

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1609-10 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, 1609-10 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 86

The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v1, 1609

PREFACE:

These volumes make a separate work in themselves. They form also the natural sequel to the other histories already published by the Author, as well as the necessary introduction to that concluding portion of his labours which he has always desired to lay before the public; a History of the Thirty Years' War.

For the two great wars which successively established the independence of Holland and the disintegration of Germany are in reality but one; a prolonged Tragedy of Eighty Years. The brief pause, which in the Netherlands was known as the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain, was precisely the epoch in which the elements were slowly and certainly gathering for the renewal over nearly the whole surface of civilized Europe of that immense conflict which for more than forty years had been raging within the narrow precincts of the Netherlands.

The causes and character of the two wars were essentially the same. There were many changes of persons and of scenery during a struggle which lasted for nearly three generations of mankind; yet a natural succession both of actors, motives, and events will be observed from the beginning to the close.

The designs of Charles V. to establish universal monarchy, which he had passionately followed for a lifetime through a series of colossal crimes against humanity and of private misdeeds against individuals, such as it has rarely been permitted to a single despot to perpetrate, had been baffled at last. Disappointed, broken, but even to our own generation never completely unveiled, the tyrant had withdrawn from the stage of human affairs, leaving his son to carry on the great conspiracy against Human Right, independence of nations, liberty of thought, and equality of religions, with the additional vigour which sprang from intensity of conviction.

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For Philip possessed at least that superiority over his father that he was a sincere bigot. In the narrow and gloomy depths of his soul he had doubtless persuaded himself that it was necessary for the redemption of the human species that the empire of the world should be vested in his hands, that Protestantism in all its forms should be extirpated as a malignant disease, and that to behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics who opposed the decree of himself and the Holy Church was the highest virtue by which he could merit Heaven.

The father would have permitted Protestantism if Protestantism would have submitted to universal monarchy. There would have been small difficulty in the early part of his reign in effecting a compromise between Rome and Augsburg, had the gigantic secular ambition of Charles not preferred to weaken the Church and to convert conscientious religious reform into political mutiny; a crime against him who claimed the sovereignty of Christendom.

The materials for the true history of that reign lie in the Archives of Spain, Austria, Rome, Venice, and the Netherlands, and in many other places. When out of them one day a complete and authentic narrative shall have been constructed, it will be seen how completely the policy of Charles foreshadowed and necessitated that of Philip, how logically, under the successors of Philip, the Austrian dream of universal empire ended in the shattering, in the minute subdivision, and the reduction to a long impotence of that Germanic Empire which had really belonged to Charles.

Unfortunately the great Republic which, notwithstanding the aid of England on the one side and of France on the other, had withstood almost single-handed the onslaughts of Spain, now allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body at the first epoch of peace, although it had successfully exorcised the evil spirit during the long and terrible war.

There can be no doubt whatever that the discords within the interior of the Dutch Republic during the period of the Truce, and their tragic catastrophe, had weakened her purpose and partially paralysed her arm. When the noble Commonwealth went forward to the renewed and general conflict which succeeded the concentrated one in which it had been the chief actor, the effect of those misspent twelve years became apparent.

Indeed the real continuity of the war was scarcely broken by the fitful, armistice. The death of John of Cleve, an event almost simultaneous with the conclusion of the Truce, seemed to those gifted with political vision the necessary precursor of a new and more general war.

The secret correspondence of Barneveld shows the almost prophetic accuracy with which he indicated the course of events and the approach of an almost universal conflict, while that tragedy was still in the future, and was to be enacted after he had been laid in his bloody grave. No man then living was so accustomed as he was to

sweep the political horizon, and to estimate the signs and portents of the times. No statesman was left in Europe during the epoch of the Twelve Years' Truce to compare with him in experience, breadth of vision, political tact, or administrative sagacity.

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Imbued with the grand traditions and familiar with the great personages of a most heroic epoch; the trusted friend or respected counsellor of William the Silent, Henry IV., Elizabeth, and the sages and soldiers on whom they leaned; having been employed during an already long lifetime in the administration of greatest affairs, he stood alone after the deaths of Henry of France and the second Cecil, and the retirement of Sully, among the natural leaders of mankind.

To the England of Elizabeth, of Walsingham, Raleigh, and the Cecils, had succeeded the Great Britain of James, with his Carrs and Carletons, Nauntons, Lakes, and Winwoods. France, widowed of Henry and waiting for Richelieu, lay in the clutches of Concini's, Epernons, and Bouillons, bound hand and foot to Spain. Germany, falling from Rudolph to Matthias, saw Styrian Ferdinand in the background ready to shatter the fabric of a hundred years of attempted Reformation. In the Republic of the Netherlands were the great soldier and the only remaining statesman of the age. At a moment when the breathing space had been agreed upon before the conflict should be renewed; on a wider field than ever, between Spanish-Austrian world-empire and independence of the nations; between the ancient and only Church and the spirit of religious Equality; between popular Right and royal and sacerdotal Despotism; it would have been desirable that the soldier and the statesman should stand side by side, and that the fortunate Confederacy, gifted with two such champions and placed by its own achievements at the very head of the great party of resistance, should be true to herself.

These volumes contain a slight and rapid sketch of Barneveld's career up to the point at which the Twelve Years' Truce with Spain was signed in the year 1609. In previous works the Author has attempted to assign the great Advocate's place as part and parcel of history during the continuance of the War for Independence. During the period of the Truce he will be found the central figure. The history of Europe, especially of the Netherlands, Britain, France, and Germany, cannot be thoroughly appreciated without a knowledge of the designs, the labours, and the fate of Barneveld.

The materials for estimating his character and judging his judges lie in the national archives of the land of which he was so long the foremost citizen. But they have not long been accessible. The letters, state papers, and other documents remain unprinted, and have rarely been read. M. van Deventer has published three most interesting volumes of the Advocate's correspondence, but they reach only to the beginning of 1609. He has suspended his labours exactly at the moment when these volumes begin. I have carefully studied however nearly the whole of that correspondence, besides a mass of other papers. The labour is not light, for the handwriting of the great Advocate is perhaps the worst that ever existed, and the papers, although kept in

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the admirable order which distinguishes the Archives of the Hague, have passed through many hands at former epochs before reaching their natural destination in the treasure-house of the nation. Especially the documents connected with the famous trial were for a long time hidden from mortal view, for Barneveld's judges had bound themselves by oath to bury the proceedings out of sight. And the concealment lasted for centuries. Very recently a small portion of those papers has been published by the Historical Society of Utrecht. The "Verhooren," or Interrogatories of the Judges, and the replies of Barneveld, have thus been laid before the reading public of Holland, while within the last two years the distinguished and learned historian, Professor Fruin, has edited the "Verhooren" of Hugo Grotius.

But papers like these, important as they are, make but a slender portion of the material out of which a judgment concerning these grave events can be constructed. I do not therefore offer an apology for the somewhat copious extracts which I have translated and given in these volumes from the correspondence of Barneveld and from other manuscripts of great value—most of them in the Royal Archives of Holland and Belgium—which are unknown to the public.

I have avoided as much as possible any dealings with the theological controversies so closely connected with the events which I have attempted to describe. This work aims at being a political study. The subject is full of lessons, examples, and warnings for the inhabitants of all free states. Especially now that the republican system of government is undergoing a series of experiments with more or less success in one hemisphere—while in our own land it is consolidated, powerful, and unchallenged—will the conflicts between the spirits of national centralization and of provincial sovereignty, and the struggle between the church, the sword, and the magistracy for supremacy in a free commonwealth, as revealed in the first considerable republic of modern history, be found suggestive of deep reflection.

