

de Coster Charles

**The Legend of Ulenspiegel.  
Volume 2 of 2**



Charles de Coster

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Ulenspiegel. Volume 2 of 2**

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## Содержание

Book III	5
I	5
II	6
III	7
IV	8
V	9
VI	11
VII	15
VIII	17
IX	18
X	19
XI	23
XII	26
XIII	28
XIV	30
XV	31
XVI	32
XVII	34
XVIII	35
XIX	36
XX	37
XXI	38
XXII	39
XXIII	43
XXIV	47
XXV	49
XXVI	50
XXVII	52
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	56

**Coster Charles de**  
**The Legend of Ulenspiegel, Volume 2**  
**(of 2) / And Lamme Goedzak, and their**  
**Adventures Heroical, Joyous and Glorious**  
**in the Land of Flanders and Elsewhere**

**Book III**

**I**

He goes away, the Silent One, God guideth him.

The two counts have been seized already; Alba promises the Silent One lenity and pardon if he will present himself before him.

At this news, Ulenspiegel said to Lamme: “The Duke summons, at the instance of Dubois, the procurator general, the Prince of Orange, Ludwig his brother, De Hoogstraeten, Van den Bergh, Culembourg, de Brederode, and other friends of the Prince’s, to appear before him within thrice fourteen days, promising them good justice and grace. Listen, Lamme, and hearken: One day a Jew of Amsterdam summoned one of his enemies to come down into the street; the summoner was on the pavement and the summoned at a window.

“‘Come down, then,’ said the summoner to the summoned, ‘and I will give thee such a cuff on the head with my fist that it will tumble into thy breast, and thou shalt look through thy ribs like a thief through the bars of his prison.’

“The summoned replied: ‘Even if thou wast to promise me an hundredfold more, I would not come down even then.’ And so may Orange and the others answer.”

And they did so, refusing to appear. Egmont and de Hoorn did not follow their example. And weakness in duty evokes the hour of God and fate.

## II

At this time were beheaded on the Horse Market at Brussels the sires d'Andelot, the sons of Battemberg and other renowned and valiant lords, that had wished to seize Amsterdam by surprise.

And while they were going to execution, being eighteen in number, and singing hymns, the drummers drummed before and behind, all along the way.

And the Spanish troopers escorting them and carrying blazing torches burned their bodies with them all over. And when they writhed because of the pain, the troopers would say: "What now, Lutherans, does that hurt then to be burned so soon?"

And he that had betrayed them was called Dierick Slosse, who brought them to Enkhuyse, that was still Catholic, to hand them over to the duke's catchpolls.

And they died valiantly.

And the king inherited.

### III

“Didst thou see him go by?” said Ulenspiegel, clad as a woodman, to Lamme similarly accoutred. “Didst thou see the foul duke with his forehead flat above like an eagle’s, and his long beard like a rope end dangling from a gallows? May God strangle him with it! Didst thou see that spider with his long hairy legs that Satan vomiting spat out upon our country? Come, Lamme, come; we will fling stones into his web...”

“Alas!” said Lamme, “we shall be burned alive.”

“Come to Groenendal, my dear friend; come to Groenendal, there is a noble cloister whither His Spiderly Dukishness goes to pray to the God of peace to allow him to perfect his work, which is to rejoice his black spirits wallowing in carrion. We are in Lent, and it is only blood from which His Dukishness has no mind to fast. Come, Lamme, there are five hundred armed horsemen roundabout the house of Ohain; three hundred footmen have set out in little bands and are entering the forest of Soignes.

“Presently, when Alba is at his devotions, we shall run out upon him, and having taken him, we shall put him in a good iron cage and send him to the prince.”

But Lamme, shivering in anguish:

“A great risk, my son,” he said to Ulenspiegel. “A great risk! I would follow you in this emprise were not my legs so weak, if my belly was not so blown out by reason of the thin sour beer they drink in this town of Brussels.”

This discourse was held in a hole dug in the earth in a wood, in the middle of the undergrowth. Suddenly, looking through the leaves as though out of a burrow, they saw the yellow and red coats of the Duke’s troopers, whose weapons glittered in the sun and who were going afoot through the wood.

“We are betrayed,” said Ulenspiegel.

When he saw the troopers no more, he ran at top speed as far as Ohain. The troopers let him pass without noticing him, because of his woodcutter’s clothes and the load of wood he carried on his back. There he found the horsemen waiting; he spread the news, all scattered and escaped except the sire de Bausart d’Armentières who was taken. As for the footmen that were coming from Brussels, they could not find a single one.

And it was a cowardly traitor in the regiment of the Sieur de Likes that betrayed them all.

The Sire de Bausart paid cruelly for the others.

Ulenspiegel went, his heart beating wildly with anguish, to see his cruel punishment in the Cattle Market at Brussels.

And poor d’Armentières, put upon the wheel, received thirty-seven blows of an iron bar on legs, arms, feet, and hands, which were broken to pieces one by one, for the murderers desired to see him suffer terribly.

And he received the thirty-seventh on the breast, and of that one he died.

## IV

On a June day, bright and sweet, there was erected at Brussels, on the marketplace in front of the City Hall, a scaffold covered with black draperies, and hard by two tall stakes with iron spiked ends. Upon the scaffold were two black cushions and a little table on which there was a silver crucifix.

And on this scaffold were put to death by the sword the noble counts of Egmont and of Hoorn. And the king inherited.

And the ambassador of François, the first of that name, said, speaking of Egmont:

“I have just seen the head cut from off the man that twice caused France to tremble.”

And the heads of the counts were set on the iron spikes.

And Ulenspiegel said to Lamme:

“The bodies and the blood are covered with black cloth. Blessed be they that shall hold their heart high and the sword straight in the black days that are at hand!”

## V

At this time the Silent One gathered an army and invaded the Low Countries from three sides. And Ulenspiegel said at a meeting of Wild Beggars at Marenhout:

“Upon the advice of the Inquisitors, Philip, the king, has declared each and every inhabitant of the Low Countries guilty of treason through heresy, both for adherence to it and for not having opposed it, and in consideration of this execrable crime, condemns them all, without respect to sex or age, excepting those that are expressly noted by name, to the penalties attached to such misdemeanours; and that without hope of grace. The king inherits. Death is reaping throughout the wide rich lands that border on the Northern Sea, the country of Emden, the river Amise, the countries of Westphalia, of Clèves, of Juliers and of Liège, the bishoprics of Cologne and of Trèves, the countries of Lorraine and of France. Death is reaping over a land of three hundred and forty leagues, in two hundred walled cities, in a hundred and fifty villages holding city rights, in the countryside in bourgs and plains. The king inherits.

“It is nowise too much,” he went on, “eleven thousand butchers to do the work. Alba calls them soldiers. And the land of our fathers has become a charnel house whence the arts are taking flight, which the trades abandon, whence industries are departing to go and enrich foreigners, who allow them in their land to worship the God of the free conscience. Death and Ruin are reaping. The king inherits.

“The countries had acquired their privileges by dint of money given to needy princes; these privileges are confiscated. They had hoped, in accordance with the contracts entered upon and passed between them and the sovereigns, to enjoy riches as the fruit of their labours. They are deceived: the mason builds for the fire, the worker toils for the thief. The king inherits.

“Blood and tears! death reaps at the stake; upon the trees that serve as gallows all along the highways; in the open graves wherein poor girls are thrown alive; in the judicial drownings of the prisons, in the circles of blazing faggots within which the victims burn by slow fire, in the wrappings of burning straw in which the victims die in flame and smoke. The king inherits.

“So has willed the Pope in Rome.

“The cities are bursting with spies waiting for their share of the victims’ goods. The richer a man is, the guiltier he is. The king inherits.

“But the valiant men of the countries will not suffer themselves to be slain like lambs. Among those that flee there are armed men that take shelter in the woods. The monks had denounced them that they might be slain and their goods seized. And so by night, by day, by bands, like wild beasts they rush upon the cloisters, and take back from thence the money stolen from the poor people, in the shape of candelabra, gold and silver shrines, pyxes, patens, precious vases. Is not that so, good fellows? They drink from them the wine the monks were keeping for themselves. The vases melted down or pledged will serve for the holy war. Long live the Beggars!”

“They harass the king’s soldiers, slay them and strip them, and then they flee into their dens. Day and night fires are seen lighted and extinguished, changing place incessantly. They are the fires of our feasting. For us the game, both fur and feather. We are lords. The peasants give us bread and bacon when we want it. Lamme, look at them. Raggedy, fierce, resolute, and proud eyed, they wander about the woods with their hatchets, halberds, long swords, daggers, pikes, lances, crossbows, arquebuses, for all weapons are good to them, and they will never march under ensigns. Long live the Beggars!

And Ulenspiegel sang:

*“Slaet op den trommele van dirre dom deyne  
Slaet op den trommele van dirre doum, doum.*

Beat upon the drum! *van dirre dom deyne*,  
Beat upon the drum of war.

“Let them tear out his bowels from the Duke!  
Let them lash his face with them!  
*Slaet op den trommele*, beat upon the drum  
Cursed be the Duke! Death to the murderer.

“Let him be thrown to dogs! Death to the  
Butcher! Long live the Beggars!  
Let him be hanged by the tongue  
And by the arm, by the tongue that orders,  
And by the arm that signs the sentence of death.

*Slaet op den trommele*.  
Beat upon the war drum. Long live the Beggar!

“Let the Duke be shut up alive with his victims’ bodies!  
In the noisome stench  
Let him die of the corpse plague!  
Beat upon the war drum. Long live the Beggar!

“Christ from on high look on thy soldiers,  
Risking the fire, the rope,  
The sword for thy word’s sake.  
They will deliverance for the land of their fathers.  
*Slaet op den trommele, van dirre dom deyne*.  
Beat upon the war drum. Long live the Beggar!”

And all set to drinking and shouting:

“Long live the Beggar!”

And Ulenspiegel, drinking from the gilt tankard of a monk, looked proudly round on the valiant faces of the Wild Beggars.

“Wild men,” said he, “ye are wolves, lions, and tigers. Eat the dogs of the bloody king.”

“Long live the Beggar!” said they, singing:

*“Slaet op den trommele van dirre dom deyne;*  
*Slaet op den trommele van dirre dom dom:*  
Beat upon the war drum. Long live the Beggar!”

## VI

Ulenspiegel, being at Ypres, was recruiting soldiers for the Prince: pursued by the Duke's catchpolls, he offered himself as beadle to the provost of Saint Martin. There he had for his companion a bellringer called Pompilius Numan, a coward of the deepest dye, who at night took his own shadow for the devil and his shirt for a ghost.

The provost was fat and plump as a hen fattened just ripe for the spit. Ulenspiegel soon saw on what grass he grazed to make himself so much pork. According to what he heard from the bellringer and saw with his own eyes, the provost dined at nine and supped at four by the clock. He stayed in bed until half-past eight; then before dinner he went walking in his church to see if the poor-boxes were well filled. And the half he put into his own pouch. At nine o'clock he dined on a bowl of milk, half a leg of mutton, a little heron pie, and emptied five tankards of Brussels wine. At ten, sucking a few prunes and washing them down with Orleans wine, he prayed God never to bring him in the way of gluttony. At noon, he ate, to pass the time, a wing and rump of a chicken. At one o'clock, thinking of his supper, he drained a big draught of Spanish wine; then stretching himself out on his bed, refreshed himself with a little nap.

Awaking, he would eat a little salted salmon to whet his appetite, and drink a great tankard of *dobbel-knol* of Antwerp. Then he would go down into the kitchen, sit down before the chimney place and the noble wood fire that flamed in it. There he watched roasting and browning for the abbey monks a big piece of veal or a well-scalded little pigling, that he would have eaten more gladly than a piece of bread. But his appetite was a little wanting. And he would study the spit, which turned by itself like a miracle. It was the work of Peter van Steenkiste the smith, who lived in the castellany of Courtrai. The provost paid him fifteen Paris livres for one of these spits.

Then he would go up again to his bed, and dozing upon it through fatigue, he would wake up about three o'clock to gulp in a little pig jelly washed down with wine of Romagna at two hundred and forty florins the hogshead. At three he would eat a fledgling chick with Madeira sugar and empty two glasses of malvoisie at seventeen florins the keg. At half-past three, he took half a pot of preserves and washed it down with hydromel. Being now well awaked, he would take one foot in his hand and rest in meditation.

The moment of supper being come, the curé of Saint Jean would often arrive to visit him at this succulent hour. They sometimes disputed which could eat most fish, poultry, game, and meat. The one that was quickest filled must pay a dish of carbonadoes for the other, with three hot wines, four spices, and seven vegetables.

Thus drinking and eating, they talked together of heretics, being of opinion anyhow that it was impossible to do away with too many of them. And then they never fell into any quarrel, except only when they were discussing the thirty-nine ways of making good soups with beer.

Then drooping their venerable heads upon their priestly paunches, they would snore. Sometimes half waking, one of them would say that life in this world is very sweet and that poor folk are very wrong to complain.

This was the saintly man whose beadle Ulenspiegel became. He served him well during mass, not without filling the flagons three times, twice for himself and once for the provost. The ringer Pompilius Numan helped him at it on occasion.

Ulenspiegel, who saw Pompilius so flourishing, paunchy, and full cheeked, asked him if it was in the provost's service he had laid up for himself this treasure of enviable health.

"Aye, my son," replied Pompilius, "but shut the door tight for fear that one might listen to us."

