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John Lothrop Motley

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History of the United Netherlands

American historian John Lothrop Motley (1814–77) graduated from Harvard in 1831. During 1832 and 1833 he studied in Göttingen before returning to the United States. Already the author of two novels and numerous essays, he began to plan a history of the Netherlands, but, unable to find all the source material he needed in America, he returned to Europe in 1851, this time with his family. His first book on the subject was the widely acclaimed *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, which covered events up to 1584. Motley published this more ambitious four-volume sequel, covering events in the period 1584–1609, between 1860 and 1867. Volume 1 takes up the story from immediately after the assassination of William the Silent in 1584. It covers the formation of the political and military alliance between Holland and England against Spain and its allies during the period 1584–6.

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*From the Death of William the Silent to the
Twelve Years' Truce – 1609*

VOLUME 1

JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY



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ALEXANDER FARNESE PRINCE OF PARMA.

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HISTORY

OF THE

UNITED NETHERLANDS

FROM THE DEATH OF WILLIAM THE SILENT TO
THE SYNOD OF DORT.

WITH

A FULL VIEW OF THE ENGLISH-DUTCH STRUGGLE AGAINST SPAIN, AND OF
THE ORIGIN AND DESTRUCTION OF THE SPANISH ARMADA.

BY JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY, D.C.L.,
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE,
AUTHOR OF 'THE RISE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC.'

VOLUME I.

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P R E F A C E.



THE indulgence with which the History of the Rise of the Dutch Republic was received has encouraged me to prosecute my task with renewed industry.

A single word seems necessary to explain the somewhat increased proportions which the present work has assumed over the original design. The intimate connection which was formed between the Kingdom of England and the Republic of Holland, immediately after the death of William the Silent, rendered the history and the fate of the two commonwealths for a season almost identical. The years of anxiety and suspense during which the great Spanish project for subjugating England and reconquering the Netherlands, by the same invasion, was slowly matured, were of deepest import for the future destiny of those two countries and for the cause of national liberty. The deep-laid conspiracy of Spain and Rome against human rights deserves to be patiently examined, for it is one of the great lessons of history. The crisis was long and doubtful, and the health—perhaps the existence—of England and Holland, and, with them, of a great part of Christendom, was on the issue.

History has few so fruitful examples of the dangers which come from superstition and despotism, and the

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blessings which flow from the maintenance of religious and political freedom, as those afforded by the struggle between England and Holland on the one side, and Spain and Rome on the other, during the epoch which I have attempted to describe. It is for this reason that I have thought it necessary to reveal, as minutely as possible, the secret details of this conspiracy of king and priest against the people, and to show how it was baffled at last by the strong self-helping energy of two free nations combined.

The period occupied by these two volumes is therefore a short one, when counted by years, for it begins in 1584 and ends with the commencement of 1590. When estimated by the significance of events and their results for future ages, it will perhaps be deemed worthy of the close examination which it has received. With the year 1588 the crisis was past; England was safe, and the new Dutch commonwealth was thoroughly organized. It is my design, in two additional volumes, which, with the two now published, will complete the present work, to carry the history of the Republic down to the Synod of Dort. After this epoch the Thirty Years' War broke out in Germany; and it is my wish, at a future day, to retrace the history of that eventful struggle, and to combine with it the civil and military events in Holland, down to the epoch when the Thirty Years' War and the Eighty Years' War of the Netherlands were both brought to a close by the Peace of Westphalia.

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The materials for the volumes now offered to the public were so abundant that it was almost impossible to condense them into smaller compass without doing injustice to the subject. It was desirable to throw full light on these prominent points of the history, while the law of historical perspective will allow long stretches of shadow in the succeeding portions, in which less important objects may be more slightly indicated. That I may not be thought capable of abusing the reader's confidence by inventing conversations, speeches, or letters, I would take this opportunity of stating—although I have repeated the remark in the foot-notes—that no personage in these pages is made to write or speak any words save those which, on the best historical evidence, he is known to have written or spoken.

A brief allusion to my sources of information will not seem superfluous. I have carefully studied all the leading contemporary chronicles and pamphlets of Holland, Flanders, Spain, France, Germany, and England; but, as the authorities are always indicated in the notes, it is unnecessary to give a list of them here. But by far my most valuable materials are entirely unpublished ones.

The archives of England are especially rich for the history of the sixteenth century; and it will be seen, in the course of the narrative, how largely I have drawn from those mines of historical wealth, the State Paper Office and the MS. department of the British Museum. Although both these great

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national depositories are in admirable order, it is to be regretted that they are not all embraced in one collection, as much trouble might then be spared to the historical student, who is now obliged to pass frequently from the one place to the other, in order to find different portions of the same correspondence.

From the royal archives of Holland I have obtained many most important, entirely unpublished documents, by the aid of which I have endeavoured to verify, to illustrate, or sometimes to correct, the recitals of the elder national chroniclers; and I have derived the greatest profit from the invaluable series of Archives and Correspondence of the Orange-Nassau Family, given to the world by M. Groen van Prinsterer. I desire to renew to that distinguished gentleman, and to that eminent scholar M. Bakhuyzen van den Brink, the expression of my gratitude for their constant kindness and advice during my residence at the Hague. Nothing can exceed the courtesy which has been extended to me in Holland, and I am deeply grateful for the indulgence with which my efforts to illustrate the history of the country have been received where that history is best known.

I have also been much aided by the study of a portion of the Archives of Simancas, the originals of which are in the Archives de l'Empire in Paris, and which were most liberally laid before me through the kindness of M. le Comte de La Borde.

