

THE LION OF FLANDERS.

BY HENDRIK CONSCIENCE.

CHAPTER VI. CONTINUED.

"You speak of the Lady Matilda, daughter of the Lord Robert de Bethune," observed Deconinck.

"How know you that?" inquired Adolf surprised.

"I know you more, sir. The Lady Matilda was not brought to your house so privily, but that Deconinck knew it, nor could she have left it again unknown to me. But be not alarmed, for I can assure you that but few besides myself at Bruges are in the secret."

You are a wonderful man, Master Deconinck. But now to the point: I feel that I may trust in your magnanimity to defend this young daughter of our Lion, if need be, against any violence from the French."

Sprung from among the people, Deconinck was one of those rare geniuses who come before the world from time to time as the leaders of their age and country. No sooner has years ripened his capacity, than he called forth his brethren out of the bondage in which they slumbered, taught them to understand the power which lies in union, and rose up at the head against their tyrants.

The latter now found it impossible to resist the awakened energies of their former slaves, whose hearts Deconinck had so roused and kindled by eloquence, that their necks would no longer bear the yoke. Yet some times the fortune of the world is so time to the nobles, and the people for a time submitted, while Deconinck seemed to have lost at once his eloquence and his sagacity. Nevertheless he slumbered not, but still worked upon the spirits of his comrades with secret exhortations, till a favorable moment came; then the common rose against their tyrants, and again broke their bonds. All the political machinations of the nobles vanished into smoke before the keen intellect of Deconinck, and they found themselves thus deprived of all their power over the people, without any possibility of permanent holding their ground.

With truth it might be said, that a chief share in the reform of the political relations between the nobles and the commons belonged to Deconinck, whose waking thoughts and sleep dreams were solely to the aggrandizement of the people, who had so long groaned, so to say, in the dark dungeon and heavy chains of feudal bondage.

It was with a smile of satisfaction, then, that he listened to Adolf of Nieuwland's appeal in behalf of the young Matilda; for it was a great triumph for the people whose representative he was. In an instant he counted over the advantages which might be derived from the presence of the illustrious maiden for the execution of his great project of deliverance.

"Sir Adolf of Nieuwland," he answered, "I am greatly honored by this application. I will swear to you that which may contribute to the safety of the illustrious daughter of the Flemish prince."

Desirous of bringing the matter more entirely into the hands of the commons, he added, with cautious hesitation, "But might she not easily be carried off hence before I could come to her aid?"

This remark was somewhat displeasing to Adolf; for he thought he saw in it a disinclination on the Dean's part to take up Matilda's cause with heart and soul. He therefore replied: "If you cannot yourself give us efficient aid, I pray you, master, to advise us as to what is the best that can be done for the safety of our noble Count's daughter."

"The Clothworker's Company is strong enough to stand between the lady and all fear of insolence," rejoined Deconinck; "I can assure you that she may live as peacefully and safely at Bruges as in Germany, if you will take counsel of me."

"What is your difficulty, then?" asked Adolf.

"Noble sir, it is not for such as me to make arrangements for the daughter of my prince; nevertheless, should she be pleased to do as I shall recommend her, I will undertake to be answerable for her safety."

"I hardly understand you, master. What have you to ask of the Lady Matilda? you would not carry her to another place?"

"O, no; all I desire is, that she should on no account leave the house without my knowledge, and should, on the other hand, at all times be ready to accompany me, should I judge it necessary. Moreover, I leave it to you to withdraw this trust from me the moment you feel any doubt of the loyalty of my intentions."

As Deconinck was universally held in Flanders as one of their ablest heads, Adolf doubted not that his demands would be founded on good reasons, and therefore made no difficulty in granting all he asked, provided he would undertake to be himself answerable for the Lady Matilda's safety; and, as he was not yet personally acquainted with her, Matilda went to request her presence.

On her entering the room, Deconinck made a low and humble obeisance before her, while the princess looked at him with considerable astonishment, not in the least knowing who he could be. But while he thus stood before her, and she awaited at his side, the door opened, suddenly a noise of loud disputing was heard in the passage.

"Wait then!" cried one of the voices, "that I may inquire whether you can be admitted."

