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THE LION OF FLANDERS.

BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER XX.

It was already dark night when Guy reached Courtrai with about sixteen thousand men. The inhabitants, apprised of their approach by mounted messengers, stood in dense crowds on the walls of the city, and with glad and joyful exclamations, amidst the blaze of innumerable torches. As soon as the host had entered the city and, been distributed throughout its various quarters, the citizens of Courtrai brought forth every kind of food and refreshment; they placed before their weary brethren large flagons of wine and they exhausted strength and kept watch over them the whole night. While they were embracing one another with transport, and expressing their affection in every possible manner, some hastened to meet the wearied women and children, who carried, not a few of these poor creatures, whose feet were torn and bleeding with their painful march, were borne to the city on the broad shoulders of the brave citizens of Courtrai; all were lodged and carefully tended, and the men every way. The gratitude of the men was expressed by their extreme kindness strengthened wonderfully the courage of the men of Bruges; for men's souls are ever on large and elevated by frank and noble treatment.

Matilda and Maria, the sister of Adolf van Mousme, with a considerable number of the noble ladies of Bruges, had been some hours in Courtrai before the army arrived. They had been already received by their friends, and had busied themselves in providing shelter and quarters for the knights and nobles, their relatives and friends; so that on their arrival, Guy and his companions found supper all ready prepared for them.

Early the next morning Guy and a few of the most distinguished inhabitants reconnoitred the fortifications of the citadel; and found, to their great dismay, that it was impossible to take it without a large siege-train. The walls were far too lofty, and the overhanging towers allowed too many arrows to be discharged on the advancing besiegers. He saw that a bold attack might easily cost him a thousand men; and, after mature deliberation, he determined not to storm the citadel at once. He gave orders for the construction of battering-rams and movable towers, and for the collection of every material in the city that could be available for the assault. It was clear that this could not take place for five days at least; but the delay was no disadvantage to the citizens of Courtrai, for since the arrival of the Flemish troops, the French garrison had ceased to shoot burning arrows into the city; the soldiers were, indeed, seen standing with their bows at the loop holes of the battlements, but yet they did not discharge them. The Flemings could not conceive the reason of this cessation; they thought that some artifice lay concealed therein, and remained carefully on their guard. Guy had forbidden every aggression; he would attempt nothing until he had all his machines ready for storming the citadel, and could securely reckon on the victory.

The castle of Van Lons was at his side; and his archers had but a very slender supply of arrows left, and prudence compelled him to reserve them for the assault. His provisions, too, were so far exhausted, that he could supply only half rations to his soldiers. Still he hoped to elude the vigilance of the Flemings, and to find some opportunity to send a messenger to Lille, where the French army lay encamped. Arnold of Oudenarde, who had a few days before brought the citizens of Courtrai a reinforcement of three hundred men, had volunteered with his soldiers on the Groningen Place, close to the abbey and the walls of the city. This place was especially fitted for a general encampment, and had been chosen for that purpose by Guy and his council of war. While the carpenters' guild was laboring at the storming engines, the other Flemings were set to work the next morning to dig trenches. The clothworkers and the butchers wielded each a pickaxe and a spade, and set to work with great ardor; the entrenchments and siege-works arose as by enchantment; the whole army toiled with obedient zeal and each sought to surpass his neighbor in exertion. The spades and pickaxes rose and descended like gleams of lightning, so that the clouds of earth fell on the entrenchments like showers of stones thrown down on the assailants from a besieged city.

As soon as a part of the earth-works was completed, the soldiers hastened to pitch the tents. Ever and anon the workmen would leave the poles sticking in the earth and scramble away to work at the entrenchments; and then would arise a loud shout of welcome greeting, and the cry, "Flanders and the Lion!" boomed in the distance as an answering echo. And this happened, too, whenever reinforcements arrived from the other cities. The Flemish people had unjustly accused their nobles of disloyalty and cowardice; true, a large number had declared for the alien, but the loyal were far more numerous than the traitors. Fifty and two of the noble knights of Flanders pined in the prisons of France; and to these prisoners their love for their fatherland and for their native princes had consigned them. The rest of the true-hearted nobles who remained in Flanders deemed it a degradation to take part with the insurgent townspeople; to them the tournament and the battle-field were the only places fit for deeds of arms. The manners of the time had given them this notion; for then the distance between a knight and a citizen was as great as that between a master and a servant now. So long as the struggle was carried on within the walls of the cities, and under the command of popular leaders, they remained shut up

in their castles, sighing over their country's oppression; but now that Guy had placed himself at the head of his people, as the general-in-chief appointed by their Count, they poured in from all sides with their retainers.

