

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1614-17 eBook

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1614-17 by John Lothrop Motley

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THE LIFE AND DEATH of JOHN OF BARNEVELD, ADVOCATE OF HOLLAND

WITH A VIEW OF THE PRIMARY CAUSES AND MOVEMENTS OF THE THIRTY
YEARS' WAR

By John Lothrop Motley, D.C.L., LL.D.

MOTLEY'S HISTORY OF THE NETHERLANDS, Project Gutenberg Edition, Volume 93

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v7, 1614-17

CHAPTER XI.

The Advocate sounds the Alarm in Germany—His Instructions to Langerac and his Forethought—The Prince—Palatine and his Forces take Aachen, Mulheim, and other Towns—Supineness of the Protestants—Increased Activity of Austria and the League—Barneveld strives to obtain Help from England—Neuburg departs for Germany—Barneveld the Prime Minister of Protestantism—Ernest Mansfield takes service under Charles Emmanuel—Count John of Nassau goes to Savoy—Slippery Conduct of King



James in regard to the New Treaty proposed—Barneveld's Influence greater in France than in England— Sequestration feared—The Elector of Brandenburg cited to appear before the Emperor at Prague—Murder of John van Wely—Uytenbogaert incurs Maurice's Displeasure—Marriage of the King of France with Anne of Austria—Conference between King James and Caron concerning Piracy, Cloth Trade and Treaty of Xanten—Barneveld's Survey of the Condition of Europe—His Efforts to avert the impending general War.

I have thus purposely sketched the leading features of a couple of momentous, although not eventful, years—so far as the foreign policy of the Republic is concerned—in order that the reader may better understand the bearings and the value of the Advocate's actions and writings at that period. This work aims at being a political study. I would attempt to exemplify the influence of individual humours and passions—some of them among the highest and others certainly the basest that agitate humanity-upon the march of great events, upon general historical results at certain epochs, and upon the destiny of eminent personages. It may also be not uninteresting to venture a glance into the internal structure and workings of a republican and federal system of government, then for the first time reproduced almost spontaneously upon an extended scale.

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Perhaps the revelation of some of its defects, in spite of the faculty and vitality struggling against them, may not be without value for our own country and epoch. The system of Switzerland was too limited and homely, that of Venice too purely oligarchical, to have much moral for us now, or to render a study of their pathological phenomena especially instructive. The lessons taught us by the history of the Netherland confederacy may have more permanent meaning.

Moreover, the character of a very considerable statesman at an all-important epoch, and in a position of vast responsibility, is always an historical possession of value to mankind. That of him who furnishes the chief theme for these pages has been either overlooked and neglected or perhaps misunderstood by posterity. History has not too many really important and emblematic men on its records to dispense with the memory of Barneveld, and the writer therefore makes no apology for dilating somewhat fully upon his lifework by means of much of his entirely unpublished and long forgotten utterances.

The Advocate had ceaselessly been sounding the alarm in Germany. For the Protestant Union, fascinated, as it were, by the threatening look of the Catholic League, seemed relapsing into a drowse.

“I believe,” he said to one of his agents in that country, “that the Evangelical electors and princes and the other estates are not alive to the danger. I am sure that it is not apprehended in Great Britain. France is threatened with troubles. These are the means to subjugate the religion, the laws and liberties of Germany. Without an army the troops now on foot in Italy cannot be kept out of Germany. Yet we do not hear that the Evangelicals are making provision of troops, money, or any other necessaries. In this country we have about one hundred places occupied with our troops, among whom are many who could destroy a whole army. But the maintenance of these places prevents our being very strong in the field, especially outside our frontiers. But if in all Germany there be many places held by the Evangelicals which would disperse a great army is very doubtful. Keep a watchful eye. Economy is a good thing, but the protection of a country and its inhabitants must be laid to heart. Watch well if against these Provinces, and against Bohemia, Austria, and other as it is pretended rebellious states, these plans are not directed. Look out for the movements of the Italian and Bavarian troops against Germany. You see how they are nursing the troubles and misunderstandings in France, and turning them to account.”

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He instructed the new ambassador in Paris to urge upon the French government the absolute necessity of punctuality in furnishing the payment of their contingent in the Netherlands according to convention. The States of Holland themselves had advanced the money during three years' past, but this anticipation was becoming very onerous. It was necessary to pay the troops every month regularly, but the funds from Paris were always in arrear. England contributed about one-half as much in subsidy, but these moneys went in paying the garrisons of Brielle, Flushing, and Rammekens, fortresses pledged to that crown. The Ambassador was shrewdly told not to enlarge on the special employment of the English funds while holding up to the Queen's government that she was not the only potentate who helped bear burthens for the Provinces, and insisted on a continuation of this aid. "Remember and let them remember," said the Advocate, "that the reforms which they are pretending to make there by relieving the subjects of contributions tends to enervate the royal authority and dignity both within and without, to diminish its lustre and reputation, and in sum to make the King unable to gratify and assist his subjects, friends, and allies. Make them understand that the taxation in these Provinces is ten times higher than there, and that My Lords the States hitherto by the grace of God and good administration have contrived to maintain it in order to be useful to themselves and their friends. Take great pains to have it well understood that this is even more honourable and more necessary for a king of France, especially in his minority, than for a republic 'hoc turbato seculo.' We all see clearly how some potentates in Europe are keeping at all time under one pretext or another strong forces well armed on a war footing. It therefore behoves his Majesty to be likewise provided with troops, and at least with a good exchequer and all the requirements of war, as well for the security of his own state as for the maintenance of the grandeur and laudable reputation left to him by the deceased king."

Truly here was sound and substantial advice, never and nowhere more needed than in France. It was given too with such good effect as to bear fruit even upon stoniest ground, and it is a refreshing spectacle to see this plain Advocate of a republic, so lately sprung into existence out of the depths of oppression and rebellion, calmly summoning great kings as it were before him and instructing them in those vital duties of government in discharge of which the country he administered already furnished a model. Had England and France each possessed a Barneveld at that epoch, they might well have given in exchange for him a wilderness of Epernons and Sillerys, Bouillons and Conde's; of Winwoods, Lakes, Carrs, and Villierses. But Elizabeth with her counsellors was gone, and Henry was gone, and Richelieu had not come; while in England James and his minions were diligently opening an abyss between government and people which in less than half a lifetime more should engulf the kingdom.



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Two months later he informed the States' ambassador of the communications made by the Prince of Conde and the Dukes of Nevers and Bouillon to the government at the Hague now that they had effected a kind of reconciliation with the Queen. Langerac was especially instructed to do his best to assist in bringing about cordial relations, if that were possible, between the crown and the rebels, and meantime he was especially directed to defend du Maurier against the calumnious accusations brought against him, of which Aerssens had been the secret sower.

"You will do your best to manage," he said, "that no special ambassador be sent hither, and that M. du Maurier may remain with us, he being a very intelligent and moderate person now well instructed as to the state of our affairs, a professor of the Reformed religion, and having many other good qualities serviceable to their Majesties and to us.

"You will visit the Prince, and other princes and officers of the crown who are coming to court again, and do all good offices as well for the court as for M. du Maurier, in order that through evil plots and slanderous reports no harm may come to him.

"Take great pains to find out all you can there as to the designs of the King of Spain, the Archdukes, and the Emperor, in the affair of Julich. You are also to let it be known that the change of religion on the part of the Prince-Palatine of Neuburg will not change our good will and affection for him, so far as his legal claims are concerned."

So long as it was possible for the States to retain their hold on both the claimants, the Advocate, pursuant to his uniform policy of moderation, was not disposed to help throw the Palatine into the hands of the Spanish party. He was well aware, however, that Neuburg by his marriage and his conversion was inevitably to become the instrument of the League and to be made use of in the duchies at its pleasure, and that he especially would be the first to submit with docility to the decree of the Emperor. The right to issue such decree the States under guidance of Barneveld were resolved to resist at all hazards.

"Work diligently, nevertheless," said he, "that they permit nothing there directly or indirectly that may tend to the furtherance of the League, as too prejudicial to us and to all our fellow religionists. Tell them too that the late king, the King of Great Britain, the united electors and princes of Germany, and ourselves, have always been resolutely opposed to making the dispute about the succession in the duchies depend on the will of the Emperor and his court. All our movements in the year 1610 against the attempted sequestration under Leopold were to carry out that purpose. Hold it for certain that our present proceedings for strengthening and maintaining the city and fortress of Julich are considered serviceable and indispensable by the British king and the German electors and princes. Use your best efforts to induce the French government to pursue the same policy—if it be not possible openly, then at least secretly. My conviction is that, unless the Prince-Palatine is supported by, and his

whole designs founded upon, the general league against all our brethren of the religion, affairs may be appeased.”

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The Envoy was likewise instructed to do his best to further the matrimonial alliance which had begun to be discussed between the Prince of Wales and the second daughter of France. Had it been possible at that moment to bring the insane dream of James for a Spanish alliance to naught, the States would have breathed more freely. He was also to urge payment of the money for the French regiments, always in arrears since Henry's death and Sully's dismissal, and always supplied by the exchequer of Holland. He was informed that the Republic had been sending some war ships to the Levant, to watch the armada recently sent thither by Spain, and other armed vessels into the Baltic, to pursue the corsairs with whom every sea was infested. In one year alone he estimated the loss to Dutch merchants by these pirates at 800,000 florins. "We have just captured two of the rovers, but the rascally scum is increasing," he said.

Again alluding to the resistance to be made by the States to the Imperial pretensions, he observed, "The Emperor is about sending us a herald in the Julich matter, but we know how to stand up to him."

And notwithstanding the bare possibility which he had admitted, that the Prince of Neuburg might not yet have wholly sold himself, body and soul, to the Papists, he gave warning a day or two afterwards in France that all should be prepared for the worst.

"The Archdukes and the Prince of Neuburg appear to be taking the war earnestly in hand," he said. "We believe that the Papistical League is about to make a great effort against all the co-religionists. We are watching closely their movements. Aachen is first threatened, and the Elector-Palatine likewise. France surely, for reasons of state, cannot permit that they should be attacked. She did, and helped us to do, too much in the Julich campaign to suffer the Spaniards to make themselves masters there now."

It has been seen that the part played by France in the memorable campaign of 1610 was that of admiring auxiliary to the States' forces; Marshal de la Chatre having in all things admitted the superiority of their army and the magnificent generalship of Prince Maurice. But the government of the Dowager had been committed by that enterprise to carry out the life-long policy of Henry, and to maintain his firm alliance with the Republic. Whether any of the great king's acuteness and vigour in countermining and shattering the plans of the House of Austria was left in the French court, time was to show. Meantime Barneveld was crying himself hoarse with warnings into the dull ears of England and France.

A few weeks later the Prince of Neuburg had thrown off the mask. Twelve thousand foot and 1500 horse had been raised in great haste, so the Advocate informed the French court, by Spain and the Archdukes, for the use of that pretender. Five or six thousand Spaniards were coming by sea to Flanders, and as many Italians were crossing the mountains, besides a great number mustering for the same purpose in Germany and Lorraine. Barneveld was constantly receiving most important intelligence of military

plans and movements from Prague, which he placed daily before the eyes of governments wilfully blind.



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“I ponder well at this crisis,” he said to his friend Caron, “the intelligence I received some months back from Ratisbon, out of the cabinet of the Jesuits, that the design of the Catholic or Roman League is to bring this year a great army into the field, in order to make Neuburg, who was even then said to be of the Roman profession and League, master of Julich and the duchies; to execute the Imperial decree against Aachen and Mulheim, preventing any aid from being sent into Germany by these Provinces, or by Great Britain, and placing the Archduke and Marquis Spinola in command of the forces; to put another army on the frontiers of Austria, in order to prevent any succour coming from Hungary, Bohemia, Austria, Moravia, and Silesia into Germany; to keep all these disputed territories in subjection and devotion to the Emperor, and to place the general conduct of all these affairs in the hands of Archduke Leopold and other princes of the House of Austria. A third army is to be brought into the Upper Palatinate, under command of the Duke of Bavaria and others of the League, destined to thoroughly carry out its designs against the Elector-Palatine, and the other electors, princes, and estates belonging to the religion.”

This intelligence, plucked by Barneveld out of the cabinet of the Jesuits, had been duly communicated by him months before to those whom it most concerned, and as usual it seemed to deepen the lethargy of the destined victims and their friends. Not only the whole Spanish campaign of the present year had thus been duly mapped out by the Advocate, long before it occurred, but this long buried and forgotten correspondence of the statesman seems rather like a chronicle of transactions already past, so closely did the actual record, which posterity came to know too well, resemble that which he saw, and was destined only to see, in prophetic vision.

Could this political seer have cast his horoscope of the Thirty Years' War at this hour of its nativity for the instruction of such men as Walsingham or Burleigh, Henry of Navarre or Sully, Richelieu or Gustavus Adolphus, would the course of events have been modified? These very idlest of questions are precisely those which inevitably occur as one ponders the seeming barrenness of an epoch in reality so pregnant.

“One would think,” said Barneveld, comparing what was then the future with the real past, “that these plans in Prague against the Elector-Palatine are too gross for belief; but when I reflect on the intense bitterness of these people, when I remember what was done within living men's memory to the good elector Hans Frederic of Saxony for exactly the same reasons, to wit, hatred of our religion, and determination to establish Imperial authority, I have great apprehension. I believe that the Roman League will use the present occasion to carry out her great design; holding France incapable of opposition to her, Germany in too great division, and imagining

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to themselves that neither the King of Great Britain nor these States are willing or able to offer effectual and forcible resistance. Yet his Majesty of Great Britain ought to be able to imagine how greatly the religious matter in general concerns himself and the electoral house of the Palatine, as principal heads of the religion, and that these vast designs should be resisted betimes, and with all possible means and might. My Lords the States have good will, but not sufficient strength, to oppose these great forces single-handed. One must not believe that without great and prompt assistance in force from his Majesty and other fellow religionists My Lords the States can undertake so vast an affair. Do your uttermost duty there, in order that, ere it be too late, this matter be taken to heart by his Majesty, and that his authority and credit be earnestly used with other kings, electors, princes, and republics, that they do likewise. The promptest energy, good will, and affection may be reckoned on from us.”