"What!" cried another voice of much greater power, "shall all butchers be shut out while the Clothworkers are let in? Quick, out of the way, or you shall rue it!"

The door opened, and a young man of powerful limbs and handsome features entered the chamber. His dress was made like that of Deconinck, but with more of taste and ornament; the great cross handled knife hung at his girdle. As he passed the threshold he was in the act of throwing back his long fair hair from his face; but the sight that met his eyes checked him suddenly in the door-way. He had thought to find there the Dean of the Clothworkers and some of his fellows; but now see

ing this beautiful and richly-dressed lady, and Deconinck bowing thus before her, he knew not what to think. However, he did not allow himself to be disconcerted, either by the unexpected presence in which he found himself, or by the inquiring look of Master Roger. He uncovered his head, bowed hastily all round, and went straight up to Deconinck; then seizing him familiarly by the arm, he exclaimed:

"His Master Peter! I have been looking for you these two hours; I have been running all over the town after you, and nowhere were you to be found. Know you what is happening, and what news I bring?"

"Well, what is it then, Master Breydel?" inquired Deconinck impatiently.

"Come, don't stare at me so with your cat's eye, Master dean of the Clothworkers," cried Breydel; "you know well enough that I am not afraid of it. But that is all one. Well, then, king Philip the Fair, and the French king, Joanna of Navarre, are coming to Bruges to-morrow; and our fine fellows of city magistrates have ordered out a hundred clothworkers, forty butchers, and I know not how many more of the rest, to make triumphal arches, cars for a pageant, and so on."

"And what is there so wonderful in that, that you should waste your breath about it?"

"What Master Dean! what is there in that? more than you think; for certainly not a single butcher will put forth his hand to work, and there are three hundred clothworkers standing in front of your hall waiting for you. As far as I am concerned, it will be long enough before I was a finger for them. The halberds stand ready, the knives are sharp; everything is in order. You know, Master Dean, what that means when I say it."

All present listened with curiosity to the bold words of the Dean of the Butchers. His voice was clear, and even musical, though with nothing of womanish softness in it. Deconinck's cooler judgment, meanwhile, soon perceived that Breydel's designs would, if executed, only be injurious to the cause, and he answered:

"I will go with you, Master Jan; we will talk over the necessary measures together; but first, you must know that this noble lady is the Lady Matilda, daughter of Lord Robert de Bethune."

Breydel, in much surprise, threw himself on one knee before Matilda, lifted his eyes to her, and exclaimed: "Most illustrious lady, forgive me the random speech I have heedlessly used in your presence. Let not the noble daughter of our lord the Lion remember it against me."

"Rise, master!" answered Matilda graciously; "you have said nothing that I could take amiss. Your words were inspired by love for our country, and hatred against its enemies. I thank you for your faithful allegiance."

"Gracious Countess," pursued Breydel, rising, "your ladyship cannot imagine how bitter are my feelings against the Liliars and French tax-gatherers. O that I could avenge the wrongs of the House of Flanders! — O that I could! But the Dean of the Clothworkers here is always against me; perhaps he is right, for late is not never; but it is difficult for me to keep back. To-morrow the false Queen Joanna comes to Bruges; but unless God gives me other thoughts than I have now, she shall never see France again."

"Master," said Matilda, "will you promise me what I am going to ask of you?"

"Promise you, lady? say rather that you command me and I will obey. Every word of yours shall be sacred to me, illustrious princess."

"Then I desire of you that you shall do nothing to break the peace while the new prince is in the city."

"So be it," answered Breydel, sorrowfully. "I had rather your ladyship had called upon me to use my arm or my knife; however, it's a long lane that has no turning, and if - day is for them to-morrow may be for us."

Then, once more bowing his knee before the princess, he added:

"I beg and pray of you, noble daughter of our Lion, not to forget your servant Breydel, whenever you have need of strong arms and stout hearts. The Butchers' Company will keep their halberds and knives ready ground for your service."

The maiden started somewhat at an answer which savored so much of blood; but nevertheless she replied in a tone of satisfaction.