Then speaking in a whisper:

"You know," said he, "that our master the provost loveth all wines and beers, all meats and fowl, with a surpassing love. And so he locks his meats in a cupboard and his wines in a cellar, the

keys of which are ever in his pouch. And he sleeps with his hand on them... By night when he sleeps I go and take his keys from his pouch and put them back again, not without trembling, my son, for if he knew my crime he would have me boiled alive.”

“Pompilius,” said Ulenspiegel, “it needs not to take all that trouble, but the keys one time only; I shall make keys on this pattern and we shall leave the others on the paunch of the good provost.”

“Make them, my son,” said Pompilius.

Ulenspiegel made the keys; as soon as he and Pompilius judged about eight of the clock in the evening that the good provost was asleep they would go down and take what they chose of meats and bottles. Ulenspiegel would carry two bottles and Pompilius the meats, because Pompilius always was trembling like a leaf, and hams and legs of mutton do not break in falling. They took possession of fowl more than once before they were cooked, which brought about the accusation of several cats belonging to the neighbourhood, which were done to death for the crime.

They went thereafter into the *Ketel-straat*, which is the street of the *bona robas*. There they spared nothing, giving liberally to their dears smoked beef and ham, saveloys and poultry, and gave them wine of Orleans and Romagna to drink, and *Ingelsche bier*, which they called *ale* on the other side of the sea, and which they poured in floods down the fresh throats of the pretty ladies. And they were paid in caresses.

However, one morning after dinner the provost sent for both of them. He had a formidable look, sucking a marrow bone in soup, not without anger.

Pompilius was trembling in his shoes, and his belly was shaken with fear. Ulenspiegel, keeping quiet, felt at the cellar keys in his pocket with pleased satisfaction.

The provost, addressing him, said:

“Someone is drinking my wine and eating my fowl, is it thou, my son?”

“No,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“And this ringer,” said the provost, pointing to Pompilius, “hath not he dipped his hands in this crime, for he is pallid as a dying man, assuredly because the stolen wine is poison to him.”

“Alas! Messire,” answered Ulenspiegel, “you wrongly accuse your ringer, for if he is pale, it is not from having drunk wine, but for want of drinking enough, from which cause he is so loosened that if he is not stopped his very soul will escape by streams into his shoes.”

“The poor we have always with us,” said the provost, taking a deep draught of wine from his tankard. “But tell me, my son, if thou, who hast the eyes of a lynx, hast not seen the robbers?”

“I will keep good watch for them, Messire Provost,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“May God have you both in his joy, my children,” said the provost, “and live soberly. For it is from intemperance that many evils come upon us in this vale of tears. Go in peace.”

And he blessed them.

And he sucked another marrow bone in soup, and drank another great draught of wine.

Ulenspiegel and Pompilius went out from him.

“This scurvy fellow,” said Ulenspiegel, “would not have given you a single drop of his wine to drink. It will be blessed bread to steal more from him still. But what ails you that you are shivering?”

“My shoes are full of water,” said Pompilius.

“Water dries quickly, my son,” said Ulenspiegel. “But be merry, to-night there will be flagon music in the *Ketel-straat*. And we will fill up the three night watchmen, who will watch the town with snores.”

Which was done.

However, they were close to Saint Martin’s day: the church was adorned for the feast. Ulenspiegel and Pompilius went in by night, shut the doors close, lit all the wax candles, took a viol and bagpipe, and began to play on these instruments all they might. And the candles flared like suns. But that was not all. Their task being done, they went to the provost, whom they found afoot, in spite

of the late hour, munching a thrush, drinking Rhenish wine and opening both eyes to see the church windows lit up.

“Messire Provost,” said Ulenspiegel to him, “would you know who eats your meats and drinks your wines?”

“And this illumination,” said the provost, pointing to the windows of the church. “Ah! Lord God, dost thou allow Master Saint Martin thus to burn, by night and without paying, poor monks’ wax candles?”

“He is doing something besides, Messire Provost,” said Ulenspiegel, “but come.”

The provost took his crozier and followed with them; they went into the church.

There, he saw, in the middle of the great nave, all the saints come down from their niches, ranged round and as it seemed commanded by Saint Martin, who out-topped them all by a head, and from the forefinger of his hand, outstretched to bless, held up a roast turkey. The others had in their hands or were lifting to their mouths pieces of chicken or goose, sausages, hams, fish raw and cooked, and among other things a pike weighing full fourteen pounds. And every one had at his feet a flask of wine.

At this sight the provost, losing himself wholly in anger, became so red and his face was so congested, that Pompilius and Ulenspiegel thought he would burst, but the provost, without paying any heed to them, went straight up to Saint Martin, threatening him as if he would have laid the crime of the others to his charge, tore the turkey away from his finger and struck him such heavy blows that he broke his arm, his nose, his crozier, and his mitre.

As for the others, he did not spare them bangs and thumps, and more than one under his blows laid aside arms, hands, mitre, crozier, scythe, axes, gridirons, saw, and other emblems of dignity and of martyrdom. Then the provost, his belly shaking in front of him, went himself to put out all the candles with rage and speed.

He carried away all he could of hams, fowl, and sausages, and bending beneath the load he came back to his bedchamber so doleful and angry that he drank, draught upon draught, three great flasks of wine.

Ulenspiegel, being well assured that he was sleeping, took away to the *Ketel-straat* all the provost thought he had rescued, and also all that remained in the church, not without first supping on the best pieces. And they laid the remains and fragments at the feet of the saints.

Next day Pompilius was ringing the bell for matins; Ulenspiegel went up into the provost’s sleeping chamber and asked him to come down once more into the church.

There, showing him the broken pieces of saints and fowls, he said to him:

“Messire Provost, you did all in vain, they have eaten all the same.”

“Aye,” replied the provost, “they have come up to my sleeping chamber, like robbers, and taken what I had saved. Ah, master saints, I will complain to the Pope about this.”

“Aye,” replied Ulenspiegel, “but the procession is the day after to-morrow, the workmen will presently be coming into the church: if they see there all these poor mutilated saints, are you not afraid of being accused of iconoclasm?”

“Ah! Master Saint Martin,” said the provost, “spare me the fire, I knew not what I did!”

Then turning to Ulenspiegel, while the timid bellringer was swinging to his bells:

“They could never,” said he, “between now and Sunday, mend Saint Martin. What am I to do, and what will the people say?”

“Messire,” answered Ulenspiegel, “we must employ an innocent subterfuge. We shall glue on a beard on the face of Pompilius; it is always respectable, being always melancholic; we shall dight him up with the Saint’s mitre, alb, amice, and great cloak; we shall enjoin upon him to stand well and fast on his pedestal, and the people will take him for the wooden Saint Martin.”

The provost went to Pompilius who was swaying on the ropes.

“Cease to ring,” said he, “and listen to me: would you earn fifteen ducats? On Sunday, the day of the procession, you shall be Saint Martin. Ulenspiegel will get you up properly, and if when you are borne by your four men you make one movement or utter one word, I will have you boiled alive in oil in the great caldron the executioner has just had built on the market square.”

“Monseigneur, I give you thanks,” said Pompilius; “but you know that I find it hard to contain my water.”

“You must obey,” replied the provost.

“I shall obey, Monseigneur,” said Pompilius, very pitifully.

## VII

Next day, in bright sunshine, the procession issued forth from the church. Ulenspiegel had, as best he could, patched up the twelve saints that balanced themselves on their pedestals between the banners of the guilds, then came the statue of Our Lady; then the daughters of the Virgin all clad in white and singing anthems; then the archers and crossbowmen; then the nearest to the dais and swaying more than the others, Pompilius sinking under the heavy accoutrements of Master Saint Martin.

Ulenspiegel, having provided himself with itching powder, had himself clothed Pompilius with his episcopal costume, had put on his gloves and given him his crozier and taught him the Latin fashion of blessing the people. He had also helped the priests to clothe themselves. On some he put their stole, on others their amice, on the deacons the alb. He ran hither and thither through the church, restoring the folds of doublet or breeches. He admired and praised the well-furbished weapons of the crossbowmen, and the formidable bows of the confraternity of the archers. And on everyone he poured, on ruff, on back or wrist, a pinch of itching powder. But the dean and the four bearers of Saint Martin were those that got most of it. As for the daughters of the Virgin, he spared them for the sake of their sweetness and grace.

The procession went forth, banners in the wind, ensigns displayed, in goodly order. Men and women crossed themselves as they saw it passing. And the sun shone hot.

The dean was the first to feel the effect of the powder, and scratched a little behind his ear. All, priests, archers, crossbowmen, were scratching neck, legs, wrists, without daring to do it openly. The four bearers were scratching, too, but the bellringer, itching worse than any, for he was more exposed to the hot sun, did not dare even to budge for fear of being boiled alive. Screwing up his nose, he made an ugly grimace and trembled on his tottery legs, for he nearly fell every time his bearers scratched themselves.

But he did not dare to move, and let his water go through fear, and the bearers said:

“Great Saint Martin, is it going to rain now?”

The priests were singing a hymn to Our Lady.

“Si de coe ... coe ... coe ... lo descenderes  
O sanc ... ta ... ta ... ta ... Ma ... ma ... ria.”

For their voices shook because of the itching, which became excessive, but they scratched themselves modestly and parsimoniously. Even so the dean and the four bearers of Saint Martin had their necks and wrists torn to pieces. Pompilius stayed absolutely still, tottering on his poor legs, which were itching the most.

But lo on a sudden all the crossbowmen, archers, deacons, priests, dean, and the bearers of Saint Martin stopped to scratch themselves. The powder made the soles of Pompilius’s feet itch, but he dared not budge for fear of falling.

And the curious said that Saint Martin rolled very fierce eyes and showed a very threatening mien to the poor populace.

Then the dean started the procession going again.

Soon the hot sun that was falling straight down on all these processional backs and bellies made the effect of the powder intolerable.

And then priests, archers, crossbowmen, deacons, and dean were seen, like a troop of apes, stopping and scratching shamelessly wherever they itched.

The daughters of the Virgin sang their hymn, and it was as the angels’ singing, all those fresh pure voices mounting towards the sky.

All went off wherever and however they could: the dean, still scratching, rescued the Holy Sacrament; the pious people carried the relics into the church; Saint Martin's four bearers threw Pompilius roughly on the ground. There, not daring to scratch, move, or speak, the poor bellringer shut his eyes devoutly.

Two lads would have carried him away, but finding him too heavy, they stood him upright against a wall, and there Pompilius shed big tears.

The populace assembled round about him; the women had gone to fetch handkerchiefs of fine white linen and wiped his face to preserve his tears as relics, and said to him: "Monseigneur, how hot you are!"

The bellringer looked at them piteously, and in spite of himself, made grimaces with his nose. But as the tears were rolling copiously from his eyes, the women said:

"Great Saint Martin, are you weeping for the sins of the town of Ypres? Is not that your honoured nose moving? Yet we have followed the counsel of Louis Vivès and the poor of Ypres will have wherewithal to work and wherewithal to eat. Oh! the big tears! They are pearls. Our salvation is here."

The men said:

"Must we, great Saint Martin, pull down the *Ketel-straat* in our town? But teach us above all ways of preventing poor girls from going out at night and so falling into a thousand adventures."

Suddenly the people cried out:

"Here is the beadle!"

Ulenspiegel then came up, and taking Pompilius round the body, carried him off on his shoulders followed by the crowd of devout men and women.

"Alas!" said the poor ringer, whispering in his ear, "I shall die of itch, my son."

"Keep stiff," answered Ulenspiegel; "do you forget that you are a wooden saint?"

He ran on at full speed and set down Pompilius before the provost who was currying himself with his nails till the blood came.

"Bellringer," said the provost, "have you scratched yourself like us?"

"No, Messire," answered Pompilius.

"Have you spoken or moved?"

"No, Messire," replied Pompilius.

"Then," said the provost, "you shall have your fifteen ducats. Now go and scratch yourself."

## VIII

The next day, the people, having learned from Ulenspiegel what had happened, said it was a wicked mockery to make them worship as a saint a whining fellow who could not hold in his water.

And many became heretics. And setting out with all their goods, they hastened to swell the prince's army.

Ulenspiegel returned towards Liége.

Being alone in the wood he sat down and pondered. Looking at the bright sky, he said:

“War, always war, so that the Spanish enemy may slay the poor people, pillage our goods, violate our wives and daughters. And all the while our goodly money goes, and our blood flows in rivers without profit to any one, except for this royal churl that would fain add another jewel of authority to his crown. A jewel that he imagines glorious, a jewel of blood, a jewel of smoke. Ah! if I could jewel thee as I desire, there would be none but flies to desire thy company.”

As he thought on these things he saw pass before him a whole herd of stags. There were some among them old and tall, with their dowcets still, and proudly wearing their antlers with nine points. Graceful brockets, which are their squires, trotted alongside them seeming all prepared to give them succour with their pointed horns. Ulenspiegel knew not where they were going, but judged that it was to their lair.

“Ah!” said he, “old stags and graceful brockets, ye are going, merry and proud, into the depths of the woodland to your lair, eating the young shoots, snuffling up the balmy scents, happy until the hunter-murderer shall come. Even so with us, old stags and brockets!”

And the ashes of Claes beat upon Ulenspiegel's breast.

## IX

In September, when the gnats cease from biting, the Silent One, with six field guns and four great cannon to talk for him, and fourteen thousand Flemings, Walloons, and Germans, crossed the Rhine at Saint Vyt.