On the first day, early in the morning there entered Courtrai Messires Baldwin of Papenrode, Henry of Ravestoboot, Ivo of Belleghem, Solomon of Sevecoete, and the lord of Maldegheem. Towards mid-day a cloud of dust arose over the distant trees in the direction of Moorsele, and amidst the loud shouts of the men of Bruges, fifteen hundred men of Flanders entered the city, with the renowned warrior Eustachius Sporkyn at their head. They were accompanied by a multitude of knights who had joined them on their march. Amongst these the most distinguished were Messires John van Aystoven, William van Daekenem, and his brother Peter; Messire van Landeghem, Hugo van der Moere, and Simon van Caestele. John Willebaert of Thorout had placed himself, with a small contingent of troops, under the command of Van Sporkyn. Each moment, moreover, some stray knight would enter the camp; not a few of these were from surrounding countries, and gladly came to lend their aid to the Flemings in their struggle for liberty. In this way Henry van Louchy of Luxembourg, Gwyn van Goetzenhove and John van Cuyck, two nobles of Brabant, were already with Guy when the troops of Flanders marched into the city. As soon as each new-comer had recruited his strength, and refreshed himself with food, he was sent into the camp, and placed under the command of Messire van Renssele.

On the second day arrived in haste the men of Ypres. Although they had their own city to care for, they could not allow Flanders to be liberated without them. Their troops were the finest and richest in equipment of all the army. There were five hundred cluermen, all arrayed in scarlet, and with magnificent feathers in their glittering morions; they wore also breast-plates and knee plates, which gleamed wondrously in the sunshine. Seven hundred others carried enormous crossbows, with bolts of steel, and their uniforms were green turned up with yellow. With them came Messires John of Ypres, armour bearer of Count John of Namur, Diederik van Vlaemertinghe, Joseph van Hollebeke and Baldwin van Paschendale; their leaders were Philip Baelde and Peter Baile, the Deans of the two principal guilds of Ypres. In the afternoon arrived two hundred well-appointed warriors from east and west Vrye, the villages around Bruges.

On the third day, early in the morning, Messires William van Gulick, the priest, and John van Renssele, returned from Cassel. Five hundred knights, four hundred Zealanders, and another detachment of the men of Bruges, marched with them into the camp. And now from every part the knights and warriors who had been summoned had arrived. Men of all arms were ranged under the command of Guy. It is impossible to express the joy which filled the hearts of the Flemings during this day; for now they saw that their fellow countrymen had not degenerated, and that their fatherland still counted loyal and valiant sons in every quarter. Already one and twenty thousand men lay encamped, fit and ready for battle under the banner of the Black Lion; and their number was being hourly increased by small reinforcements.

Although the French had an army of sixty-two thousand men, of which the half was cavalry, yet not the slightest fear found entrance into the hearts of the Flemings. In their enthusiasm they would cease their work, and embrace one another, exchanging words of confidence and triumph, as though there were nothing that could rob them of their victory.

Towards evening, as the labourers were returning to their tents, the cry of "Flanders and the Lion!" arose once over the walls of Courtrai. All ran back to the entrenchments to see what the sound could mean. No sooner did their eyes range freely over the ramparts, than they sent back a loud and joyous answering shout. Six hundred horsemen, all clad in steel, sprang into the trenches amidst deafening acclamations. They came from Namur; and Count John, the brother of Robert de Bethune, had sent them into Flanders. The arrival of these horsemen greatly raised the spirits and increased the joy of the Flemings; for it was in cavalry that they were particularly deficient. Although they knew right well that the men of Namur could not understand one word they said, they overwhelmed them with words of greeting and welcome, and brought them wine in profusion; and when the foreign warriors saw this friendly reception, they felt themselves animated by a like spirit of affection; they swore that they would sacrifice both blood and life for their good hosts.