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I have, further, enjoyed an inestimable advantage in the perusal of the whole correspondence between Philip II., his ministers, and governors, relating to the affairs of the Netherlands, from the epoch at which this work commences down to that monarch's death. Copies of this correspondence have been carefully made from the originals at Simancas by order of the Belgian Government, under the superintendence of the eminent archivist M. Gachard, who has already published a synopsis or abridgment of a portion of it in a French translation. The translation and abridgment of so large a mass of papers, however, must necessarily occupy many years, and it may be long, therefore, before the whole of the correspondence—and particularly that portion of it relating to the epoch occupied by these volumes—sees the light. It was, therefore, of the greatest importance for me to see the documents themselves unabridged and untranslated. This privilege has been accorded me, and I desire to express my thanks to his Excellency M. van de Weyer, the distinguished representative of Belgium at the English Court, to whose friendly offices I am mainly indebted for the satisfaction of my wishes in this respect. A letter from him to his Excellency M. Rogier, Minister of the Interior in Belgium—who likewise took the most courteous interest in promoting my views—obtained for me the permission thoroughly to study this correspondence; and I passed several months in Brussels, occupied with reading the whole

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of it from the year 1584 to the end of the reign of Philip II.

I was thus saved a long visit to the Archives of Simancas, for it would be impossible conscientiously to write the history of the epoch without a thorough examination of the correspondence of the King and his ministers. I venture to hope, therefore—whatever judgment may be passed upon my own labours—that this work may be thought to possess an intrinsic value; for the various materials of which it is composed are original, and—so far as I am aware—have not been made use of by any historical writer.

I would take this opportunity to repeat my thanks to M. Gachard, Archivist of the kingdom of Belgium, for the uniform courtesies and kindness which I have received at his hands, and to bear my testimony to the skill and critical accuracy with which he has illustrated so many passages of Belgian and Spanish history.

31, *Hertford-Street, May-Fair,*
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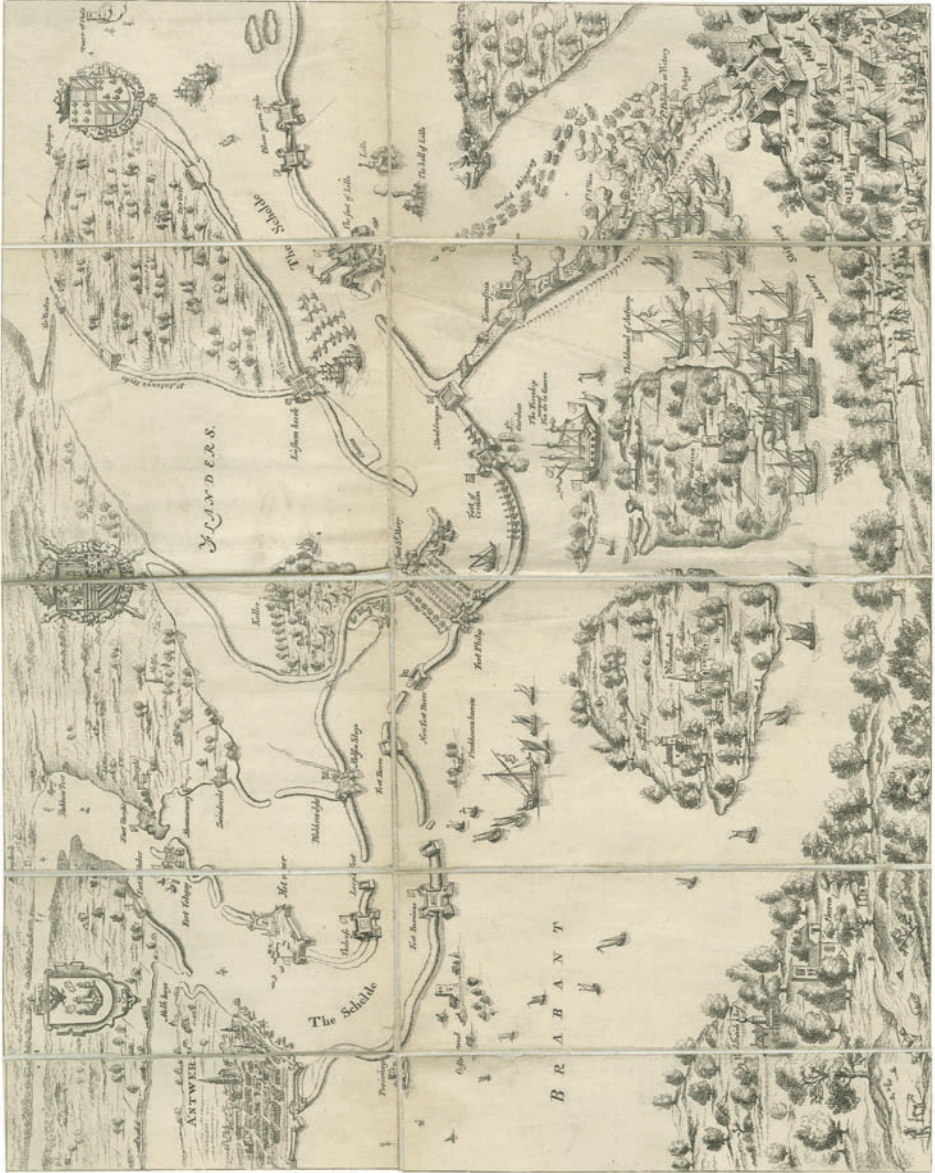
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