

John Burnet of Barns

him a sum of money. This he would have none of, but took, instead, a pair of little old pistols which had been my father's.

I never saw him again, though often I have desired it, but years after I heard of him, and that in the oddest way. I corresponded to some little extent with folk in the Low Countries, and in especial with one Master Ebenezer van Gliecken, a learned man and one of great humour in converse. It was at the time when there was much fighting between the French and the Dutch, and one morn I received a letter from this Master van Gliecken, written from some place whose name I have forgot, a rascally little Holland town in the south. He wrote of many things—of some points in Latin scholarship, of the vexatious and most unpolitic state of affairs in the land, and finally concluded with this which I transcribe. . . .

“ Lastly, my dear Master John, I will tell you a tale which, as it concerns the glory of your countrymen, you may think worth hearing. As you know well, this poor town of ours has lately been the centre of a most bloody strife, for the French forces have assaulted it on all sides, and though by God's grace they have failed to take it, yet it has suffered many sore afflictions. In particular there was a fierce attack made upon the side which fronts the river, both by boat and on foot. On the last day of the siege, a sally was made from the gate of the corner tower, which, nevertheless, was unsuccessful, our men being all but enclosed and some of the enemy succeeding in entering the