Those who look in this work for a history of the Synod of Dordrecht will look in vain. The Author has neither wish nor power to grapple with the mysteries and passions which at that epoch possessed so many souls. The Assembly marks a political period. Its political aspects have been anxiously examined, but beyond the ecclesiastical threshold there has been no attempt to penetrate.

It was necessary for my purpose to describe in some detail the relations of Henry IV. with the Dutch Republic during the last and most pregnant year of his life, which makes the first of the present history. These relations are of European importance, and the materials for appreciating them are of unexpected richness, in the Dutch and Belgian Archives.

Especially the secret correspondence, now at the Hague, of that very able diplomatist Francis Aerssens with Barneveld during the years 1609, 1610, and 1611, together with many papers at Brussels, are full of vital importance.

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They throw much light both on the vast designs which filled the brain of Henry at this fatal epoch and on his extraordinary infatuation for the young Princess of Conde by which they were traversed, and which was productive of such widespread political and tragical results. This episode forms a necessary portion of my theme, and has therefore been set forth from original sources.

I am under renewed obligations to my friend M. Gachard, the eminent publicist and archivist of Belgium, for his constant and friendly offices to me (which I have so often experienced before), while studying the documents under his charge relating to this epoch; especially the secret correspondence of Archduke Albert with Philip III, and his ministers, and with Pecquius, the Archduke's agent at Paris.

It is also a great pleasure to acknowledge the unceasing courtesy and zealous aid rendered me during my renewed studies in the Archives at the Hague—lasting through nearly two years—by the Chief Archivist, M. van den Berg, and the gentlemen connected with that institution, especially M. de Jonghe and M. Hingman, without whose aid it would have been difficult for me to decipher and to procure copies of the almost illegible holographs of Barneveld.

I must also thank M. van Deventer for communicating copies of some curious manuscripts relating to my subject, some from private archives in Holland, and others from those of Simancas.

A single word only remains to be said in regard to the name of the statesman whose career I have undertaken to describe.

His proper appellation and that by which he has always been known in his own country is Oldenbarneveld, but in his lifetime and always in history from that time to this he has been called Barneveld in English as well as French, and this transformation, as it were, of the name has become so settled a matter that after some hesitation it has been adopted in the present work.

The Author would take this opportunity of expressing his gratitude for the indulgence with which his former attempts to illustrate an important period of European history have been received by the public, and his anxious hope that the present volumes may be thought worthy of attention. They are the result at least of severe and conscientious labour at the original sources of history, but the subject is so complicated and difficult that it may well be feared that the ability to depict and unravel is unequal to the earnestness with which the attempt has been made.

London, 1873.

The Life and Death of John of Barneveld, v1, 1609

CHAPTER I.

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John of Barneveld the Founder of the Commonwealth of the United Provinces—Maurice of Orange Stadholder, but Servant to the States-General—The Union of Utrecht maintained—Barneveld makes a Compromise between Civil Functionaries and Church Officials— Embassies to France, England, and to Venice—the Appointment of Arminius to be Professor of Theology at Leyden creates Dissension— The Catholic League opposed by the Great Protestant Union—Death of the Duke of Cleve and Struggle for his Succession—The Elector of Brandenburg and Palatine of Neuburg hold the Duchies at Barneveld's Advice against the Emperor, though having Rival Claims themselves— Negotiations with the King of France—He becomes the Ally of the States-General to Protect the Possessory Princes, and prepares for war.

I propose to retrace the history of a great statesman's career. That statesman's name, but for the dark and tragic scenes with which it was ultimately associated, might after the lapse of two centuries and a half have faded into comparative oblivion, so impersonal and shadowy his presence would have seemed upon the great European theatre where he was so long a chief actor, and where his efforts and his achievements were foremost among those productive of long enduring and widespread results.

There is no doubt whatever that John of Barneveld, Advocate and Seal Keeper of the little province of Holland during forty years of as troubled and fertile an epoch as any in human history, was second to none of his contemporary statesmen. Yet the singular constitution and historical position of the republic whose destinies he guided and the peculiar and abnormal office which he held combined to cast a veil over his individuality. The ever-teeming brain, the restless almost omnipresent hand, the fertile pen, the eloquent and ready tongue, were seen, heard, and obeyed by the great European public, by the monarchs, statesmen, and warriors of the time, at many critical moments of history, but it was not John of Barneveld that spoke to the world. Those "high and puissant Lords my masters the States-General" personified the young but already majestic republic. Dignified, draped, and concealed by that overshadowing title the informing and master spirit performed its never ending task.

Those who study the enormous masses of original papers in the archives of the country will be amazed to find how the penmanship, most difficult to decipher, of the Advocate meets them at every turn. Letters to monarchs, generals, ambassadors, resolutions of councils, of sovereign assemblies, of trading corporations, of great Indian companies, legal and historical disquisitions of great depth and length on questions agitating Europe, constitutional arguments, drafts of treaties among the leading powers of the world, instructions to great commissions, plans for European campaigns, vast combinations covering the world, alliances of empire, scientific expeditions and discoveries—papers such as these covered now with the satirical dust of centuries, written in the small, crabbed, exasperating characters which make Barneveld's handwriting almost cryptographic, were once, when fairly engrossed and sealed with the great seal of the haughty burgher-aristocracy, the documents which occupied the close attention of the cabinets of Christendom.

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It is not unfrequent to find four or five important despatches compressed almost in miniature upon one sheet of gigantic foolscap. It is also curious to find each one of these rough drafts conscientiously beginning in the statesman's own hand with the elaborate phrases of compliment belonging to the epoch such as "Noble, strenuous, severe, highly honourable, very learned, very discreet, and very wise masters," and ending with "May the Lord God Almighty eternally preserve you and hold you in His holy keeping in this world and for ever"—decorations which one might have thought it safe to leave to be filled in by the secretary or copying clerk.

Thus there have been few men at any period whose lives have been more closely identical than his with a national history. There have been few great men in any history whose names have become less familiar to the world, and lived less in the mouths of posterity. Yet there can be no doubt that if William the Silent was the founder of the independence of the United Provinces Barneveld was the founder of the Commonwealth itself. He had never the opportunity, perhaps he might have never had the capacity, to make such prodigious sacrifices in the cause of country as the great prince had done. But he had served his country strenuously from youth to old age with an abiding sense of duty, a steadiness of purpose, a broad vision, a firm grasp, and an opulence of resource such as not one of his compatriots could even pretend to rival.

Had that country of which he was so long the first citizen maintained until our own day the same proportionate position among the empires of Christendom as it held in the seventeenth century, the name of John of Barneveld would have perhaps been as familiar to all men as it is at this moment to nearly every inhabitant of the Netherlands. Even now political passion is almost as ready to flame forth either in ardent affection or enthusiastic hatred as if two centuries and a half had not elapsed since his death. His name is so typical of a party, a polity, and a faith, so indelibly associated with a great historical cataclysm, as to render it difficult even for the grave, the conscientious, the learned, the patriotic of his own compatriots to speak of him with absolute impartiality.

A foreigner who loves and admires all that is great and noble in the history of that famous republic and can have no hereditary bias as to its ecclesiastical or political theories may at least attempt the task with comparative coldness, although conscious of inability to do thorough justice to a most complex subject.

In former publications devoted to Netherland history I have endeavoured to trace the course of events of which the life and works of the Advocate were a vital ingredient down to the period when Spain after more than forty years of hard fighting virtually acknowledged the independence of the Republic and concluded with her a truce of twelve years.

