole county. Of his successors the most illustrious was William II (1234 to 1256) who was crowned King of the Romans at Aachen, and would have received from Pope Innocent IV the imperial crown at Rome, had he not been unfortunately drowned while attempting to cross on horseback an ice-bound marsh.

In 1299 the male line of this dynasty became extinct; and John of Avennes, Count of Hainault, nephew of William II, succeeded. His son, William III, after a long struggle with the Counts of Flanders, conquered Zeeland and became Count henceforth of Holland, Zeeland and Hainault. His son, William IV, died childless; and the succession then passed to his sister Margaret, the wife of the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria. It was contested by her second son William, who, after a long drawn-out strife with his mother, became, in 1354, Count of Holland and Zeeland with the title William V, Margaret retaining the county of Hainault. Becoming insane, his brother Albert in 1358 took over the reins of government. In his time the two factions, known by the nicknames of “the Hooks” and “the Cods,” kept the land in a continual state of disorder and practically of civil war. They had already been active for many years. The Hooks were supported by the nobles, by the peasantry and by that large part of the poorer townsfolk that was excluded from all share in the municipal government. The Cods represented the interests of the powerful burgher corporations. In later times these same principles and interests divided the Orangist and the States parties, and were inherited from the

PROLOGUE

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Hooks and Cods of mediaeval Holland. The marriages of Albert's son, William, with Margaret the sister of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, and of John the Fearless with Albert's daughter, Margaret, were to have momentous consequences. Albert died in 1404 and was succeeded by William VI, who before his death in 1417 caused the nobles and towns to take the oath of allegiance to his daughter and only child, Jacoba or Jacqueline¹.

Jacoba, brave, beautiful and gifted, for eleven years maintained her rights against many adversaries, chief among them her powerful and ambitious cousin, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. Her courage and many adventures transformed her into a veritable heroine of romance. By her three marriages with John, Duke of Brabant, with Humphry, Duke of Gloucester, and, finally, with Frans van Borselen, she had no children. Her hopeless fight with Philip of Burgundy's superior resources ended at last in the so-called "Reconciliation of Delft" in 1428, by which, while retaining the title of countess, she handed over the government to Philip and acknowledged his right of succession to the Countship upon her death, which took place in 1436.

G. E.

November, 1921

¹ In French books and documents, Jacqueline.

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