

THE LION OF FLANDERS.

BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE

CHAPTER XVI.

Jan Breydel and his seven hundred butchers pitched their camp near the small town of Damme, in the immediate neighborhood of Bruges. Three thousand guildsmen from the other companies had also voluntarily placed themselves under his command; so that he now found himself at the head of a force, not numerous indeed, but formidable from its fearless and devoted courage; for there was not a man among them whose heart was not possessed with the single thought of liberty and vengeance. The wood which the Dean had selected as the place of encampment was thickly crowded for a considerable space with huts and tents; and on the morning of the 18th of May, a little before the Châtillon's entry into Bruges, numberless flags were flying from the trees which spread their branches over the tents, was an open space free from trees and entirely unoccupied. From this quarter might be heard incessantly a confused murmur of voices, the monotony of which was ever and anon relieved by the sharp or heavy sound of workmen's implements. The hammers rang upon the anvils, and in the wood the largest trees came thundering down under the axes of the butchers. Here long wooden shafts were being rounded and smoothed and pointed with iron, there stood piles of pikes and "good days" ready for use. Elsewhere the black makers were busily engaged in manufacturing frameworks for bucklers, which were then covered over by the tanners to be covered with ox hides. The carpenters were at work upon the heavy siege artillery of the day, especially catapults, and other engines of assault. Jan Breydel ran about hither and thither, animating his comrades with words of encouragement. Occasionally he would himself take the axe in hand from one of his butchers; and then, as he heaved away to the astonishment of all that saw him, one of the largest trees would speedily fall under his vigorous blows.

On the left of this open space stood a magnificent tent of sky-blue cloth, with silver fringe. At its summit hung a shield, showing a black lion on a golden field, and thus denoting the abode of a member of the princely house of Flanders. Here it was that the Lady Matilda was for the present lodged, under the special protection of the guilds, to which she had committed herself. Two ladies of the illustrious house of Hesse had left their home in Zealand to attend upon her and bear her company; and in no respect did she want for any thing. The most sumptuous appointments; the most costly apparel had been amply supplied for her use by the noble Zelander. A party of butchers, axes in hand, stood on either side of the tent as body-guard to the young countess. The Dean of the Clothworkers was pacing up and down before the entrance, apparently immersed in thought, with his eyes bent upon the earth. The guard looked on at him in silence; not a word was spoken among them, out of deep respect for the meditations of the man who was so great and noble in their eyes. The object of his thoughts was a plan for a general encampment. Hitherto, for the better convenience of provisioning, he had distributed the whole force into three divisions. The Butchers and the various other guilds were encamped at Damme, under the command of Breydel; Dean Lindens by with two thousand Clothworkers at Sluis; and Deconinck himself, with two thousand men of the same guild, at Ardenburg. But he was far from satisfied with this scattered disposition of the forces, and would gladly have seen the whole reunited into one corps before the arrival of Guy to take the supreme command. It was for this reason that he was now at Damme; and his consultation with Breydel had concluded, he was waiting till he should be admitted to pay his respects to the daughter of his lord.

While he walked, thus meditating on his project, the portion of hanging that formed the door of the tent was drawn on one side, and Matilda stepped slowly forward over the carpet that was spread before it. Her countenance was pale, and expressive of much languor; her steps seemed to totter under and she leaned for support on the arm of the young Adelaïde of Hesse, who accompanied her. Her dress was rich, but plain; for she had laid aside all ornament, and the only jewel she wore was the golden plate upon her breast, with the Black Lion of Flanders enamelled on it.

Immediately on her appearance, Deconinck uncovered his head, and stood before her in an attitude of deep respect. A sweet smile lighted up the gleam with which the maidens' features were overcast; for it was with pleasure that she beheld the firm and faithful friend of her house and country, and with a faint voice she thus addressed him: "Welcome, Master Deconinck, my good friend; how is it with you? With me, you see, it is ill enough. Every breath I draw is painful to me; but I cannot always keep my tent; the narrow room oppresses me. I have come out to see my father's loyal subjects at their work.—If, indeed, my feet will carry me so far; and you, Master Deconinck, shall accompany me. I have many things to ask you; and I pray you, answer truly to my questions. I hope to find in your discourse some refreshment for my weary heart. There is no need for the guards to follow us. Ah! the bright morning sunshine does me good; it cheers me."