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That convention was signed in the spring of 1609. The ten ensuing years in Europe were comparatively tranquil, but they were scarcely to be numbered among the full and fruitful sheaves of a pacific epoch. It was a pause, a breathing spell during which the sulphurous clouds which had made the atmosphere of Christendom poisonous for nearly half a century had sullenly rolled away, while at every point of the horizon they were seen massing themselves anew in portentous and ever accumulating strength. At any moment the faint and sickly sunshine in which poor exhausted Humanity was essaying a feeble twitter of hope as it plumed itself for a peaceful flight might be again obscured. To us of a remote posterity the momentary division of epochs seems hardly discernible. So rapidly did that fight of Demons which we call the Thirty Years' War tread on the heels of the forty years' struggle for Dutch Independence which had just been suspended that we are accustomed to think and speak of the Eighty Years' War as one pure, perfect, sanguinary whole.

And indeed the Tragedy which was soon to sweep solemnly across Europe was foreshadowed in the first fitful years of peace. The throb of the elementary forces already shook the soil of Christendom. The fantastic but most significant conflict in the territories of the dead Duke of Clove reflected the distant and gigantic war as in a mirage. It will be necessary to direct the reader's attention at the proper moment to that episode, for it was one in which the beneficent sagacity of Barneveld was conspicuously exerted in the cause of peace and conservation. Meantime it is not agreeable to reflect that this brief period of nominal and armed peace which the Republic had conquered after nearly two generations of warfare was employed by her in tearing her own flesh. The heroic sword which had achieved such triumphs in the cause of freedom could have been better employed than in an attempt at political suicide.

In a picture of the last decade of Barneveld's eventful life his personality may come more distinctly forward perhaps than in previous epochs. It will however be difficult to disentangle a single thread from the great historical tapestry of the Republic and of Europe in which his life and achievements are interwoven. He was a public man in the fullest sense of the word, and without his presence and influence the record of Holland, France, Spain, Britain, and Germany might have been essentially modified.

The Republic was so integral a part of that system which divided Europe into two great hostile camps according to creeds rather than frontiers that the history of its foremost citizen touches at every point the general history of Christendom.

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The great peculiarity of the Dutch constitution at this epoch was that no principle was absolutely settled. In throwing off a foreign tyranny and successfully vindicating national independence the burghers and nobles had not had leisure to lay down any organic law. Nor had the day for profound investigation of the political or social contract arrived. Men dealt almost exclusively with facts, and when the facts arranged themselves illogically and incoherently the mischief was grave and difficult to remedy. It is not a trifling inconvenience for an organized commonwealth to be in doubt as to where, in whom, and of what nature is its sovereignty. Yet this was precisely the condition of the United Netherlands. To the eternal world so dazzling were the reputation and the achievements of their great captain that he was looked upon by many as the legitimate chief of the state and doubtless friendly monarchs would have cordially welcomed him into their brotherhood.

During the war he had been surrounded by almost royal state. Two hundred officers lived daily at his table. Great nobles and scions of sovereign houses were his pupils or satellites. The splendour of military despotism and the awe inspired by his unquestioned supremacy in what was deemed the greatest of all sciences invested the person of Maurice of Nassau with a grandeur which many a crowned potentate might envy. His ample appointments united with the spoils of war provided him with almost royal revenues, even before the death of his elder brother Philip William had placed in his hands the principality and wealthy possessions of Orange. Hating contradiction, arbitrary by instinct and by military habit, impatient of criticism, and having long acknowledged no master in the chief business of state, he found himself at the conclusion of the truce with his great occupation gone, and, although generously provided for by the treasury of the Republic, yet with an income proportionately limited.

Politics and theology were fields in which he had hardly served an apprenticeship, and it was possible that when he should step forward as a master in those complicated and difficult pursuits, soon to absorb the attention of the Commonwealth and the world, it might appear that war was not the only science that required serious preliminary studies.

Meantime he found himself not a king, not the master of a nominal republic, but the servant of the States-General, and the limited stadholder of five out of seven separate provinces.

And the States-General were virtually John of Barneveld. Could antagonism be more sharply defined? Jealousy, that potent principle which controls the regular movements and accounts for the aberrations of humanity in widest spheres as well as narrowest circles far more generally and conclusively than philosophers or historians have been willing to admit, began forthwith to manifest its subtle and irresistible influence.

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And there were not to be wanting acute and dangerous schemers who saw their profit in augmenting its intensity.

The Seven Provinces, when the truce of twelve years had been signed, were neither exhausted nor impoverished. Yet they had just emerged from a forty years' conflict such as no people in human history had ever waged against a foreign tyranny. They had need to repose and recruit, but they stood among the foremost great powers of the day. It is not easy in imagination to thrust back the present leading empires of the earth into the contracted spheres of their not remote past. But to feel how a little confederacy of seven provinces loosely tied together by an ill-defined treaty could hold so prominent and often so controlling a place in the European system of the seventeenth century, we must remember that there was then no Germany, no Russia, no Italy, no United States of America, scarcely even a Great Britain in the sense which belongs to that mighty empire now.

France, Spain, England, the Pope, and the Emperor were the leading powers with which the Netherlands were daily called on to solve great problems and try conclusions; the study of political international equilibrium, now rapidly and perhaps fortunately becoming one of the lost arts, being then the most indispensable duty of kings and statesmen.

Spain and France, which had long since achieved for themselves the political union of many independent kingdoms and states into which they had been divided were the most considerable powers and of necessity rivals. Spain, or rather the House of Austria divided into its two great branches, still pursued its persistent and by no means fantastic dream of universal monarchy. Both Spain and France could dispose of somewhat larger resources absolutely, although not relatively, than the Seven Provinces, while at least trebling them in population. The yearly revenue of Spain after deduction of its pledged resources was perhaps equal to a million sterling, and that of France with the same reservation was about as much. England had hardly been able to levy and make up a yearly income of more than £600,000 or £700,000 at the end of Elizabeth's reign or in the first years of James, while the Netherlands had often proved themselves capable of furnishing annually ten or twelve millions of florins, which would be the equivalent of nearly a million sterling.

The yearly revenues of the whole monarchy of the Imperial house of Habsburg can scarcely be stated at a higher figure than £350,000.

Thus the political game—for it was a game—was by no means a desperate one for the Netherlands, nor the resources of the various players so unequally distributed as at first sight it might appear.

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The emancipation of the Provinces from the grasp of Spain and the establishment by them of a commonwealth, for that epoch a very free one, and which contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty, religious, political, and commercial, than had yet been known, was already one of the most considerable results of the Reformation. The probability of its continued and independent existence was hardly believed in by potentate or statesman outside its own borders, and had not been very long a decided article of faith even within them. The knotty problem of an acknowledgment of that existence, the admission of the new-born state into the family of nations, and a temporary peace guaranteed by two great powers, had at last been solved mainly by the genius of Barneveld working amid many disadvantages and against great obstructions. The truce had been made, and it now needed all the skill, coolness, and courage of a practical and original statesman to conduct the affairs of the Confederacy. The troubled epoch of peace was even now heaving with warlike emotions, and was hardly less stormy than the war which had just been suspended.

The Republic was like a raft loosely strung together, floating almost on a level of the ocean, and often half submerged, but freighted with inestimable treasures for itself and the world. It needed an unsleeping eye and a powerful brain to conduct her over the quicksands and through the whirlpools of an unmapped and intricate course.

The sovereignty of the country so far as its nature could be satisfactorily analysed seemed to be scattered through, and inherent in each one of, the multitudinous boards of magistracy—close corporations, self-elected—by which every city was governed. Nothing could be more preposterous. Practically, however, these boards were represented by deputies in each of the seven provincial assemblies, and these again sent councillors from among their number to the general assembly which was that of their High Mightinesses the Lords States-General.