Under the yellow-and-red ensigns of the knotty staff of Burgundy, a staff that bruised our countries for long, the rod of the beginning of servitude that Alba wielded, the bloody duke, there marched twenty-six thousand five hundred men, and rumbled along seventeen field pieces and nine big guns.

But the Silent One was not to have any good success in this war, for Alba continually refused battle.

And his brother Ludwig, the Bayard of Flanders, after many cities won, and many ships held to ransom on the Rhine, lost at Jemmingen in Frisia to the duke's son sixteen guns, fifteen hundred horses, and twenty ensigns, all through certain cowardly mercenary troops, who demanded money when it was the hour of battle.

And through ruin, blood, and tears, Ulenspiegel vainly sought the salvation of the land of our fathers.

And the executioners throughout the countries were hanging, beheading, burning the poor innocent victims.

And the king was inheriting.

## X

Going through the Walloon country, Ulenspiegel saw that the prince had no succour to hope for thence, and so he came up to the town of Bouillon.

Little by little he saw appearing on the road more and more hunchbacks of every age, sex, and condition. All of them, equipped with large rosaries, were devoutly telling their beads on them.

And their prayers were as the croakings of frogs in a pond at night when the weather is warm.

There were hunchback mothers carrying hunchback children, whilst other children of the same brood clung to their skirts. And there were hunchbacks on the hills and hunchbacks in the plains. And everywhere Ulenspiegel saw their thin silhouettes standing out against the clear sky.

He went to one and said to him:

“Whither go all these poor men, women, and children?”

The man replied:

“We are going to the tomb of Master Saint Remacle to pray him that he will grant what our hearts desire, by taking from off our backs his lump of humiliation.”

Ulenspiegel rejoined:

“Could Master Saint Remacle give me also what my heart desireth, by taking from off the back of the poor communes the bloody duke, who weighs upon them like a leaden hump?”

“He hath not charge to remove humps of penance,” replied the pilgrim.

“Did he remove others?” asked Ulenspiegel.

“Aye, when the humps are young. If then the miracle of healing takes place, we hold revel and feasting throughout all the town. And every pilgrim gives a piece of silver, and oftentimes a gold florin to the happy one that is cured, becomes a saint thereby and with power to pray with efficacy for the others.”

Ulenspiegel said:

“Why doeth the wealthy Master Saint Remacle, like a rascal apothecary, make folk pay for his cures?”

“Impious tramp, he punishes blasphemers!” replied the pilgrim, shaking his hump in fury.

“Alas!” groaned Ulenspiegel.

And he fell doubled up at the foot of a tree.

The pilgrim, looking down on him, said:

“Master Saint Remacle smites hard when he smites.”

Ulenspiegel bent up his back, and scratching at it, whined:

“Glorious saint, take pity. It is chastisement. I feel between my shoulder bones a bitter agony. Alas! O! O! Pardon, Master Saint Remacle. Go, pilgrim, go, leave me here alone, like a parricide, to weep and to repent.”

But the pilgrim had fled away as far as the Great Square of Bouillon, where all the hunchbacks were gathered.

There, shivering with fear, he told them, speaking brokenly:

“Met a pilgrim as straight as a poplar ... a blaspheming pilgrim ... hump on his back ... a burning hump!”

The pilgrims, hearing this, they gave vent to a thousand joyful outcries, saying:

“Master Saint Remacle, if you give humps, you can take them away. Take away our humps, Master Saint Remacle!”

Meanwhile, Ulenspiegel left his tree. Passing through the empty suburb, he saw, at the low door of a tavern, two bladders swinging from a stick, pigs' bladders, hung up in this fashion as a sign of a fair of black puddings, *panch kermis* as they say in the country of Brabant.

Ulenspiegel took one of the two bladders, picked up from the ground the backbone of a *schol*, which the French call dried plaice, drew blood from himself, made some blood run into the bladder, blew it up, sealed it, put it on his back, and on it placed the backbone of the *schol*. Thus equipped, with his back arched, his head wagging, and his legs tottering like an old humpback, he came out on the square.

The pilgrim that had witnessed his fall saw him and cried out:

“Here is the blasphemer!”

And pointed to him with his finger. And all ran to see the afflicted one.

Ulenspiegel nodded his head piteously.

“Ah!” said he, “I deserve neither grace nor pity; slay me like a mad dog.”

And the humpbacks, rubbing their hands, said:

“One more in our fraternity.”

Ulenspiegel, muttering between his teeth: “I will make you pay for that, evil ones,” appeared to endure all patiently, and said:

“I will neither eat nor drink, even to fortify my hump, until Master Saint Remacle has deigned to heal me even as he has smitten me.”

At the rumour of the miracle the dean came out of the church. He was a tall man, portly and majestic. Nose in wind, he clove the sea of the hunchbacks like a ship.

They pointed out Ulenspiegel; he said to him:

“Is it thou, good fellow, that the scourge of Saint Remacle has smitten?”

“Yea, Messire Dean,” replied Ulenspiegel, “it is indeed I his humble worshipper who would fain be cured of his new hump, if it please him.”

The dean, smelling some trick under this speech:

“Let me,” said he, “feel this hump.”

“Feel it, Messire,” answered Ulenspiegel.

And having done so, the dean:

“It is,” said he, “of recent date and wet. I hope, however, that Master Saint Remacle will be pleased to act pitifully. Follow me.”

Ulenspiegel followed the dean and went into the church. The humpbacks, walking behind him, cried out: “Behold the accursed! Behold the blasphemer! What doth it weigh, thy fresh hump? Wilt thou make a bag of it to put thy patacoons in? Thou didst mock at us all thy life because thou wast straight: now it is our turn. Glory be to Master Saint Remacle!”

Ulenspiegel, without uttering a word, bending his head, still following the dean, went into a little chapel where there was a tomb all marble covered with a great flat slab also of marble. Between the tomb and the chapel wall there was not the space of the span of a large hand. A crowd of humpbacked pilgrims, following one another in single file, passed between the wall and the slab of the tomb, on which they rubbed their humps in silence. And thus they hoped to be delivered. And those that were rubbing their humps were loath to give place to those that had not yet rubbed theirs, and they fought together, but without any noise, only daring to strike sly blows, humpbacks’ blows, because of the holiness of the place.

The dean bade Ulenspiegel get up on the flat top of the tomb, that all the pilgrims might see him plainly. Ulenspiegel replied: “I cannot get up by myself.”

The dean helped him up and stationed himself beside him, bidding him kneel down. Ulenspiegel did so and remained in this posture, with head hanging.

The dean then, having meditated, preached and said in a sonorous voice:

“Sons and brothers of Jesus Christ, ye see at my feet the greatest child of impiety, vagabond, and blasphemer that Saint Remacle hath ever smitten with his anger.”

And Ulenspiegel, beating upon his breast, said: “*Confiteor.*”

“Once,” went on the dean, “he was straight as a halberd shaft, and gloried in it. See him now, humpbacked and bowed under the stroke of the celestial curse.”

“*Confiteor*, take away my hump,” said Ulenspiegel.

“Yea,” went on the dean, “yea, mighty saint, Master Saint Remacle, who since thy glorious death hast performed nine and thirty miracles, take away from his shoulders the weight that loads them down. And may we, for this boon, sing thy praises from everlasting to everlasting, *in saecula saeculorum*. And peace on earth to humpbacks of good will.”

And the humpbacks said in chorus:

“Yea, yea, peace on earth to humpbacks of good will: humpbacks’ peace, truce to the deformed, amnesty of humiliation. Take away our humps, Master Saint Remacle!”

The dean bade Ulenspiegel descend from the tomb, and rub his hump against the edge of the slab. Ulenspiegel did so, ever repeating: “*Mea culpa, confiteor*, take away my hump.” And he rubbed it thoroughly in sight and knowledge of those that stood by.

And these cried aloud:

“Do ye see the hump? it bends! see you, it gives way! it will melt away on the right” – “No, it will go back into the breast; humps do not melt, they go down again into the intestines from which they come” – “No, they return into the stomach where they serve as nourishment for eighty days” – “It is the saint’s gift to humpbacks that are rid of them” – “Where do the old humps go?”

Suddenly all the humpbacks gave a loud cry, for Ulenspiegel had just burst his hump leaning hard against the edge of the flat tomb top. All the blood that was in it fell, dripping from his doublet in big drops upon the stone flags. And he cried out, straightening himself up and stretching out his arms:

“I am rid of it!”

And all the humpbacks began to call out together:

“Master Saint Remacle the blessed, it is kind to him, but hard to us” – “Master, take away our humps, ours too!” – “I, I will give thee a calf.” – “I, seven sheep.” – “I, the year’s hunting.” – “I, six hams.” – “I, I will give my cottage to the Church” – “Take away our humps, Master Saint Remacle!”

And they looked on Ulenspiegel with envy and with respect. One would have felt under his doublet, but the dean said to him:

“There is a wound that may not see the light.”

“I will pray for you,” said Ulenspiegel.

“Aye, Pilgrim,” said the humpbacks, speaking all together, “aye, master, thou that hast been made straight again, we made a mock of thee; forgive it us, we knew not what we did. Monseigneur Christ forgave when on the cross; give us all forgiveness.”

“I will forgive,” said Ulenspiegel benevolently.

“Then,” said they, “take this patard, accept this florin, permit us to give this real to Your Straightness, to offer him this cruzado, put these carolus in his hands...”

“Hide up your carolus,” said Ulenspiegel, whispering, “let not your left hand know what your right hand is giving.”

And this he said because of the dean who was devouring with his eyes the humpbacks’ money, without seeing whether it was gold or silver.

“Thanks be unto thee, sanctified sir,” said the humpbacks to Ulenspiegel.

And he accepted their gifts proudly as a man of a miracle.

But greedy ones were rubbing away with their humps on the tomb without saying a word.

Ulenspiegel went at night to a tavern where he held revel and feast.

Before going to bed, thinking that the dean would want to have his share of the booty, if not all, he counted up his gain, and found more gold than silver, for he had in it fully three hundred carolus. He noted a withered bay tree in a pot, took it by the hair of its head, plucked up the plant and the earth, and put the gold underneath. All the demi-florins, patards, and patacoons were spread out upon the table.

The dean came to the tavern and went up to Ulenspiegel.

The latter, seeing him:

“Messire Dean,” said he, “what would you of my poor self?”

“Nothing but thy good, my son,” replied he.

“Alas!” groaned Ulenspiegel, “is it that which you see on the table?”

“The same,” replied the dean.

Then putting out his hand, he swept the table clean of all the money that was upon it and dropped it into a bag destined for it.

And he gave a florin to Ulenspiegel, who pretended to groan and whine.

And he asked for the implements of the miracle.

Ulenspiegel showed him the *schol* bone and the bladder.

The dean took them while Ulenspiegel bemoaned himself, imploring him to be good enough to give him more, saying that the way was long from Bouillon to Damme, for him a poor footpassenger, and that beyond a doubt he would die of hunger.

The dean went away without uttering a word.

Being left alone, Ulenspiegel went to sleep with his eye on the bay tree. Next day at dawn, having picked up his booty, he went away from Bouillon and went to the camp of the Silent One, handed over the money to him and recounted the story, saying it was the true method of levying contributions of war from the enemy.

And the Prince gave him ten florins.

As for the *schol* bone, it was enshrined in a crystal casket and placed between the arms of the cross on the principal altar at Bouillon.

And everyone in the town knows that what the cross encloses is the hump of the blasphemer who was made straight.

## XI

The Silent One, being in the neighbourhood of Liège, made marches and countermarches before crossing the Meuse, thus misleading the duke's vigilance.

Ulenspiegel, schooling himself to his duties as a soldier, became very dexterous in handling the wheel-locked arquebus and kept his eyes and ears well open.

At this time there came to the camp Flemish and Brabant nobles, who lived on good terms with the lords, colonels, and captains in the following of the Silent One.

Soon two parties formed in the camp, eternally quarrelling and disputing, the one side saying: "the Prince is a traitor," the other answering that the accusers lied in their throat and that they would make them swallow their lie. Distrust spread and grew like a spot of oil. They came to blows in groups of six, of eight, or a dozen men; fighting with every weapon of single combat, even with arquebuses.

One day the prince came up at the noise, marching between two parties. A bullet carried away his sword from his side. He put an end to the combat and visited the whole camp to show himself, that it might not be said: "The Silent One is dead, and the war is dead with him."

The next day, towards midnight, in misty weather, Ulenspiegel being on the point of coming out from a house where he had been to sing a Flemish love song to a Walloon girl, heard at the door of the cottage beside the house a raven's croak thrice repeated. Other croakings answered from a distance, thrice by thrice. A country churl came to the door of the cottage. Ulenspiegel heard footsteps on the highway.

Two men, speaking Spanish, came to the rustic, who said to them in the same tongue:

"What have you done?"

"A good piece of work," said they, "lying for the king. Thanks to us, captains and soldiermen say to one another in distrust:

"It is through vile ambition that the prince is resisting the king; he is but waiting to be feared by him and to receive cities and lordships as a pledge of peace; for five hundred thousand florins he will abandon the valiant lords that are fighting for the countries. The duke has offered him a full amnesty with a promise and an oath to restore to their estates himself and all the highest leaders of the army, if they would re-enter into obedience to the king. Orange means to treat with him alone by himself."

"The partisans of the Silent One answered us:

"The duke's offer is a treacherous trap. He will pay them no heed, recalling the fate of Messieurs d'Egmont and de Hoorn. Well they know it, Cardinal de Granvelle, being at Rome, said at the time of the capture of the Counts: "They take the two gudgeons, but they leave the pike; they have taken nothing since the Silent remains still to take.""