She moved forward with Deconinck by her side, who replied to her inquiries as they walked along. With that

admirable tact and facility of expression by which he was distinguished, he continued to suggest matter for consolation and cheerful hope, and so for the while dispelled the heavy melancholy that weighed upon her spirits. Every where, as she passed, the guildsmen greeted the young girl with loud expressions of homage and affection, and soon one universal shout of "Long live the Lady Matilda!" long live our noble Lion's daughter!" resounded through the wood. Matilda felt a genuine thrill in Breydel as she received these testimonies of warm and loyal attachment to her father and her father's house; and approaching the Dean of the Butchers with a gracious smile.

"Master Breydel," she said, "I have been noticing you from afar. You really labor harder than the lowest of guildsmen; work seems to be a pleasure to you."

"Lady," answered the delighted Breydel, "we are making 'good days' for the deliverance of our country and of our lord the Lion, and that is a work I enjoy with my whole heart; for I feel as if each one we finish here a Frenchman's death upon its point, and every blow I strike seems struck upon the body of an enemy."

Matilda could not look without admiration upon the young hero, in whose countenance, as in that of some Grecian deity, the fierce energy of passion was marvellously softened and tempered down by the noble refinement of his features. His manly beauty seemed but the mirror of the generous soul within, and its whole aspect glowed with the fervor of self-devotion and patriotic zeal. Again graciously smiling on him she replied:

"Come with us, I pray you, Master Breydel; it will give me pleasure to have your company in my walk."

Quickly Jan Breydel cast his axe aside, stroked back his long fair locks behind his ears, set his cap more jauntily on his head, and followed the princess, his heart bounding and his step elastic with honest pride.

"If my father," she whispered softly to Deconinck, "had but a thousand such, so fearless and so true, our enemies would not long keep foot in Flanders to-day."

"Flanders has but one Breydel," replied the Clothworker. "It is but seldom that nature sets so fiery a soul in so mighty a body; and that is a wise providence of God, else should men, when they learnt to know their force, become too proud of heart, like the giants of old, who sought to climb up into heaven."

He would have proceeded; but at this moment he was interrupted by a sentinel running breathlessly up, and calling out aloud to Breydel:

"Master Dean, my fellows of the watch have sent me to let you know that a thick cloud of dust has been seen rising in the distance from just before our city-gates, and that a noise as of an army in full march is clearly audible. Some considerable body is leaving the city, and advancing to wards our camp."

"To arms! to arms!" cried Breydel in a voice that was heard far and near through the encampment; "each man to his place, quick!"

The work people hastily seized their arms and ran confusedly hither and thither; but this was only for a moment. The companies were speedily formed; and soon the guildsmen might be seen standing firm and motionless in their armed phalanx. Breydel's first care was to post five hundred chosen men about Matilda's tent, to which she had with all speed returned a carriage, too, well horsed, was drawn up before it, and every preparation made for her escape in case of need; then with the whole remainder of his force he issued from the wood in full array, and ready at all points for battle.

It was not long ere they became aware that it was a false alarm. The body which raised the dust was evidently advancing in no kind of order; and it was soon perceptible that a large proportion of it consisted of women and children confusedly mingled together. A prominent object was a bier, or rather handbarrow borne by men, round which the women crowded, filling the air with the most piteous lamentations. But although the cause of alarm no longer existed, the guildsmen still kept their ranks, resting upon their arms, and awaiting with anxious curiosity the solution of the enigma. At last the approaching train drew near; and while wives and children pressed through the ranks to embrace a husband or a father, a frightful spectacle presented itself to the assembled multitude.