Alas! it was easy for his Majesty to take to heart the matter of Conrad Vorstius, to spend reams of diplomatic correspondence, to dictate whole volumes for orations brimming over with theological wrath, for the edification of the States-General, against that doctor of divinity. But what were the special interests of his son-in-law, what the danger to all the other Protestant electors and kings, princes and republics, what the imperilled condition of the United Provinces, and, by necessary consequence, the storm gathering over his own throne, what the whole fate of Protestantism, from Friesland to Hungary, threatened by the insatiable, all-devouring might of the double house of Austria, the ancient church, and the Papistical League, what were hundred thousands of men marching towards Bohemia, the Netherlands, and the duchies, with the drum beating for mercenary recruits in half the villages of Spain, Italy, and Catholic Germany, compared with the danger to Christendom from an Arminian clergyman being appointed to the theological professorship at Leyden?

The world was in a blaze, kings and princes were arming, and all the time that the monarch of the powerful, adventurous, and heroic people of Great Britain could spare from slobbering over his minions, and wasting the treasures of the realm to supply their insatiate greed, was devoted to polemical divinity, in which he displayed his learning, indeed, but changed his positions and contradicted himself day by day. The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign's littleness oppresses the imagination.

Moreover, should he listen to the adjurations of the States and his fellow religionists, should he allow himself to be impressed by the eloquence of Barneveld and take a manly and royal decision in the great emergency, it would be indispensable for him to come before that odious body, the Parliament of Great Britain, and ask for money. It would be perhaps necessary for him to take them into his confidence, to degrade himself by speaking to them of the national affairs. They might not be satisfied with the honour of voting the supplies at his demand, but were capable of asking questions as to their appropriation. On the whole it was more king-like and statesman-like to remain

quiet, and give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift, he had an inexhaustible supply.

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Barneveld had just hopes from the Commons of Great Britain, if the King could be brought to appeal to Parliament. Once more he sounded the bugle of alarm. "Day by day the Archdukes are making greater and greater enrolments of riders and infantry in ever increasing mass," he cried, "and therewith vast provision of artillery and all munitions of war. Within ten or twelve days they will be before Julich in force. We are sending great convoys to reinforce our army there. The Prince of Neuburg is enrolling more and more troops every day. He will soon be master of Mulheim. If the King of Great Britain will lay this matter earnestly to heart for the preservation of the princes, electors, and estates of the religion, I cannot doubt that Parliament would cooperate well with his Majesty, and this occasion should be made use of to redress the whole state of affairs."

It was not the Parliament nor the people of Great Britain that would be in fault when the question arose of paying in money and in blood for the defence of civil and religious liberty. But if James should venture openly to oppose Spain, what would the Count of Gondemar say, and what would become of the Infanta and the two millions of dowry?

It was not for want of some glimmering consciousness in the mind of James of the impending dangers to Northern Europe and to Protestantism from the insatiable ambition of Spain, and the unrelenting grasp of the Papacy upon those portions of Christendom which were slipping from its control, that his apathy to those perils was so marked. We have seen his leading motives for inaction, and the world was long to feel its effects.

"His Majesty firmly believes," wrote Secretary Winwood, "that the Papistical League is brewing great and dangerous plots. To obviate them in everything that may depend upon him, My Lords the States will find him prompt. The source of all these entanglements comes from Spain. We do not think that the Archduke will attack Julich this year, but rather fear for Mulheim and Aix-la-Chapelle."

But the Secretary of State, thus acknowledging the peril, chose to be blind to its extent, while at the same time undervaluing the powers by which it might be resisted. "To oppose the violence of the enemy," he said, "if he does resort to violence, is entirely impossible. It would be furious madness on our part to induce him to fall upon the Elector-Palatine, for this would be attacking Great Britain and all her friends and allies. Germany is a delicate morsel, but too much for the throat of Spain to swallow all at once. Behold the evil which troubles the conscience of the Papistical League. The Emperor and his brothers are all on the brink of their sepulchre, and the Infants of Spain are too young to succeed to the Empire. The Pope would more willingly permit its dissolution than its falling into the hands of a prince not of his profession. All that we have to do in this conjuncture is to attend the best we can to our own affairs, and afterwards to strengthen the good alliance existing among us, and not to let ourselves be separated by the tricks and sleights of hand of our adversaries. The common cause can reckon firmly upon the King of Great Britain, and will not find itself deceived."

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Excellent commonplaces, but not very safe ones. Unluckily for the allies, to attend each to his own affairs when the enemy was upon them, and to reckon firmly upon a king who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy, was hardly the way to avert the danger. A fortnight later, the man who thought it possible to resist, and time to resist, before the net was over every head, replied to the Secretary by a picture of the Spaniards' progress.

“Since your letter,” he said, “you have seen the course of Spinola with the army of the King and the Archdukes. You have seen the Prince-Palatine of Neuburg with his forces maintained by the Pope and other members of the Papistical League. On the 29th of August they forced Aachen, where the magistrates and those of the Reformed religion have been extremely maltreated. Twelve hundred soldiers are lodged in the houses there of those who profess our religion. Mulheim is taken and dismantled, and the very houses about to be torn down. Duren, Castre, Grevenborg, Orsoy, Duisburg, Ruhrort, and many other towns, obliged to receive Spanish garrisons. On the 4th of September they invested Wesel. On the 6th it was held certain that the cities of Cleve, Emmerich, Rees, and others in that quarter, had consented to be occupied. The States have put one hundred and thirty-five companies of foot (about 14,000 men) and 4000 horse and a good train of artillery in the field, and sent out some ships of war. Prince Maurice left the Hague on the 4th of September to assist Wesel, succour the Prince of Brandenburg, and oppose the hostile proceedings of Spinola and the Palatine of Neuburg Consider, I pray you, this state of things, and think how much heed they have paid to the demands of the Kings of Great Britain and France to abstain from hostilities. Be sure that without our strong garrison in Julich they would have snapped up every city in Julich, Cleve, and Berg. But they will now try to make use of their slippery tricks, their progress having been arrested by our army. The Prince of Neuburg is sending his chancellor here ‘cum mediis componendae pacis,’ in appearance good and reasonable, in reality deceptive If their Majesties, My Lords the States, and the princes of the Union, do not take an energetic resolution for making head against their designs, behold their League in full vigour and ours without soul. Neither the strength nor the wealth of the States are sufficient of themselves to withstand their ambitious and dangerous designs. We see the possessory princes treated as enemies upon their own estates, and many thousand souls of the Reformed religion cruelly oppressed by the Papistical League. For myself I am confirmed in my apprehensions and believe that neither our religion nor our Union can endure such indignities. The enemy is making use of the minority in France and the divisions among the princes of Germany to their great advantage I believe that the singular wisdom of his Majesty will enable him to apply promptly the suitable remedies, and that your Parliament will make no difficulty in acquitting itself well in repairing those disorders.”

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The year dragged on to its close. The supineness of the Protestants deepened in direct proportion to the feverish increase of activity on the part of Austria and the League. The mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated, the parade of conciliation when war of extermination was intended, continued on the part of Spain and Austria. Barneveld was doing his best to settle all minor differences between the States and Great Britain, that these two bulwarks of Protestantism might stand firmly together against the rising tide. He instructed the Ambassador to exhaust every pacific means of arrangement in regard to the Greenland fishery disputes, the dyed cloth question, and like causes of ill feeling. He held it more than necessary, he said, that the inhabitants of the two countries should now be on the very best terms with each other. Above all, he implored the King through the Ambassador to summon Parliament in order that the kingdom might be placed in position to face the gathering danger.

“I am amazed and distressed,” he said, “that the statesmen of England do not comprehend the perils with which their fellow religionists are everywhere threatened, especially in Germany and in these States. To assist us with bare advice and sometimes with traducing our actions, while leaving us to bear alone the burthens, costs, and dangers, is not serviceable to us.” Referring to the information and advice which he had sent to England and to France fifteen months before, he now gave assurance that the Prince of Neuburg and Spinola were now in such force, both foot and cavalry, with all necessary munitions, as to hold these most important territories as a perpetual “sedem bedli,” out of which to attack Germany at their pleasure and to cut off all possibility of aid from England and the States. He informed the court of St. James that besides the forces of the Emperor and the House of Austria, the Duke of Bavaria and Spanish Italy, there were now several thousand horse and foot under the Bishop of Wurzburg, 8000 or 9000 under the Bishop-Elector of Mayence, and strong bodies of cavalry under Count Vaudemont in Lorraine, all mustering for the war. The pretext seems merely to reduce Frankfurt to obedience, even as Donauworth had previously been used as a colour for vast designs. The real purpose was to bring the Elector-Palatine and the whole Protestant party in Germany to submission. “His Majesty,” said the Advocate, “has now a very great and good subject upon which to convoke Parliament and ask for a large grant. This would be doubtless consented to if Parliament receives the assurance that the money thus accorded shall be applied to so wholesome a purpose. You will do your best to further this great end. We are waiting daily to hear if the Xanten negotiation is broken off or not. I hope and I fear. Meantime we bear as heavy burthens as if we were actually at war.”

He added once more the warning, which it would seem superfluous to repeat even to schoolboys in diplomacy, that this Xanten treaty, as proposed by the enemy, was a mere trap.

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Spinola and Neuburg, in case of the mutual disbanding, stood ready at an instant's warning to re-enlist for the League not only all the troops that the Catholic army should nominally discharge, but those which would be let loose from the States' army and that of Brandenburg as well. They would hold Rheinberg, Groll, Lingen, Oldenzaal, Wachtendonk, Maestricht, Aachen, and Mulheim with a permanent force of more than 20,000 men. And they could do all this in four days' time.

A week or two later all his prophecies had been fulfilled. "The Prince of Neuburg," he said, "and Marquis Spinola have made game of us most impudently in the matter of the treaty. This is an indignity for us, their Majesties, and the electors and princes. We regard it as intolerable. A despatch came from Spain forbidding a further step in the negotiation without express order from the King. The Prince and Spinola are gone to Brussels, the ambassadors have returned to the Hague, the armies are established in winter-quarters. The cavalry are ravaging the debateable land and living upon the inhabitants at their discretion. M. de Refuge is gone to complain to the Archdukes of the insult thus put upon his sovereign. Sir Henry Wotton is still here. We have been plunged into an immensity of extraordinary expense, and are amazed that at this very moment England should demand money from us when we ought to be assisted by a large subsidy by her. We hope that now at least his Majesty will take a vigorous resolution and not suffer his grandeur and dignity to be vilipended longer. If the Spaniard is successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones, and will believe that mankind is ready to bear and submit to everything. His Majesty is the first king of the religion. He bears the title of Defender of the Faith. His religion, his only daughter, his son-in-law, his grandson are all especially interested besides his own dignity, besides the common weal."

He then adverted to the large subsidies from Queen Elizabeth many years before, guaranteed, it was true, by the cautionary towns, and to the gallant English regiments, sent by that great sovereign, which had been fighting so long and so splendidly in the Netherlands for the common cause of Protestantism and liberty. Yet England was far weaker then, for she had always her northern frontier to defend against Scotland, ever ready to strike her in the back. "But now his Majesty," said Barneveld, "is King of England and Scotland both. His frontier is free. Ireland is at peace. He possesses quietly twice as much as the Queen ever did. He is a king. Her Majesty was a woman. The King has children and heirs. His nearest blood is engaged in this issue. His grandeur and dignity have been wronged. Each one of these considerations demands of itself a manly resolution. You will do your best to further it."

The almost ubiquitous power of Spain, gaining after its exhaustion new life through the strongly developed organization of the League, and the energy breathed into that mighty conspiracy against human liberty by the infinite genius of the "cabinet of Jesuits," was not content with overshadowing Germany, the Netherlands, and England, but was threatening Savoy with 40,000 men, determined to bring Charles Emmanuel either to perdition or submission.

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Like England, France was spell-bound by the prospect of Spanish marriages, which for her at least were not a chimera, and looked on composedly while Savoy was on point of being sacrificed by the common invader of independent nationality whether Protestant or Catholic. Nothing ever showed more strikingly the force residing in singleness of purpose with breadth and unity of design than all these primary movements of the great war now beginning. The chances superficially considered were vastly in favour of the Protestant cause. In the chief lands, under the sceptre of the younger branch of Austria, the Protestants outnumbered the Catholics by nearly ten to one. Bohemia, the Austrias, Moravia, Silesia, Hungary were filled full of the spirit of Huss, of Luther, and even of Calvin. If Spain was a unit, now that the Moors and Jews had been expelled, and the heretics of Castille and Aragon burnt into submission, she had a most lukewarm ally in Venice, whose policy was never controlled by the Church, and a dangerous neighbour in the warlike, restless, and adventurous House of Savoy, to whom geographical considerations were ever more vital than religious scruples. A sincere alliance of France, the very flower of whose nobility and people inclined to the Reformed religion, was impossible, even if there had been fifty infantes to espouse fifty daughters of France. Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the united princes of Germany seemed a solid and serried phalanx of Protestantism, to break through which should be hopeless. Yet at that moment, so pregnant with a monstrous future, there was hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland. How long would that policy remain sound and united? How long would the Republic speak through the imperial voice of Barneveld? Time was to show and to teach many lessons. The united princes of Germany were walking, talking, quarrelling in their sleep; England and France distracted and bedrugged, while Maximilian of Bavaria and Ferdinand of Gratz, the cabinets of Madrid and the Vatican, were moving forward to their aims slowly, steadily, relentlessly as Fate. And Spain was more powerful than she had been since the Truce began. In five years she had become much more capable of aggression. She had strengthened her positions in the Mediterranean by the acquisition and enlargement of considerable fortresses in Barbary and along a large sweep of the African coast, so as to be almost supreme in Africa. It was necessary for the States, the only power save Turkey that could face her in those waters, to maintain a perpetual squadron of war ships there to defend their commerce against attack from the Spaniard and from the corsairs, both Mahometan and Christian, who infested every sea. Spain was redoubtable everywhere, and the Turk, engaged in Persian campaigns, was offering no diversion against Hungary and Vienna.