The Province of Holland, being richer and more powerful than all its six sisters combined, was not unwilling to impose a supremacy which on the whole was practically conceded by the rest. Thus the Union of Utrecht established in 1579 was maintained for want of anything better as the foundation of the Commonwealth.

The Advocate and Keeper of the Great Seal of that province was therefore virtually prime minister, president, attorney-general, finance minister, and minister of foreign affairs of the whole republic. This was Barneveld's position. He took the lead in the deliberations both of the States of Holland and the States-General, moved resolutions, advocated great measures of state, gave heed to their execution, collected the votes, summed up the proceedings, corresponded with and instructed ambassadors, received and negotiated with foreign ministers, besides directing and holding in his hands the various threads of the home policy and the rapidly growing colonial system of the Republic.

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All this work Barneveld had been doing for thirty years.

The Reformation was by no means assured even in the lands where it had at first made the most essential progress. But the existence of the new commonwealth depended on the success of that great movement which had called it into being. Losing ground in France, fluctuating in England, Protestantism was apparently more triumphant in vast territories where the ancient Church was one day to recover its mastery. Of the population of Bohemia, there were perhaps ten Protestants to one Papist, while in the United Netherlands at least one-third of the people were still attached to the Catholic faith.

The great religious struggle in Bohemia and other dominions of the Habsburg family was fast leading to a war of which no man could even imagine the horrors or foresee the vast extent. The Catholic League and the Protestant Union were slowly arranging Europe into two mighty confederacies.

They were to give employment year after year to millions of mercenary freebooters who were to practise murder, pillage, and every imaginable and unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry that could occupy mankind. The Holy Empire which so ingeniously combined the worst characteristics of despotism and republicanism kept all Germany and half Europe in the turmoil of a perpetual presidential election. A theatre where trivial personages and graceless actors performed a tragi-comedy of mingled folly, intrigue, and crime, and where earnestness and vigour were destined to be constantly baffled, now offered the principal stage for the entertainment and excitement of Christendom.

There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese. The men who sat on the thrones in Madrid, Vienna, London, would have lived and died unknown but for the crowns they wore, and while there were plenty of bustling politicians here and there in Christendom, there were not many statesmen.

Among them there was no stronger man than John of Barneveld, and no man had harder or more complicated work to do.

Born in Amersfoort in 1547, of the ancient and knightly house of Oldenbarneveltdt, of patrician blood through all his ancestors both male and female, he was not the heir to large possessions, and was a diligent student and hardworking man from youth upward. He was not wont to boast of his pedigree until in later life, being assailed by vilest slander, all his kindred nearest or most remote being charged with every possible and unmentionable crime, and himself stigmatized as sprung from the lowest kennels of humanity—as if thereby his private character and public services could be more legitimately blackened—he was stung into exhibiting to the world the purity and antiquity of his escutcheon, and a roll of respectably placed, well estated, and authentically

noble, if not at all illustrious, forefathers in his country's records of the previous centuries.

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Without an ancestor at his back he might have valued himself still more highly on the commanding place he held in the world by right divine of intellect, but as the father of lies seemed to have kept his creatures so busy with the Barneveld genealogy, it was not amiss for the statesman once for all to make the truth known.

His studies in the universities of Holland, France, Italy, and Germany had been profound. At an early age he was one of the first civilians of the time. His manhood being almost contemporary with the great war of freedom, he had served as a volunteer and at his own expense through several campaigns, having nearly lost his life in the disastrous attempt to relieve the siege of Haarlem, and having been so disabled by sickness and exposure at the heroic leaguer of Leyden as to have been deprived of the joy of witnessing its triumphant conclusion.

Successfully practising his profession afterwards before the tribunals of Holland, he had been called at the comparatively early age of twenty-nine to the important post of Chief Pensionary of Rotterdam. So long as William the Silent lived, that great prince was all in all to his country, and Barneveld was proud and happy to be among the most trusted and assiduous of his counsellors.

When the assassination of William seemed for an instant to strike the Republic with paralysis, Barneveld was foremost among the statesmen of Holland to spring forward and help to inspire it with renewed energy.

The almost completed negotiations for conferring the sovereignty, not of the Confederacy, but of the Province of Holland, upon the Prince had been abruptly brought to an end by his death. To confer that sovereign countship on his son Maurice, then a lad of eighteen and a student at Leyden, would have seemed to many at so terrible a crisis an act of madness, although Barneveld had been willing to suggest and promote the scheme. The confederates under his guidance soon hastened however to lay the sovereignty, and if not the sovereignty, the protectorship, of all the provinces at the feet first of England and then of France.

Barneveld was at the head of the embassy, and indeed was the indispensable head of all important, embassies to each of those two countries throughout all this portion of his career. Both monarchs refused, almost spurned, the offered crown in which was involved a war with the greatest power in the world, with no compensating dignity or benefit, as it was thought, beside.

Then Elizabeth, although declining the sovereignty, promised assistance and sent the Earl of Leicester as governor-general at the head of a contingent of English troops. Precisely to prevent the consolidation thus threatened of the Provinces into one union, a measure which had been attempted more than once in the Burgundian epoch, and always successfully resisted by the spirit of provincial separatism, Barneveld now proposed and carried the appointment of Maurice of

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Nassau to the stadholdership of Holland. This was done against great opposition and amid fierce debate. Soon afterwards Barneveld was vehemently urged by the nobles and regents of the cities of Holland to accept the post of Advocate of that province. After repeatedly declining the arduous and most responsible office, he was at last induced to accept it. He did it under the remarkable condition that in case any negotiation should be undertaken for the purpose of bringing back the Province of Holland under the dominion of the King of Spain, he should be considered as from that moment relieved from the service.

His brother Elias Barneveld succeeded him as Pensionary of Rotterdam, and thenceforth the career of the Advocate is identical with the history of the Netherlands. Although a native of Utrecht, he was competent to exercise such functions in Holland, a special and ancient convention between those two provinces allowing the citizens of either to enjoy legal and civic rights in both. Gradually, without intrigue or inordinate ambition, but from force of circumstances and the commanding power of the man, the native authority stamped upon his forehead, he became the political head of the Confederacy. He created and maintained a system of public credit absolutely marvellous in the circumstances, by means of which an otherwise impossible struggle was carried to a victorious end.

When the stadholderate of the provinces of Gelderland, Utrecht, and Overijssel became vacant, it was again Barneveld's potent influence and sincere attachment to the House of Nassau that procured the election of Maurice to those posts. Thus within six years after his father's death the youthful soldier who had already given proof of his surpassing military genius had become governor, commander-in-chief, and high admiral, of five of the seven provinces constituting the Confederacy.

At about the same period the great question of Church and State, which Barneveld had always felt to be among the vital problems of the age, and on which his opinions were most decided, came up for partial solution. It would have been too much to expect the opinion of any statesman to be so much in advance of his time as to favor religious equality. Toleration of various creeds, including the Roman Catholic, so far as abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlours could be called toleration, was secured, and that was a considerable step in advance of the practice of the sixteenth century. Burning, hanging, and burying alive of culprits guilty of another creed than the dominant one had become obsolete. But there was an established creed—the Reformed religion, founded on the Netherland Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. And there was one established principle then considered throughout Europe the grand result of the Reformation; “Cujus regio ejus religio;” which was in reality as impudent an invasion of human right as any heaven-born dogma

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of Infallibility. The sovereign of a country, having appropriated the revenues of the ancient church, prescribed his own creed to his subjects. In the royal conscience were included the million consciences of his subjects. The inevitable result in a country like the Netherlands, without a personal sovereign, was a struggle between the new church and the civil government for mastery. And at this period, and always in Barneveld's opinion, the question of dogma was subordinate to that of church government. That there should be no authority over the King had been settled in England.