The four bearers of the bier carried it to within a short distance of the Dean of the Butchers, and there set it down upon the ground. Upon it lay two female corpses, their clothes dabbled with blood, their features indistinguishable, being concealed from sight by a black veil thrown over the heads. The women meanwhile kept up their cries; one continued heart-rending "Woe! woe!" was all that could be heard till at last a voice exclaimed: "The French soldiers have murdered them!"

Hitherto the guildsmen had looked on silently in mingled surprise and curiosity; but as the bier was set down and reached their ears, their hearts swelled with revenged fury, and disorder would have ensued but for Breydel's loud command:

"The first man that leaves the ranks shall be severely punished!" he exclaimed.

He himself, tortured by a terrible presentiment, rushed impulsively to the bier, and tore away the veil that concealed the faces; but, O God! how fearful the sight that met his eyes! He uttered not a sound, he moved not a limb; he stood there as struck with sudden and universal palsy. Paler he was than the corpses themselves, and his hair stood on end upon his head. His lips quivering, his eyes fixedly bent upon the eyes now glazed with death, one would have said that he felt his last hour upon him.

Thus he stood, but for a few moments only. Soon, with a mighty

bound, he sprang forward in front of the ranks, threw both arms up into the air, and in a voice of agony exclaimed: "Woe! woe! is me! My aged mother! my poor sister!"

With these words he flung himself into Deconinck's arms, and lay powerless and almost senseless upon his friend's bosom. With vague and wondering eyes he stared around, while his comrades shuddered with horror and compassion. Anon he rationally raised his arm; but it was instantly caught away out of his hand. Deconinck now gave the word for all to return to their work until further orders. The men, indeed, thought of thought else but speedy vengeance; but no one ventured to dispute the command, for they knew that the Dean of the Clothworkers had been daily appointed their general-in-chief. Giving vent therefore, to their feelings in murmurs, they returned into the wood, and resumed though unwillingly, the labors which this incident had interrupted.

By Deconinck's care Breydel was speedily conveyed to his own tent, where, exhausted alike in mind and body, he threw himself upon a seat, and rested his head upon the table. He said nothing; but when his eyes met those of his friend, there was a singular expression in them. A bitter mocking smile distorted his features; it was as though he were scoffing at his own wretchedness.

"Now, Master Breydel, broke the silence. "My unhappy friend," he said, "be calm for God's sake."

"Calm! calm!" repeated Breydel; "am I not calm! Have you ever seen me so calm before?"

"Oh, my friend!" resumed the Clothworker, "full well can I conceive how intense must be the agony of your soul, as you seem to me to be your countenance. Comfort you I cannot; your calamity is too great. I know of no balm for such a wound."

"No; so say I," replied Breydel; "the balm of my wounds I know well enough; it is the power to procure it that fails me. O my poor mother! they have shed your blood because you are a true Fleming; and that is no—oh, mischief! cannot you see?"

As he uttered these words, the expression of his countenance altered; he ground his teeth violently together; his hands grasped the legs of the table as though he would snap them asunder. Then, again, he became more quiet and seemed to sink into a state of the deepest depression.

"Now, Master Breydel, bear up like a man," Deconinck began again, "and give me no way to despair, that worst enemy of the soul. Strengthen your heart against the bitter calamity that has this day befallen you; your mother's blood shall not have cried in vain for vengeance."

Again the fearful smile curled Breydel's lip. "Vengeance!" he exclaimed, "how easily you promise what it is not in your power to accomplish—who can avenge me? Can you yourself? and could torrents of French blood redeem my mother's veins? Can the tyrant's life redeem his victims from the grave? No; they are dead, gone from me forever my friend. I will suffer in silence and without complaint. There is no comfort left for me; we are too weak, and our foes too mighty."