“Reasons of state worthy of his Majesty’s consideration and wisdom,” said Barneveld, “forbid the King of Great Britain from permitting the Spaniard to give the law in Italy. He is about to extort obedience and humiliation from the Duke of Savoy, or else with 40,000 men to mortify and ruin him, while entirely assuring himself of France by the double marriages. Then comes the attack on these Provinces, on Protestant Germany, and all other states and realms of the religion.”



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With the turn of the year, affairs were growing darker and darker. The League was rolling up its forces in all directions; its chiefs proposed absurd conditions of pacification, while war was already raging, and yet scarcely any government but that of the Netherlands paid heed to the rising storm. James, fatuous as ever, listened to Gondemar, and wrote admonitory letters to the Archduke. It was still gravely proposed by the Catholic party that there should be mutual disbanding in the duchies, with a guarantee from Marquis Spinola that there should be no more invasion of those territories. But powers and pledges from the King of Spain were what he needed.

To suppose that the Republic and her allies would wait quietly, and not lift a finger until blows were actually struck against the Protestant electors or cities of Germany, was expecting too much ingenuousness on the part of statesmen who had the interests of Protestantism at heart. What they wanted was the signed, sealed, ratified treaty faithfully carried out. Then if the King of Spain and the Archdukes were willing to contract with the States never to make an attempt against the Holy German Empire, but to leave everything to take its course according to the constitutions, liberties, and traditions and laws of that empire, under guidance of its electors, princes, estates, and cities, the United Provinces were ready, under mediation of the two kings, their allies and friends, to join in such an arrangement. Thus there might still be peace in Germany, and religious equality as guaranteed by the "Majesty-Letter," and the "Compromise" between the two great churches, Roman and Reformed, be maintained. To bring about this result was the sincere endeavour of Barneveld, hoping against hope. For he knew that all was hollowness and sham on the part of the great enemy. Even as Walsingham almost alone had suspected and denounced the delusive negotiations by which Spain continued to deceive Elizabeth and her diplomatists until the Armada was upon her coasts, and denounced them to ears that were deafened and souls that were stupified by the frauds practised upon them, so did Barneveld, who had witnessed all that stupendous trickery of a generation before, now utter his cries of warning that Germany might escape in time from her impending doom.

"Nothing but deceit is lurking in the Spanish proposals," he said. "Every man here wonders that the English government does not comprehend these malversations. Truly the affair is not to be made straight by new propositions, but by a vigorous resolution of his Majesty. It is in the highest degree necessary to the salvation of Christendom, to the conservation of his Majesty's dignity and greatness, to the service of the princes and provinces, and of all Germany, nor can this vigorous resolution be longer delayed without enormous disaster to the common weal I have the deepest affection for the cause of the Duke of Savoy, but I cannot further it so long as I cannot tell what his Majesty specifically is resolved to do, and what hope is held out from Venice, Germany, and other quarters. Our taxes are prodigious, the ordinary and extraordinary, and we have a Spanish army at our front door."



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The armaments, already so great, had been enlarged during the last month of the year. Vaudemont was at the head of a further force of 2000 cavalry and 8000 foot, paid for by Spain and the Pope; 24,000 additional soldiers, riders and infantry together, had been gathered by Maximilian of Bavaria at the expense of the League. Even if the reports were exaggerated, the Advocate thought it better to be too credulous than as apathetic as the rest of the Protestants.

“We receive advices every day,” he wrote to Caron, “that the Spaniards and the Roman League are going forward with their design. They are trying to amuse the British king and to gain time, in order to be able to deal the heavier blows. Do all possible duty to procure a timely and vigorous resolution there. To wait again until we are anticipated will be fatal to the cause of the Evangelical electors and princes of Germany and especially of his Electoral Highness of Brandenburg. We likewise should almost certainly suffer irreparable damage, and should again bear our cross, as men said last year in regard to Aachen, Wesel, and so many other places. The Spaniard is sly, and has had a long time to contrive how he can throw the net over the heads of all our religious allies. Remember all the warnings sent from here last year, and how they were all tossed to the winds, to the ruin of so many of our co-religionists. If it is now intended over there to keep the Spaniards in check merely by speeches or letters, it would be better to say so clearly to our friends. So long as Parliament is not convoked in order to obtain consents and subsidies for this most necessary purpose, so long I fail to believe that this great common cause of Christendom, and especially of Germany, is taken to heart by England.”

He adverted with respectfully subdued scorn to King James’s proposition that Spinola should give a guarantee. “I doubt if he accepts the suggestion,” said Barneveld, “unless as a notorious trick, and if he did, what good would the promise of Spinola do us? We consider Spinola a great commander having the purses and forces of the Spaniards and the Leaguers in his control; but should they come into other hands, he would not be a very considerable personage for us. And that may happen any day. They don’t seem in England to understand the difference between Prince Maurice in his relations to our state and that of Marquis Spinola to his superiors. Try to make them comprehend it. A promise from the Emperor, King of Spain, and the princes of the League, such as his Majesty in his wisdom has proposed to Spinola, would be most tranquillizing for all the Protestant princes and estates of the Empire, especially for the Elector and Electress Palatine, and for ourselves. In such a case no difficulty would be made on our side.”

After expressing his mind thus freely in regard to James and his policy, he then gave the Ambassador a word of caution in characteristic fashion. “Cogita,” he said, “but beware of censuring his Majesty’s projects. I do not myself mean to censure them, nor are they publicly laughed at here, but look closely at everything that comes from Brussels, and let me know with diligence.”



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And even as the Advocate was endeavouring with every effort of his skill and reason to stir the sluggish James into vigorous resolution in behalf of his own children, as well as of the great cause of Protestantism and national liberty, so was he striving to bear up on his strenuous shoulders the youthful king of France, and save him from the swollen tides of court intrigue and Jesuitical influence fast sweeping him to destruction.

He had denounced the recent and paltry proposition made on the part of the League, and originally suggested by James, as a most open and transparent trap, into which none but the blind would thrust themselves. The Treaty of Xanten, carried out as it had been signed and guaranteed by the great Catholic powers, would have brought peace to Christendom. To accept in place of such guarantee the pledge of a simple soldier, who to-morrow might be nothing, was almost too ridiculous a proposal to be answered gravely. Yet Barneveld through the machinations of the Catholic party was denounced both at the English and French courts as an obstacle to peace, when in reality his powerful mind and his immense industry were steadily directed to the noblest possible end—to bring about a solemn engagement on the part of Spain, the Emperor, and the princes of the League, to attack none of the Protestant powers of Germany, especially the Elector-Palatine, but to leave the laws, liberties, and privileges of the States within the Empire in their original condition. And among those laws were the great statutes of 1609 and 1610, the “Majesty-Letter” and the “Compromise,” granting full right of religious worship to the Protestants of the Kingdom of Bohemia. If ever a policy deserved to be called truly liberal and truly conservative, it was the policy thus steadily maintained by Barneveld.

Adverting to the subterfuge by which the Catholic party had sought to set aside the treaty of Xanten, he instructed Langerac, the States’ ambassador in Paris, and his own pupils to make it clear to the French government that it was impossible that in such arrangements the Spanish armies would not be back again in the duchies at a moment’s notice. It could not be imagined even that they were acting sincerely.

“If their upright intention,” he said, “is that no actual, hostile, violent attack shall be made upon the duchies, or upon any of the princes, estates, or cities of the Holy Empire, as is required for the peace and tranquillity of Christendom, and if all the powers interested therein will come into a good and solid convention to that effect. My Lords the States will gladly join in such undertaking and bind themselves as firmly as the other powers. If no infraction of the laws and liberties of the Holy Empire be attempted, there will be peace for Germany and its neighbours. But the present extravagant proposition can only lead to chicane and quarrels. To press such a measure is merely to inflict a disgrace



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upon us. It is an attempt to prevent us from helping the Elector-Palatine and the other Protestant princes of Germany and coreligionists everywhere against hostile violence. For the Elector-Palatine can receive aid from us and from Great Britain through the duchies only. It is plainly the object of the enemy to seclude us from the Palatine and the rest of Protestant Germany. It is very suspicious that the proposition of Prince Maurice, supported by the two kings and the united princes of Germany, has been rejected.”

The Advocate knew well enough that the religious franchises granted by the House of Habsburg at the very moment in which Spain signed her peace with the Netherlands, and exactly as the mad duke of Cleve was expiring—with a dozen princes, Catholic and Protestant, to dispute his inheritance—would be valuable just so long as they could be maintained by the united forces of Protestantism and of national independence and no longer. What had been extorted from the Catholic powers by force would be retracted by force whenever that force could be concentrated. It had been necessary for the Republic to accept a twelve years’ truce with Spain in default of a peace, while the death of John of Cleve, and subsequently of Henry IV., had made the acquisition of a permanent pacification between Catholicism and Protestantism, between the League and the Union, more difficult than ever. The so-called Thirty Years’ War—rather to be called the concluding portion of the Eighty Years’ War—had opened in the debateable duchies exactly at the moment when its forerunner, the forty years’ war of the Netherlands, had been temporarily and nominally suspended. Barneveld was perpetually baffled in his efforts to obtain a favourable peace for Protestant Europe, less by the open diplomacy and military force of the avowed enemies of Protestantism than by the secret intrigues and faintheartedness of its nominal friends. He was unwearied in his efforts simultaneously to arouse the courts of England and France to the danger to Europe from the overshadowing power of the House of Austria and the League, and he had less difficulty in dealing with the Catholic Lewis and his mother than with Protestant James. At the present moment his great designs were not yet openly traversed by a strong Protestant party within the very republic which he administered.

“Look to it with earnestness and grave deliberation,” he said to Langerac, “that they do not pursue us there with vain importunity to accept something so notoriously inadmissible and detrimental to the common weal. We know that from the enemy’s side every kind of unseemly trick is employed, with the single object of bringing about misunderstanding between us and the King of France. A prompt and vigorous resolution on the part of his Majesty, to see the treaty which we made duly executed, would be to help the cause. Otherwise, not. We cannot here believe that his Majesty, in this first



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year of his majority, will submit to such a notorious and flagrant affront, or that he will tolerate the oppression of the Duke of Savoy. Such an affair in the beginning of his Majesty's reign cannot but have very great and prejudicial consequences, nor can it be left to linger on in uncertainty and delay. Let him be prompt in this. Let him also take a most Christian—kingly, vigorous resolution against the great affront put upon him in the failure to carry out the treaty. Such a resolve on the part of the two kings would restore all things to tranquillity and bring the Spaniard and his adherents 'in terminos modestiae. But so long as France is keeping a suspicious eye upon England, and England upon France, everything will run to combustion, detrimental to their Majesties and to us, and ruinous to all the good inhabitants."

To the Treaty of Xanten faithfully executed he held as to an anchor in the tempest until it was torn away, not by violence from without, but by insidious mutiny within. At last the government of James proposed that the pledges on leaving the territory should be made to the two allied kings as mediators and umpires. This was better than the naked promises originally suggested, but even in this there was neither heartiness nor sincerity. Meantime the Prince of Neuburg, negotiations being broken off, departed for Germany, a step which the Advocate considered ominous. Soon afterwards that prince received a yearly pension of 24,000 crowns from Spain, and for this stipend his claims on the sovereignty of the duchies were supposed to be surrendered.

"If this be true," said Barneveld, "we have been served with covered dishes."

The King of England wrote spirited and learned letters to the Elector-Palatine, assuring him of his father-in-law's assistance in case he should be attacked by the League. Sir Henry Wotton, then on special mission at the Hague, showed these epistles to Barneveld.

"When I hear that Parliament has been assembled and has granted great subsidies," was the Advocate's comment, "I shall believe that effects may possibly follow from all these assurances."

It was wearisome for the Advocate thus ever to be foiled; by the pettinesses and jealousies of those occupying the highest earthly places, in his efforts to stem the rising tide of Spanish and Catholic aggression, and to avert the outbreak of a devastating war to which he saw Europe doomed. It may be wearisome to read the record. Yet it is the chronicle of Christendom during one of the most important and fateful epochs of modern history. No man can thoroughly understand the complication and precession of phenomena attending the disastrous dawn of the renewed war, on an even more awful scale than the original conflict in the Netherlands, without studying the correspondence of Barneveld. The history of Europe is there. The fate of Christendom is there. The conflict of elements, the crash of contending forms of religion

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and of nationalities, is pictured there in vivid if homely colours. The Advocate, while acting only in the name of a slender confederacy, was in truth, so long as he held his place, the prime minister of European Protestantism. There was none other to rival him, few to comprehend him, fewer still to sustain him. As Prince Maurice was at that moment the great soldier of Protestantism without clearly scanning the grandeur of the field in which he was a chief actor, or foreseeing the vastness of its future, so the Advocate was its statesman and its prophet. Could the two have worked together as harmoniously as they had done at an earlier day, it would have been a blessing for the common weal of Europe. But, alas! the evil genius of jealousy, which so often forbids cordial relations between soldier and statesman, already stood shrouded in the distance, darkly menacing the strenuous patriot, who was wearing his life out in exertions for what he deemed the true cause of progress and humanity.

