

but perceive with amazement the effect of the initial labor and enterprise of the early inhabitants.

The chief and most woful of the many afflictions besetting the early inhabitants of the Netherlands was the frequent flooding of the country by the North Sea. Lacking the means to build costly dikes to check the invasive floods, they not only often lost all the property which they had slowly acquired through long years of provident industry, but many were drowned in attempting to cross impassable and impetuous streams to reach unsubmerged ground. The following translated *excerpta* from one of the histories of the country summarily describe the calamities consequent upon these once-frequent inundations:

“Hereafter our ancestors enjoyed a rest until the great flood in January, in the year 1164, when the whole of Friesland and parts below it were dreadfully damaged; the flood being general, the number of men that was killed by it was estimated as being over a hundred thousand. * * * * Our region was shortly thereafter visited by an amazing drought in 1285, and by a frightful inundation in 1287, by which, between the rivers Eems and Lauwer alone, twenty thousand men were killed.”¹

At the beginning of the eleventh century there lay between the rivers Eems and Lauwer, at the confluence of the rivers Aa and Hunze, about thirty-five English miles eastward of the manor of Zwartewoude, a great meadow, which on account of the vivid beauty of its verdure obtained the name of *Groene Inge* (Green Meadow), which in the course of time was corrupted into Groningen.

The origin of the prosperous city, the capital of the province of the same name, now widely extending its numerous and cleanly-kept streets over the outer area of the verdurous lea, is obscure. The information extant respecting the beginning of the place is exceedingly meagre. Nothing, it seems, is known of the existence of Groningen prior to the year 1006. It is titled “*Villa Groninga*” in a Latin gift-deed presented, in 1040, to the church of Utrecht, by Henry III., Emperor of Germany. The prosperity of the place being evidently assured, and the inhabitants finding, in the year 1110, that the fence of palisades, with which it had long been surrounded, was either too low or too insecure, they removed it and encircled the city with a high stone wall, massive towers, strong gates, and a deep ditch. Gondbald, Bishop of Utrecht, fearing that the people might thereafter hold his ecclesiastical authority in contempt, as the wall had been built without his consent, induced the citizens two years later to pull it down.

¹ Tegenwoordige staat der Vereenigde Nederlanden. Stad en Lande. Amsterdam, 1793. *Twintigste deel*, pp. 40, 85.