"Is the variance great in the camp?" said the rustic.

"Great is the variance," said they: "greater every day. Where are the letters?"

They went into the cottage, where a lantern was lighted. There, peeping through a little skylight, Ulenspiegel saw them open two missives, read them with much satisfaction and pleasure, drink hydromel, and at last depart, saying to the rustic in Spanish:

"Camp divided, Orange taken. That will be a good lemonade."

"Those fellows," said Ulenspiegel, "cannot be allowed to live."

They went out into the thick mist. Ulenspiegel saw the rustic bring them a lantern, which they took with them.

The light of the lantern being often intercepted by a black shape, he took it that they were walking one behind the other.

He primed his arquebus and fired at the black shape. He then saw the lantern lowered and raised several times, and judged that, one of the two being down, the other was endeavouring to see the nature of his wound. He primed his arquebus again. Then the lantern going forward alone, swiftly

and swinging and in the direction of the camp, he fired once more. The lantern staggered about, then fell, and there was darkness.

Running towards the camp, he saw the provost coming out with a crowd of soldiers awakened by the noise of the shots. Ulenspiegel, accosting them, said:

“I am the hunter, go and pick up the game.”

“Jolly Fleming,” said the provost, “you speak otherwise than with your tongue.”

“Tongue talk, ’tis wind,” replied Ulenspiegel. “Lead talk remains in the bodies of the traitors. But follow me.”

He brought them, furnished with their lanterns, to the place where the two were fallen. And they beheld them indeed, stretched out on the earth, one dead, the other in the death rattle and holding his hand on his breast, where there was a letter crushed and crumpled in the last effort of his life.

They carried away the bodies, which they recognized by their garments as bodies of nobles, and thus came with their lanterns to the prince, interrupted at council with Frederic of Hollenhausen, the Markgrave of Hesse, and other lords.

Followed by landsknechts, reiters, green jackets and yellow jackets, they came before the tent of the Silent, shouting requests that he would receive them.

He came from the tent. Then, taking the word from the provost who was coughing and preparing to accuse him, Ulenspiegel said:

“Monseigneur, I have killed two traitor nobles of your train, instead of ravens.”

Then he recounted what he had seen, heard, and done.

The Silent said not a word. The two bodies were searched, there being present himself, William of Orange, the Silent, Frederic de Hollenhausen, the Markgrave of Hesse, Dieterich de Schoonenbergh, Count Albert of Nassau, the Count de Hoogstraeten, Antoine de Lalaing, the Governor of Malines; the troopers, and Lamme Goedzak trembling in his great paunch. Sealed letters from Granvelle and Noircarnes were found upon the gentlemen, enjoining upon them to sow dissension in the prince’s train, in order to diminish his strength by so much, to force him to yield, and to deliver him to the duke to be beheaded in accordance with his deserts. “It was essential,” said the letters, “to proceed subtly and by veiled speech, so that the people in the army might believe that the Silent had already, for his own personal profit, come to a private agreement with the duke. His captains and soldiers, being angry, would make him a prisoner. For reward a draft on the Fuggers of Antwerp for five hundred ducats had been sent to each; they should have a thousand as soon as the four hundred thousand ducats that were expected should have arrived in Zeeland from Spain.”

This plot being discovered and laid open, the prince, without a word, turned towards the nobles, lords, and soldiers, among whom were a great many that held him in suspicion; he showed the two corpses without a word, intending thereby to reproach them for their mistrust of him. All shouted with a great tumultuous noise:

“Long life to Orange! Orange is faithful to the countries!”

They would, for contumely, fain have flung the bodies to the dogs, but the Silent:

“It is not bodies that must be thrown to the dogs, but feeble-mindedness that bringeth about doubts of single-minded and good intents.”

And lords and soldiers shouted:

“Long live the prince! Long live Orange, the friend to the countries!”

And their voices were as a thunder threatening injustice.

And the prince, pointing to the bodies:

“Give them Christian interment,” said he.

“And I,” said Ulenspiegel, “what is to be done with my faithful carcase? If I have done ill let them give me blows; if I have done well let them accord me reward.”

Then the Silent One spake and said:

“This musketeer shall have fifty blows with green wood in my presence for having, without orders, slain two nobles, to the great disparagement of all discipline. He shall receive as well thirty florins for having seen well and heard well.”

“Monseigneur,” replied Ulenspiegel, “if they gave me the thirty florins first, I would endure the blows from the green wood with patience.”

“Aye, aye,” groaned Lamme Goedzak, “give him first of all the thirty florins; he will endure the rest with patience.”

“And then,” said Ulenspiegel, “having my soul free of guilt, I have no need to be washed with oak or rinsed with cornel.”

“Aye,” groaned Lamme Goedzak as before, “Ulenspiegel hath no need of washing or of rinsing. He hath a clean soul. Do not wash him, Messires, do not wash him.”

Ulenspiegel having received the thirty florins, the *stock-meester* was ordered by the provost to seize him.

“See, Messires,” said Lamme, “how piteous he looks. He hath no love for the wood, my friend Ulenspiegel.”

“I love,” replied Ulenspiegel, “to see a lovely ash all leafy, growing in the sunshine in all its native verdure; but I hate to the death those ugly sticks of wood still bleeding their sap, stripped of branches, without leaves or twigs, of fierce aspect and harsh of acquaintance.”

“Art thou ready?” asked the provost.

“Ready,” repeated Ulenspiegel, “ready for what? To be beaten. No, I am not, and have no desire to be, master *stock-meester*. Your beard is red and you have a formidable air; but I am fully persuaded that you have a kind heart and do not love to maltreat a poor fellow like me. I must tell it you, I love not to do it or see it; for a Christian man’s back is a sacred temple which, even as his breast, encloseth the lungs wherewith we breathe the air of the good God. With what poignant remorse would you be gnawed if a brutal stroke of the stick were to break me in pieces.”

“Make haste,” said the *stock-meester*.

“Monseigneur,” said Ulenspiegel, speaking to the Prince, “nothing presses, believe me; first should this stick be dried and seasoned, for they say that green wood entering living flesh imparts to it a deadly venom. Would Your Highness wish to see me die of this foul death? Monseigneur, I hold my faithful back at Your Highness’ service; have it beaten with rods, lashed with the whip; but, if you would not see me dead, spare me, if it please you, the green wood.”

“Prince, give him grace,” said Messire de Hoogstraeten and Dieterich de Schoonenbergh. The others smiled pityingly.

Lamme also said:

“Monseigneur, Monseigneur, show grace; green wood it is pure poison.”

The Prince then said: “I pardon him.”

Ulenspiegel, leaping several times high in air, struck on Lamme’s belly and forced him to dance, saying:

“Praise Monseigneur with me, who saved me from the green wood.”

And Lamme tried to dance, but could not, because of his belly.

And Ulenspiegel treated him to both eating and drinking.

## XII

Not wishing to give battle, the duke without truce or respite harried the Silent as he wandered about the flat land between Juliers and the Meuse, everywhere sounding the river at Hondt, Mechelen, Elsen, Meerssen, and everywhere finding it filled with traps and caltrops to wound men and horses that sought to pass over by fording.

At Stockem, the sounders found none of these engines. The prince gave orders for crossing. The reiters went over the Meuse and held themselves in battle order on the other bank, so as to protect the crossing on the side of the bishopric of Liège; then there formed up in line from one bank to the other, in this way breaking the current of the river, ten ranks of archers and musketeers, among whom was Ulenspiegel.

He had water up to his thighs, and often some treacherous wave would lift him up, himself and his horse.

He saw the foot soldiers cross, carrying a powder bag upon their headgear and holding their muskets high in air: then came the wagons, the hackbuts, linstocks, culverins, double culverins, falcons, falconets, serpentines, demi-serpentines, double serpentines, mortars, double mortars, cannon, demi-cannon, double cannon, *sacres*, little field pieces mounted on carriages drawn by two horses, able to manœuvre at the gallop and in every way like those that were nicknamed the Emperor's Pistols; behind them, protecting the rear, landsknechts and reiters from Flanders.

Ulenspiegel looked about to find some warming drink. The archer Riesencraft, a High German, a lean, cruel, gigantic fellow, was snoring on his charger beside him, and as he breathed he spread abroad the perfume of brandy. Ulenspiegel, spying for a flask on his horse's crupper, found it hung behind on a cord like a baldric, which he cut, and he took the flask, and drank rejoicing. The archer companions said to him:

"Give us some."

He did so. The brandy being drunk, he knotted the cord that held the flask, and would have put it back about the soldier's breast. As he lifted his arm to pass it round, Riesencraft awoke. Taking the flask, he would have milked his cow as usual. Finding that it gave no more milk, he fell into mighty anger.

"Robber," said he, "what have you done with my brandy?"

Ulenspiegel replied:

"Drunk it. Among soaking horsemen, one man's brandy is everybody's brandy. Evil is the scurvy stingy one."

"To-morrow I will carve your carcass in the lists," replied Riesencraft.

"We will carve each other," answered Ulenspiegel, "heads, arms, legs, and all. But are you not constipated, that you have such a sour face?"

"I am," said Riesencraft.

"You want a purge, then," replied Ulenspiegel, "and not a duel."

It was agreed between them that they should meet next day, mounted and accoutred each as he pleased, and should cut up each other's bacon with a short stiff sword.

Ulenspiegel asked that for himself the sword might be replaced by a cudgel, which was granted him.

In the meanwhile, all the soldiers having crossed the river and falling into order at the voice of the colonels and the captains, the ten ranks of archers also crossed over.

And the Silent said:

"Let us march on Liège!"

Ulenspiegel was glad of this, and with all the Flemings, shouted out:

"Long life to Orange, let us march on Liège!"

But the foreigners, and notably the High Germans, said they were too much washed and rinsed to march. Vainly did the prince assure them that they were going to a certain victory, to a friendly city; they would listen to nothing, but lit great fires and warmed themselves in front of them, with their horses unharnessed.

The attack on the city was put off till next day when Alba, greatly astonished at the bold crossing, learned through his spies that the Silent One's soldiers were not yet ready for the assault.

Thereupon, he threatened Liége and all the country round about to put them to fire and sword, if the prince's friends made any movement there. Gerard de Groesbeke, the bishop's catchpoll, armed his troopers against the prince, who arrived too late, through the fault of the High Germans, who were afraid of a little water in their stockings.

### XIII

Ulenspiegel and Riesencraft having taken seconds, the latter said that the two soldiers were to fight on foot to the death, if the conqueror wished, for such were Riesencraft's conditions.

The scene of the conflict was a little heath.

Early in the morning, Riesencraft donned his archer's array. He put on his salade with the throat piece, without visor, and a mail shirt with no sleeves. His other shirt being fallen into pieces, he put it in his salade to make lint of it if need was. He armed himself with an arbalest of good Ardennes wood, a sheaf of thirty quarrels, with a long dagger, but not with a two-handed sword, which is the archer's sword. And he came to the field of battle mounted upon his charger, carrying his war saddle and the plumed chamfron, and all barded with iron.

Ulenspiegel made up for himself an armament for a nobleman; his charger was a donkey; his saddle was the petticoat of a gay wench, his plumed chamfron was of osier, adorned above with goodly fluttering shavings. His barde was bacon, for, said he, iron costs too much, steel is beyond price, and as for brass in these later days, they have made so many cannon out of it that there is not enough left to arm a rabbit for battle. He donned for headgear a fine salade that had not yet been devoured by the snails; this salade was surmounted by a swan's feather, to make him sing if he was killed.

His sword, stiff and light, was a good long, stout cudgel of pinewood, at the end of which there was a besom of branches of the same tree. On the left hand of his saddle hung his knife, which was of wood likewise; on the right swung his good mace, which was of elderwood, surmounted with a turnip. His cuirass was all holes and flaws.

When he arrived in this array, at the field of the duel, Riesencraft's seconds burst out laughing, but he himself remained unbending from his sour face.

Ulenspiegel's seconds then demanded of Riesencraft's that the German should lay aside his armour of mail and iron, seeing that Ulenspiegel was armed only in rags and pieces. To which Riesencraft gave consent. Riesencraft's seconds then asked Ulenspiegel's how it came that Ulenspiegel was armed with a besom.

"You granted me the stick, but you did not forbid me to enliven it with foliage."

"Do as you think fit," said the four seconds.

Riesencraft said never a word and cropped down with little strokes of his sword the thin stalks of the heather.

The seconds requested him to replace his sword with a besom, the same as Ulenspiegel.

He replied:

"If this rascal of his own accord chose a weapon so out of the way, it is because he imagines he can defend his life with it."

Ulenspiegel saying again that he would use his besom, the four seconds agreed that everything was in order.

They were set facing each other, Riesencraft on his horse barded with iron, Ulenspiegel on his donkey barded with bacon.

Ulenspiegel came forward into the middle of the field of combat. There, holding his besom like a lance:

"I deem," said he, "fouler and more stinking than plague, leprosy, and death, this vermin brood of ill fellows who, in a camp of old soldiers and boon companions, have no other thought than to carry round everywhere their scowling faces and their mouths foaming with anger. Wherever they may be, laughter dares not show itself, and songs are silent. They must be forever growling and fighting, introducing thus alongside of legitimate combat for the fatherland single combat which is the ruin of an army and the delight of the enemy. Riesencraft here present hath slain for mere innocent words one and twenty men, without ever performing in battle or skirmish any act of distinguished bravery

or deserved the least reward by his courage. Now it is my pleasure to-day to brush the bare hide of this crabbed dog the wrong way.”