Nor can the fate of the man himself, his genuine character, and the extraordinary personal events towards which he was slowly advancing, be accurately unfolded without an attempt by means of his letters to lay bare his inmost thoughts. Especially it will be seen at a later moment how much value was attached to this secret correspondence with the ambassadors in London and Paris.

The Advocate trusted to the support of France, Papal and Medicean as the court of the young king was, because the Protestant party throughout the kingdom was too powerful, warlike, and numerous to be trifled with, and because geographical considerations alone rendered a cordial alliance between Spain and France very difficult. Notwithstanding the Spanish marriages, which he opposed so long as opposition was possible, he knew that so long as a statesman remained in the kingdom, or a bone for one existed, the international policy of Henry, of Sully, and of Jeannin could not be wholly abandoned.

He relied much on Villeroy, a political hack certainly, an ancient Leaguer, and a Papist, but a man too cool, experienced, and wily to be ignorant of the very hornbook of diplomacy, or open to the shallow stratagems by which Spain found it so easy to purchase or to deceive. So long as he had a voice in the council, it was certain that the Netherland alliance would not be abandoned, nor the Duke of Savoy crushed. The old secretary of state was not especially in favour at that moment, but Barneveld could not doubt his permanent place in French affairs until some man of real power should arise there. It was a dreary period of barrenness and disintegration in that kingdom while France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu.



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The Dutch ambassador at Paris was instructed accordingly to maintain good relations with Villeroy, who in Barneveld's opinion had been a constant and sincere friend to the Netherlands. "Don't forget to caress the old gentleman you wot of," said the Advocate frequently, but suppressing his name, "without troubling yourself with the reasons mentioned in your letter. I am firmly convinced that he will overcome all difficulties. Don't believe either that France will let the Duke of Savoy be ruined. It is against every reason of State." Yet there were few to help Charles Emmanuel in this Montferrat war, which was destined to drag feebly on, with certain interludes of negotiations, for two years longer. The already notorious condottiere Ernest Mansfeld, natural son of old prince Peter Ernest, who played so long and so high a part in command of the Spanish armies in the Netherlands, had, to be sure, taken service under the Duke. Thenceforth he was to be a leader and a master in that wild business of plunder, burning, blackmailing, and murder, which was opening upon Europe, and was to afford occupation for many thousands of adventurers of high and low degree.

Mansfeld, reckless and profligate, had already changed his banner more than once. Commanding a company under Leopold in the duchies, he had been captured by the forces of the Union, and, after waiting in vain to be ransomed by the Archduke, had gone secretly over to the enemy. Thus recovering his liberty, he had enlisted a regiment under Leopold's name to fight the Union, and had then, according to contract, transferred himself and most of his adventurers to the flag of the Union. The military operations fading away in the duchies without being succeeded by permanent peace, the Count, as he was called, with no particular claim to such title, had accepted a thousand florins a year as retainer from the Union and had found occupation under Charles Emmanuel. Here the Spanish soldier of a year or two before found much satisfaction and some profit in fighting Spanish soldiers. He was destined to reappear in the Netherlands, in France, in Bohemia, in many places where there were villages to be burned, churches to be plundered, cities to be sacked, nuns and other women to be outraged, dangerous political intrigues to be managed. A man in the prime of his age, fair-haired, prematurely wrinkled, battered, and hideous of visage, with a hare-lip and a humpback; slovenly of dress, and always wearing an old grey hat without a band to it; audacious, cruel, crafty, and licentious—such was Ernest Mansfeld, whom some of his contemporaries spoke of as Ulysses Germanicus, others as the new Attila, all as a scourge to the human race. The cockneys of Paris called him "Machefer," and nurses long kept children quiet by threatening them with that word. He was now enrolled on the Protestant side, although at the moment serving Savoy against Spain in a question purely personal. His armies, whether in Italy or in Germany, were a miscellaneous collection of adventurers of high and low degree, of all religions, of all countries, unfrocked priests and students, ruined nobles, bankrupt citizens, street vagabonds—earliest type perhaps of the horrible military vermin which were destined to feed so many years long on the unfortunate dismembered carcass of Germany.



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Many demands had been made upon the States for assistance to Savoy,—as if they and they alone were to bear the brunt and pay the expense of all the initiatory campaigns against Spain.

“We are much importuned,” said the Advocate, “to do something for the help of Savoy . . . We wish and we implore that France, Great Britain, the German princes, the Venetians, and the Swiss would join us in some scheme of effective assistance. But we have enough on our shoulders at this moment.”

They had hardly money enough in their exchequer, admirably ordered as it was, for enterprises so far from home when great Spanish armies were permanently encamped on their border.

Partly to humour King James and partly from love of adventure, Count John of Nassau had gone to Savoy at the head of a small well disciplined body of troops furnished by the States.

“Make use of this piece of news,” said Barneveld, communicating the fact to Langerac, “opportunely and with discretion. Besides the wish to give some contentment to the King of Great Britain, we consider it inconsistent with good conscience and reasons of state to refuse help to a great prince against oppression by those who mean to give the law to everybody; especially as we have been so earnestly and frequently importuned to do so.”

And still the Spaniards and the League kept their hold on the duchies, while their forces, their munitions, their accumulation of funds waged hourly. The war of chicane was even more deadly than an actual campaign, for when there was no positive fighting the whole world seemed against the Republic. And the chicane was colossal.

“We cannot understand,” said Barneveld, “why M. de Prevaux is coming here on special mission. When a treaty is signed and sealed, it only remains to execute it. The Archduke says he is himself not known in the treaty, and that nothing can be demanded of him in relation to it. This he says in his letters to the King of Great Britain. M. de Refuge knows best whether or not Marquis Spinola, Ottavio Visconti, Chancellor Pecquius, and others, were employed in the negotiation by the Archduke. We know very well here that the whole business was conducted by them. The Archduke is willing to give a clean and sincere promise not to re-occupy, and asks the same from the States. If he were empowered by the Emperor, the King of Spain, and the League, and acted in such quality, something might be done for the tranquillity of Germany. But he promises for himself only, and Emperor, King, or League, may send any general to do what they like to-morrow. What is to prevent it?”

“And so My Lords the States, the Elector of Brandenburg, and others interested are cheated and made fools of. And we are as much troubled by these tricks as by armed



force. Yes, more; for we know that great enterprises are preparing this year against Germany and ourselves, that all Neuburg's troops have been disbanded and re-enlisted under the Spanish commanders, and that forces are levying not only in Italy and Spain, but in Germany, Lorraine, Luxemburg, and Upper Burgundy, and that Wesel has been stuffed full of gunpowder and other munitions, and very strongly fortified."

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For the States to agree to a treaty by which the disputed duchies should be held jointly by the Princes of Neuburg and of Brandenburg, and the territory be evacuated by all foreign troops; to look quietly on while Neuburg converted himself to Catholicism, espoused the sister of Maximilian of Bavaria, took a pension from Spain, resigned his claims in favour of Spain, and transferred his army to Spain; and to expect that Brandenburg and all interested in Brandenburg, that is to say, every Protestant in Europe, should feel perfectly easy under such arrangement and perfectly protected by the simple promise of a soldier of fortune against Catholic aggression, was a fantastic folly hardly worthy of a child. Yet the States were asked to accept this position, Brandenburg and all Protestant Germany were asked to accept it, and Barneveld was howled at by his allies as a marplot and mischief-maker, and denounced and insulted by diplomatists daily, because he mercilessly tore away the sophistries of the League and of the League's secret friend, James Stuart.

The King of Spain had more than 100,000 men under arms, and was enlisting more soldiers everywhere and every day, had just deposited 4,000,000 crowns with his Antwerp bankers for a secret purpose, and all the time was exuberant in his assurances of peace. One would have thought that there had never been negotiations in Bourbourg, that the Spanish Armada had never sailed from Coruna.

"You are wise and prudent in France," said the Advocate, "but we are used to Spanish proceedings, and from much disaster sustained are filled with distrust. The King of England seems now to wish that the Archduke should draw up a document according to his good pleasure, and that the States should make an explanatory deed, which the King should sign also and ask the King of France to do the same. But this is very hazardous.

"We do not mean to receive laws from the King of Spain, nor the Archduke The Spanish proceedings do not indicate peace but war. One must not take it ill of us that we think these matters of grave importance to our friends and ourselves. Affairs have changed very much in the last four months. The murder of the first vizier of the Turkish emperor and his designs against Persia leave the Spanish king and the Emperor free from attack in that quarter, and their armaments are far greater than last year I cannot understand why the treaty of Xanten, formerly so highly applauded, should now be so much disapproved. . . . The King of Spain and the Emperor with their party have a vast design to give the law to all Christendom, to choose a Roman king according to their will, to reduce the Evangelical electors, princes, and estates of Germany to obedience, to subject all Italy, and, having accomplished this, to proceed to triumph over us and our allies, and by necessary consequence over France and England. They say they have established the Emperor's

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authority by means of Aachen and Mulheim, will soon have driven us out of Julich, and have thus arranged matters entirely to their heart's content. They can then, in name of the Emperor, the League, the Prince of Neuburg, or any one else, make themselves in eight days masters of the places which they are now imaginarily to leave as well as of those which we are actually to surrender, and by possession of which we could hold out a long time against all their power."

Those very places held by the States—Julich, Emmerich, and others—had recently been fortified at much expense, under the superintendence of Prince Maurice, and by advice of the Advocate. It would certainly be an act of madness to surrender them on the terms proposed. These warnings and forebodings of Barneveld sound in our ears like recorded history, yet they were far earlier than the actual facts. And now to please the English king, the States had listened to his suggestion that his name and that of the King of France should be signed as mediators to a new arrangement proposed in lieu of the Xanten treaty. James had suggested this, Lewis had agreed to it. Yet before the ink had dried in James's pen, he was proposing that the names of the mediating sovereigns should be omitted from the document? And why? Because Gondemar was again whispering in his ear. "They are renewing the negotiations in England," said the Advocate, "about the alliance between the Prince of Wales and the second daughter of Spain; and the King of Great Britain is seriously importuning us that the Archdukes and My Lords the States should make their pledges 'impersonaliter' and not to the kings." James was also willing that the name of the Emperor should appear upon it. To prevent this, Barneveld would have had himself burned at the stake. It would be an ignominious and unconditional surrender of the whole cause.

"The Archduke will never be contented," said the Advocate, "unless his Majesty of Great Britain takes a royal resolution to bring him to reason. That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice. We have been ready and are still ready to execute the treaty of Xanten. The Archduke is the cause of the dispute concerning the act. We approved the formularies of their Majesties, and have changed them three times to suit the King of Great Britain. Our Provincial States have been notified in the matter, so that we can no longer digest the Spanish impudence, and are amazed that his Majesty can listen any more to the Spanish ministers. We fear that those ministers are working through many hands, in order by one means or another to excite quarrels between his Majesty, us, and the respective inhabitants of the two countries Take every precaution that no attempt be made there to bring the name of the Emperor into the act. This would be contrary to their Majesties' first resolution, very prejudicial to the Elector of Brandenburg, to the duchies, and to ourselves. And it is indispensable that the promise be made to the two kings as mediators, as much for their reputation and dignity as for the interests of the Elector, the territories, and ourselves. Otherwise too the Spaniards will triumph over us as if they had driven us by force of arms into this promise."



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The seat of war, at the opening of the apparently inevitable conflict between the Catholic League and the Protestant Union, would be those debateable duchies, those border provinces, the possession of which was of such vital importance to each of the great contending parties, and the populations of which, although much divided, were on the whole more inclined to the League than to the Union. It was natural enough that the Dutch statesman should chafe at the possibility of their being lost to the Union through the adroitness of the Catholic managers and the supineness of the great allies of the Republic.

Three weeks later than these last utterances of the Advocate, he was given to understand that King James was preparing to slide away from the position which had been three times changed to make it suitable for him. His indignation was hot.

“Sir Henry Wotton,” he said, “has communicated to me his last despatches from Newmarket. I am in the highest degree amazed that after all our efforts at accommodation, with so much sacrifice to the electors, the provinces, and ourselves, they are trying to urge us there to consent that the promise be not made to the Kings of France and Great Britain as mediators, although the proposition came from the Spanish side. After we had renounced, by desire of his Majesty, the right to refer the promise to the Treaty of Xanten, it was judged by both kings to be needful and substantial that the promise be made to their Majesties. To change this now would be prejudicial to the kings, to the electors, the duchies, and to our commonwealth; to do us a wrong and to leave us naked. France maintains her position as becoming and necessary. That Great Britain should swerve from it is not to be digested here. You will do your utmost according to my previous instructions to prevent any pressure to this end. You will also see that the name of the Emperor is mentioned neither in the preamble nor the articles of the treaty. It would be contrary to all our policy since 1610. You may be firmly convinced that malice is lurking under the Emperor’s name, and that he and the King of Spain and their adherents, now as before, are attempting a sequestration. This is simply a pretext to bring those principalities and provinces into the hands of the Spaniards, for which they have been labouring these thirty years. We are constantly cheated by these Spanish tricks. Their intention is to hold Wesel and all the other places until the conclusion of the Italian affair, and then to strike a great blow.”

Certainly were never words more full of sound statesmanship, and of prophecy too soon to be fulfilled, than these simple but pregnant warnings. They awakened but little response from the English government save cavils and teasing reminders that Wesel had been the cradle of German Calvinism, the Rhenish Geneva, and that it was sinful to leave it longer in the hands of Spain. As if the Advocate had not proved to demonstration that to stock hands for a new deal at that moment was to give up the game altogether.