Deconinck made no reply to Breydel's lament, and seemed to be revolving something weighty in his mind. He appeared like one who was putting violence on himself, and controlling some strong inward feeling. The Dean of the Butchers regarded him with an inquiring look, deeming that something unusual was at work within him. Soon the painful expression passed away from Deconinck's face; he rose slowly from his seat, and in a tone of deep earnestness thus addressed his friend:

"Our foes are too mighty, say you? To-morrow you shall say so no more. They have gained their ends by fraud and treachery, and have not feared to pour out innocent blood like water, as though the avenging angel no longer stood before the throne of the Most High. They know not that the life of every one of them is even now in my hands; that I can break them in pieces, as though God had put his power into my hands; and that I can bring down in death, and cruelty and all evil arts. Well, then, their own sword shall pierce them, and they shall perish by it. I have said it!"

At this moment Deconinck looked like an inspired prophet denouncing the malediction of the Lord upon the crimes and backslidings of Jerusalem. They have gained their ends by fraud and treachery, and have not feared to pour out innocent blood like water, as though the avenging angel no longer stood before the throne of the Most High. They know not that the life of every one of them is even now in my hands; that I can break them in pieces, as though God had put his power into my hands; and that I can bring down in death, and cruelty and all evil arts. Well, then, their own sword shall pierce them, and they shall perish by it. I have said it!"

His cheeks glowed with the intensity of his indignation. He who was usually so calm, was now inflamed with fiercer passion than Breydel himself, though his exterior did not betray to their full extent the feelings which agitated him. He left the tent for a few moments, and returned with one of the lately-arrived craftsmen, from whom he demanded a full and particular recital of all that had passed in Bruges. From him they learnt the amount of the reinforcements with which De Castillon had arrived, and the circumstances attending it, together with all the frightful story of the sack of the town.

Breydel, for his part, listened to the horrible recital dispassionately enough, for all was as nothing to him after the murder of her who had given him birth; the Deconinck's emotion sensibly increased as each scene in the hideous tragedy was unrolled before him. It was not the details of the narrative, however, existing as they were, that thus affected him; patriotism and love of liberty were the two main-springs of his soul, and in these all his energies were concentrated. He

felt that the latest moment had arrived for commencing in earnest the work of regeneration that moment must not be lost, or the event of that day would spread terror through the Flemish people, and utterly subdue their spirit. The necessary information obtained, he dismissed the craftsman, and sat for some time silent, his head supported on his hand, while Breydel awaited impatiently the result of his cogitations.

Suddenly he started from his reverie. "Friend," he exclaimed, "sharpen your axe; chase sorrows from your heart! Up; we will break the chains from our country's neck!"

"What is it you mean?" inquired Breydel.

"Listen; the husbandman waits till the cold of the morning has driven the caterpillars into their nest, then he plucks it from the tree, sets his foot upon it, and with one stamp of his heel crushes the whole brood. Do you understand me now?"

Apply your parable," replied the butcher. "Oh, my friend, a bright gleam of hope breaks in upon me through my dark despair. But go on, go on!"

"Well, then, the French tyrants have preyed upon our country like noxious insects; and like them they shall be crushed—ay, as though a mountain had fallen upon them. Cheer up, Master Jan; judgment is gone forth against them. Your mother's death shall be requited with usury, and the blood we will shed shall wash the stain of slavery from the Flemish name."

Breydel's eyes wandered restlessly round the tent, seeking in vain for his axe; at last he remembered that it had been taken from him. Seizing Deconinck's hand he said with strong emotion, "more than once you have been my preserver; but hitherto it was life alone I owed you; henceforth I shall be your debtor for all its peace and joy. But now make haste, and tell me by what means you meditate accomplishing the vengeance that my satisfaction may be unalloyed, and free from any lingering doubt."

"Have patience for a moment, you will soon hear all; for I must immediately lay my project before a general council of the Deans, which I am now about to call."