Ghent alone had sent neither message nor contingent to Courtrai. It had been long known that the Lillards were very numerous there, and that the governor was a staunch ally of the French. Nevertheless, seven hundred French mercenaries had been slain by the townspeople, and John Borlout had promised his aid. The matter was doubtful, and so the Flemings did not venture openly to accuse their brethren of Ghent of disloyalty; nevertheless, they entertained great suspicion of them, and not seldom gave free expression to their displeasure. In the evening, when the sun had already disappeared more than an hour behind the village of Moorsele, the labourers had dispersed themselves amongst the tents. Here and there was still heard a sound, interrupted at intervals by the clapping of hands and the clink of drinking-glasses, and the concluding verse of which was caught up and enthusiastically repeated by a multitude of voices. In other tents was heard a confused murmur, which, when one listened attentively, resolved itself into an interchange of encouragements and exhortations. In the midst of the camp, at a little distance from the

tents, a large fire was blazing, which illumined a portion of the entrenchments with its ruddy glare. About ten men were appointed to keep it burning, who, from time to time, threw large branches of trees upon it; and then would be heard the voice of the captain, saying, "Gently, my men, gently; lay the branches carefully, and do not drive the sparks towards the camp."

A few steps from this fire was the tent of the camp sentinels. It was a covering of ox hides, the framework of which rested on eight massive beams, the four sides were open, so that it commanded the camp in all directions; it was Jan Breydel's duty to keep watch this night with fifty of his butchers; they sat on little wooden stools round a table under the roof, which protected them from the dew and the rain; their axes shone in their hands like weapons of glowing flame. The sentinels they had sent out were seen in the gloom, striding slowly back wards and forwards, with a tin can, wine and some tin cans stood on the table; and although drinking was not forbidden, one could see that they drank with unusual moderation, for they raised the cans but seldom to their lips. They laughed and chatted pleasantly together, to wit away the time, each telling what splendid blows he meant to discharge on the Frenchmen in the coming battle.

"Well," said Breydel, "they may say, if they will, that the Flemings are not so good men as their fathers, now that such a camp as this has been got together by volunteers alone. Let the French come on, if it is like, with their two-and-sixty thousand men. The more game, the fiercer hunt! They say we are nothing but a pack of ill-tempered hounds. We will give them reason to pray that they may not get thoroughly well worried; for the hounds have right good teeth."

With laughter at the words of their Dean, a fine old goldsmith entered, whose grey beard attested his advanced age. One of them called out to him: "And you, Jacob, do you think you can still manage to give a good bite?"

"My teeth may not be quite so good as yours," growled the old butcher; "but for all that, the old dog has not forgotten how to use them. I am quite ready to stake twenty bottles of wine, which of us two will give most Frenchmen a bloody grave."

"Bravo!" cried the others; "and we will join in drinking them out. Let us fetch them at once!"

"Ho! ho!" interposed Breydel; "can't you keep yourselves quiet? Drink to-morrow, if you please; but whoever of you drinks to-night shall be shut up in Courtrai, and shall have no share in the fight."

This threat had a wonderful effect on the butchers; their jests died away from their lips; they did not even dare to sing a song; the old goldsmith alone ventured to speak.

"By the beard of our Dean!" said he, "rather than suffer that, I would be roasted at this fire, like Messire St. Lawrence; for I can never expect to witness such a feast."

Breydel remarked that his threat had rather damped the spirits of his companions, for which he was sorry, as he was himself inclined to merriment. Anxious to restore their cheerfulness, he raised the can, and, filling a bumper, he held up his can, and said:

"Well, my men, why are you so silent? That's what I want to drink to; that you may find your tongues. I am vexed to have spoken so to you. Do I not know you well? Do I not know that the true butchers' blood flows in your veins? Well, then, here's to you, comrades!"

An expression of satisfaction burst from the company, and they took out into a loud merry laugh when they found that the threat of their Dean had no serious meaning.