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His influence in France was always greater than in England, and this had likewise been the case with William the Silent. And even now that the Spanish matrimonial alliance was almost a settled matter at the French court, while with the English king it was but a perpetual will-o'the-wisp conducting to quagmires ineffable, the government at Paris sustained the policy of the Advocate with tolerable fidelity, while it was constantly and most capriciously traversed by James.

Barneveld sighed over these approaching nuptials, but did not yet despair. "We hope that the Spanish-French marriages," he said, "may be broken up of themselves; but we fear that if we should attempt to delay or prevent them authoritatively, or in conjunction with others, the effort would have the contrary effect."

In this certainly he was doomed to disappointment.

He had already notified the French court of the absolute necessity of the great points to be insisted upon in the treaty, and there he found more docility than in London or Newmarket.

All summer he was occupied with this most important matter, uttering Cassandra-like warnings into ears wilfully deaf. The States had gone as far as possible in concession. To go farther would be to wreck the great cause upon the very quicksands which he had so ceaselessly pointed out. "We hope that nothing further will be asked of us, no scruples be felt as to our good intentions," he said, "and that if Spain and the Archdukes are not ready now to fulfil the treaty, their Majesties will know how to resent this trifling with their authority and dignity, and how to set matters to rights with their own hands in the duchies. A new treaty, still less a sequestration, is not to be thought of for a moment."

Yet the month of August came and still the names of the mediating kings were not on the treaty, and still the spectre of sequestration had not been laid. On the contrary, the peace of Asti, huddled up between Spain and Savoy, to be soon broken again, had caused new and painful apprehensions of an attempt at sequestration, for it was established by several articles in that treaty that all questions between Savoy and Mantua should be referred to the Emperor's decision. This precedent was sure to be followed in the duchies if not resisted by force, as it had been so successfully resisted five years before by the armies of the States associated with those of France. Moreover the first step at sequestration had been actually taken. The Emperor had peremptorily summoned the Elector of Brandenburg and all other parties interested to appear before him on the 1st of August in Prague. There could be but one object in this citation, to drive Brandenburg and the States out of the duchies until the Imperial decision as to the legitimate sovereignty should be given. Neuburg being already disposed of and his claims ceded to the Emperor, what possibility was there in such circumstances of saving one scrap

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of the territory from the clutch of the League? None certainly if the Republic faltered in its determination, and yielded to the cowardly advice of James. "To comply with the summons," said Barneveld, "and submit to its consequences will be an irreparable injury to the electoral house of Brandenburg, to the duchies, and to our co-religionists everywhere, and a very great disgrace to both their Majesties and to us."

He continued, through the ambassador in London, to hold up to the King, in respectful but plain language, the shamelessness of his conduct in dispensing the enemy from his pledge to the mediators, when the Republic expressly, in deference to James, had given up the ampler guarantees of the treaty. The arrangement had been solemnly made, and consented to by all the provinces, acting in their separate and sovereign capacity. Such a radical change, even if it were otherwise permissible, could not be made without long debates, consultations, and votes by the several states. What could be more fatal at such a crisis than this childish and causeless delay. There could be no doubt in any statesman's eyes that the Spanish party meant war and a preparatory hoodwinking. And it was even worse for the government of the Republic to be outwitted in diplomacy than beaten in the field.

"Every man here," said the Advocate, "has more apprehension of fraud than of force. According to the constitution of our state, to be overcome by superior power must be endured, but to be overreached by trickery is a reproach to the government."

The summer passed away. The States maintained their positions in the duchies, notwithstanding the objurgations of James, and Barneveld remained on his watch-tower observing every movement of the fast-approaching war, and refusing at the price of the whole territory in dispute to rescue Wesel and Aix-la-Chapelle from the grasp of the League.

Caron came to the Hague to have personal consultations with the States-General, the Advocate, and Prince Maurice, and returned before the close of the year. He had an audience of the King at the palace of Whitehall early in November, and found him as immovable as ever in his apathetic attitude in regard to the affairs of Germany. The murder of Sir Thomas Overbury and the obscene scandals concerning the King's beloved Carr and his notorious bride were then occupying the whole attention of the monarch, so that he had not even time for theological lucubrations, still less for affairs of state on which the peace of Christendom and the fate of his own children were hanging.

The Ambassador found him sulky and dictatorial, but insisted on expressing once more to him the apprehensions felt by the States-General in regard to the trickery of the Spanish party in the matter of Cleve and Julich. He assured his Majesty that they had no intention of maintaining the Treaty of Xanten, and respectfully requested that the



King would no longer urge the States to surrender the places held by them. It was a matter of vital importance to retain them, he said.



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“Sir Henry Wotton told me,” replied James, “that the States at his arrival were assembled to deliberate on this matter, and he had no doubt that they would take a resolution in conformity with my intention. Now I see very well that you don’t mean to give up the places. If I had known that before, I should not have warned the Archduke so many times, which I did at the desire of the States themselves. And now that the Archdukes are ready to restore their cities, you insist on holding yours. That is the dish you set before me.”

And upon this James swore a mighty oath, and beat himself upon the breast.

“Now and nevermore will I trouble myself about the States’ affairs, come what come will,” he continued. “I have always been upright in my words and my deeds, and I am not going to embark myself in a wicked war because the States have plunged themselves into one so entirely unjust. Next summer the Spaniard means to divide himself into two or three armies in order to begin his enterprises in Germany.”

Caron respectfully intimated that these enterprises would be most conveniently carried on from the very advantageous positions which he occupied in the duchies. “No,” said the King, “he must restore them on the same day on which you make your surrender, and he will hardly come back in a hurry.”

“Quite the contrary,” said the Ambassador, “they will be back again in a twinkling, and before we have the slightest warning of their intention.”

But it signified not the least what Caron said. The King continued to vociferate that the States had never had any intention of restoring the cities.

“You mean to keep them for yourselves,” he cried, “which is the greatest injustice that could be perpetrated. You have no right to them, and they belong to other people.”

The Ambassador reminded him that the Elector of Brandenburg was well satisfied that they should be occupied by the States for his greater security and until the dispute should be concluded.

“And that will never be,” said James; “never, never. The States are powerful enough to carry on the war all alone and against all the world.”

And so he went on, furiously reiterating the words with which he had begun the conversation, “without accepting any reasons whatever in payment,” as poor Caron observed.

“It makes me very sad,” said the Ambassador, “to find your Majesty so impatient and so resolved. If the names of the kings are to be omitted from the document, the Treaty of Xanten should at least be modified accordingly.”



“Nothing of the kind,” said James; “I don’t understand it so at all. I speak plainly and without equivocation. It must be enough for the States that I promise them, in case the enemy is cheating or is trying to play any trick whatever, or is seeking to break the Treaty of Xanten in a single point, to come to their assistance in person.”



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And again the warlike James swore a big oath and smote his breast, affirming that he meant everything sincerely; that he cheated no one, but always spoke his thoughts right on, clearly and uprightly.

It was certainly not a cheerful prospect for the States. Their chief ally was determined that they should disarm, should strip themselves naked, when the mightiest conspiracy against the religious freedom and international independence of Europe ever imagined was perfecting itself before their eyes, and when hostile armies, more numerous than ever before known, were at their very door. To wait until the enemy was at their throat, and then to rely upon a king who trembled at the sight of a drawn sword, was hardly the highest statesmanship. Even if it had been the chivalrous Henry instead of the pacific James that had held out the promise of help, they would have been mad to follow such counsel.

The conversation lasted more than an hour. It was in vain that Caron painted in dark colours the cruel deeds done by the Spaniards in Mulheim and Aachen, and the proceedings of the Archbishop of Cologne in Rees. The King was besotted, and no impression could be made upon him.

“At any rate,” said the Envoy, “the arrangement cannot be concluded without the King of France.”

“What excuse is that?” said James. “Now that the King is entirely Spanish, you are trying to excuse your delays by referring to him. You have deferred rescuing the poor city of Wesel from the hands of the Spaniard long enough. I am amazed to have heard never a word from you on that subject since your departure. I had expressed my wish to you clearly enough that you should inform the States of my intention to give them any assurance they chose to demand.”

Caron was much disappointed at the humour of his Majesty. Coming freshly as he did from the council of the States, and almost from the seat of war, he had hoped to convince and content him. But the King was very angry with the States for putting him so completely in the wrong. He had also been much annoyed at their having failed to notify him of their military demonstration in the Electorate of Cologne to avenge the cruelties practised upon the Protestants there. He asked Caron if he was instructed to give him information regarding it. Being answered in the negative, he said he had thought himself of sufficient importance to the States and enough in their confidence to be apprised of their military movements. It was for this, he said, that his ambassador sat in their council. Caron expressed the opinion that warlike enterprises of the kind should be kept as secret as possible in order to be successful. This the King disputed, and loudly declared his vexation at being left in ignorance of the matter. The Ambassador excused himself as well as he could, on the ground that he had been in Zealand when the troops were marching, but told the King his impression that they had

been sent to chastise the people of Cologne for their cruelty in burning and utterly destroying the city of Mulheim.



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“That is none of your affair,” said the King.

“Pardon me, your Majesty,” replied Caron, “they are our fellow religionists, and some one at least ought to resent the cruelty practised upon them.”

The King admitted that the destruction of the city had been an unheard— of cruelty, and then passed on to speak of the quarrel between the Duke and City of Brunswick, and other matters. The interview ended, and the Ambassador, very downhearted, went to confer with the Secretary of State Sir Ralph Winwood, and Sir Henry Wotton.

He assured these gentlemen that without fully consulting the French government these radical changes in the negotiations would never be consented to by the States. Winwood promised to confer at once with the French ambassador, admitting it to be impossible for the King to take up this matter alone. He would also talk with the Archduke’s ambassador next day noon at dinner, who was about leaving for Brussels, and “he would put something into his hand that he might take home with him.”

“When he is fairly gone,” said Caron, “it is to be hoped that the King’s head will no longer be so muddled about these things. I wish it with all my heart.”

It was a dismal prospect for the States. The one ally on whom they had a right to depend, the ex-Calvinist and royal Defender of the Faith, in this mortal combat of Protestantism with the League, was slipping out of their grasp with distracting lubricity. On the other hand, the Most Christian King, a boy of fourteen years, was still in the control of a mother heart and soul with the League—so far as she had heart or soul—was betrothed to the daughter of Spain, and saw his kingdom torn to pieces and almost literally divided among themselves by rebellious princes, who made use of the Spanish marriages as a pretext for unceasing civil war.

The Queen-Mother was at that moment at Bordeaux, and an emissary from the princes was in London. James had sent to offer his mediation between them and the Queen. He was fond of mediation. He considered it his special mission in the world to mediate. He imagined himself as looked up to by the nations as the great arbitrator of Christendom, and was wont to issue his decrees as if binding in force and infallible by nature. He had protested vigorously against the Spanish-French marriages, and declared that the princes were justified in formalizing an opposition to them, at least until affairs in France were restored to something like order. He warned the Queen against throwing the kingdom “into the combustion of war without necessity,” and declared that, if she would trust to his guidance, she might make use of him as if her affairs were his own. An indispensable condition for much assistance, however, would be that the marriages should be put off.

As James was himself pursuing a Spanish marriage for his son as the chief end and aim of his existence, there was something almost humorous in this protest to the

Queen-Dowager and in his encouragement of mutiny in France in order to prevent a catastrophe there which he desired at home.



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The same agent of the princes, de Monbaran by name, was also privately accredited by them to the States with instructions to borrow 200,000 crowns of them if he could. But so long as the policy of the Republic was directed by Barneveld, it was not very probable that, while maintaining friendly and even intimate relations with the legitimate government, she would enter into negotiations with rebels against it, whether princes or plebeians, and oblige them with loans. "He will call on me soon, no doubt," said Caron, "but being so well instructed as to your Mightinesses intentions in this matter, I hope I shall keep him away from you." Monbaran was accordingly kept away, but a few weeks later another emissary of Conde and Bouillon made his appearance at the Hague, de Valigny by name. He asked for money and for soldiers to reinforce Bouillon's city of Sedan, but he was refused an audience of the States-General. Even the martial ardour of Maurice and his sympathy for his relatives were cooled by this direct assault on his pocket. "The Prince," wrote the French ambassador, du Maurier, "will not furnish him or his adherents a thousand crowns, not if they had death between their teeth. Those who think it do not know how he loves his money."

In the very last days of the year (1615) Caron had another interview with the King in which James was very benignant. He told the Ambassador that he should wish the States to send him some special commissioners to make a new treaty with him, and to treat of all unsettled affairs which were daily arising between the inhabitants of the respective countries. He wished to make a firmer union and accord between Great Britain and the Netherlands. He was very desirous of this, "because," said he, "if we can unite with and understand each other, we have under God no one what ever to fear, however mighty they may be."

Caron duly notified Barneveld of these enthusiastic expressions of his Majesty. The Advocate too was most desirous of settling the troublesome questions about the cloth trade, the piracies, and other matters, and was in favour of the special commission. In regard to a new treaty of alliance thus loosely and vaguely suggested, he was not so sanguine however. He had too much difficulty in enforcing the interests of Protestantism in the duchies against the infatuation of James in regard to Spain, and he was too well aware of the Spanish marriage delusion, which was the key to the King's whole policy, to put much faith in these casual outbursts of eternal friendship with the States. He contented himself therefore with cautioning Caron to pause before committing himself to any such projects. He had frequently instructed him, however, to bring the disputed questions to his Majesty's notice as often as possible with a view to amicable arrangement.