Riesencraft replied:

“This drunkard has had tall dreams of the abuse of single combats: it will be my pleasure to-day to split his head, to show everybody that he has nothing but hay in his brain-box.”

The seconds made them get down from their mounts. In so doing Ulenspiegel dropped from his head the salad which the ass ate quietly and slyly; but the donkey was interrupted in this job by a kick from one of the seconds to make him get out of the duelling enclosure. The same treatment fell to the lot of the horse. And they went off elsewhere to graze in company.

Then the seconds, carrying broom – these were Ulenspiegel’s pair, and the others, carrying sword – they were Riesencraft’s, gave the signal for the fray with a whistle.

And Riesencraft and Ulenspiegel fell to fighting furiously, Riesencraft smiting with his sword, Ulenspiegel parrying with his besom; Riesencraft swearing by all devils, Ulenspiegel fleeing before him, wandering through the heather obliquely and circling, zigzagging, thrusting out his tongue, making a thousand other faces at Riesencraft, who was losing his breath and beating the air with his sword like a mad trooper. Ulenspiegel felt him close, turned sharp and sudden, and gave him a great whack under the nose with his besom. Riesencraft fell down with arms and legs stretched out like a dying frog.

Ulenspiegel flung himself upon him, besomed his face up and down and every way, pitilessly, saying:

“Cry for mercy or I make you swallow my besom!”

And he rubbed and scrubbed him without ceasing, to the great pleasure and joy of the spectators, and still said:

“Cry for mercy or I make you eat it!”

But Riesencraft could not cry, for he was dead of black rage.

“God have thy soul, poor madman!” said Ulenspiegel.

And he went away, plunged in melancholy.

## XIV

It was then the end of October. The prince lacked money; his army was hungry. The soldiers were murmuring; he marched in the direction of France and offered battle to the duke, who declined it.

Leaving Quesnoy-le-Comte to go towards Cambrésis, he met ten companies of Germans, eight ensigns of Spaniards, and three cornets of light horse, commanded by Don Ruffele Henricis, the duke's son, who was in the middle of the line, and cried in Spanish:

“Kill! Kill! No quarter. Long live the Pope!”

Don Henricis was then over against the company of musketeers in which Ulenspiegel was *dizenier*, in command of ten men, and hurled himself upon them with his men. Ulenspiegel said to the sergeant of his troop:

“I am going to cut the tongue out of this ruffian!”

“Cut away,” said the sergeant.

And Ulenspiegel, with a well-aimed bullet, smashed the tongue and the jaw of Don Ruffele Henricis, the duke's son.

Ulenspiegel brought down from his horse the son of Marquis Delmarès also.

The eight ensigns, the three cornets were beaten.

After this victory, Ulenspiegel sought for Lamme in the camp, but found him not.

“Alas!” said he, “there he is, gone, my friend Lamme, my big friend. In his warlike ardour, forgetting the weight of his belly, he must have pursued the flying Spaniards. Out of breath he will have fallen like a sack upon the road. And they will have picked him up to have ransom for him, a ransom for Christian bacon. My friend Lamme, where art thou then, where art thou, my fat friend?”

Ulenspiegel sought him everywhere, and finding him not fell into melancholy.

## XV

In November, the month of snow storms, the Silent sent for Ulenspiegel to come before him. The prince was biting at the cord of his mail shirt.

“Hearken and understand,” said he.

Ulenspiegel replied:

“My ears are prison doors; to enter is easy, but it is a hard business to get anything out.”

The Silent said:

“Go through Namur, Flanders, Hainaut, Sud-Brabant, Antwerp, Nord-Brabant, Guelder, Overysse, Nord-Holland, announcing everywhere that if fortune betrays our holy and Christian cause by land, the struggle against every unjust violence will continue on the sea. May God direct this matter with all grace, whether in good or evil fortune. Once come to Amsterdam, you shall give account to Paul Buys, my trusty friend, of all you have done and performed. Here are three passes, signed by Alba himself, and found upon the bodies at Quesnoy-le-Comte. My secretary has filled them. Perchance you will find on the way some good comrade in whom you may be able to trust. Those are good folk who to the lark’s note answer with the warlike bugle of the cock. Here are fifty florins. You will be valiant and faithful.”

“The ashes beat upon my heart,” replied Ulenspiegel.

And he went away.

## XVI

He had, under the hand of the king and the duke, license to carry all weapons at his own convenience. He took his good wheel-lock arquebus, cartridges, and dry powder. Then clad in a ragged short cloak, a tattered doublet, and breeches full of holes in the Spanish fashion, wearing a bonnet with plume flying in the wind, and sword, he left the army near the French frontier and marched off towards Maestricht.

The wrens, those heralds of the cold, flew about the houses, asking shelter. The third day it snowed.

Many times and oft on the way Ulenspiegel must needs show his safe conduct. He was allowed to pass. He marched towards Liège.

He had just entered into a plain; a great wind drove whirls of flakes upon his face. Before him he saw the plain stretch out all white, and the eddies of snow driven hither and thither by the gusts. Three wolves followed him, but when he knocked one over with his musket, the others flung themselves on the wounded one and made off into the woods, each carrying a great piece of the corpse.

Ulenspiegel being thus delivered, and looking to see if there was no other band in the country, saw at the end of the plain specks as it were gray statues moving among the eddies, and behind them shapes of mounted soldiers. He climbed up into a tree. The wind brought a far-off noise of complaining: "These are perchance," he said to himself, "pilgrims clad in white coats; I can scarcely see their bodies against the snow." Then he distinguished men running naked and saw two reiters, harnessed all in black, who sitting on their chargers were driving this poor flock before them with great blows of their whips. He primed his musket. Among these wretches he saw young folk, old men naked with teeth chattering, frozen, huddled up, and running to escape the whips of the two troopers, who took a delight, being well clad, red with brandy and good food, in lashing the bodies of the naked men to make them run quicker.

Ulenspiegel said: "Ye shall have vengeance, ashes of Claes." And he killed, with a bullet in the face, one of the reiters, who fell down from his horse. The other, not knowing from whence had come that unlooked-for bullet, took fright. Thinking there were enemies hidden in the wood, he would fain have fled with his comrade's horse. While he dismounted to despoil the dead man, and had taken hold of the bridle, he was stricken with another bullet in the neck and fell, like his companion.

The naked men, believing that an angel from heaven, a good arquebusier, had come to their rescue, fell upon their knees. Ulenspiegel came down from his tree and was recognized by those in the band who had, like him, served in the prince's army. They said to him:

"Ulenspiegel, we are of the land of France, sent in state to Maestricht where the duke is, there to be treated as rebel prisoners, unable to pay ransom and condemned in advance to be tortured, beheaded, or to row like ruffians and robbers on the king's galleys."

Ulenspiegel, giving his *opperst kleet* to the oldest of the band, replied:

"Come, I will fetch you as far as Mézières, but first of all we must strip these two troopers and take their horses with us."

The doublets, breeches, boots, and headgear and cuirasses of the troopers were divided among the weakest and most ailing, and Ulenspiegel said:

"We shall go into the wood, where the air is thicker and milder. Let us run, brothers."

Suddenly a man fell and said:

"I am cold and I am hungry, and I go before God to bear witness that the Pope is Antichrist on earth."

And he died. And the others were fain to bear him away with them, in order to give him a Christian burial.

While they were journeying along a main road they perceived a countryman driving a wagon covered with its canvas tilt. Seeing the naked men, he took pity and made them get into the wagon. There they found hay to lie on and empty sacks to cover themselves with. Being warm, they gave thanks to God. Ulenspiegel, riding by the side of the wagon on one of the reiters' horses, held the other by the bridle.

At Mézières they alighted: there they were given good soup, beer, bread, cheese, and meat, the old men and the women. They were lodged, clad, and weaponed afresh at the charge of the commune. And they all gave the embrace of blessing to Ulenspiegel, who received it rejoicing.

He sold the horses of the two reiters for forty-eight florins, of which he gave thirty to the Frenchmen.

Going on his way alone, he said to himself: "I go through ruins, blood, and tears, without finding aught. The devils lied to me, past a doubt. Where is Lamme? Where is Nele? Where are the Seven?"

And he heard a voice like a low breath, saying:

"In death, ruin, and tears, seek."

And he went his way.

## XVII

Ulenspiegel came to Namur in March. There he saw Lamme, who having been seized with a great love for the fish of the River Meuse, and especially for the trout, had hired a boat and was fishing in the river by leave of the commune. But he had paid fifty florins to the guild of the fishmongers.

He sold and ate his fish, and in this trade he gained a better paunch and a little bag of carolus.

Seeing his friend and comrade going along the banks of the Meuse to come into the town, he was filled with joy, thrust his boat up against the bank, and climbing up the steep, not without puffing, he came to Ulenspiegel. Stammering with pleasure:

“There you are then, my son,” said he, “my son in God, for my belly-ark could carry two like you. Whither go you? What would you? You are not dead, without a doubt? Have you seen my wife? You shall eat Meuse fish, the best that is in this world below; they make sauces in this country fit to make you eat your fingers up to the shoulder. You are proud and splendid, with the bronze of battle on your cheeks. There you are then, my son, my friend Ulenspiegel, the jolly vagabond.”

Then in a low voice:

“How many Spaniards have you killed? You never saw my wife in their wagons full of wenches? And the Meuse wine, so delicious for constipated folk, you shall drink of it. Are you wounded, my son? You will stay here then, fresh, lively, keen as an eagle. And the eels, you shall taste lad. No marshy flavour whatever. Kiss me, my fat lad. My blessing upon God, how glad I am!”

And Lamme danced, leapt, puffed, and forced Ulenspiegel to dance as well.

Then they wended their way towards Namur. At the gate of the city Ulenspiegel showed his pass signed by the duke. And Lamme brought him to his house.

While he was making their meal ready, he made Ulenspiegel tell his adventures and recounted his own, having, he said, abandoned the army to follow after a girl that he thought was his wife. In this pursuit he had come as far as Namur. And he kept repeating:

“Have you not seen her at all?”

“I saw others that were very beautiful,” replied Ulenspiegel, “and especially in this town, where all are amorous.”

“In truth,” said Lamme, “a hundred times they would fain have had me, but I remained faithful, for my sad heart is big with a single memory.”

“As your belly is big with innumerable dishes,” answered Ulenspiegel.

Lamme replied:

“When I am in distress I must eat.”

“Is your grief without respite?” asked Ulenspiegel.

“Alas, yes!” said Lamme.

And pulling a trout from out a saucepan:

“See,” said he, “how lovely and firm it is. This flesh is pink as my wife’s. To-morrow we shall leave Namur; I have a pouch full of florins; we shall buy an ass apiece, and we shall depart riding thus towards the land of Flanders.”

“You will lose heavily by it,” said Ulenspiegel.

“My heart draws me to Damme, which was the place where she loved me well: perchance she has returned thither.”

“We shall start to-morrow,” said Ulenspiegel, “since you wish it so.”

And as a matter of fact, they set out, each mounted on an ass and straddling along side by side.

## XVIII

A sharp wind was blowing. The sun, bright as youth in the morning, was veiled and gray as an old man. A rain mixed with hail was falling.

The rain having ceased, Ulenspiegel shook himself, saying:

“The sky that drinks up so much mist must relieve itself sometimes.”

Another rain, still more mingled with hail than the former, beat down on the two companions.

Lamme groaned:

“We were well washed, now we must needs be rinsed!”

The sun reappeared, and they rode on gaily.

A third rain fell, so full of hail and so deadly that like knives it chopped the dry twigs on the trees to mincemeat.

Lamme said:

“Ho! a roof! My poor wife! Where are ye, good fire, soft kisses, and fat soups?”

And he wept, the great fellow.

But Ulenspiegel:

“We bemoan ourselves,” said he, “is it not from ourselves none the less that our woes come on us? It is raining on our backs, but this December rain will make the clover of May. And the kine will low for pleasure. We are without a shelter, but why did we never marry? I mean myself, with little Nele, so pretty and so kind, who would now give me a good stew of beef and beans to eat. We are thirsty in spite of the water that is falling; why did we not make ourselves workmen steady in one condition? Those who are received as masters in their trade have in their cellars full casks of *bruinbier*.”

The ashes of Claes beat upon his heart, the sky became clear, the sun shone out in it, and Ulenspiegel said:

“Master Sun, thanks be unto you, you warm our loins again; ashes of Claes, ye warm our heart once more, and tell us that blessed are they that are wanderers for the sake of the deliverance of the land of our fathers.”

“I am hungry,” said Lamme.

## XIX

They came into an inn, where they were served with supper in an upper chamber. Ulenspiegel, opening the windows, saw from thence a garden in which a comely girl was walking, plump, round bosomed, with golden hair, and clad only in a petticoat, a jacket of white linen, and an apron of black stuff, full of holes.

Chemises and other woman's linen was bleaching on cords: the girl, still turned towards Ulenspiegel, was taking chemises down from the lines, and putting them back and smiling and still looking at him, and sat down on linen bands, swinging on the two ends knotted together.

Near by Ulenspiegel heard a cock crowing and saw a nurse playing with a child whose face she turned towards a man that was standing, saying:

“Boelkin, look nicely at papa!”

The child wept.

And the pretty girl continued to walk about in the garden, displacing and replacing the linen.

“She is a spy,” said Lamme.

The girl put her hands before her eyes, and smiling between her fingers, looked at Ulenspiegel.