"Drink again!" continued Breydel, filling his can afresh; "the cry is yours, and you may drink it to the guard shall have another supper with them. Now we see that succors are arriving from every city, and that we are so strong, we may well be merry."

"I drink to the disgrace of the men of Ghent!" cried a goldsmith. "We have good reason to know, that he who puts any trust in them leans on a broken staff. But it is no matter; they may stay at home now; and so our own good city of Bruges will have gained unshared the glory of the conflict and the liberation of our fatherland."

"Are they Flemings, those men of Ghent?" said another. "Does their heart beat for freedom? Are there any butchers left in Ghent? Breydel! forever! You have the true blood there."

"I do not know," added Breydel, "why Count Guy so earnestly desires their arrival. Our camp is not overstocked with provisions, and it is scarcely prudent to invite more guests to the meal. Does the Count imagine that we shall lose the game? One can easily see that he has been used to Namur; he knows not the men of Bruges, or he would not long so much for those of Ghent. I hope they will stay quietly at home; and we want no crowds amongst us."

Like the genuine citizen of Bruges, Breydel bore no love to the men of Ghent. The two leading cities of Flanders kept up an hereditary rivalry, and almost enmity, with each other; not that the one boasted braver citizens than the other, but simply that each did his best to ruin or divert the trade and traffic of the other. And the same jealousy still continues. So impossible is it to root out the feelings which are inborn in the mass of the people, that, notwithstanding their many revolutions, and the changes of their many religions, has been perpetuated to our own day.

CHAPTER XXI.

Guy had issued orders that the whole army, under its several captains, should muster on the Groningen Place, in front of the camp, on the following morning; he wished to pass them all in review. In obedience

to these orders, the Flemings were drawn up in square on the appointed place. They stood like the four foundations of some mighty edifice, each troop being composed of eight closely compacted divisions. Deconinck's four thousand cloth workers formed the front of the right wing. The first file of his troops consisted of archers, whose heavy crossbows hung diagonally over their shoulders; while a quiver, filled with steel pointed shafts, was suspended at their side. They wore no other defensive armour than an iron plate, which was fastened over their breasts by four straps of leather. Over the six other divisions, thousands of spears arose ten feet high into the air. This weapon, the renowned "good-day," was with reason much dreaded by the French; for with it a horse might easily be pierced through and through. No armor could withstand its formidable stroke: the knight on whom it fell was inevitably unhorsed.

On the same side stood also the light troops of Ypres; their advanced division was composed of five hundred men, whose apparel was as red as coral. From their graceful helmets downy plumes waved low as their shoulders; massive clubs, armed with points of steel, stood with the butt end at the foot of each soldier; while the hilts, grasped by their strong fists, rested against their loins. Small plates of iron were buckled around their arms and thighs. The other divisions of this gallant host were all clothed in green, and their unstrung bows of steel reared themselves high above their heads.

The left wing was entirely composed of the ten thousand men furnished by Breydel. On one side of it the countless axes of the butchers flashed before the eyes of their companions in arms, so that they were obliged to turn away their heads from time to time—so keen and dazzling were the rays of the sun reflected from these mirrors of steel. The butchers were not heavily equipped; short brown trousers, and a jerkin of the same colour, formed their only clothing. Their arms were bare to the elbows, according to their custom; for they took pride in displaying their compact and brawny muscles. Many were of air complexion, but embrowned by exposure to the sun; huge scars, records of former combats, crossed their faces like deep furrows, and these they regarded as the laurel-wreaths which attested their bravery. The features of Breydel formed a strong contrast to the sombre sharp-cut faces of his followers; for he was a fine, open countenance, his forehead was broad, his eyes were blue, his nose was straight, and his lips were smiling. The contour and expression of his features were most pleasing when, as at this moment, he was full of joy and content; but when excited by passion, no lion's face could surpass his countenance in hideous expressiveness; his cheeks would gather in folds and wrinkles, he would grind his teeth with fury, and his eyebrows would meet over his flashing eyes.