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This preventive policy in regard to France was highly approved by Barneveld, who was willing to share in the blame profusely heaped upon such sincere patriots and devoted Protestants as Duplessis-Mornay and others, who saw small advantage to the great cause from a mutiny against established government, bad as it was, led by such intriguers as Conde and Bouillon. Men who had recently been in the pay of Spain, and one of whom had been cognizant of Biron's plot against the throne and life of Henry IV., to whom sedition was native atmosphere and daily bread, were not likely to establish a much more wholesome administration than that of Mary de' Medici. Prince Maurice sympathized with his relatives by marriage, who were leading the civil commotions in France and endeavouring to obtain funds in the Netherlands. It is needless to say that Francis Aerssens was deep in their intrigues, and feeding full the grudge which the Stadholder already bore the Advocate for his policy on this occasion.

The Advocate thought it best to wait until the young king should himself rise in mutiny against his mother and her minions. Perhaps the downfall of the Concini's and their dowager and the escape of Lewis from thralldom might not be so distant as it seemed. Meantime this was the legal government, bound to the States by treaties of friendship and alliance, and it would be a poor return for the many favours and the constant aid bestowed by Henry IV. on the Republic, and an imbecile mode of avenging his murder to help throw his kingdom into bloodshed and confusion before his son was able to act for himself. At the same time he did his best to cultivate amicable relations with the princes, while scrupulously abstaining from any sympathy with their movements. "If the Prince and the other gentlemen come to court," he wrote to Langerac, "you will treat them with all possible caresses so far as can be done without disrespect to the government."

While the British court was occupied with the foul details of the Overbury murder and its consequences, a crime of a more commonplace nature, but perhaps not entirely without influence on great political events, had startled the citizens of the Hague. It was committed in the apartments of the Stadholder and almost under his very eyes. A jeweller of Amsterdam, one John van Wely, had come to the court of Maurice to lay before him a choice collection of rare jewellery. In his caskets were rubies and diamonds to the value of more than 100,000 florins, which would be the equivalent of perhaps ten times as much to-day. In the Prince's absence the merchant was received by a confidential groom of the chambers, John of Paris by name, and by him, with the aid of a third John, a soldier of his Excellency's guard, called Jean de la Vigne, murdered on the spot. The deed was done in the Prince's private study. The unfortunate jeweller was shot, and to make sure was strangled with the blue riband of the Order of the Garter recently conferred upon Maurice, and which happened to be lying conspicuously in the room.



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The ruffians had barely time to take possession of the booty, to thrust the body behind the tapestry of the chamber, and to remove the more startling evidences of the crime, when the Prince arrived. He supped soon afterwards in the same room, the murdered jeweller still lying behind the arras. In the night the valet and soldier carried the corpse away from the room, down the stairs, and through the great courtyard, where, strange to say, no sentinels were on duty, and threw it into an ashpit.

A deed so bloody, audacious, and stupid was of course soon discovered and the murderers arrested and executed. Nothing would remove the incident from the catalogue of vulgar crimes, or even entitle it to a place in history save a single circumstance. The celebrated divine John Uytenbogaert, leader among the Arminians, devoted friend of Barneveld, and up to that moment the favorite preacher of Maurice, stigmatized indeed, as we have seen, by the orthodox as "Court Trumpeter," was requested by the Prince to prepare the chief criminal for death. He did so, and from that day forth the Stadholder ceased to be his friend, although regularly listening to his preaching in the French chapel of the court for more than a year longer. Some time afterwards the Advocate informed Uytenbogaert that the Prince was very much embittered against him. "I knew it well," says the clergyman in his memoirs, "but not the reasons for it, nor do I exactly comprehend them to this day. Truly I have some ideas relating to certain things which I was obliged to do in discharge of my official duty, but I will not insist upon them, nor will I reveal them to any man."

These were mysterious words, and the mystery is said to have been explained; for it would seem that the eminent preacher was not so entirely reticent among his confidential friends as before the public. Uytenbogaert—so ran the tale—in the course of his conversation with the condemned murderer, John of Paris, expressed a natural surprise that there should have been no soldiers on guard in the court on the evening when the crime was committed and the body subsequently removed. The valet informed him that he had for a long time been empowered by the Prince to withdraw the sentinels from that station, and that they had been instructed to obey his orders—Maurice not caring that they should be witnesses to the equivocal kind of female society that John of Paris was in the habit of introducing of an evening to his master's apartments. The valet had made use of this privilege on the night in question to rid himself of the soldiers who would have been otherwise on guard.

The preacher felt it his duty to communicate these statements to the Prince, and to make perhaps a somewhat severe comment upon them. Maurice received the information sullenly, and, as soon as Uytenbogaert was gone, fell into a violent passion, throwing his hat upon the floor, stamping upon it, refusing to eat his supper, and allowing no one to speak to him. Next day some courtiers asked the clergyman what in the world he had been saying to the Stadholder.

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From that time forth his former partiality for the divine, on whose preaching he had been a regular attendant, was changed to hatred; a sentiment which lent a lurid colour to subsequent events.

The attempts of the Spanish party by chicane or by force to get possession of the coveted territories continued year after year, and were steadily thwarted by the watchfulness of the States under guidance of Barneveld. The martial stadholder was more than ever for open war, in which he was opposed by the Advocate, whose object was to postpone and, if possible, to avert altogether the dread catastrophe which he foresaw impending over Europe. The Xanten arrangement seemed hopelessly thrown to the winds, nor was it destined to be carried out; the whole question of sovereignty and of mastership in those territories being swept subsequently into the general whirlpool of the Thirty Years' War. So long as there was a possibility of settlement upon that basis, the Advocate was in favour of settlement, but to give up the guarantees and play into the hands of the Catholic League was in his mind to make the Republic one of the conspirators against the liberties of Christendom.

“Spain, the Emperor and the rest of them,” said he, “make all three modes of pacification—the treaty, the guarantee by the mediating kings, the administration divided between the possessory princes—alike impossible. They mean, under pretext of sequestration, to make themselves absolute masters there. I have no doubt that Villeroy means sincerely, and understands the matter, but meantime we sit by the fire and burn. If the conflagration is neglected, all the world will throw the blame on us.”

Thus the Spaniards continued to amuse the British king with assurances of their frank desire to leave those fortresses and territories which they really meant to hold till the crack of doom. And while Gondemar was making these ingenuous assertions in London, his colleagues at Paris and at Brussels distinctly and openly declared that there was no authority whatever for them, that the Ambassador had received no such instructions, and that there was no thought of giving up Wesel or any other of the Protestant strongholds captured, whether in the duchies or out of them. And Gondemar, still more to keep that monarch in subjection, had been unusually flattering in regard to the Spanish marriage. “We are in great alarm here,” said the Advocate, “at the tidings that the projected alliance of the Prince of Wales with the daughter of Spain is to be renewed; from which nothing good for his Majesty’s person, his kingdom, nor for our state can be presaged. We live in hope that it will never be.”



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But the other marriage was made. Despite the protest of James, the forebodings of Barneveld, and the mutiny of the princes, the youthful king of France had espoused Anne of Austria early in the year 1616. The British king did his best to keep on terms with France and Spain, and by no means renounced his own hopes. At the same time, while fixed as ever in his approbation of the policy pursued by the Emperor and the League, and as deeply convinced of their artlessness in regard to the duchies, the Protestant princes of Germany, and the Republic, he manifested more cordiality than usual in his relations with the States. Minor questions between the countries he was desirous of arranging—so far as matters of state could be arranged by orations—and among the most pressing of these affairs were the systematic piracy existing and encouraged in English ports, to the great damage of all seafaring nations and to the Hollanders most of all, and the quarrel about the exportation of undyed cloths, which had almost caused a total cessation of the woollen trade between the two countries. The English, to encourage their own artisans, had forbidden the export of undyed cloths, and the Dutch had retorted by prohibiting the import of dyed ones.

The King had good sense enough to see the absurdity of this condition of things, and it will be remembered that Barneveld had frequently urged upon the Dutch ambassador to bring his Majesty's attention to these dangerous disputes. Now that the recovery of the cautionary towns had been so dexterously and amicably accomplished, and at so cheap a rate, it seemed a propitious moment to proceed to a general extinction of what would now be called "burning questions."

James was desirous that new high commissioners might be sent from the States to confer with himself and his ministers upon the subjects just indicated, as well as upon the fishery questions as regarded both Greenland and Scotland, and upon the general affairs of India.

He was convinced, he said to Caron, that the sea had become more and more unsafe and so full of freebooters that the like was never seen or heard of before. It will be remembered that the Advocate had recently called his attention to the fact that the Dutch merchants had lost in two months 800,000 florins' worth of goods by English pirates.

The King now assured the Ambassador of his intention of equipping a fleet out of hand and to send it forth as speedily as possible under command of a distinguished nobleman, who would put his honour and credit in a successful expedition, without any connivance or dissimulation whatever. In order thoroughly to scour these pirates from the seas, he expressed the hope that their Mightinesses the States would do the same either jointly or separately as they thought most advisable. Caron bluntly replied that the States had already ten or twelve war-ships at sea for this purpose, but that unfortunately, instead of finding any help from the English in this regard, they had always found the pirates favoured in his Majesty's ports, especially in Ireland and Wales.



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“Thus they have so increased in numbers,” continued the Ambassador, “that I quite believe what your Majesty says, that not a ship can pass with safety over the seas. More over, your Majesty has been graciously pleased to pardon several of these corsairs, in consequence of which they have become so impudent as to swarm everywhere, even in the river Thames, where they are perpetually pillaging honest merchantmen.”

“I confess,” said the King, “to having pardoned a certain Manning, but this was for the sake of his old father, and I never did anything so unwillingly in my life. But I swear that if it were the best nobleman in England, I would never grant one of them a pardon again.”

Caron expressed his joy at hearing such good intentions on the part of his Majesty, and assured him that the States-General would be equally delighted.

In the course of the summer the Dutch ambassador had many opportunities of seeing the King very confidentially, James having given him the use of the royal park at Bayscot, so that during the royal visits to that place Caron was lodged under his roof.

On the whole, James had much regard and respect for Noel de Caron. He knew him to be able, although he thought him tiresome. It is amusing to observe the King and Ambassador in their utterances to confidential friends each frequently making the charge of tediousness against the other. “Caron’s general education,” said James on one occasion to Cecil, “cannot amend his native German prolixity, for had I not interrupted him, it had been tomorrow morning before I had begun to speak. God preserve me from hearing a cause debated between Don Diego and him! . . . But in truth it is good dealing with so wise and honest a man, although he be somewhat longsome.”

Subsequently James came to Whitehall for a time, and then stopped at Theobalds for a few days on his way to Newmarket, where he stayed until Christmas. At Theobalds he sent again for the Ambassador, saying that at Whitehall he was so broken down with affairs that it would be impossible to live if he stayed there.

He asked if the States were soon to send the commissioners, according to his request, to confer in regard to the cloth-trade. Without interference of the two governments, he said, the matter would never be settled. The merchants of the two countries would never agree except under higher authority.

“I have heard both parties,” he said, “the new and the old companies, two or three times in full council, and tried to bring them to an agreement, but it won’t do. I have heard that My Lords the States have been hearing both sides, English and the Hollanders, over and over again, and that the States have passed a provisional resolution, which however does not suit us. Now it is not reasonable, as we are allies, that our merchants

should be obliged to send their cloths roundabout, not being allowed either to sell them in the United Provinces

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or to pass them through your territories. I wish I could talk with them myself, for I am certain, if they would send some one here, we could make an agreement. It is not necessary that one should take everything from them, or that one should refuse everything to us. I am sure there are people of sense in your assembly who will justify me in favouring my own people so far as I reasonably can, and I know very well that My Lords the States must stand up for their own citizens. If we have been driving this matter to an extreme and see that we are ruining each other, we must take it up again in other fashion, for Yesterday is the preceptor of To-morrow. Let the commissioners come as soon as possible. I know they have complaints to make, and I have my complaints also. Therefore we must listen to each other, for I protest before God that I consider the community of your state with mine to be so entire that, if one goes to perdition, the other must quickly follow it."

Thus spoke James, like a wise and thoughtful sovereign interested in the welfare of his subjects and allies, with enlightened ideas for the time upon public economy. It is difficult, in the man conversing thus amicably and sensibly with the Dutch ambassador, to realise the shrill pedant shrieking against Vorstius, the crapulous comrade of Carrs and Steenies, the fawning solicitor of Spanish marriages, the "pepperer" and hangman of Puritans, the butt and dupe of Gondemar and Spinola.

"I protest," he said further, "that I seek nothing in your state but all possible friendship and good fellowship. My own subjects complain sometimes that your people follow too closely on their heels, and confess that your industry goes far above their own. If this be so, it is a lean kind of reproach; for the English should rather study to follow you. Nevertheless, when industry is directed by malice, each may easily be attempting to snap an advantage from the other. I have sometimes complained of many other things in which my subjects suffered great injustice from you, but all that is excusable. I will willingly listen to your people and grant them to be in the right when they are so. But I will never allow them to be in the right when they mistrust me. If I had been like many other princes, I should never have let the advantage of the cautionary towns slip out of my fingers, but rather by means of them attempted to get even a stronger hold on your country. I have had plenty of warnings from great statesmen in France, Germany, and other nations that I ought to give them up nevermore. Yet you know how frankly and sincerely I acquitted myself in that matter without ever making pretensions upon your state than the pretensions I still make to your friendship and co-operation."



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James, after this allusion to an important transaction to be explained in the next chapter, then made an observation or two on a subject which was rapidly overtopping all others in importance to the States, and his expressions were singularly at variance with his last utterances in that regard. "I tell you," he said, "that you have no right to mistrust me in anything, not even in the matter of religion. I grieve indeed to hear that your religious troubles continue. You know that in the beginning I occupied myself with this affair, but fearing that my course might be misunderstood, and that it might be supposed that I was seeking to exercise authority in your republic, I gave it up, and I will never interfere with the matter again, but will ever pray God that he may give you a happy issue out of these troubles."