He hurried out, and despatched one of the sentinels through the encampment, to summon the superior officers to meet at Breydel's tent. Shortly afterwards, they all stood before it in a circle to the number of thirty, when Deconinck thus addressed them:

"Comrades! the solemn hour is come, which must bring us liberty or death. Long enough have we borne the brand of shame upon our foreheads; it is time that we demand from our tyrants an account of our brothers' blood; and if it shall so be that we lose our lives in our country's cause—remember, comrades, that the slave drops his fetters on the threshold of the tomb; we shall sleep with our fathers, free, and without reproach. But no; we shall conquer—I feel it, I feel it; the Black Lion of Flanders shall not die! Right and justice, I need not tell you, are all on our side. The strangers have plundered our land; they have imprisoned our Count, with all the nobles that were true to their prince and their country; the Lady Philippa they have poisoned; our good city of Bruges they have laid waste with the sword; and on our own proper soil and territory they have hung up our brethren as infamous malefactors. The blood-stained corpses of those who were nearest and dearest to our friends lie even now unburied amongst us; unhappy victims of these foreign despots, they have voices which cry in our hearts for vengeance! Well then, comrades, the purpose for which I have called you together; but remember, what I say to you must bury in your hearts, as in the depths of the grave. The French garison have wearied themselves out with this day's wicked work; they will sleep soundly—most of them only to wake, I trust, on the day of judgment. Say nothing to your men; but to-morrow morning, two hours before sunrise, have them ready under arms in the wood behind St. Cross. I shall myself proceed instantly to Ardenburg, to make my arrangements there, and to send the necessary orders to Dean Lindens at Sluis; for I must be in Bruges before the day is over. See you are surprised; well, one thing there is that we must not forget; there is a Frenchman in Bruges whom we may not harm, for his blood would assuredly be upon our heads."

"The Governor De Mortenay," here interrupted several voices.

The same," pursued Deconinck; "he has ever treated us with consideration, and shown that he feels for the calamities of our country. Many times he has restrained that execrable wretch, Van Gistel, in his persecution, and obtained pardon or mitigation of sentence for such as were condemned to suffer. We must not sully our right with the blood of the just; and it is to provide for this that I am about to risk myself in the city, by the danger what it may."

"But," objected one of the Deans present, "how shall we obtain entrance into the city to-morrow morning for that, I suppose, is our object, since the gates are not opened till sunrise?"

"The gates will be opened for us," replied Deconinck; "I shall not leave the city walls till our vengeance is secured. And now, for the present, I have said enough; to-morrow, at the rendezvous, I will give you further orders; meanwhile do you get your companies on foot. I will take immediate measures for removing the Lady Matilda from the neighborhood of a spectacle which befiteth not her presence."

All this Breydel had listened to without any expression of approbation, though his countenance sufficiently betrayed the intensity of his satisfaction; but no sooner was the assembly broken up, and he found himself again alone with his friend, than, throwing himself upon Deconinck's neck, he while tears trickled down his cheeks.

"My best friend!" he exclaimed; "you have brought me back from the

bottomless pit of despair. Now can I with an undisturbed heart weep over the remains of my poor mother and sister; and when I lay them in the earth, devoutly add my prayer to the last solemnities. But then—oh, then, when the grave has closed over them, what have I left upon earth to love or to live for?"

"Our country, and our country's greatness!"

"Yes, yes; country and liberty—and vengeance! But now, my friend, understand me well; when our land is fairly clear of the French, nothing will remain for me but to shed tears of rage. For then there will be no more heads for my axe to cleave, no corpses for me to tramp on, as the hoofs of their horses have trampled down our brothers. What is liberty to me? only the sight of streaming blood can give me joy, now that they have poured out that of the heart from which my own veins were filled. But haste away and God be with you! I am thirst after the promised vengeance."

"Screcy and caution, my friend!" was the response; and Deconinck took his leave.

His first care was for the safe removal of the Lady Matilda, for which he speedily made all necessary arrangements; and then, after a short audience with her, he mounted his horse and disappeared in the direction of Ardenburg.

Immediately upon Deconinck's departure, Breydel proceeded to the wood, stopped the work and dismissed his men to their tents, with orders to take all the rest they could without delay, and be ready for marching the next morning before dawn.