In the third wing were the men of Fumes, with the vassals of Arnold of Oudenarde, and the Baldwin of Papenrode. The goldsmiths of Fumes had sent a thousand slingers and five hundred halberdiers; the former stood in the front rank, and were clothed entirely in leather, that they might wield their slings without impediment. About their loins was fastened a white leather girdle, which held the round pebbles with which they supplied their slings; and in their right hands they carried leather thongs, in the middle of which was a hollow depression.

These were the slings—a fearful weapon—which they wielded with such fatal precision, that the massive stones which they discharged at the foe very seldom missed their aim. Behind these stood the halberdiers; they wore a sheathed in iron, and bore heavy helmets on their heads. Their weapons were a battle-axe, with a long handle; and above the steel of the axe was a thick, sharp-pointed piece of iron, with which they were accustomed to pierce both helmet and armour, so that they gained the name of helm-cleavers.

The men of Oudenarde and Papenrode, who were ranged on the same side, bore weapons of all kinds. The first two ranks, indeed, consisted entirely of archers; but the others carried spears, clubs, or broadswords. The last wing, which completed the army, comprised all the cavalry of the army (eleven hundred mounted men), whom Count John of Namur had sent to his brother Guy. These horsemen seemed as though they were made of steel and iron; nothing else was to be seen except the eyes of the rider flashing through the vizor, and beneath his helmet and armour, so that they gained the name of helm-cleavers.

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When the Flemings saw their numbers increased by this unexpected reinforcement of troops so numerous, their impatient joy could no longer be restrained; their commanders could not scarcely keep them in their ranks. They moved about in violent commotion, and seemed beside themselves with pleasure; but Messire John Borlout cried:

"Be of good courage, my friends, Flanders shall be free! I bring you five thousand well-armed and intrepid warriors."

And then answered the whole host with irrepressible enthusiasm: "Hail! hail to the hero of Worringen! Borlout! Borlout!"

Messire Borlout drew near to the young Count, and would have greeted him with courtly ceremony; but Guy hastily interrupted him:

"Spare these words of ceremony, Messire John; give me your friendly right hand. I am so glad that you are come; you who have passed your days in arms, and are so rich in experience. I was beginning to be troubled at your not arriving; you have delayed long."

"O yes, noble Guy," was the answer, "longer than I wished; but those dastardly Lillards have kept me back, they have actually formed a conspiracy in Ghent to bring back the French again? They would not let us leave the town to go to the aid of our brethren; but God be thanked! their plot did not succeed; for the people's indignation and contempt of them exiled all the traitors into the citadel, so here I am with five thousand intrepid men, longing for the fight more eagerly than for their dinners, though they have touched nothing this day as yet."

"I thought assuredly that some great obstacle must have detained you, Messire Borlout, and I even feared that you would not come at all."

"What, noble Guy! could I stay away from Courtrai? I, who have

suite to pass into the centre of the square.

In advance rode the standard bearer with the banner of Flanders. The Black Lion on his golden field floated gracefully over the head of his horse; and he seemed to the joyous Flemings as though he were stretching out his claws as omens of victory. Immediately behind the banner came Guy and his nephew William van Gulick. The youthful general wore a magnificent suit of armour, on which the escutcheon of Flanders was skillfully embossed; from his helmet a gorgeous plume fell down over the back of his horse. The armor of William van Gulick bore only a broad red cross; from beneath his coat of mail his white priestly vestment fell down over the saddle. His helmet bore no plume, and his whole equipment was simple and unadorned. Immediately after these illustrious lords followed Adolf van Nieuwenland. His armor was perfect in its grace and finish. Guided studs concealed the joints of his coat-of-mail; he bore a plume of green, and his gloves were plated with silver. Over his shirt of mail might be discerned a green veil, the gauds he stowed on him by the daughter of the Lion in token of her gratitude. Near him rode Matilda, on a palfrey, white as the driven snow. The noble maiden was still pale; but the arrival of her brother Adolf had put her sickness to flight. A sky-blue riding habit, of costly velvet embroidered with silken lions, fell in long folds over her feet to the ground, and her silken veil which was fastened to the point of her peaked hat swept the mane of her palfrey.