Then pressing up her two breasts with her hands, she let them fall back, and swung again without her feet touching the ground. And the linen, unwinding itself, made her turn like a top, while Ulenspiegel saw her arms, bare to the shoulders, white and round in the pallid sunshine. Turning and smiling, she kept always looking at him. He went out to find her. Lamme followed him. At the hedge of the garden he searched for an opening to pass through, but found none.

The girl, seeing what he was doing, looked again, smiling between her fingers.

Ulenspiegel tried to break through the hedge, while Lamme, holding him back, said to him:

“Do not go there; she is a spy, we shall be burned.”

Then the girl walked about the garden, covering up her face with her apron, and looking through the holes to see if her chance friend would not be coming soon.

Ulenspiegel was going to leap over the hedge with a running jump, but he was prevented by Lamme, who caught hold of him by the leg and made him fall, saying:

“Rope, sword, and gallows, 'tis a spy, do not go there.”

Sitting on the ground, Ulenspiegel struggled against him. The girl cried out, pushing up her head above the hedge:

“Adieu, Messire, may Love keep your Longanimousness hanging!”

And he heard a burst of mocking laughter.

“Ah!” said he, “it is in my ears like a packet of pins!”

Then a door shut noisily.

And he was melancholy.

Lamme said to him, still holding him:

“You are counting over the sweet treasures of beauty thus lost to your shame. 'Tis a spy. You fall in luck when you fall. I am going to burst with laughing.”

Ulenspiegel said not a word, and both got up on their asses once more.

## XX

They went on their way each well astride his ass.

Lamme, chewing the cud of his last meat, sniffed up the cool air rejoicing. Suddenly Ulenspiegel fetched him a great stinging slash of his whip on his behind, which was like a cushion in the saddle.

“What are you doing?” cried Lamme, piteously.

“What!” answered Ulenspiegel.

“This lash with the whip?” said Lamme.

“What lash with the whip?”

“The one I got from you,” returned Lamme.

“On the left?” asked Ulenspiegel.

“Aye, on the left and on my behind. Why did you do that, scandalous vagabond?”

“In ignorance,” replied Ulenspiegel. “I know well enough what a whip is, and very well, too, what a behind of small compass is upon a saddle. But seeing this one wide, swollen, tight, and overflowing the saddle, I said to myself: ‘Since it could never be pinched with a finger, a stroke of the whip could not sting it either with the lash.’ I was wrong.”

Lamme smiling at this speech, Ulenspiegel went on in these terms:

“But I am not the only one in this world to sin through ignorance, and there is more than one past-master idiot displaying his fat on a donkey saddle who could give me points. If my whip sinned on your behind, you sinned much more weightily on my legs in preventing them from running after the girl who was coquetting in her garden.”

“Crow’s meat!” said Lamme, “so it was revenge then?”

“Just a little one,” replied Ulenspiegel.

## XXI

At Damme Nele the unhappy lived alone with Katheline who still for love called the cold devil who never came.

“Ah!” she would say, “thou art rich, Hanske my darling, and mightest bring me back the seven hundred carolus. Then would Soetkin come back alive from limbo to this earth, and Claes would laugh in the sky: well canst thou do this. Take away the fire, the soul would fain come out; make a hole, the soul would fain come out.”

And without ceasing she pointed her finger to the place where the tow had been.

Katheline was very poor, but the neighbours helped her with beans, with bread and meat according to their means. The commune gave her some money. And Nele sewed dresses for rich women in the town; went to their houses to iron their linen, and in this way earned a florin a week.

And Katheline still repeated:

“Make a hole; take away my soul. It knocks to get out. He will give back the seven hundred carolus.”

And Nele, listening to her, wept.

## XXII

Meanwhile, Ulenspiegel and Lamme, armed with their passes, came to a little inn backed up against the rocks of the Sambre, which in certain places are covered with trees. And on the sign there was written: *Chez Marlaire*.

Having drunk many a flask of Meuse wine of the fashion of Burgundy and eaten much fish, they gossiped with the host, a Papist of the deepest dye, but as talkative as a magpie through the wine he had drunk and all the time winking an eye cunningly. Ulenspiegel, divining some mystery under this winking, made him drink more, so much that the host began to dance and burst out into laughter, then returning to the table:

“Good Catholics,” he said, “I drink to you.”

“To you we drink,” replied Lamme and Ulenspiegel.

“To the extinction of all plague, of rebellion and heresy.”

“We drink,” replied Lamme and Ulenspiegel, who kept replenishing the goblet the host could never allow to stay full.

“You are good fellows,” said he. “I drink to your Generosities; I make a profit on wine drunk. Where are your passes?”

“Here they are,” answered Ulenspiegel.

“Signed by the duke,” said the host. “I drink to the duke.”

“To the duke we drink,” replied Lamme and Ulenspiegel. The host, continuing:

“How do we catch rats, mice, and field mice? In rat-traps, snares, and mouse-traps. Who is the field mouse? ’Tis the great heretic Orange as hellfire. God is with us. They are coming. Hé! hé! Something to drink! Pour out, I am roasting, burning. To drink! Most goodly little reforming preachers... I say little ... goodly little gallants, stout troopers, oak trees... Drink! Will you not go with them to the great heretic’s camp? I have passes signed by him. Ye shall see their work.”

“We shall go to the camp,” answered Ulenspiegel.

“They will get there all right, and by night if an opportunity offers” (and the host, whistling, made the gesture of a man cutting a throat). “Steel-wind will stop the blackbird Nassau from ever whistling again. Come on, something to drink, hey!”

“You are a gay fellow, even though you are married,” replied Ulenspiegel.

Said the host:

“I neither was nor am. I hold the secrets of princes. Drink up! My wife would steal them from my pillow to have me hanged and to be a widow sooner than Nature means it. Vive Dieu! they are coming ... where are the new passes? On my Christian heart. Let us drink! They are there, three hundred paces along the road, at Marche-les-Dames. Do ye see them? Let us drink!”

“Drink,” said Ulenspiegel. “I drink to the king, to the duke, to the preachers, to Steel-wind; I drink to you, to me; I drink to the wine and to the bottle. You are not drinking.” And at every health Ulenspiegel filled up his glass and the host emptied it.

Ulenspiegel studied him for some time; then rising up:

“He is asleep,” said he; “let us go, Lamme.”

When they were outside:

“He has no wife to betray us... The night is about to come down... You heard clearly what this rogue said, and you know who the three preachers are?”

“Aye,” said Lamme.

“You know they are coming from Marche-les-Dames, along by the Meuse, and it will be well to wait for them on the way before Steel-wind blows.”

“Aye,” said Lamme.

“We must save the prince’s life,” said Ulenspiegel.

“Aye,” said Lamme.

“Here,” said Ulenspiegel, “take my musket; go there into the underwoods between the rocks; load it with two bullets and fire when I croak like a crow.”

“I will,” said Lamme.

And he disappeared into the undergrowth. And Ulenspiegel soon heard the creak of the lock of the musket.

“Do you see them coming?” said he.

“I see them,” replied Lamme. “They are three, marching like soldiers, and one of them overtops the others by the head.”

Ulenspiegel sat down on the road, his legs out in front of him, murmuring prayers on a rosary, as beggars do. And he had his bonnet between his knees.

When the three preachers passed by, he held out his bonnet to them, but they put nothing in.

Then rising, Ulenspiegel said piteously:

“Good sirs, refuse not a patard to a poor workman, a porter who lately cracked his loins falling into a mine. They are hard folk in this country, and they would give me nothing to relieve my wretched plight. Alas! give me a patard, and I will pray for you. And God will keep Your Magnanimities in joy throughout all their lives.”

“My son,” said one of the preachers, a fine robust fellow, “there will be no joy more for us in this world so long as the Pope and the Inquisition reign therein.”

Ulenspiegel sighed also, saying:

“Alas! what are you saying, my masters! Speak low, if it please Your Graces. But give me a patard.”

“My son,” replied a preacher who had a warrior-like face, “we others, poor martyrs, we have no patards beyond what we need to sustain life on our journey.”

Ulenspiegel threw himself on his knees.

“Bless me,” said he.

The three preachers stretched out their hands over Ulenspiegel’s head with no devoutness.

Remarking that they were lean men, and yet had fine paunches, he got up again, pretended to fall, and striking his forehead against the tall preacher’s belly, he heard therein a gay clink and tinkle of money.

Then drawing himself up and drawing his bragmart:

“My goodly fathers,” said he, “it is chilly weather and I am lightly clad; you are clad overly much. Give me your wool that I may cut myself a cloak out of it. I am a Beggar. Long live the Beggars!”

The tall preacher replied:

“My Beggar-cock, you carry your comb too high; we shall cut it for you.”

“Cut it!” said Ulenspiegel, drawing back, “but Steel-wind shall blow for you before ever it blows for the prince. Beggar I am; long live the Beggars!”

The three preachers, dumbfounded, said one to another:

“Whence does he know this news? We are betrayed! Slay! Long live the Mass!”

And they drew from under their hose fine bragmarts, well sharpened.

But Ulenspiegel, without waiting for them, gave ground towards that side of the brushwood where Lamme was hidden. Judging that the preachers were within musket range, he said:

“Crows, black crows, Lead-wind is about to blow. I sing for your finish.”

And he croaked.

A musket shot, from out of the brushwood, knocked over the tallest of the preachers with his face to the ground, and was followed by a second shot which stretched the second on the road.

And Ulenspiegel saw amid the brush Lamme’s good visage, and his arm up hastily recharging his arquebus.

And a blue smoke rose up above the black brushwood.

The third preacher, furious with rage, would fain by main force have cut down Ulenspiegel, who said:

“Steel-wind or Lead-wind, thou art about to go over from this world to the other, foul artificer of murders!”

And he attacked him, and he defended himself bravely.

And they both remained standing face to face stiffly upon the highway, delivering and parrying blows. Ulenspiegel was all bloody, for his opponent, a tough soldier, had wounded him in the head and the leg. But he attacked and defended like a lion. As the blood that flowed from his head blinded him, he broke ground continually with great strides, wiped it off with his left hand and felt himself grow weak. He was like to be killed had not Lamme fired on the preacher and brought him down.

And Ulenspiegel saw and heard him belch forth blasphemy, blood, and deathfoam.

And the blue smoke rose up above the black brushwood, amidst of which Lamme showed his good face once more.

“Is that all over?” said he.

“Aye, my son,” answered Ulenspiegel. “But come...”

Lamme, coming out of his niche, saw Ulenspiegel all covered with blood. Then running like a stag, in spite of his belly, he came to Ulenspiegel, seated on the earth beside the slain men.

“He is wounded,” said he, “my friend, wounded by that murdering rascal.” And with a kick from his heel he broke in the teeth of the nearest preacher.

“You do not answer, Ulenspiegel! Are you going to die, my son? Where is that balsam? Ha! in the bottom of his satchel, under the sausages. Ulenspiegel, do you not hear me? Alas! I have no warm water to wash your wound, nor any way to have it. But the water of the Sambre will serve. Speak to me, my friend. You are not so terribly wounded, in any case. A little water, there, very cold water, is it not? He awakes. ’Tis I, thy friend: they are all dead! Linen! linen to tie up his hurts. There is none. My shirt then.” He took off his doublet. And Lamme continuing his discourse: “In pieces, shirt! The blood is stopping. My friend will not die.”

“Ha!” he said, “how cold it is, bareback in this keen air. Let us reclothe ourselves. He will not die. ’Tis I, Ulenspiegel, I thy friend Lamme. He smiles. I shall despoil the assassins. They have bellies of florins. Gilded entrails, carolus, florins, daelders, patards, and letters! We are rich. More than three hundred carolus to share. Let us take the arms and the money. Steel-wind will not blow as yet for Monseigneur.”

Ulenspiegel, his teeth chattering from the cold, rose up.

“There you are on your feet,” said Lamme.

“That is the might of the balsam,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“The balsam of valiancy,” answered Lamme.

Then taking the bodies of the three preachers one by one, he cast them into a hole among the rocks, leaving them their weapons and their clothes, all save their cloaks.

And all about them in the sky croaked the ravens, awaiting their food.

And the Sambre rolled along like a river of steel under the gray sky.

And the snow fell, washing the blood away.

And they were nevertheless troubled. And Lamme said:

“I would rather kill a chicken than a man.”

And they mounted their asses again.

At the gates of Huy the blood was still flowing; they pretended to fall into quarrel together, got down from their asses, and fenced and foined with their daggers most cruelly to behold; then having brought the combat to an end, they mounted again and entered into Huy, showing their passes at the gates of the city.

The women seeing Ulenspiegel wounded and bleeding, and Lamme playing the victor upon his ass, they looked on Ulenspiegel with pity and showed their fists at Lamme saying: “That one is the rascal that wounded his friend.”

Lamme, uneasy, only sought among them whether he did not see his wife.

It was in vain, and he was plunged in melancholy.

## XXIII

“Whither are we going?” said Lamme.

“To Maestricht,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“But, my son, they say the duke’s army is there all about and around, and that he himself is within the city. Our passes will not be enough for us. If the Spanish troopers accept them, none the less we shall be held in the town and interrogated. Meanwhile, they will have discovered the death of the preachers, and we shall have finished with living.”

Ulenspiegel replied:

“The ravens, the owls, and the vultures will soon have made an end of their meat; already, beyond a doubt, they have faces that could not be recognized. As for our passes they may be good; but if they learned of the slaughter, we should, as you say, be taken prisoners. Nevertheless, we must needs go to Maestricht and take Landen on our way.”