"Masters," she answered, "I will not forget to make your fidelity known to my lord and father, when God shall restore him to me; for myself, I cannot sufficiently express my thanks to you."

Master Jan, who had been standing taking Deconinck by the arm, then went out together. Long after they had left the house this unexpected visit formed a topic of conversation for its inmates. As soon as the two Deans were in the street Deconinck began:

"Master Jan, you know that the Lion of Flanders has always been your friend of the people; it is therefore our bounden duty to watch over his daughter as a sacred deposit."

"What need of so many words about it?" answered Breydel; "the first Frenchman that dare but look askance at her shall make acquaintance with my cross knife. But, Master Peter, would it not be the best plan to close the gates, and not let Joanna into the town? All my butchers are ready, the halberds stand behind the doors, and at the first word every Liliard will be packed to the wall."

"Beware of any violence!" interrupted Deconinck. "To receive one's prince magnificently is the custom everywhere; that can do no dishonor to the commons. It is better to reserve our strength for occasions of more importance. Our country is at present swarming with foreign troops, and might very easily get the worst of it."

"But, master, this is terribly slow work! Let us just cut the knot with a good knife, instead of taking all this time to untie it, you understand me?"

"I understand you well enough; but that will not do. Caution, Breydel, is

the best knife; it cuts slowly, but it never blunts and never breaks. Suppose you do shut the gates, what have you gained then? Listen, and take my word for it. Let the storm go by a little, and things get quiet, let us wait till a part of the foreign troops are gone back to France; let the French and the Liliards have their own way a little, and then they will be less on their guard."

"No!" cried Breydel, "that must not be! They are already beginning to be insolent and despotic more than enough. They plunder all the country round about, and treat us burghers as though we were their slaves."

"So much the better, Master Jan! so much the better!"

"So much the better! what do you mean by that? Say, master, have you turned your coat? and do you mean to use your fox's wit to betray us? I know not, but it seems to me that you begin to smell very strong of Liliars!"

"No, no, friend Jan! but just be thinking that the more there is to irritate, the nearer is the day of deliverance. If they cloaked their doings a little, and ruled with any show of justice, the mass of the people would sit down quietly under the yoke till they grew accustomed to it, and then, adieu, there would be no other means of open force than that."

"Master," said Jan Breydel, "I understand you; you are always right, as though your words, stood written upon parchment. But it is a bitter pill to me, to have to put up so long with these insolent foreigners. Better the Saracen than the Frenchman! But you are right enough; the more a frog blows himself out, the sooner he bursts! After all, I must confess that understanding is with the Clothworkers."

"Well, Master Breydel, I, for my part, acknowledge that it is the Butchers that are the men of action. Let us ever put these two good gifts, caution and courage, together, and the French will never find time to make fast the irons about our feet."

A bright smile on the face of the butcher acknowledged his satisfaction at this counsel.

"Yes," he replied, "there are five fellows in our company, Master Peter; and that the foreign rascals shall know, when the bitter fruit is ripe. But now I think of it, how shall we keep our Lion's daughter from Queen Joanna's knights?"

"We will show her here openly in the light of day."

"How so, master? let Joanna of Navarre see the Lady Matilda? You can never mean that in your sound senses! I think you must have some thing wrong in your upper works."

"No, no, friend Jan! To-morrow, at the entry of the foreign masters, all the Clothworkers will be under arms; so will you, with your Butchers. What can the Frenchmen do then? Nothing, as you know. Well, then, to-morrow I will put the Lady Matilda in a conspicuous place, whence Joanna of Navarre cannot but notice her. Then I shall be able to judge from the queen's countenance what her thoughts are, and how far we have to fear for our precious charge."

"The very thing, Master Peter! You are in very truth too wise for mortal man. I will do as you say, and I should only like to see the French (for to harm or affront her: for my hands itch to be at them, and that's the truth of it. But to-day I have to go to Sysselle to buy some linen, so it will be your turn to keep guard to-morrow."

"Now, then, only be a little calm, friend Jan, and do not let your blood boil over: here we are at Clothworkers' Hall."

