

HISTOIRE
DE
RÈGNE DE CHARLES-QUINT
EN BELGIQUE.

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Imp. de V^e PARENT et FILS, à Bruxelles.

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HISTOIRE

DU

RÈGNE DE CHARLES-QUINT

EN BELGIQUE.

CHAPITRE XXVII.

TROUBLES DE LA FLANDRE. — SOUMISSION DE GAND.

(1539-1540.)

Telle était la situation, quand arriva d'Espagne le comte de Rœulx. Il précédait Charles-Quint, qui s'était décidé à venir réprimer lui-même des résistances aggravées à ses yeux, par la démarche tentée près du roi de France, et par la crainte d'une connexité entre ces troubles et les querelles religieuses. « Puisque lesdits de Gand ont passé si avant et tant se ont deshontez et perdu la vergoingne que de recourir à France, avait-il écrit à Marie de Hongrie, il fait grandement à craindre qu'ilz ne fassent tout le pys qu'ilz pourront par extrême désespération, et fait à douter qu'ilz ne se vuellent ayder des desvoyez de la foi, dont, comme j'entends, il y en a

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grand nombre en mes pays, et aussy des voisins et estrangers¹. »

De Rœulx devait sonder le terrain, préparer les voies, rendre irrésistible l'intervention impériale, déjà simulée sans succès peu de temps auparavant. La reine avait envoyé aux échevins de Gand de prétendues lettres de son frère, datées de Madrid et du 15 septembre 1539, invitant les collèges des deux bancs à rétablir toutes choses sur l'ancien pied. « Nous avons appris, disaient ces lettres, les nouveautés et violences commises dans notre ville de Gand, à l'encontre de nos dignités et justice, contraires aux sentimens de bons sujets, au serment que vous nous avez prêté, au détriment même de votre ville. Il nous est impossible de les attribuer à la volonté générale; elles proviennent de la méchanceté de malveillans et de séditeux ne cherchant que troubles, divisions et confusion, afin de molester et d'opprimer les bons et fidèles bourgeois et habitans, chose étrange dans une ville où nous sommes né, à laquelle nous avons toujours porté tant d'intérêt et d'affection. » — « L'empereur s'étonnoit surtout, ajoutaient-elles, des changemens apportés à son insu dans le gouvernement de la cité, alors qu'on connoissoit son intention de se rendre dans les Pays-Bas, pour pourvoir au bien et à l'utilité de ses pays, en particulier de la Flandre et de sa ville de Gand. Aussi vouloit-il l'abolition de toutes ces nouveautés; il se réservoir de rechercher la vérité et de corriger les abus, et promettoit, en cas d'obéissance, de se montrer bon prince et bon souverain². » Mais les Gantois « n'extimant point que ces lettres venoient de l'empereur, et supposant que ladicte reyne les avoit faict escrire sur le nom de sadicte ma-

¹ Lettre du 30 septembre 1539. Appendice précité, 252.

² *Ibid.*, 603.