Alas! if the King had always kept himself on that height of amiable neutrality, if he had been able to govern himself in the future by these simplest principles of reason and justice, there might have been perhaps a happier issue from the troubles than time was like to reveal.

Once more James referred to the crisis pending in German affairs, and as usual spoke of the Clove and Julich question as if it were a simple matter to be settled by a few strokes of the pen and a pennyworth of sealing-wax, instead of being the opening act in a vast tragedy, of which neither he, nor Carom nor Barneveld, nor Prince Maurice, nor the youthful king of France, nor Philip, nor Matthias, nor any of the men now foremost in the conduct of affairs, was destined to see the end.

The King informed Caron that he had just received most satisfactory assurances from the Spanish ambassador in his last audience at Whitehall.

"He has announced to me on the part of the King his master with great compliments that his Majesty seeks to please me and satisfy me in everything that I could possibly desire of him," said James, rolling over with satisfaction these unctuous phrases as if they really had any meaning whatever.

"His Majesty says further," added the King, "that as he has been at various times admonished by me, and is daily admonished by other princes, that he ought to execute the treaty of Xanten by surrendering the city of Wesel and all other places occupied by Spinola, he now declares himself ready to carry out that treaty in every point. He will accordingly instruct the Archduke to do this, provided the Margrave of Brandenburg and the States will do the same in regard to their captured places. As he understands however that the States have been fortifying Julich even as he might fortify Wesel, he would be glad that no innovation be made before the end of the coming month of March. When this term shall have expired, he will no longer be bound by these offers, but will proceed to fortify Wesel and the other places, and to hold them as he best may for himself. Respect for me has alone induced his Majesty to make this resolution."



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We have already seen that the Spanish ambassador in Paris was at this very time loudly declaring that his colleague in London had no commission whatever to make these propositions. Nor when they were in the slightest degree analysed, did they appear after all to be much better than threats. Not a word was said of guarantees. The names of the two kings were not mentioned. It was nothing but Albert and Spinola then as always, and a recommendation that Brandenburg and the States and all the Protestant princes of Germany should trust to the candour of the Catholic League. Caron pointed out to the King that in these proposals there were no guarantees nor even promises that the fortresses would not be reoccupied at convenience of the Spaniards. He engaged however to report the whole statement to his masters. A few weeks afterwards the Advocate replied in his usual vein, reminding the King through the Ambassador that the Republic feared fraud on the part of the League much more than force. He also laid stress on the affairs of Italy, considering the fate of Savoy and the conflicts in which Venice was engaged as components of a general scheme. The States had been much solicited, as we have seen, to render assistance to the Duke of Savoy, the temporary peace of Asti being already broken, and Barneveld had been unceasing in his efforts to arouse France as well as England to the danger to themselves and to all Christendom should Savoy be crushed. We shall have occasion to see the prominent part reserved to Savoy in the fast opening debate in Germany. Meantime the States had sent one Count of Nassau with a couple of companies to Charles Emmanuel, while another (Ernest) had just gone to Venice at the head of more than three thousand adventurers. With so many powerful armies at their throats, as Barneveld had more than once observed, it was not easy for them to despatch large forces to the other end of Europe, but he justly reminded his allies that the States were now rendering more effective help to the common cause by holding great Spanish armies in check on their own frontier than if they assumed a more aggressive line in the south. The Advocate, like every statesman worthy of the name, was accustomed to sweep the whole horizon in his consideration of public policy, and it will be observed that he always regarded various and apparently distinct and isolated movements in different parts of Europe as parts of one great whole. It is easy enough for us, centuries after the record has been made up, to observe the gradual and, as it were, harmonious manner in which the great Catholic conspiracy against the liberties of Europe was unfolded in an ever widening sphere. But to the eyes of contemporaries all was then misty and chaotic, and it required the keen vision of a sage and a prophet to discern the awful shape which the future might assume. Absorbed in the contemplation of these portentous phenomena, it was not unnatural that the Advocate should attach



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less significance to perturbations nearer home. Devoted as was his life to save the great European cause of Protestantism, in which he considered political and religious liberty bound up, from the absolute extinction with which it was menaced, he neglected too much the furious hatreds growing up among Protestants within the narrow limits of his own province. He was destined one day to be rudely awakened. Meantime he was occupied with organizing a general defence of Italy, Germany, France, and England, as well as the Netherlands, against the designs of Spain and the League.

“We wish to know,” he said in answer to the affectionate messages and fine promises of the King of Spain to James as reported by Caron, “what his Majesty of Great Britain has done, is doing, and is resolved to do for the Duke of Savoy and the Republic of Venice. If they ask you what we are doing, answer that we with our forces and vigour are keeping off from the throats of Savoy and Venice 2000 riders and 10,000 infantry, with which forces, let alone their experience, more would be accomplished than with four times the number of new troops brought to the field in Italy. This is our succour, a great one and a very costly one, for the expense of maintaining our armies to hold the enemy in check here is very great.”

He alluded with his usual respectful and quiet scorn to the arrangements by which James so wilfully allowed himself to be deceived.

“If the Spaniard really leaves the duchies,” he said, “it is a grave matter to decide whether on the one side he is not resolved by that means to win more over us and the Elector of Brandenburg in the debateable land in a few days than he could gain by force in many years, or on the other whether by it he does not intend despatching 1200 or 1500 cavalry and 5000 or 6000 foot, all his most experienced soldiers, from the Netherlands to Italy, in order to give the law at his pleasure to the Duke of Savoy and the Republic of Venice, reserving his attack upon Germany and ourselves to the last. The Spaniards, standing under a monarchical government, can in one hour resolve to seize to-morrow all that they and we may abandon to-day. And they can carry such a resolution into effect at once. Our form of government does not permit this, so that our republic must be conserved by distrust and good garrisons.”

Thus during this long period of half hostilities Barneveld, while sincerely seeking to preserve the peace in Europe, was determined, if possible, that the Republic should maintain the strongest defensive position when the war which he foreboded should actually begin. Maurice and the war party had blamed him for the obstacles which he interposed to the outbreak of hostilities, while the British court, as we have seen, was perpetually urging him to abate from his demands and abandon both the well strengthened fortresses in the duchies and that strong citadel of distrust which in his often



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repeated language he was determined never to surrender. Spinola and the military party of Spain, while preaching peace, had been in truth most anxious for fighting. "The only honour I desire henceforth," said that great commander, "is to give battle to Prince Maurice." The generals were more anxious than the governments to make use of the splendid armies arrayed against each other in such proximity that, the signal for conflict not having been given, it was not uncommon for the soldiers of the respective camps to aid each other in unloading munition waggons, exchanging provisions and other articles of necessity, and performing other small acts of mutual service.

But heavy thunder clouds hanging over the earth so long and so closely might burst into explosion at any moment. Had it not been for the distracted condition of France, the infatuation of the English king, and the astounding inertness of the princes of the German Union, great advantages might have been gained by the Protestant party before the storm should break. But, as the French ambassador at the Hague well observed, "the great Protestant Union of Germany sat with folded arms while Hannibal was at their gate, the princes of which it was composed amusing themselves with staring at each other. It was verifying," he continued, bitterly, "the saying of the Duke of Alva, 'Germany is an old dog which still can bark, but has lost its teeth to bite with.'"

To such imbecility had that noble and gifted people—which had never been organized into a nation since it crushed the Roman empire and established a new civilization on its ruins, and was to wait centuries longer until it should reconstruct itself into a whole—been reduced by subdivision, disintegration, the perpetual dissolvent of religious dispute, and the selfish policy of infinitesimal dynasties.

CHAPTER XII.

James still presses for the Payment of the Dutch Republic's Debt to him—A Compromise effected, with Restitution of the Cautionary Towns—Treaty of Loudun—James's Dream of a Spanish Marriage revives—James visits Scotland—The States-General agree to furnish Money and Troops in fulfilment of the Treaty of 1609—Death of Concini—Villeroy returns to Power.

Besides matters of predestination there were other subjects political and personal which increased the King's jealousy and hatred. The debt of the Republic to the British crown, secured by mortgage of the important sea-ports and fortified towns of Flushing, Brielle, Rammekens, and other strong places, still existed. The possession of those places by England was a constant danger and irritation to the States. It was an axe perpetually held over their heads. It threatened their sovereignty, their very existence. On more than one occasion, in foreign courts, the representatives of the Netherlands had been exposed to the taunt that the Republic was



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after all not an independent power, but a British province. The gibe had always been repelled in a manner becoming the envoys of a proud commonwealth; yet it was sufficiently galling that English garrisons should continue to hold Dutch towns; one of them among the most valuable seaports of the Republic,—the other the very cradle of its independence, the seizure of which in Alva's days had always been reckoned a splendid achievement. Moreover, by the fifth article of the treaty of peace between James and Philip III., although the King had declared himself bound by the treaties made by Elizabeth to deliver up the cautionary towns to no one but the United States, he promised Spain to allow those States a reasonable time to make peace with the Archdukes on satisfactory conditions. Should they refuse to do so, he held himself bound by no obligations to them, and would deal with the cities as he thought proper, and as the Archdukes themselves might deem just.

The King had always been furious at “the huge sum of money to be advanced, nay, given, to the States,” as he phrased it. “It is so far out of all square,” he had said, “as on my conscience I cannot think that ever they craved it ‘animo obtinendi,’ but only by that objection to discourage me from any thought of getting any repayment of my debts from them when they shall be in peace Should I ruin myself for maintaining them? Should I bestow as much on them as cometh to the value of my whole yearly rent? “He had proceeded to say very plainly that, if the States did not make great speed to pay him all his debt so soon as peace was established, he should treat their pretence at independence with contempt, and propose dividing their territory between himself and the King of France.

“If they be so weak as they cannot subsist either in peace or war,” he said, “without I ruin myself for upholding them, in that case surely ‘minus malunv est eligendum,’ the nearest harm is first to be eschewed, a man will leap out of a burning ship and drown himself in the sea; and it is doubtless a farther off harm for me to suffer them to fall again in the hands of Spain, and let God provide for the danger that may with time fall upon me or my posterity than presently to starve myself and mine with putting the meat in their mouth. Nay, rather if they be so weak as they can neither sustain themselves in peace nor war, let them leave this vainglorious thirsting for the title of a free state (which no people are worthy or able to enjoy that cannot stand by themselves like substantives), and ‘dividantur inter nos;’ I mean, let their countries be divided between France and me, otherwise the King of Spain shall be sure to consume us.”

Such were the eyes with which James had always regarded the great commonwealth of which he affected to be the ally, while secretly aspiring to be its sovereign, and such was his capacity to calculate political forces and comprehend coming events.



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Certainly the sword was hanging by a thread. The States had made no peace either with the Archdukes or with Spain. They had made a truce, half the term of which had already run by. At any moment the keys of their very house-door might be placed in the hands of their arch enemy. Treacherous and base as the deed would be, it might be defended by the letter of a treaty in which the Republic had no part; and was there anything too treacherous or too base to be dreaded from James Stuart?

But the States owed the crown of England eight millions of florins, equivalent to about L750,000. Where was this vast sum to be found? It was clearly impossible for the States to beg or to borrow it, although they were nearly as rich as any of the leading powers at that day.

It was the merit of Barneveld, not only that he saw the chance for a good bargain, but that he fully comprehended a great danger. Years long James had pursued the phantom of a Spanish marriage for his son. To achieve this mighty object, he had perverted the whole policy of the realm; he had grovelled to those who despised him, had repaid attempts at wholesale assassination with boundless sycophancy. It is difficult to imagine anything more abject than the attitude of James towards Philip. Prince Henry was dead, but Charles had now become Prince of Wales in his turn, and there was a younger infanta whose hand was not yet disposed of.

So long as the possible prize of a Most Catholic princess was dangling before the eyes of the royal champion of Protestantism, so long there was danger that the Netherlanders might wake up some fine morning and see the flag of Spain waving over the walls of Flushing, Brielle, and Rammekens.

It was in the interest of Spain too that the envoys of James at the Hague were perpetually goading Barneveld to cause the States' troops to be withdrawn from the duchies and the illusory treaty of Xanten to be executed. Instead of an eighth province added to the free Netherlands, the result of such a procedure would have been to place that territory enveloping them in the hands of the enemy; to strengthen and sharpen the claws, as the Advocate had called them, by which Spain was seeking to clutch and to destroy the Republic.

The Advocate steadily refused to countenance such policy in the duchies, and he resolved on a sudden stroke to relieve the Commonwealth from the incubus of the English mortgage.

James was desperately pushed for money. His minions, as insatiable in their demands on English wealth as the parasites who fed on the Queen-Regent were exhaustive of the French exchequer, were greedier than ever now that James, who feared to face a parliament disgusted with the meanness of his policy and depravity of his life, could not be relied upon to minister to their wants.



The Advocate judiciously contrived that the proposal of a compromise should come from the English government. Noel de Caron, the veteran ambassador of the States in London, after receiving certain proposals, offered, under instructions' from Barneveld, to pay L250,000 in full of all demands. It was made to appear that the additional L250,000 was in reality in advance of his instructions. The mouths of the minions watered at the mention of so magnificent a sum of money in one lump.

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The bargain was struck. On the 11th June 1616, Sir Robert Sidney, who had become Lord Lisle, gave over the city of Flushing to the States, represented by the Seignior van Maldere, while Sir Horace Vere placed the important town of Brielle in the hands of the Seignior van Mathenesse. According to the terms of the bargain, the English garrisons were converted into two regiments, respectively to be commanded by Lord Lisle's son, now Sir Robert Sidney, and by Sir Horace Vere, and were to serve the States. Lisle, who had been in the Netherlands since the days of his uncle Leicester and his brother Sir Philip Sidney, now took his final departure for England.