Arrived at Ardenburg, Deconinck placed his two thousand Clothworkers under the command of one of the able men of the guild, and despatched a messenger with instructions to Dean Lindens. The needful measures taken for concentrating the three divisions at St. Cross, he again mounted, and proceeded straightway to Bruges, stopping his horse at a road-side inn not far from the gate, and entering the city on foot. Impediment to his progress there was none; the gates were not yet closed; but the evening was far advanced, and no soldiers were to be seen save the sentinels upon the walls; a dead and awful stillness reigned in all the streets in which he had to pass. Soon he stopped before a house of mean appearance, behind the church of St. D. natus, and would have knocked, but on approaching for that purpose, he perceived that the door was gone, and its place supplied by a piece of cloth hung over the entrance. He was evidently well acquainted with the inmates, and familiar with its interior arrangements; for, lifting up the hanging, he stepped directly into the shop into which the door had opened, and passed on into a little chamber behind it. The shop was quite dark; the room which he now entered was doubtfully lighted by a small lamp, the flickering rays of which, however, enabled him to discern at a glance the state of things within. The floor was strewn with the fragments of shattered furniture—a woman sat weeping by a table, with two young children pressed against her bosom, amid alternate sighs and kisses as thanking heaven that they at least, her best and dearest portion of his world's goods, were spared to her. Further on, in a corner, but half illuminated by the lamp's pale beams, sat a man, with his head resting on his hand, who seemed to be asleep.

Alarmed at Deconinck's unexpected apparition, the woman clasped her babes still closer, to her breast, while a loud cry of terror escaped her lips. The man started up, and hastily grasped his cross knife; but in a moment recognised his Dean.

"O master!" he exclaimed; "what a heavy burden did you lay upon me when you ordered me not to leave the city! By God's grace we have escaped the massacre; but our house has been plundered, we have seen our brothers murdered by the hangman or the soldiery; and what to-morrow may bring heaven alone knows. O, let me quit this place, I pray you, and come out to you at Ardenburg."

To this request Deconinck made no answer; but with his finger beckoned the guildsman out into the shop.

"Gerard," he then commenced in a low voice, "when I quitted the city, I left you and thirty of your comrades behind, that I might have means of intelligence as to the proceedings of our French masters. I chose you out for this service, from my knowledge of your unflinching courage and disinterested patriotism. Perhaps, however, the sight of your brethren upon the gallows has shaken your heart; if so, you have my leave to go this very day to Ardenburg."

"Master," replied Gerard, "your words grieve me deeply; for myself I fear not death, but my wife, my poor children, are here with me, and exposed to all the horrors of the times. They are pining away before my eyes with terror and anxiety; they do nothing but weep and mourn the whole day and the night brings them no repose. Only look at them, how pale and worn they are! And can I see their suffering without sharing it? And ought I not a husband and a father, and ought I not to be the guardian of those who have me alone to look to for protection? Yet what protection can I give them here? O master, believe me, such times as these a father has more upon his heart than those weaker ones themselves. Nevertheless, I am willing to forget all for my country,—yes, even the dearest ties of nature; and so, if you can make any use of me, you may safely count upon me. Now speak; for I feel that you have something weighty to communicate."

Deconinck seized the brave guildsman's hand, and pressed it with much emotion. "Yet one more soul like Breydel's!" he thought.

"Gerard," said he, "you are a worthy Fleming; I thank you for your fidelity and courage. Listen, then; for I have but little time to spare. Go in haste to your comrades, and give them notice to meet you this night with all possible secrecy in

Pepper Lane. Do you alone mount upon the city wall, between the Damme Gate and that of St. Cross; lie down flat upon the rampart, and look out in the direction of St. Cross. Presently you will see a fire lighted in the fields, at the foot of the wall; then do you, with your comrades make haste to fall upon the guard and open the gate; you will find seven thousand Flemings before it."

"The gate shall be opened at the appointed hour; fear not," answered Gerard, coolly and resolutely. "You give me your word on it?"

"My word on it."

"Good evening, then, worthy friend. God be with you!"

"His angels attend your steps, master!"

The guildsman returned to his wife, and Deconinck left the house. He proceeded to the neighborhood of the Town Hall, and knocked at the door of a magnificent mansion which was immediately opened to him.