Henry VIII., Elizabeth, and afterwards James, having become popes in their own realm, had no great hostility to, but rather an affection for, ancient dogma and splendid ceremonial. But in the Seven Provinces, even as in France, Germany, and Switzerland, the reform where it had been effected at all had been more thorough, and there was little left of Popish pomp or aristocratic hierarchy. Nothing could be severer than the simplicity of the Reformed Church, nothing more imperious than its dogma, nothing more infallible than its creed. It was the true religion, and there was none other. But to whom belonged the ecclesiastical edifices, the splendid old minsters in the cities—raised by the people's confiding piety and the purchased remission of their sins in a bygone age—and the humbler but beautiful parish churches in every town and village? To the State; said Barneveld, speaking for government; to the community represented by the states of the provinces, the magistracies of the cities and municipalities. To the Church itself, the one true church represented by its elders, and deacons, and preachers, was the reply.

And to whom belonged the right of prescribing laws and ordinances of public worship, of appointing preachers, church servants, schoolmasters, sextons? To the Holy Ghost inspiring the Class and the Synod, said the Church.

To the civil authority, said the magistrates, by which the churches are maintained, and the salaries of the ecclesiastics paid. The states of Holland are as sovereign as the kings of England or Denmark, the electors of Saxony or Brandenburg, the magistrates of Zurich or Basel or other Swiss cantons. "*Cujus regio ejus religio.*"

In 1590 there was a compromise under the guidance of Barneveld. It was agreed that an appointing board should be established composed of civil functionaries and church officials in equal numbers. Thus should the interests of religion and of education be maintained.

The compromise was successful enough during the war. External pressure kept down theological passion, and there were as yet few symptoms of schism in the dominant church. But there was to come a time when the struggle between church and government was to break forth with an intensity and to rage to an extent which no man at that moment could imagine.

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Towards the end of the century Henry IV. made peace with Spain. It was a trying moment for the Provinces. Barneveld was again sent forth on an embassy to the King. The cardinal point in his policy, as it had ever been in that of William the Silent, was to maintain close friendship with France, whoever might be its ruler. An alliance between that kingdom and Spain would be instantaneous ruin to the Republic. With the French and English sovereigns united with the Provinces, the cause of the Reformation might triumph, the Spanish world-empire be annihilated, national independence secured.

Henry assured the Ambassador that the treaty of Vervins was indispensable, but that he would never desert his old allies. In proof of this, although he had just bound himself to Spain to give no assistance to the Provinces, open or secret, he would furnish them with thirteen hundred thousand crowns, payable at intervals during four years. He was under great obligations to his good friends the States, he said, and nothing in the treaty forbade him to pay his debts.

It was at this period too that Barneveld was employed by the King to attend to certain legal and other private business for which he professed himself too poor at the moment to compensate him. There seems to have been nothing in the usages of the time or country to make the transaction, innocent in itself, in any degree disreputable. The King promised at some future day, when he should be more in funds, to pay him a liberal fee. Barneveld, who a dozen years afterwards received 20,000 florins for his labour, professed that he would much rather have had one thousand at the time.

Thence the Advocate, accompanied by his colleague, Justinus de Nassau, proceeded to England, where they had many stormy interviews with Elizabeth. The Queen swore with many an oath that she too would make peace with Philip, recommended the Provinces to do the same thing with submission to their ancient tyrant, and claimed from the States immediate payment of one million sterling in satisfaction of their old debts to her. It would have been as easy for them at that moment to pay a thousand million. It was at last agreed that the sum of the debt should be fixed at £800,000, and that the cautionary towns should be held in Elizabeth's hands by English troops until all the debt should be discharged. Thus England for a long time afterwards continued to regard itself, as in a measure the sovereign and proprietor of the Confederacy, and Barneveld then and there formed the resolve to relieve the country of the incubus, and to recover those cautionary towns and fortresses at the earliest possible moment. So long as foreign soldiers commanded by military governors existed on the soil of the Netherlands, they could hardly account themselves independent. Besides, there was the perpetual and horrid nightmare, that by a sudden pacification between Spain and England those important cities, keys to the country's defence, might be handed over to their ancient tyrant.

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Elizabeth had been pacified at last, however, by the eloquence of the Ambassador. "I will assist you even if you were up to the neck in water," she said. "Jusque la," she added, pointing to her chin.

Five years later Barneveld, for the fifth time at the head of a great embassy, was sent to England to congratulate James on his accession. It was then and there that he took measure of the monarch with whom he was destined to have many dealings, and who was to exert so baleful an influence on his career. At last came the time when it was felt that peace between Spain and her revolted provinces might be made. The conservation of their ancient laws, privileges, and charters, the independence of the States, and included therein the freedom to establish the Reformed religion, had been secured by forty years of fighting.

The honour of Spain was saved by a conjunction. She agreed to treat with her old dependencies "as" with states over which she had no pretensions. Through virtue of an "as," a truce after two years' negotiation, perpetually traversed and secretly countermined by the military party under the influence of Maurice, was carried by the determination of Barneveld. The great objects of the war had been secured. The country was weary of nearly half a century of bloodshed. It was time to remember that there could be such a condition as Peace.

The treaty was signed, ratifications exchanged, and the usual presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made. Barneveld earnestly protested against carrying out the custom on this occasion, and urged that those presents should be given for the public use. He was overruled by those who were more desirous of receiving their reward than he was, and he accordingly, in common with the other diplomatists, accepted the gifts.

The various details of these negotiations have been related by the author in other volumes, to which the present one is intended as a sequel. It has been thought necessary merely to recall very briefly a few salient passages in the career of the Advocate up to the period when the present history really opens.

Their bearing upon subsequent events will easily be observed. The truce was the work of Barneveld. It was detested by Maurice and by Maurice's partisans.

"I fear that our enemies and evil reports are the cause of many of our difficulties," said the Advocate to the States' envoy in Paris, in 1606. "You are to pay no heed to private advices. Believe and make others believe that more than one half the inhabitants of the cities and in the open country are inclined to peace. And I believe, in case of continuing adversities, that the other half will not remain constant, principally because the Provinces are robbed of all traffic, prosperity, and navigation, through the actions of France and England. I have always thought it for the advantage of his Majesty to

sustain us in such wise as would make us useful in his service. As to his remaining permanently at peace with Spain, that would seem quite out of the question.”

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The King had long kept, according to treaty, a couple of French regiments in the States' service, and furnished, or was bound to furnish, a certain yearly sum for their support. But the expenses of the campaigning had been rapidly increasing and the results as swiftly dwindling. The Advocate now explained that, "without loss both of important places and of reputation," the States could not help spending every month that they took the field 200,000 florins over and above the regular contributions, and some months a great deal more. This sum, he said, in nine months, would more than eat up the whole subsidy of the King. If they were to be in the field by March or beginning of April, they would require from him an extraordinary sum of 200,000 crowns, and as much more in June or July.

Eighteen months later, when the magnificent naval victory of Heemskerk in the Bay of Gibraltar had just made a startling interlude to the languishing negotiations for peace, the Advocate again warned the French King of the difficulty in which the Republic still laboured of carrying on the mighty struggle alone. Spain was the common enemy of all. No peace or hope was possible for the leading powers as long as Spain was perpetually encamped in the very heart of Western Europe. The Netherlands were not fighting their own battle merely, but that of freedom and independence against the all-encroaching world-power. And their means to carry on the conflict were dwindling, while at the same time there was a favourable opportunity for cropping some fruit from their previous labours and sacrifices.