“They will hang us,” said Lamme.

“We shall pass,” replied Ulenspiegel.

Thus talking, they arrived at the *Magpie* inn, where they found good meals, good beds, and hay for their asses.

The next day they set out on their way to Landen.

Having arrived at a great farm near the city, Ulenspiegel whistled like the lark, and immediately there answered from within the warlike clarion of a cock. A farmer with a goodly face appeared on the threshold of the farmhouse. He said to them:

“Friends, as freemen, long live the Beggar! Come within.”

“Who is this one?” asked Lamme.

Ulenspiegel replied:

“Thomas Utenhove, the brave reformer; his serving men and women on the farm work like him for freedom of conscience.”

Then Utenhove said:

“Ye are the prince’s envoys. Eat and drink.”

And the ham began to crackle in the pan and the black puddings also, and the wine went about and glasses were filled. And Lamme fell to drinking like the dry sand and to eating lustily.

Lads and lasses of the farm came in turns and thrust in their noses at the half-open door to look at him labouring with his jaws. And the men, jealous of him, said they could do as well as he.

At the end of the meal Thomas Utenhove said:

“A hundred peasants will go from here this week under pretence of going to work on the dykes at Bruges and round about. They will travel by bands of five or six and by different ways. There will be boats at Bruges to fetch them by sea to Emden.”

“Will they be furnished with weapons and money?” asked Ulenspiegel.

“They will have each ten florins and big cutlasses.”

“God and the prince will reward you,” said Ulenspiegel.

“I am not working for reward,” replied Thomas Utenhove.

“What do you do,” said Lamme, eating big black puddings, “what do you do, master host, to have a dish so savoury, so succulent, and with such fine grease?”

“Tis because we put in it,” the host said, “cinnamon and catnip.”

Then speaking to Ulenspiegel:

“Is Edzard, Count of Frisia, is he still the prince’s friend?”

Ulenspiegel replied:

“He hides it, while at the same time giving refuge at Emden to his ships.”

And he added:

“We must go to Maestricht.”

“You will not be able to do so,” said the host; “the duke’s army is before the town and in the environs.”

Then taking him into the loft, he showed him far away the ensigns and guidons of horse soldiers and footmen riding and marching in the country.

Ulenspiegel said:

“I shall make my way through if you, who are of authority in this place, will give me a permit to marry. As for the woman, she must be pretty, gentle, and sweet, and willing to marry me, if not for always, at least for a week.”

Lamme sighed and said:

“Do not do this, my son; she will leave you alone, burning in the fires of love. Your bed, where you now sleep so snugly, will become as a mattress of holly to you, depriving you of sweet slumber.”

“I will take a wife,” replied Ulenspiegel.

And Lamme, finding nothing more on the table, was deeply distressed. However, having discovered castrelins in a bowl, he ate them in melancholy fashion.

Ulenspiegel said to Thomas Utenhove:

“Come, then, let us drink; give me a wife rich or poor. I shall go with her to church and have the marriage blessed by the curé. And he will give us the certificate of marriage, which will not be valid since it comes from a Papist and inquisitor; we shall have it set down in it that we are all good Christians, having confessed and taken the Sacrament, living apostolically according to the precepts of our Holy Mother the Roman Church, which burneth her children, and thus calling upon us the blessings of our Holy Father the Pope, the armies celestial and terrestrial, the saints both men and women, deans, curés, monks, soldiers, catchpolls, and other rascals. Armed with this certificate aforesaid, we shall make our preparations for the usual festal wedding journey.”

“But the woman,” said Thomas Utenhove.

“You will find her for me,” replied Ulenspiegel. “I will take two wagons, then; I will bedeck them with wreaths adorned with pine boughs, holly, and paper flowers; I will fill them with certain of the lads you want to send to the prince.”

“But the woman?” said Thomas Utenhove.

“She is here without a doubt,” replied Ulenspiegel. And continuing:

“I shall harness two of your horses to one of the wagons, our two asses to the other. In the first wagon I shall put my wife and myself, my friend Lamme, the witnesses of the marriage; in the second, tambourine players, fifers, and shawm players. Then displaying the joyful marriage flags, playing the tambourine, singing, drinking, we will go trotting down the highway that leads to the Galgen-Veld, the Gallows Field, or to liberty.”

“I will help you,” said Thomas Utenhove. “But the women and girls will wish to go with their men.”

“We shall go, by the grace of God,” said a pretty girl, putting her head in at the half-open door.

“There will be four wagons, if they are needed,” said Thomas Utenhove; “in this way we shall get more than twenty-five men through.”

“The duke will be crestfallen,” said Ulenspiegel.

“And the prince’s fleet served by some good soldiers the more,” replied Thomas Utenhove.

Having his serving men and women summoned then by ringing a bell, he said to them:

“All ye that are of Zeeland, men and women, oyez; Ulenspiegel the Fleming here present desires that you should pass through the duke’s army in wedding array.”

Men and women of Zeeland shouted together:

“Danger of death! we are willing!”

And the men said, one to another:

“It is joy to us to leave the land of slavery to go to the free sea. If God be for us, who shall be against us?”

Women and girls said:

“Let us follow our husbands and our lovers. We are of Zealand and we shall find harbour there.”

Ulenspiegel espied a pretty young girl, and said to her, jesting:

“I want to marry you.”

But she, blushing, replied:

“I am willing, but only in church.”

The women, laughing, said to one another:

“Her heart turns to Hans Utenhove, the son of the *baes*. Doubtless he is going with her.”

“Aye,” replied Hans.

And the father said to him:

“You may.”

The men donned festal raiment, doublet and breeches of velvet, and the big *opperst-kleed* over all, and large kerchiefs on their heads, to keep off sun and rain; the women in black stockings and pinked shoes; wearing the big gilt jewel on their foreheads, on the left for the girls, on the right for the married women; the white ruff upon their necks, the plastron of gold, scarlet, and azure embroidery, the petticoat of black woollen, with wide velvet stripes of the same colour, black woollen stockings and velvet shoes with silver buckles.

Then Thomas Utenhove went off to the church to beg the priest to marry immediately, for two *ryck-daelders* which he put in his hand, Thylbert the son of Claes, which was Ulenspiegel, and Tannekin Pieters, to the which the curé consented.

Ulenspiegel then went to church followed by the whole wedding party, and there he married before the priest Tannekin, so pretty and sweet, so gracious and so plump, that he would gladly have bitten her cheeks like a love-apple. And he told her so, not daring to do it for the respect he had to her gentle beauty. But she, pouting, said to him:

“Leave me alone: there is Hans looking murder at you.”

And a jealous girl said to him:

“Look elsewhere: do you not see she is afraid of her man?”

Lamme, rubbing his hands, exclaimed:

“You are not to have them all, rogue.”

And he was delighted.

Ulenspiegel, applying patience to his trouble, came back to the farm with the wedding party. And there he drank, sang, and was jolly, drinking hob-nob with the jealous girl. Thereat Hans was merry, but not Tannekin, nor the girl's betrothed.

At noon, in bright sunshine and a cool wind, the wagons set forth, all greenery and flowers, all the banners displayed to the merry sound of tambourines, shawms, fifes, and bagpipes.

At Alba's camp there was another feast. The advanced outposts and sentinels having sounded the alarm, came in one after another, saying:

“The enemy is near at hand; we have heard the noise of tambourines and fifes and seen his ensigns. It is a strong body of cavalry come there to draw you into some ambush. The main army is doubtless farther on.”

The duke at once had his camp masters, colonels, and captains informed, ordered them to set the army in battle array, and sent to reconnoitre the enemy.

Suddenly there appeared four wagons advancing towards the musketeers. In the wagons men and women were dancing, bottles were jiggling round, and merrily squealed the fifes, moaned the shawms, beat the drums and droned the bagpipes.

The wedding party having halted, Alba came in person to the noise, and beheld the new-made bride on one of the four wagons; Ulenspiegel, her bridegroom, all rosy and fine beside her, and all

the country folk, both men and women, alighted on the ground, dancing all about and offering drink to the soldiers.

Alba and his train marvelled greatly at the simplicity of these peasants who were singing and feasting when everything was in arms all about them.

And those who were in the wagons gave all their wine to the soldiers.

And they were well applauded and welcomed by them.

The wine giving out in the wagons, the peasants went on their way again to the sound of the tambourines, fifes, and bagpipes, without being interfered with.

And the soldiers, gay and jolly, fired a salvo of musket shots in their honour.

And thus they came into Maestricht, where Ulenspiegel made arrangements with the reformers' agents to despatch by vessels arms and munitions to the fleet of the Silent.

And they did the same at Landen.

And they went in this way elsewhere, clad as workmen.

The duke heard of the trick; and there was a song made upon it, which was sent him, and the refrain of which was:

Bloody Duke, silly head,

Have you seen the newlywed?

And every time he had made a wrong manœuvre the soldiers would sing:

The Duke has dust in eye:

He has seen the newlywed.

## XXIV

In the meantime, King Philip was plunged in bitter melancholy. In his grievous pride he prayed to God to give him power to conquer England, to subdue France, to take Milan, Genoa, Venice, and great lord of all the seas, thus to reign over all Europe.

Thinking of this triumph, he laughed not.

He was continually and always cold; wine never warmed him, nor the fire of scented wood that was always burning in the chamber where he was. There always writing, sitting amid so many letters that a hundred casks might have been filled with them, he brooded over the universal domination of the whole world, such as was wielded by the emperors of Rome; on his jealous hatred of his son Don Carlos, since the latter had wanted to go to the Low Countries in the Duke of Alba's place, to seek to reign there, he thought, without doubt. And seeing him ugly, deformed, a savage and cruel madman, he hated him the more. But he never spoke of it.

Those who served King Philip and his son Don Carlos knew not which of the twain they ought to fear the most; whether the son, agile, murderous, tearing his servitors with his nails, or the cowardly and crafty father, using others to strike, and like a hyæna, living upon corpses.

The servitors were terrified to see them prowling around each other. And they said that there would soon be a death in the Escorial.

Now they learned presently that Don Carlos had been imprisoned for the crime of high treason. And they knew that he was devouring his soul with black spite, that he had hurt his face trying to get through the bars of his prison in order to escape, and that Madame Isabelle of France, his mother, was weeping without ceasing.

But King Philip was not weeping.

The rumour came to them that Don Carlos had been given green figs and that he was dead the next day as if he had gone to sleep. The physicians said as soon as he had eaten the figs the blood ceased to beat, the functions of life, as Nature meant them, were interrupted; he could neither spit, nor vomit, nor get rid of anything from out of his body. His belly swelled at his death.

King Philip heard the death mass for Don Carlos, had him buried in the chapel of his royal residence and marble set over his body; but he did not weep.

And the lords in waiting said to one another, mocking the princely epitaph that was on the tombstone:

**HERE LIES ONE WHO, EATING GREEN FIGS,**

**DIED WITHOUT HAVING BEEN SICK**

**A qui jaze qui en para desit verdad,**

**Morio s'in infirmitad**

And King Philip looked with a lustful eye upon the Princess of Eboli, who was married. He besought her love, and she yielded.

Madame Isabelle of France, of whom it was said that she had favoured the designs of Don Carlos upon the Low Countries, became haggard and woebegone. And her hair fell out in great handfuls at a time. Often she vomited, and the nails of her feet and her hands came out. And she died.

And King Philip did not weep.

The hair of the Prince of Eboli fell out also. He became sad and always complaining. Then the nails of his feet and his hands came out, too.

And King Philip had him buried.

And he paid for the widow's mourning and did not weep.

## XXV

At this time certain women and girls of Damme came to ask Nele if she would be the May bride and hide among the brushwood with the groom that would be found for her; “for,” said the women, not without jealousy, “there is not one young man in all Damme and round about who would not fain be betrothed to you, who stay so lovely, good, and fresh: the gift of a witch, doubtless.”

“Goodwives,” answered Nele, “say to the young men that seek after me: ‘Nele’s heart is not here, but with him that wandereth to deliver the land of our fathers.’ And if I am fresh, even as you say, it is no gift of a witch, but the gift of good health.”

The goodwives replied:

“All the same, Katheline is suspect.”

“Do not believe what ill folk say,” answered Nele; “Katheline is no witch. The law-men burned tow upon her head and God struck her with witlessness.”

And Katheline, nodding her head in a corner where she was sitting all huddled up, said:

“Take away the fire; he will come back, my darling Hanske.”

The goodwives asking who was this Hanske, Nele replied:

“It is the son of Claes, my foster brother, whom she thinks she lost since God struck her.”

And the kindly goodwives gave silver patards to Katheline. And when they were new she showed them to someone that nobody could see, saying:

“I am rich, rich in shining silver. Come, Hanske, my darling; I will pay for my love.”

And the goodwives being gone, Nele wept in the lonely cottage. And she thought on Ulenspiegel wandering in far-off countries where she might not follow him, and on Katheline who, often groaning “take away the fire,” held her bosom with both hands, showing in this way that the fire of madness burned her head and her body feverishly.

And in the meanwhile the bride and groom of May hid in the grass.

He or she who found one of them was, according to the sex of the one found, and his or her own, King or Queen of the feast.

Nele heard the cries of joy of the lads and lasses when the May bride was found on the edge of a ditch, hidden among the tall grasses.

And she wept, thinking on the sweet time when they hunted for her and her friend Ulenspiegel.

## XXVI

Meanwhile, Lamme and he were riding along well astraddle upon their asses.