"What will you, Fleming?" asked the servant.

"I wish to speak with Messire de Mortenay."

"Good; but have you arms? for you folks are not to be trusted."

"What's that to you?" replied the Dean. "Go, and tell your master that Deconinck would speak with him."

"What! you Deconinck? then 'tis sure you have some mischief in hand."

With these words, the servant hastily departed; and in a few moments almost as hastily returning, invited Deconinck to follow him up stairs. The door of a small cabinet was opened and closed again, and the Dean of the Clothworkers stood before the French Governor of Bruges.

De Mortenay was sitting beside a table, on which lay his sword, helmet, and gauntlets; he regarded his visitor with no small astonishment, while Deconinck, with a low obeisance, opened his errand.

"Messire de Mortenay," he commenced, "I have put myself in your power, trusting in your honour, and feeling sure, therefore, that I shall not have to repent of my confidence."

"Certainly," answered De Mortenay; "you shall return as you have come."

"Your magnanimity, noble sir, is a proverb among us," resumed the Dean; "and it is on that account, and that you may see that we Flemings know how to respect a generous enemy, that I now stand before you. The governor De Châtillon has condemned eight innocent men of our citizens to the gallows, and has given up our town to the fury of his soldiery; you must acknowledge, Messire de Mortenay, that it is our bounden duty to avenge the death of those who have thus suffered; for what had the governor to lay to their charge, except that they refused obedience to his despotic will?"

"The subject must obey his lord; and however severely that lord may punish disobedience, it is not for the subject to sit in judgment on his acts."

"You are right, Messire de Mortenay; so goes the word in France; and as you are a natural-born subject of King Philip the Fair, it is fitting that you should execute his commands. But we free Flemings—we can no longer bear the galling chain. The governor-general has carried his cruelty beyond all bounds of endurance; he sure that ere long blood shall flow in torrents, and that, if the fortune of war goes against us, the victory is with you, at least it will be but a few wretched slaves that are left you; for we have resolved, once for all, to conquer or to die. However, to that as it may, happen what will,—and it is to tell you this that I am come,—not a hair of your head shall be injured by us; the house in which you abide shall be to us a sanctuary, and no Fleming shall set his foot across its threshold. For this Deconinck pledges you his faith and honor."

"I thank your countrymen for their regard," replied De Mortenay; "but I cannot accept the protection which you offer me, and indeed shall never be in a situation to require it. Should ought occur such as you prophesy, it will be under the banner of France, and not in my house, that I shall be found; and in all fall, it will be sword in hand. But do not believe that things will ever come to such a pass; as for the present instruction, it will be an end. But for you, Dean, do you make haste away to some other land; that is what I counsel you as your friend."

"No Messire, I will never forsake my country, the land in which the bones of my fathers rest. I pray you, consider that all things are possible, and that it may yet be the French blood shall be poured out like water; when that day comes, then bethink you of my words. This is all that I would say to you, noble sir. So now, farewell; and may God have you in his keeping!"

As De Mortenay, when left to himself, pondered over Deconinck's words, he could not but feel an anxious foreboding that some terrible secret lay hidden under them: he resolved therefore that he would the very next day warn De Châtillon to especial vigilance and himself take extraordinary measures for the security of the city. Little deeming that what he feared, and thought to provide against, was so near at hand, he now retired to his bed, and soon fell asleep in all tranquillity.

TO BE CONTINUED.

Gourlay plans are all of one quality—the best. Better cannot be made. Though a Gourlay may cost more than another, it will prove to be worth more than the increase.

Regarding the Gould de Sagan combination the Palladaphia Record says:

And now, Prince de Sagan is going to enter the Protestant Church because that of Rome will not annul little Boni's marriage and let him step into his shoes. It is hard on the Protestant Church, Polly. It is bad enough to lose from its ranks good, conscientious men like Dr. McGarvey and the clergy of St. Elizabeth's, for good people are getting to be few and far between, but it can stand that better than it can the accession of so grotesque a personage as de Sagan."