Thus this ancient burthen had been taken off the Republic by the masterly policy of the Advocate. A great source of dread for foreign complication was closed for ever.

The French-Spanish marriages had been made. Henry IV. had not been murdered in vain. Conde and his confederates had issued their manifesto. A crisis came to the States, for Maurice, always inclined to take part for the princes, and urged on by Aerssens, who was inspired by a deadly hatred for the French government ever since they had insisted on his dismissal from his post, and who fed the Stadholder's growing jealousy of the Advocate to the full, was at times almost ready for joining in the conflict. It was most difficult for the States-General, led by Barneveld, to maintain relations of amity with a government controlled by Spain, governed by the Concini's, and wafted to and fro by every wind that blew. Still it was the government, and the States might soon be called upon, in virtue of their treaties with Henry, confirmed by Mary de' Medici, not only to prevent the daily desertion of officers and soldiers of the French regiments to the rebellious party, but to send the regiments themselves to the assistance of the King and Queen.

There could be no doubt that the alliance of the French Huguenots at Grenoble with the princes made the position of the States very critical. Bouillon was loud in his demands upon Maurice and the States for money and reinforcements, but the Prince fortunately understood the character of the Duke and of Conde, and comprehended the nature of French politics too clearly to be led into extremities by passion or by pique. He said loudly to any one that chose to listen:

"It is not necessary to ruin the son in order to avenge the death of the father. That should be left to the son, who alone has legitimate authority to do it." Nothing could be more sensible, and the remark almost indicated a belief on the Prince's part in Mary's complicity in the murder of her husband. Duplessis-Mornay was in despair, and, like all true patriots and men of earnest character, felt it almost an impossibility to choose between the two ignoble parties contending for the possession of France, and both secretly encouraged by France's deadly enemy.



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The Treaty of Loudun followed, a treaty which, said du Maurier, had about as many negotiators as there were individuals interested in the arrangements. The rebels were forgiven, Conde sold himself out for a million and a half livres and the presidency of the council, came to court, and paraded himself in greater pomp and appearance of power than ever. Four months afterwards he was arrested and imprisoned. He submitted like a lamb, and offered to betray his confederates.

King James, faithful to his self-imposed part of mediator-general, which he thought so well became him, had been busy in bringing about this pacification, and had considered it eminently successful. He was now angry at this unexpected result. He admitted that Conde had indulged in certain follies and extravagancies, but these in his opinion all came out of the quiver of the Spaniard, "who was the head of the whole intrigue." He determined to recall Lord Hayes from Madrid and even Sir Thomas Edmonds from Paris, so great was his indignation. But his wrath was likely to cool under the soothing communications of Gondemar, and the rumour of the marriage of the second infanta with the Prince of Wales soon afterwards started into new life. "We hope," wrote Barneveld, "that the alliance of his Highness the Prince of Wales with the daughter of the Spanish king will make no further progress, as it will place us in the deepest embarrassment and pain."

For the reports had been so rife at the English court in regard to this dangerous scheme that Caron had stoutly gone to the King and asked him what he was to think about it. "The King told me," said the Ambassador, "that there was nothing at all in it, nor any appearance that anything ever would come of it. It was true, he said, that on the overtures made to him by the Spanish ambassador he had ordered his minister in Spain to listen to what they had to say, and not to bear himself as if the overtures would be rejected."

The coyness thus affected by James could hardly impose on so astute a diplomatist as Noel de Caron, and the effect produced upon the policy of one of the Republic's chief allies by the Spanish marriages naturally made her statesmen shudder at the prospect of their other powerful friend coming thus under the malign influence of Spain.

"He assured me, however," said the Envoy, "that the Spaniard is not sincere in the matter, and that he has himself become so far alienated from the scheme that we may sleep quietly upon it." And James appeared at that moment so vexed at the turn affairs were taking in France, so wounded in his self-love, and so bewildered by the ubiquitous nature of nets and pitfalls spreading over Europe by Spain, that he really seemed waking from his delusion. Even Caron was staggered? "In all his talk he appears so far estranged from the Spaniard," said he, "that it would seem impossible that he should consider this marriage as good for his state. I have also had other advices on the subject which in the highest degree comfort me. Now your Mightinesses may think whatever you like about it."



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The mood of the King was not likely to last long in so comfortable a state. Meantime he took the part of Conde and the other princes, justified their proceedings to the special envoy sent over by Mary de' Medici, and wished the States to join with him in appealing to that Queen to let the affair, for his sake, pass over once more.

"And now I will tell your Mightinesses," said Caron, reverting once more to the dreaded marriage which occupies so conspicuous a place in the strangely mingled and party-coloured tissue of the history of those days, "what the King has again been telling me about the alliance between his son and the Infanta. He hears from Carleton that you are in very great alarm lest this event may take place. He understands that the special French envoy at the Hague, M. de la None, has been representing to you that the King of Great Britain is following after and begging for the daughter of Spain for his son. He says it is untrue. But it is true that he has been sought and solicited thereto, and that in consequence there have been talks and propositions and rejoinders, but nothing of any moment. As he had already told me not to be alarmed until he should himself give me cause for it, he expressed his amazement that I had not informed your Mightinesses accordingly. He assured me again that he should not proceed further in the business without communicating it to his good friends and neighbours, that he considered My Lords the States as his best friends and allies, who ought therefore to conceive no jealousy in the matter."

This certainly was cold comfort. Caron knew well enough, not a clerk in his office but knew well enough, that James had been pursuing this prize for years. For the King to represent himself as persecuted by Spain to give his son to the Infanta was about as ridiculous as it would have been to pretend that Emperor Matthias was persuading him to let his son-in-law accept the crown of Bohemia. It was admitted that negotiations for the marriage were going on, and the assertion that the Spanish court was more eager for it than the English government was not especially calculated to allay the necessary alarm of the States at such a disaster. Nor was it much more tranquillizing for them to be assured, not that the marriage was off, but that, when it was settled, they, as the King's good friends and neighbours, should have early information of it.

"I told him," said the Ambassador, "that undoubtedly this matter was of the highest importance to your Mightinesses, for it was not good for us to sit between two kingdoms both so nearly allied with the Spanish monarch, considering the pretensions he still maintained to sovereignty over us. Although his Majesty might not now be willing to treat to our prejudice, yet the affair itself in the sequence of time must of necessity injure our commonwealth. We hoped therefore that it would never come to pass."

Caron added that Ambassador Digby was just going to Spain on extraordinary mission in regard to this affair, and that eight or ten gentlemen of the council had been deputed to confer with his Majesty about it. He was still inclined to believe that the whole negotiation would blow over, the King continuing to exhort him not to be alarmed, and

assuring him that there were many occasions moving princes to treat of great affairs although often without any effective issue.

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At that moment too the King was in a state of vehement wrath with the Spanish Netherlands on account of a stinging libel against himself, “an infamous and wonderfully scandalous pamphlet,” as he termed it, called ‘Corona Regis’, recently published at Louvain. He had sent Sir John Bennet as special ambassador to the Archdukes to demand from them justice and condign and public chastisement on the author of the work—a rector Putianus as he believed, successor of Justus Lipsius in his professorship at Louvain—and upon the printer, one Flaminius. Delays and excuses having followed instead of the punishment originally demanded, James had now instructed his special envoy in case of further delay or evasion to repudiate all further friendship or intercourse with the Archduke, to ratify the recall of his minister-resident Trumbull, and in effect to announce formal hostilities.

“The King takes the thing wonderfully to heart,” said Caron.

James in effect hated to be made ridiculous, and we shall have occasion to see how important a part other publications which he deemed detrimental to the divinity of his person were to play in these affairs.

Meantime it was characteristic of this sovereign that—while ready to talk of war with Philip’s brother-in-law for a pamphlet, while seeking the hand of Philip’s daughter for his son—he was determined at the very moment when the world was on fire to take himself, the heaven-born extinguisher of all political conflagrations, away from affairs and to seek the solace of along holiday in Scotland. His counsellors persistently and vehemently implored him to defer that journey until the following year at least, all the neighbouring nations being now in a state of war and civil commotion. But it was in vain. He refused to listen to them for a moment, and started for Scotland before the middle of March.

Conde, who had kept France in a turmoil, had sought aid alternately from the Calvinists at Grenoble and the Jesuits in Rome, from Spain and from the Netherlands, from the Pope and from Maurice of Nassau, had thus been caged at last. But there was little gained. There was one troublesome but incompetent rebel the less, but there was no king in the land. He who doubts the influence of the individual upon the fate of a country and upon his times through long passages of history may explain the difference between France of 1609, with a martial king aided by great statesmen at its head, with an exchequer overflowing with revenue hoarded for a great cause—and that cause an attempt at least to pacificate Christendom and avert a universal and almost infinite conflict now already opening—and the France of 1617, with its treasures already squandered among ignoble and ruffianly favourites, with every office in state, church, court, and magistracy sold to the highest bidder, with a queen governed by an Italian adventurer who was governed by Spain, and with a little king who had but lately expressed triumph at his confirmation because now he should no longer be whipped, and who was just married to a daughter of the hereditary and inevitable foe of France.

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To contemplate this dreary interlude in the history of a powerful state is to shiver at the depths of inanity and crime to which mankind can at once descend. What need to pursue the barren, vulgar, and often repeated chronicle? France pulled at by scarcely concealed strings and made to perform fantastic tricks according as its various puppets were swerved this way or that by supple bands at Madrid and Rome is not a refreshing spectacle. The States-General at last, after an agitated discussion, agreed in fulfilment of the treaty of 1609 to send 4000 men, 2000 being French, to help the King against the princes still in rebellion. But the contest was a most bitter one, and the Advocate had a difficult part to play between a government and a rebellion, each more despicable than the other. Still Louis XIII. and his mother were the legitimate government even if ruled by Concini. The words of the treaty made with Henry IV. were plain, and the ambassadors of his son had summoned the States to fulfil it. But many impediments were placed in the path of obvious duty by the party led by Francis Aerssens.

"I know very well," said the Advocate to ex-Burgomaster Hooft of Amsterdam, father of the great historian, sending him confidentially a copy of the proposals made by the French ambassadors, "that many in this country are striving hard to make us refuse to the King the aid demanded, notwithstanding that we are bound to do it by the pledges given not only by the States-General but by each province in particular. By this no one will profit but the Spaniard, who unquestionably will offer much, aye, very much, to bring about dissensions between France and us, from which I foresee great damage, inconvenience, and difficulties for the whole commonwealth and for Holland especially. This province has already advanced 1,000,000 florins to the general government on the money still due from France, which will all be lost in case the subsidy should be withheld, besides other evils which cannot be trusted to the pen."

On the same day on which it had been decided at the Hague to send the troops, a captain of guards came to the aid of the poor little king and shot Concini dead one fine spring morning on the bridge of the Louvre. "By order of the King," said Vitry. His body was burned before the statue of Henry IV. by the people delirious with joy. "L'hanno ammazzato" was shouted to his wife, Eleanora Galigai, the supposed sorceress. They were the words in which Concini had communicated to the Queen the murder of her husband seven years before. Eleanora, too, was burned after having been beheaded. Thus the Marshal d'Ancre and wife ceased to reign in France.

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The officers of the French regiments at the Hague danced for joy on the Vyverberg when the news arrived there. The States were relieved from an immense embarrassment, and the Advocate was rewarded for having pursued what was after all the only practicable policy. “Do your best,” said he to Langerac, “to accommodate differences so far as consistent with the conservation of the King’s authority. We hope the princes will submit themselves now that the ‘lapis offensionis,’ according to their pretence, is got rid of. We received a letter from them to-day sealed with the King’s arms, with the circumscription ‘Periclitante Regno, Regis vita et Regia familia.’”

The shooting of Concini seemed almost to convert the little king into a hero. Everyone in the Netherlands, without distinction of party, was delighted with the achievement. “I cannot represent to the King,” wrote du Maurier to Villeroy, “one thousandth part of the joy of all these people who are exalting him to heaven for having delivered the earth from this miserable burthen. I can’t tell you in what execration this public pest was held. His Majesty has not less won the hearts of this state than if he had gained a great victory over the Spaniards. You would not believe it, and yet it is true, that never were the name and reputation of the late king in greater reverence than those of our reigning king at this moment.”

Truly here was glory cheaply earned. The fame of Henry the Great, after a long career of brilliant deeds of arms, high statesmanship, and twenty years of bountiful friendship for the States, was already equalled by that of Louis XIII., who had tremblingly acquiesced in the summary execution of an odious adventurer—his own possible father—and who never had done anything else but feed his canary birds.

As for Villeroy himself, the Ambassador wrote that he could not find portraits enough of him to furnish those who were asking for them since his return to power.

Barneveld had been right in so often instructing Langerac to “caress the old gentleman.”

ETEXT EDITOR’S BOOKMARKS:

And give advice. Of that, although always a spendthrift
Casual outbursts of eternal friendship
Changed his positions and contradicted himself day by day
Conciliation when war of extermination was intended
Considered it his special mission in the world to mediate
Denounced as an obstacle to peace
France was mourning Henry and waiting for Richelieu
Hardly a sound Protestant policy anywhere but in Holland
History has not too many really important and emblematic men
I hope and I fear
King who thought it furious madness to resist the enemy



Mockery of negotiation in which nothing could be negotiated
More apprehension of fraud than of force
Opening an abyss between government and people
Successful in this step, he is ready for greater ones
That he tries to lay the fault on us is pure malice
The magnitude of this wonderful sovereign's littleness
This wonderful sovereign's littleness oppresses the imagination
Wise and honest a man, although he be somewhat longsome
Yesterday is the preceptor of To-morrow

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