The ducheſs endeavoured to allay the ferment by fair words, but in vain. At the head of the malecontents were the prince of Orange, count Egmont, and count Horn, who ſtrenuouſly insisted on calling an aſſembly of the States-general, and laying before them the grievances by which the country was oppreſſed. The event was, that in 1564 the cardinal was obliged to reſign his dignity ; which yet did not pro­duce any good effect, as he was ſucceeded by two of his creatures, Barlaimont and Viglius, who trod exactly in his footſteps. They puſhed on the inquiſition to freſh execu­tions ; ſtigmatized the principal nobility as heretics ; and on all occasions ſhowed ſuch violent and intolerable zeal for the Catholic religion, that one of Philip’s miniſters repreſented to him the danger there was of a total revolt of the provinces, unleſs the rigours of perſecution were ſomewhat relaxed. But Philip no ſooner received this intelligence, than he replied, “ that he had rather be without ſubjects, than be a king of heretics.” Agreeable to this reply, all the obnoxious decrees were enforced with double rigour ; upon which the ſtate of affairs became ſo alarming, that it was thought neceſſary to send count Egmont into Spain, in or­der to have a perſonal interview with the king on the ſubject. Philip, accuſtomed to deceit, gave a ſmooth anſwer, abated the rigour of his decrees, and ordered the governante ſometimes to conſult with the prince of Orange. Thus tranquillity was for a time reſtored ; but in the year 1566, it being diſcovered that a ſcheme for the total extirpation of the Proteſtants had been concerted by the queen-mother of France, her ſon Charles IX. and Iſabella queen of Spain, in a conference at Bayonne, matters became worſe than ever. That the information received concerning this deteſtable combination was true, very ſoon appeared, from Philip’s diſclaiming all the favourable interpretations which had been put upon his answer to count Egmont, and from his order­ing the inquiſition to proceed with more fury than ever.— The conſequence of this was a general aſſociation againſt this abominable tribunal, which was ſubſcribed by all orders and degrees of men, Roman Catholics as well as Proteſtants. The confederates, headed by Henry de Brodenrode, a deſcendant of the ancient earls of Holland, waited on the ducheſs of Parma, in ſuch a formidable body, that ſhe was ob­liged to diſmiſs them with an abſolute promiſe that their de­mands ſhould be granted. Theſe demands were, that the inquiſition ſhould be aboliſhed, and the edicts againſt liberty of conſcience recalled ; and for this ſhe immediately interpoſed all her intereſt with Philip. Sir William Temple al­leges, that Philip, in conſequence of the governante’s remonſtrances, granted all that was deſired, but too late. All other hiſtorians, however, agree that he was inflexible, and that the ducheſs could procure no better conditions than that heretics ſhould from that time forward be hanged inſtead of being burned. Even this appeared a conceſſion. unworthy of the king ; the royal name was therefore forbid to be uſed.

Before the confederates proceeded to extremities, they ſent deputies to Madrid; but, according to ſome authors, they were refused admittance into the king’s preſence. It appears, however, that they had found means of representing the true ſtate of affairs to the king, and of informing him that the diſturbances proceeded from the deteſtation in which the inquiſition was everywhere held in the Low Countries. Their repreſentations produced no other effect than an equivocal promiſe, which was evidently never in­tended to be kept. The governance received orders to proceed againſt heretics with the utmoſt ſeverity ; upon which the people broke out into acts of open rebellion. In ſeveral towns of Flanders the churches were destroyed, ima­ges pulled down, and all thoſe acts of violence committed which are the usual operations of a lawleſs mob. The principal inhabitants, however, still remained quiet, and even did all in their power to reſtrain the violence of the com­monalty ; ſo that, had Philip made any kind of reaſonable conceſſion, the public tranquillity might have been reſtored. Inſtead of this, however, a new oath of allegiance was adminiſtered by the governante, and all perſons were obliged to ſwear that they would regard as traitors and enemies to their country all whom the king ſhould think proper to proſcribe. This extraordinary proceeding was followed by the moſt cruel perſecution that can be imagined; at the ſame time that the duke of Alva was ſent into the Nether­lands with an army of 10,000 veteran troops, to put the laſt hand to the miſery of the people, and fully to eſtabliſh the deſpotiſm of the court. Counts Egmont and Horn took the above mentioned oath ; but the prince of Orange could by no means be induced to it, and therefore retired into Germany, along with counts Brodenrode and Hoogſtrate. Their example was followed by great numbers of all ranks and conditions ; and after the arrival of the army commanded by the duke of Alva, ſuch multitudes continued to emigrate, that the ducheſs of Parma informed the king, that within a few days 100,000 families had left his dominions ; that in a ſhort time the country muſt be depo­pulated, in which caſe there were would be no occaſion for a governante ; ſhe therefore begged leave to reſign, before ſhe ſhould have the mortification and diſgrace of being left alone in the Netherlands.

Philip immediately complied with the requeſt of the princeſs, and the duke of Alva was appointed to ſucceed her in the government. It may eaſily be imagined that the miſeries of the people would now become intolerable. The king was a proud and mercileſs tyrant, ſet at too great a diſtance from his ſubjects to be thoroughly ſenſible of their calamities, and totally deſtitute of compaſſion had he known them ever ſo well. The new governor was of the ſame diſpoſition ; and the army he commanded was fierce, rapaci­ous, and cruel, desiring nothing more ardently than to enrich themſelves at the expence of the inhabitants. The whole country was filled with blood and horror; counts Egmont and Horn were ignominiouſly executed, and the eſtate of the prince of Orange was confiſcated. Theſe laſt proceed­ings drove the people into deſpair; and they invited the prince to return, in order to take upon him the defence of the country from such inſufferable tyranny and oppreſſion.

All this time the prince of Orange, and his brother Louis of Nassau, had been labouring to form alliances for the defence of the liberties of their country. He had repre­sented matters in ſuch a light to the emperor Maximilian, that his Imperial majeſty ſent an ambaſſador to Philip, ex­horting him to treat his ſubjects in the Netherlands with leſs rigour. This enmaſſy was haughtily received ; Philip continued his perſecutions, and the prince of Orange his preparations for entering the Low Countries. His firſt efforts, however, were very unſucceſsful. A detachment of Germans in the ſervice of the prince attempted to penetrate into Brabant and ſurpriſe Ruremond ; but were defeated by a detach­ment from the duke of Alva’s army; Another party, consisting chiefly of French, attempted to penetrate into Ar­tois by the way of Picardy ; but their officers were arreſted by order of Charles IX. Louis of Nassau, however, defeat­ed a body of Spaniards, and killed 600 of them on the ſpot; but the vigilance of his enemies prevented him from drawing any advantage of conſequence from his victory.

The duke of Alva was ſo much chagrined at the defeat ſuſtained by his party, that he inſtantly aſſembled his troops from all quarters. His army then appeared too formidable to be oppoſed, and the prince of Naſſau with count Hoog-