"We are led to doubt," he wrote once more to the envoy in France, "whether the King's full powers will come from Spain. This defeat is hard for the Spaniards to digest. Meantime our burdens are quite above our capacity, as you will understand by the enclosed statement, which is made out with much exactness to show what is absolutely necessary for a vigorous defence on land and a respectable position at sea to keep things from entire confusion. The Provinces could raise means for the half of this estimate. But, it is a great difference when the means differ one half from the expenses. The sovereignst and most assured remedy would be the one so often demanded, often projected, and sometimes almost prepared for execution, namely that our neighbour kings, princes, and republics should earnestly take the matter in hand and drive the Spaniards and their adherents out of the Netherlands and over the mountains. Their own dignity and security ought not to permit such great bodies of troops of both belligerents permanently massed in the Netherlands. Still less ought they to allow these Provinces to fall into the hands of the Spaniards, whence they could with so much more power and convenience make war upon all kings, princes, and republics. This must be prevented by one means or another. It ought to be enough for every one that we have been between thirty and forty years

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a firm bulwark against Spanish ambition. Our constancy and patience ought to be strengthened by counsel and by deed in order that we may exist; a Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient. Believe and cause to be believed that the present condition of our affairs requires more aid in counsel and money than ever before, and that nothing could be better bestowed than to further this end.

“Messieurs Jeannin, Buzenval, and de Russey have been all here these twelve days. We have firm hopes that other kings, princes, and republics will not stay upon formalities, but will also visit the patients here in order to administer sovereign remedies.

“Lend no ear to any flying reports. We say with the wise men over there, ‘Metuo Danaos et dons ferentes.’ We know our antagonists well, and trust their hearts no more than before, ‘sed ultra posse non est esse.’ To accept more burthens than we can pay for will breed military mutiny; to tax the community above its strength will cause popular tumults, especially in ‘rebus adversis,’ of which the beginnings were seen last year, and without a powerful army the enemy is not to be withstood. I have received your letters to the 17th May. My advice is to trust to his upright proceedings and with patience to overcome all things. Thus shall the detractors and calumniators best be confounded. Assure his Majesty and his ministers that I will do my utmost to avert our ruin and his Majesty’s disservice.”

The treaty was made, and from that time forth the antagonism between the eminent statesman and the great military chieftain became inevitable. The importance of the one seemed likely to increase day by day. The occupation of the other for a time was over.

During the war Maurice had been, with exception of Henry IV., the most considerable personage in Europe. He was surrounded with that visible atmosphere of power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist, and through the golden haze of which a mortal seems to dilate for the vulgar eye into the supernatural. The attention of Christendom was perpetually fixed upon him. Nothing like his sieges, his encampments, his military discipline, his scientific campaigning had been seen before in modern Europe. The youthful aristocracy from all countries thronged to his camp to learn the game of war, for he had restored by diligent study of the ancients much that was noble in that pursuit, and had elevated into an art that which had long since degenerated into a system of butchery, marauding, and rapine. And he had fought with signal success and unquestionable heroism the most important and most brilliant pitched battle of the age. He was a central figure of the current history of Europe. Pagan nations looked up to him as one of the leading sovereigns of Christendom. The Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch, assured him that his subjects trading to that distant empire should be welcomed and protected, and expressed himself ashamed that so great a prince, whose name and fame had spread through the world, should send his

subjects to visit a country so distant and unknown, and offer its emperor a friendship which he was unconscious of deserving.

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He had been a commander of armies and a chief among men since he came to man's estate, and he was now in the very vigour of life, in his forty-second year. Of Imperial descent and closely connected by blood or alliance with many of the most illustrious of reigning houses, the acknowledged master of the most royal and noble of all sciences, he was of the stuff of which kings were made, and belonged by what was then accounted right divine to the family of kings. His father's death had alone prevented his elevation to the throne of Holland, and such possession of half the sovereignty of the United Netherlands would probably have expanded into dominion over all the seven with a not fantastic possibility of uniting the ten still obedient provinces into a single realm. Such a kingdom would have been more populous and far wealthier than contemporary Great Britain and Ireland. Maurice, then a student at Leyden, was too young at that crisis, and his powers too undeveloped to justify any serious attempt to place him in his father's place.

The Netherlands drifted into a confederacy of aristocratic republics, not because they had planned a republic, but because they could not get a king, foreign or native. The documents regarding the offer of the sovereign countship to William remained in the possession of Maurice, and a few years before the peace there had been a private meeting of leading personages, of which Barneveld was the promoter and chief spokesman, to take into consideration the propriety and possibility of conferring that sovereignty upon the son which had virtually belonged to the father. The obstacles were deemed so numerous, and especially the scheme seemed so fraught with danger to Maurice, that it was reluctantly abandoned by his best friends, among whom unquestionably was the Advocate.

There was no reason whatever why the now successful and mature soldier, to whom the country was under such vast obligations, should not aspire to the sovereignty. The Provinces had not pledged themselves to republicanism, but rather to monarchy, and the crown, although secretly coveted by Henry IV., could by no possibility now be conferred on any other man than Maurice. It was no impeachment on his character that he should nourish thoughts in which there was nothing criminal.

But the peace negotiations had opened a chasm. It was obvious enough that Barneveld having now so long exercised great powers, and become as it were the chief magistrate of an important commonwealth, would not be so friendly as formerly to its conversion into a monarchy and to the elevation of the great soldier to its throne. The Advocate had even been sounded, cautiously and secretly, so men believed, by the Princess-Dowager, Louise de Coligny, widow of William the silent, as to the feasibility of procuring the sovereignty for Maurice. She had done this at the instigation of Maurice, who had expressed his belief that the favourable influence of the Advocate

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would make success certain and who had represented to her that, as he was himself resolved never to marry, the inheritance after his death would fall to her son Frederick Henry. The Princess, who was of a most amiable disposition, adored her son. Devoted to the House of Nassau and a great admirer of its chief, she had a long interview with Barneveld, in which she urged the scheme upon his attention without in any probability revealing that she had come to him at the solicitation of Maurice.

The Advocate spoke to her with frankness and out of the depths of his heart. He professed an ardent attachment to her family, a profound reverence for the virtues, sacrifices, and achievements of her lamented husband, and a warm desire to do everything to further the interests of the son who had proved himself so worthy of his parentage.

But he proved to her that Maurice, in seeking the sovereignty, was seeking his ruin. The Hollanders, he said, liked to be persuaded and not forced. Having triumphantly shaken off the yoke of a powerful king, they would scarcely consent now to accept the rule of any personal sovereign. The desire to save themselves from the claws of Spain had led them formerly to offer the dominion over them to various potentates. Now that they had achieved peace and independence and were delivered from the fears of Spanish ferocity and French intrigue, they shuddered at the dangers from royal hands out of which they had at last escaped. He believed that they would be capable of tearing in pieces any one who might make the desired proposition. After all, he urged, Maurice was a hundred times more fortunate as he was than if he should succeed in desires so opposed to his own good. This splendour of sovereignty was a false glare which would lead him to a precipice. He had now the power of a sovereign without the envy which ever followed it. Having essentially such power, he ought, like his father, to despise an empty name, which would only make him hated. For it was well known that William the Silent had only yielded to much solicitation, agreeing to accept that which then seemed desirable for the country's good but to him was more than indifferent.

Maurice was captain-general and admiral-general of five provinces. He appointed to governments and to all military office. He had a share of appointment to the magistracies. He had the same advantages and the same authority as had been enjoyed in the Netherlands by the ancient sovereign counts, by the dukes of Burgundy, by Emperor Charles V. himself.