Behind them followed a troop of about thirty knights and noble damsels, all adorned with costly armigerous armor, and with countenance as serene and joyous as though they were riding to a tournament. The procession was closed by four squires on foot; the first two bore each a rich suit of armor and a sword, while the others each carried a helmet and a shield. Amidst the solemn silence of the whole army, this brilliant cavalcade reached the middle of the square, when all halted.

Guy beckoned to him his herald-at-arms, and gave him a parchment, the contents of which he was to publish to the assembled host.

"Only add to it," said he, "the war-like name of the Lion of Flanders; for that always gladdens our good folk of Bruges."

The curiosity of the soldiers was manifested by a slight movement, followed by a silence of deepest attention; they saw that some mystery lay hidden in all these forms of solemnity, for it was not for nothing that the daughters of their nobles were their richest adornments. The herald advanced, sounded his trumpet thrice, and then proclaimed aloud:

"We, Guy of Namur, in the name of our Count and our brother, Robert de Bethune, the Lion of Flanders, to all who shall read or hear this proclamation, greeting and peace. In consideration of the good and loyal service rendered to the whole country of Flanders and to ourselves, by Master Deconinck and Master Breydel of Bruges, we, willing to bestow on them, in presence of all our subjects, a token of our grace and favor,—willing, moreover, especially to requite their noble-hearted love of our fatherland in such wise as is meet and fitting, that their loyal services may be held in everlasting remembrance; and whereas our Count and father, Guy of Flanders, hath thereto empowered us, we do hereby announce and declare, that Peter Deconinck, Dean of the Clothworkers, and Jan Breydel, Dean of the Butchers, both of our good city of Bruges, and their descendants after them for all time, shall be, and shall be held to be, of noble blood, and enjoy all the rights and privileges appertaining to nobles in our land of Flanders. And in order that they may be enabled to support this dignity honourably, we assign to each of them one twentieth part of our good city of Bruges for the maintenance of his house."

Long ere the herald had made an end, his voice was drowned in the joyous exclamations of the Clothworkers and Butchers. The great favour conferred on their Deans was, as it were, the reward of their own bravery, an honour which was reflected upon their guilds. Had not the loyalty and patriotism of the Deans been so well known, their elevation to the rank of nobles would undoubtedly have been received with suspicion and displeasure, as a stratagem of the nobility. They would have said: "These feudal lords are depriving us of the assestors of our rights and are reducing our leaders by these manifestations of favour."

In any other case the suspicion would not have been unfounded; for men, for the most part, are easily perverted and seduced by the love of honour. Hence it is not to be wondered at that the people cherished a bitter

shed my blood for strangers, was I not of need? The French shall soon know this to their cost. I feel myself quite young again; and my men, noble lord, see how the French shall fall before the White Lion of Ghent."

"You gladden my heart, Messire Borlout; our men are full of fury and impetuous ardor; should we lose the fight, I can assure you very few Flemings will see their homes again."

"Lose the fight, say you? Lose it, Count Guy? Never will I believe it; our men are all animated with too noble a courage; and Breydel—victory sits beaming already on his very countenance. Look you, my lord; I will wager my head, that if you would only allow Breydel to do what he likes, he and his butchers would cut pieces just as easily as they would mow down a mob of corn. Be of good courage; God and Messire St. George will be our aid. But, I pray you excuse me, Lord Guy; there are my men—I must leave you for a moment."

The men of Ghent had now reached the Groningen Place; they were wearied and covered with dust, for they had made a forced march under the burning sun. Their weapons were of various kinds; and amongst them were all the classes of troops we have already described. About fifty nobles rode in advance, for the most part friends of the old warrior, John Borlout, and in the midst of the host floated the banner of Ghent with its white lion. Then the men of Bruges, who felt how unjustly they had reproached their brethren of Ghent, shouted again and again:

"Welcome, brothers, welcome! Hurrah for Ghent!"

In the meantime John Borlout drew up his men in front of the left wing of the square; he wished to make a good display of them, that the men of Bruges might see that they did not yield to them in love of their common fatherland. At Guy's command he then left the camp and entered Courtrai, that he might give his men the repose and refreshment which they so much needed. As soon as the men of Ghent had withdrawn, John van Renssele advanced into the square and cried:

"To arms! Silence!"