“Listen here, Lamme,” said Ulenspiegel, “the nobles of the Low Countries, through jealousy against Orange, have betrayed the cause of the confederates, the holy alliance, the valiant covenant signed for the good of the land of our fathers. Egmont and de Hoorn were traitors alike and with no advantage to themselves. Brederode is dead; in this war there is nothing left us now but the poor common folk of Brabant and Flanders waiting for loyal chiefs to go forward; and then, my son, the isles, the isles of Zeeland, North Holland, too, over which the Prince is governor; and farther still and on the sea, Edzard, Count of Emden and East Frisia.”

“Alas,” said Lamme, “I see it clear; we journey between rope, rack, and stake, dying of hunger, gaping for thirst, and with no hope of rest.”

“We are but at the beginning,” replied Ulenspiegel. “Deign to consider how that all in this is pleasure for us, slaying our enemies, mocking them, having our pouches full of florins; well laden with meat, with beer, with wine, with brandy. What would you have more, feather bed? Would you like us to sell our asses and buy horses?”

“My son,” said Lamme, “the trotting of a horse is very severe on a man of my corpulence.”

“You will sit on your steed as peasants do,” said Ulenspiegel, “and no man will mock at you, since you are clad like a peasant, and do not wear the sword like me, but only carry a pikestaff.”

“My son,” said Lamme, “are you sure that our two passes will avail for the little towns?”

“Have not I the curé’s certificate,” said Ulenspiegel, “with the great seal of the Church in red wax hanging from it by two tails of parchment, and our confession cards? The soldiers and catchpolls of the duke have no power against two men so well armed. And the black paternosters we have for sale? We are two reiters, both of us, you a Fleming and I a German, travelling by express command from the duke, to win over the heretics of this land to the Holy Catholic faith by the sale of sacred articles. We shall thus enter everywhere the houses of noble lords and the fat abbés. And they will give us rich hospitality. And we shall surprise their secrets. Lick your chops, my gentle friend.”

“My son,” said Lamme, “we will then be carrying on the trade of spies.”

“By law and right of war,” replied Ulenspiegel.

“If they hear of the affair of the three preachers, we shall die without a doubt,” said Lamme.

Ulenspiegel sang:

“My standards ‘Live’ as motto bear  
Live ever in a sunshine land  
My skin the first is buff well tanned  
And steel the second skin I wear.”

But Lamme, sighing:

“I have nothing but one skin, and a soft one; the least stroke of a dagger would make a hole in it immediately. We should do better to settle in some useful trade than to gad about in this way over hill and valley, to serve all these great princes who, with their feet in velvet hose, eat ortolans on gilded tables. To us the blows, perils, battle, rain, hail, snow, the thin soups that fall to vagabonds. To them the fine sausages, fat capons, savoury thrushes, succulent fowls.”

“The water is coming into your mouth, my gentle friend,” said Ulenspiegel.

“Where are ye, fresh bread, golden *koekbakken*, delicious creams? But where art thou, my wife?”

Ulenspiegel replied:

“The ashes beat upon my heart and drive me on to the battle. But thou, mild lamb that hast naught to avenge, neither the death of thy father nor of thy mother, nor the grief of those thou lovest, nor thy present poverty, leave me alone to march whither I say, if the toils of war affright thee.”

“Alone?” said Lamme.

And he pulled up his ass, which began to eat a tuft of thistles, of which there was a great plantation on that wayside. Ulenspiegel’s ass stopped and ate likewise.

“Alone,” said Lamme. “You will not leave me alone, my son; that would be an infamous cruelty. To have lost my wife and then further to lose my friend, that is impossible. I will whine no more, I promise you. And since it must be” – and he raised his head proudly – “I will go under the rain of bullets. Aye! And in the midst of swords; aye! in the face of those foul soldiers that drink blood like wolves. And if one day I fall at your feet bloody and death-stricken, bury me; and if you see my wife, tell her that I died because I could not bear to live without being loved by someone in this world. No, I could not do it, my son Ulenspiegel.”

And Lamme wept. And Ulenspiegel was moved to see that mild courage.

## XXVII

At this time the duke, dividing his army into two corps, made the one march towards the Duchy of Luxembourg and the other towards the Marquisate of Namur.

“This,” said Ulenspiegel, “is some military decision unknown to me; it is all one to me, let us go towards Maestricht boldly.”

As they went alongside the Meuse near the city Lamme saw Ulenspiegel looking attentively at all the boats that were moving in the river; and he stopped before one of them that bore a siren on the prow. And this siren held a scutcheon on which there was marked in gold letters on a sable ground the sign J. H. S., which is that of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ulenspiegel signed to Lamme to stop and began to sing merrily like a lark.

A man came up on the boat, crowed like a cock, and then, on a sign from Ulenspiegel, who brayed like a donkey and pointed him to the people gathered on the quay, he began to bray terribly like a donkey. Ulenspiegel’s two asses laid back their ears and sang their native song.

Women were passing; men, too, riding the towing horses, and Ulenspiegel said to Lamme:

“That boatman is mocking us and our steeds. Suppose we go and attack him on his boat?”

“Let him rather come hither,” replied Lamme.

Then a woman spoke and said:

“If you do not want to come back with arms cut off, broken backs, faces in bits, let that Stercke Pier bray in peace as he pleases.”

“Hee haw! hee haw! hee haw!” went the boatman.

“Let him sing,” said the goodwife, “we saw him the other day lift up on his shoulders a cart laden with huge casks of beer, and stop another cart pulled by a powerful horse. There,” she said, pointing to the inn of the *Blauwe-Toren*, the Blue Tower, “he pierced with his knife, thrown from twenty paces off, an oaken plank twelve inches thick.”

“Hee haw! hee haw! hee haw!” went the boatman, while a lad of twelve years old got up on the bridge of the boat and started to bray also.

Ulenspiegel replied:

“Much we care for your strong Peter! However Stercke Pier he may be, we are more of it than he is, and there is my friend Lamme who would eat two of his size without a hiccup.”

“What are you saying, my son?” asked Lamme.

“What is,” replied Ulenspiegel; “do not contradict me through modesty. Aye, good people, goodwives and artisans, soon you will behold him try the work of his arms and annihilate this famous Stercke Pier.”

“Hold your tongue,” said Lamme.

“Your might is well known,” replied Ulenspiegel, “you could never hide it.”

“Hee haw!” went the boatman; “hee haw!” went the lad.

Suddenly Ulenspiegel sang again, most melodiously like a lark. And the men, the women, and the artisans, ravished with delight, asked him where he had learned that divine whistle.

“In paradise, whence I have come direct,” answered Ulenspiegel.

Then, speaking to the man who never stopped braying and pointing with his finger for mockery:

“Why do you stay there on your boat, rascal? Do you not dare to come to land and mock at us and our steeds?”

“Do you not dare?” said Lamme.

“Hee haw! hee haw!” went the boatman. “Masters, donkeys, playing the donkey, come up on my boat.”

“Do as I do,” said Ulenspiegel in a low voice to Lamme.

And speaking to the boatman:

“If you are the Stercke Pier, I, I am Thyl Ulenspiegel. And these twain are our asses, Jef and Jan, who can bray better than you, for it is their native tongue. As for going up on your rickety planks, we have no mind to it. Your boat is like a tub; every time a wave strikes it it goes back, and it can only move like the crabs, sideways.”

“Aye, like the crabs!” said Lamme.

Then the boatman, speaking to Lamme:

“What are you muttering between your teeth, lump of bacon?”

Lamme, becoming furious, said:

“Evil Christian, who reproached me with my infirmity, know that my bacon is my own and comes from my good food; while thou, old rusty nail, thou livest but on old red herrings, candle wicks, skins of stockfish, to judge from thy scrawny beef that can be seen sticking through the holes in thy breeches.”

“They’ll be giving each other a stiff drubbing,” said the men, women, and artisans, delighted and full of curiosity.

“Hee haw! hee haw!” went the boatman.

“Do not throw stones,” said Ulenspiegel.

The boatman said a word in the ear of the lad hee-hawing beside him on the boat, and with the help of a boat hook, which he handled dexterously, came to the bank. When he was quite close, he said, standing proudly upright:

“My *baes* asks if you dare to come on board his boat and wage battle with him with fist and foot. These goodmen and goodwives will be witnesses.”

“We will,” said Ulenspiegel with much dignity.

“We accept the combat,” said Lamme with great stateliness.

It was noon; the workmen, navvies, paviours, ship-makers, their wives armed with their husbands’ luncheons, the children that came to see their fathers refresh themselves with beans or boiled meat, all laughed and clapped their hands at the idea of a battle at hand, gaily hoping that one or the other of the combatants would have a broken head or would fall into the river all in pieces for their delectation.

“My son,” said Lamme in a low voice, “he will throw us into the water.”

“Let yourself be thrown,” said Ulenspiegel.

“The big man is afraid,” said the crowd of workmen.

Lamme, still sitting on his ass, turned on them and looked wrathfully at them, but they hooted him.

“Let us go on the boat,” said Lamme, “they will see if I am afraid.”

At these words he was hooted again, and Ulenspiegel said:

“Let us go on the boat.”

Alighting from their asses, they threw the bridles to the boy who patted the donkeys in friendly fashion, and led them where he saw thistles growing.

Then Ulenspiegel took the boat hook, made Lamme get into the dinghy, sculled along towards the boat, where by the help of a rope he climbed up, preceded by Lamme, sweating and blowing hard.

When he was upon the bridge of the vessel, Ulenspiegel stooped down as though he meant to lace up his boots, and said a few words to the boatman, who smiled and looked at Lamme. Then he roared a thousand insults at him, calling him rascal, stuffed with guilty fat, gaol seed, *pap-eter*, eater of pap, and saying: “Big whale, how many hogsheads of oil do you give when you are bled?”

All at once, without answering him, Lamme hurled himself on him like a wild bull, flung him down, struck him with all his might, but did him little harm because of the fat pithlessness of his arms. The boatman, while pretending to struggle, let him do as he would, and Ulenspiegel said: “This rascal will pay for liquor.”

The men, women, and workmen, who from the bank looked on at the battle, said: “Who would have imagined that this big man was so impetuous?”

And they clapped their hands while Lamme struck like a deaf man. But the boatman took care for nothing except to save his face. Suddenly Lamme was seen with his knee on Stercke Pier’s breast, holding him by the throat with one hand and raising the other to strike.

“Cry for mercy,” he said in fury, “or I will drive you through the ribs of your tub!”

The boatman, coughing to show that he could not cry out, asked for mercy with his hand.

Then Lamme was seen generously lifting up his enemy, who was soon on his feet, and turning his back on the spectators, put out his tongue at Ulenspiegel, who was bursting with laughter to see Lamme, proudly shaking the feather in his cap, walking up and down the boat in mighty triumph.

And the men, women, lads, and lasses, who were on the bank, applauded with all their might, saying: “Hurrah for the conqueror of Stercke Pier! He is a man of iron. Did ye see how he thumped him with his fist and how he stretched him on his back with a blow from his head? There they are, going to drink now to make peace. Stercke Pier is coming up from the hold with wine and sausages.”

In very deed, Stercke Pier had come up with two tankards and a great quart of white Meuse wine. And Lamme and he had made peace. And Lamme, all gay and jolly because of his triumph, because of the wine and the sausages, asked him, pointing to an iron chimney that was disgorging a black thick smoke, what were the fricassees he was making in his hold.

“War cookery,” replied Stercke Pier, smiling.

The crowd of artisans, women, and children being dispersed to go back to their work or to their homes, the rumour ran speedily from mouth to mouth that a great fat man, mounted on an ass and accompanied by a little pilgrim, also mounted on an ass, was stronger than Samson and that care must be taken not to offend him.

Lamme drank and looked at the boatman with a conquering air.

The other said suddenly:

“Your donkeys are tired of being over yonder.”

Then, bringing the boat up against the quay, he got out on the earth, took one of the asses by the hind legs and the forelegs, and carrying him as Jesus carried the lamb, set it down on the bridge of the boat. Then having done the same with the other one without so much as drawing a quicker breath, he said:

“Let us drink.”

The lad leaped on the bridge.

And they drank. Lamme, all in a maze, no longer knew if it was himself, native of Damme, who had beaten this strong man, and he no longer dared to look at him, save by stealth, without any triumphing, fearing that he might take a notion to lay hold of him as he had done with the donkeys and throw him alive into the Meuse, for spite at his overthrow.

But the boatman, smiling, invited him gaily to drink again, and Lamme recovered from his fright and looked on him once more with victorious assurance.

And the boatman and Ulenspiegel laughed.

In the meanwhile, the donkeys, dumbfounded to find themselves on a floor that was not the *cows’ floor*, as the peasants call dry land, had hung their heads, laid back their ears, and dared not drink for fear. The boatman went off to fetch them one of the pecks of corn he gave the horses that towed his boat, buying it himself so as not to be cheated by the drivers in the price of fodder.

When the donkeys saw the grain they murmured paternosters of the jaw while staring at the deck of the boat in melancholy fashion and not daring to move a hoof for fear of slipping.

Thereupon the boatman said to Lamme and to Ulenspiegel:

“Let us go into the kitchen.”

“A war kitchen, but you may go down into it without fear, my conqueror.”

“I am nowise afraid, and I follow you,” said Lamme.

The lad took the tiller.

Going down they saw everywhere bags of grain, of beans, peas, carrots, and other vegetables.

The boatman then said to them, opening the door of a small forge:

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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