Every one now was in favour of increasing his pensions, his salaries, his material splendour. Should he succeed in seizing the sovereignty, men would envy him even to the ribbands of his pages' and his lackeys' shoes. He turned to the annals of Holland and showed the Princess that there had hardly been a sovereign count against whom his subjects had not revolted, marching generally into the very courtyard of the palace at the Hague in order to take his life.

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Convinced by this reasoning, Louise de Coligny had at once changed her mind, and subsequently besought her stepson to give up a project sure to be fatal to his welfare, his peace of mind, and the good of the country. Maurice listened to her coldly, gave little heed to the Advocate's logic, and hated him in his heart from that day forth.

The Princess remained loyal to Barneveld to the last.

Thus the foundation was laid of that terrible enmity which, inflamed by theological passion, was to convert the period of peace into a hell, to rend the Provinces asunder when they had most need of repose, and to lead to tragical results for ever to be deplored. Already in 1607 Francis Aerssens had said that the two had become so embroiled and things had gone so far that one or the other would have to leave the country. He permitted also the ridiculous statement to be made in his house at Paris, that Henry IV. believed the Advocate to have become Spanish, and had declared that Prince Maurice would do well to have him put into a sack and thrown into the sea.

His life had been regularly divided into two halves, the campaigning season and the period of winter quarters. In the one his business, and his talk was of camps, marches, sieges, and battles only. In the other he was devoted to his stud, to tennis, to mathematical and mechanical inventions, and to chess, of which he was passionately fond, and which he did not play at all well. A Gascon captain serving in the States' army was his habitual antagonist in that game, and, although the stakes were but a crown a game, derived a steady income out of his gains, which were more than equal to his pay. The Prince was sulky when he lost, sitting, when the candles were burned out and bed-time had arrived, with his hat pulled over his brows, without bidding his guest good night, and leaving him to find his way out as he best could; and, on the contrary, radiant with delight when successful, calling for valets to light the departing captain through the corridor, and accompanying him to the door of the apartment himself. That warrior was accordingly too shrewd not to allow his great adversary as fair a share of triumph as was consistent with maintaining the frugal income on which he reckoned.

He had small love for the pleasures of the table, but was promiscuous and unlicensed in his amours. He was methodical in his household arrangements, and rather stingy than liberal in money matters. He personally read all his letters, accounts, despatches, and other documents trivial or important, but wrote few letters with his own hand, so that, unlike his illustrious father's correspondence, there is little that is characteristic to be found in his own. He was plain but not shabby in attire, and was always dressed in exactly the same style, wearing doublet and hose of brown woollen, a silk under vest, a short cloak lined with velvet, a little plaited ruff on his neck, and very loose boots. He ridiculed the

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smart French officers who, to show their fine legs, were wont to wear such tight boots as made them perspire to get into them, and maintained, in precept and practice, that a man should be able to jump into his boots and mount and ride at a moment's notice. The only ornaments he indulged in, except, of course, on state occasions, were a golden hilt to his famous sword, and a rope of diamonds tied around his felt hat.

He was now in the full flower of his strength and his fame, in his forty-second year, and of a noble and martial presence. The face, although unquestionably handsome, offered a sharp contrast within itself; the upper half all intellect, the lower quite sensual. Fair hair growing thin, but hardly tinged with grey, a bright, cheerful, and thoughtful forehead, large hazel eyes within a singularly large orbit of brow; a straight, thin, slightly aquiline, well-cut nose—such features were at open variance with the broad, thick-lipped, sensual mouth, the heavy pendant jowl, the sparse beard on the glistening cheek, and the moleskin-like moustachio and chin tuft. Still, upon the whole, it was a face and figure which gave the world assurance of a man and a commander of men. Power and intelligence were stamped upon him from his birth.

Barneveld was tall and majestic of presence, with large quadrangular face, austere, blue eyes looking authority and command, a vast forehead, and a grizzled beard. Of fluent and convincing eloquence with tongue and pen, having the power of saying much in few words, he cared much more for the substance than the graces of speech or composition. This tendency was not ill exemplified in a note of his written on a sheet of questions addressed to him by a States' ambassador about to start on an important mission, but a novice in his business, the answers to which questions were to serve for his diplomatic instructions.

"Item and principally," wrote the Envoy, "to request of M. de Barneveld a formulary or copy of the best, soundest, wisest, and best couched despatches done by several preceding ambassadors in order to regulate myself accordingly for the greater service of the Province and for my uttermost reputation."

The Advocate's answer, scrawled in his nearly illegible hand, was—

"Unnecessary. The truth in shortest about matters of importance shall be taken for good style."

With great love of power, which he was conscious of exerting with ease to himself and for the good of the public, he had little personal vanity, and not the smallest ambition of authorship. Many volumes might be collected out of the vast accumulation of his writings now mouldering and forgotten in archives. Had the language in which they are written become a world's language, they would be worthy of attentive study, as

containing noble illustrations of the history and politics of his age, with theories and sentiments often far in advance of his age. But he cared

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not for style. "The truth in shortest about matters of importance" was enough for him; but the world in general, and especially the world of posterity, cares much for style. The vehicle is often prized more than the freight. The name of Barneveld is fast fading out of men's memory. The fame of his pupil and companion in fortune and misfortune, Hugo Grotius, is ever green. But Grotius was essentially an author rather than a statesman: he wrote for the world and posterity with all the love, pride, and charm of the devotee of literature, and he composed his noblest works in a language which is ever living because it is dead. Some of his writings, epochmaking when they first appeared, are text-books still familiar in every cultivated household on earth. Yet Barneveld was vastly his superior in practical statesmanship, in law, in the science of government, and above all in force of character, while certainly not his equal in theology, nor making any pretensions to poetry. Although a ripe scholar, he rarely wrote in Latin, and not often in French. His ambition was to do his work thoroughly according to his view of duty, and to ask God's blessing upon it without craving overmuch the applause of men.

Such were the two men, the soldier and the statesman. Would the Republic, fortunate enough to possess two such magnificent and widely contrasted capacities, be wise enough to keep them in its service, each supplementing the other, and the two combining in a perfect whole?

Or was the great law of the Discords of the World, as potent as that other principle of Universal Harmony and planetary motion which an illustrious contemporary—that Wurtemberg astronomer, once a soldier of the fierce Alva, now the half-starved astrologer of the brain-sick Rudolph—was at that moment discovering, after "God had waited six thousand years for him to do it," to prevail for the misery of the Republic and shame of Europe? Time was to show.

The new state had forced itself into the family of sovereignties somewhat to the displeasure of most of the Lord's anointed. Rebellious and republican, it necessarily excited the jealousy of long-established and hereditary governments.

The King of Spain had not formally acknowledged the independence of the United Provinces. He had treated with them as free, and there was supposed to be much virtue in the conjunction. But their sovereign independence was virtually recognized by the world. Great nations had entered into public and diplomatic relations and conventions with them, and their agents at foreign courts were now dignified with the rank and title of ambassadors.

The Spanish king had likewise refused to them the concession of the right of navigation and commerce in the East Indies, but it was a matter of notoriety that the absence of the word India, suppressed as it was in the treaty, implied an immense triumph on the part

of the States, and that their flourishing and daily increasing commerce in the farthest East and the imperial establishments already rising there were cause of envy and jealousy not to Spain alone, but to friendly powers.