The group in the middle of the square returned to its former position; every one held his peace, as the command of Messire van Renssele, and the attention of all was fixed on the herald, who again sounded his trumpet thrice, and then proceeded to read with a loud voice:

"We, Guy of Namur, in the name of our Count and brother, Robert de Bethune, the Lion of Flanders, to all who shall read or hear this proclamation, greeting and peace. In consideration of the good and loyal service rendered to the whole country of Flanders and to ourselves, by Master Deconinck and Master Breydel of Bruges, we, willing to bestow on them, in presence of all our subjects, a token of our grace and favor,—willing, moreover, especially to requite their noble-hearted love of our fatherland in such wise as is meet and fitting, that their loyal services may be held in everlasting remembrance; and whereas our Count and father, Guy of Flanders, hath thereto empowered us, we do hereby announce and declare, that Peter Deconinck, Dean of the Clothworkers, and Jan Breydel, Dean of the Butchers, both of our good city of Bruges, and their descendants after them for all time, shall be, and shall be held to be, of noble blood, and enjoy all the rights and privileges appertaining to nobles in our land of Flanders. And in order that they may be enabled to support this dignity honourably, we assign to each of them one twentieth part of our good city of Bruges for the maintenance of his house."

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The men of Ghent had now reached the Groningen Place; they were wearied and covered with dust, for they had made a forced march under the burning sun. Their weapons were of various kinds; and amongst them were all the classes of troops we have already described. About fifty nobles rode in advance, for the most part friends of the old warrior, John Borlout, and in the midst of the host floated the banner of Ghent with its white lion. Then the men of Bruges, who felt how unjustly they had reproached their brethren of Ghent, shouted again and again:

"Welcome, brothers, welcome! Hurrah for Ghent!"

In the meantime John Borlout drew up his men in front of the left wing of the square; he wished to make a good display of them, that the men of Bruges might see that they did not yield to them in love of their common fatherland. At Guy's command he then left the camp and entered Courtrai, that he might give his men the repose and refreshment which they so much needed. As soon as the men of Ghent had withdrawn, John van Renssele advanced into the square and cried:

"To arms! Silence!"

The group in the middle of the square returned to its former position; every one held his peace, as the command of Messire van Renssele, and the attention of all was fixed on the herald, who again sounded his trumpet thrice, and then proceeded to read with a loud voice:

"We, Guy of Namur, in the name of our Count and brother, Robert de Bethune, the Lion of Flanders, to all who shall read or hear this proclamation, greeting and peace. In consideration of the good and loyal service rendered to the whole country of Flanders and to ourselves, by Master Deconinck and Master Breydel of Bruges, we, willing to bestow on them, in presence of all our subjects, a token of our grace and favor,—willing, moreover, especially to requite their noble-hearted love of our fatherland in such wise as is meet and fitting, that their loyal services may be held in everlasting remembrance; and whereas our Count and father, Guy of Flanders, hath thereto empowered us, we do hereby announce and declare, that Peter Deconinck, Dean of the Clothworkers, and Jan Breydel, Dean of the Butchers, both of our good city of Bruges, and their descendants after them for all time, shall be, and shall be held to be, of noble blood, and enjoy all the rights and privileges appertaining to nobles in our land of Flanders. And in order that they may be enabled to support this dignity honourably, we assign to each of them one twentieth part of our good city of Bruges for the maintenance of his house."

Long ere the herald had made an end, his voice was drowned in the joyous exclamations of the Clothworkers and Butchers. The great favour conferred on their Deans was, as it were, the reward of their own bravery, an honour which was reflected upon their guilds. Had not the loyalty and patriotism of the Deans been so well known, their elevation to the rank of nobles would undoubtedly have been received with suspicion and displeasure, as a stratagem of the nobility. They would have said: "These feudal lords are depriving us of the assestors of our rights and are reducing our leaders by these manifestations of favour."

In any other case the suspicion would not have been unfounded; for men, for the most part, are easily perverted and seduced by the love of honour. Hence it is not to be wondered at that the people cherished a bitter

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