As Breydel had said, a considerable group of Clothworkers stood about the door. All had gowns and caps of the same form as their Dean, though here and there might be perceived a young journeyman with longer hair, and something more of ornament about his apparel. This, however, was but an exception; for the company kept strict discipline, and did not permit in its members much idle display.

Jan Breydel spoke a few words more with Deconinck in an under tone, and then left him in high satisfaction.

Meanwhile the Clothworkers had opened a passage for their Dean as he approached; and all respectfully uncovered their heads, followed him into the hall.

CHAPTER VII.

The Liliards had made unusual preparations for giving a magnificent reception to their new prince. These favour they hoped by this means to earn. No cost had been spared; the fronts of the houses were hung with the richest stuffs the shops could furnish; the streets were turned into green avenues, by means of trees brought from the neighbouring woods and fields, and all the journey men of the different companies had been employed in erecting triumphal arches. On the following day, by ten o'clock in the morning, all was in readiness.

In the middle of the great square stood a lofty throne, erected by the Carpenters' Company, and covered with blue velvet, its double seat adorned with gold fringe, and furnished with richly worked cushions; two figures, Peace and Power, stood by, which with uplifted hands were to place a crown of olive upon the head of Philip the Fair and Joanna of Navarre. Hangings of heavy stuffs descended from the canopy, and the very ground of the square was covered with costly carpets for some distance round.

In the entrance of the Stone street stood four columns painted in imitation of marble, and on each of them a trumpeter, dressed as a figure of Fame, with long wings and flowing purple robes.

Over against the great shambles, at the beginning of the Lady street, was

erected a magnificent triumphal arch with Gothic pillars. Above, at the apex of the arch, hung the shield of the arms of France; lower, on each pillar, those of Flanders and the city of Bruges. The rest of the available space was occupied with allegorical devices, such as might best flatter the foreign lord. Here might be seen the black lion of Flanders humbly arising under a lily; there were the heavens with lilies substituted for clouds; and many other like images, such as a spirit of base treachery had suggested to these traitorous Flemings.

If Jan Breydel had not been kept in restraint by the Dean of the Clothworkers, the people would certainly not have been long scandalized by these symbols of abasement. As it was, however, he swallowed his indignation, and looked on in dark and desperate endurance. Deconinck had convinced him that the hour was not yet come.

The Catheline street was hung throughout its whole length with white linen and long festoons of foliage, and every house of a Liliard bore an inscription of welcome. On little four cornered stands burned all kinds of perfumes in beautifully chased vases and young girls strewed the streets with the flowers of the Catheline, by which the king and queen were to enter the town, was decked on the outside with magnificent scarlet hangings; there, too, were placed allegorical pictures intended to glorify the stranger, and to throw scorn upon the insolent foreigners. Better the Saracen than the Frenchman! But you are right enough; the more a frog blows himself out, the sooner he bursts! After all, I must confess that understanding is with the Clothworkers."

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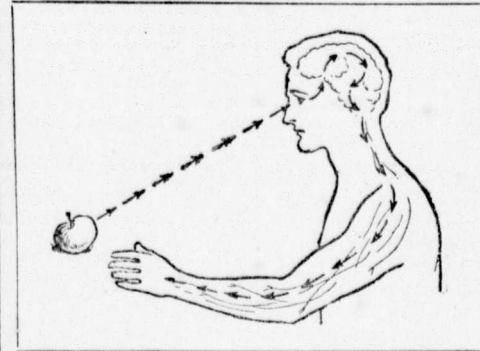
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Some Mysteries of the Nervous System Explained.



There is so much mystery associated with the nerve force which controls the organs of the human body that it can best be likened to electricity, of which we know so very little and yet make such varied uses.

By referring to the accompanying illustration we want to point out some things that are known in regard to the workings of the nervous system and emphasize the necessity of keeping up the supply of nerve force in order that the various organs of the body may perform their functions and health be maintained. Of the two sets of nerves in the human body, this sketch illustrates those which have to do with external objects, and control seeing, hearing, feeling, moving, etc.

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food

The cut shows how at sight of an apple the message is carried by the optical nerve to the brain, which receives, thinks and decides on some form of action, and then sends out its command through the nerves which lead to the hand.