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Yet the government of Great Britain affected to regard them as something less than a sovereign state. Although Elizabeth had refused the sovereignty once proffered to her, although James had united with Henry IV. in guaranteeing the treaty just concluded between the States and Spain, that monarch had the wonderful conception that the Republic was in some sort a province of his own, because he still held the cautionary towns in pledge for the loans granted by his predecessor. His agents at Constantinople were instructed to represent the new state as unworthy to accredit its envoys as those of an independent power. The Provinces were represented as a collection of audacious rebels, a piratical scum of the sea. But the Sultan knew his interests better than to incur the enmity of this rising maritime power. The Dutch envoy declaring that he would sooner throw himself into the Bosphorus than remain to be treated with less consideration than that accorded to the ministers of all great powers, the remonstrances of envious colleagues were hushed, and Haga was received with all due honours.

Even at the court of the best friend of the Republic, the French king, men looked coldly at the upstart commonwealth. Francis Aerssens, the keen and accomplished minister of the States, resident in Paris for many years, was received as ambassador after the truce with all the ceremonial befitting the highest rank in the diplomatic service; yet Henry could not yet persuade himself to look upon the power accrediting him as a thoroughly organized commonwealth.

The English ambassador asked the King if he meant to continue his aid and assistance to the States during the truce. "Yes," answered Henry.

"And a few years beyond it?"

"No. I do not wish to offend the King of Spain from mere gaiety of heart."

"But they are free," replied the Ambassador; "the King of Spain could have no cause for offence."

"They are free," said the King, "but not sovereign."—"Judge then," wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, "how we shall be with the King of Spain at the end of our term when our best friends make this distinction among themselves to our disadvantage. They insist on making a difference between liberty and sovereignty; considering liberty as a mean term between servitude and sovereignty."

"You would do well," continued the Dutch ambassador, "to use the word 'sovereignty' on all occasions instead of 'liberty.'" The hint was significant and the advice sound.

The haughty republic of Venice, too, with its "golden Book" and its pedigree of a thousand years, looked askance at the republic of yesterday rising like herself out of lagunes and sand banks, and affecting to place herself side by side with emperors, kings, and the lion of St. Mark. But the all-accomplished council of that most serene

commonwealth had far too much insight and too wide experience in political combinations to make the blunder of yielding to this aristocratic sentiment.

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The natural enemy of the Pope, of Spain, of Austria, must of necessity be the friend of Venice, and it was soon thought highly desirable to intimate half officially that a legation from the States-General to the Queen of the Adriatic, announcing the conclusion of the Twelve Years' Truce, would be extremely well received.

The hint was given by the Venetian ambassador at Paris to Francis Aerssens, who instantly recommended van der Myle, son-in-law of Barneveld, as a proper personage to be entrusted with this important mission. At this moment an open breach had almost occurred between Spain and Venice, and the Spanish ambassador at Paris, Don Pedro de Toledo, naturally very irate with Holland, Venice, and even with France, was vehement in his demonstrations. The arrogant Spaniard had for some time been employed in an attempt to negotiate a double marriage between the Dauphin and the eldest daughter of Philip III., and between the eldest son of that king and the Princess Elizabeth of France. An indispensable but secret condition of this negotiation was the absolute renunciation by France of its alliance and friendly relations with the United Provinces. The project was in truth a hostile measure aimed directly at the life of the Republic. Henry held firm however, and Don Pedro was about to depart malcontent, his mission having totally failed. He chanced, when going to his audience of leave-taking, after the arrival of his successor, Don Inigo de Cardenas, to meet the Venetian ambassador, Antonio Foscarini. An altercation took place between them, during which the Spaniard poured out his wrath so vehemently, calling his colleague with neat alliteration "a poltroon, a pantaloon, and a pig," that Henry heard him.

What Signor Antonio replied has not been preserved, but it is stated that he was first to seek a reconciliation, not liking, he said, Spanish assassinations.

Meantime the double marriage project was for a season at least suspended, and the alliance between the two republics went forwards. Van der Myle, appointed ambassador to Venice, soon afterwards arrived in Paris, where he made a very favourable impression, and was highly lauded by Aerssens in his daily correspondence with Barneveld. No portentous shadow of future and fatal discord between those statesmen fell upon the cheerful scene. Before the year closed, he arrived at his post, and was received with great distinction, despite the obstacles thrown in his way by Spain and other powers; the ambassador of France itself, de Champigny, having privately urged that he ought to be placed on the same footing with the envoys of Savoy and of Florence.

Van der Myle at starting committed the trifling fault of styling the States-General "most illustrious" (*illustrissimi*) instead of "most serene," the title by which Venice designated herself.

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The fault was at once remedied, however, Priuli the Doge seating the Dutch ambassador on his right hand at his solemn reception, and giving directions that van der Myle should be addressed as Excellency, his post being assigned him directly after his seniors, the ambassadors of Pope, Emperor, and kings. The same precedence was settled in Paris, while Aerssens, who did not consider himself placed in a position of greater usefulness by his formal installation as ambassador, received private intimation from Henry, with whom he was on terms of great confidence and intimacy, that he should have private access to the King as frequently and as informally as before. The theory that the ambassador, representing the personality of his sovereign, may visit the monarch to whom he is accredited, without ceremony and at his own convenience, was as rarely carried into practice in the sixteenth century as in the nineteenth, while on the other hand Aerssens, as the private and confidential agent of a friendly but not publicly recognized commonwealth, had been for many years in almost daily personal communication with the King.

It is also important to note that the modern fallacy according to which republics being impersonal should not be represented by ambassadors had not appeared in that important epoch in diplomatic history. On the contrary, the two great republics of the age, Holland and Venice, vindicated for themselves, with as much dignity and reason as success, their right to the highest diplomatic honours.

The distinction was substantial not shadowy; those haughty commonwealths not considering it advantageous or decorous that their representatives should for want of proper official designations be ranked on great ceremonial occasions with the ministers of petty Italian principalities or of the three hundred infinitesimal sovereignties of Germany.

It was the advice of the French king especially, who knew politics and the world as well as any man, that the envoys of the Republic which he befriended and which stood now on the threshold of its official and national existence, should assert themselves at every court with the self-reliance and courtesy becoming the functionaries of a great power. That those ministers were second to the representatives of no other European state in capacity and accomplishment was a fact well known to all who had dealings with them, for the States required in their diplomatic representatives knowledge of history and international law, modern languages, and the classics, as well as familiarity with political customs and social courtesies; the breeding of gentlemen in short, and the accomplishments of scholars. It is both a literary enjoyment and a means of historical and political instruction to read after the lapse of centuries their reports and despatches. They worthily compare as works of art with those diplomatic masterpieces the letters and 'Relazioni' of the Venetian ambassadors; and it is well known that the earlier and some of the most important treatises on public and international law ever written are from the pens of Hollanders, who indeed may be said to have invented that science.'

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The Republic having thus steadily shouldered its way into the family of nations was soon called upon to perform a prominent part in the world's affairs. More than in our own epoch there was a close political commingling of such independent states as held sympathetic views on the great questions agitating Europe. The policy of isolation so wisely and successfully carried out by our own trans-Atlantic commonwealth was impossible for the Dutch republic, born as it was of a great religious schism, and with its narrow territory wedged between the chief political organizations of Christendom. Moreover the same jealousy on the part of established powers which threw so many obstacles in its path to recognized sovereignty existed in the highest degree between its two sponsors and allies, France and England, in regard to their respective relations to the new state.

"If ever there was an obliged people," said Henry's secretary of state, Villeroy, to Aerssens, "then it is you Netherlanders to his Majesty. He has converted your war into peace, and has never abandoned you. It is for you now to show your affection and gratitude."

In the time of Elizabeth, and now in that of her successor, there was scarcely a day in which the envoys of the States were not reminded of the immense load of favour from England under which they tottered, and of the greater sincerity and value of English friendship over that of France.

Sully often spoke to Aerssens on the subject in even stronger language, deeming himself the chief protector and guardian angel of the Republic, to whom they were bound by ties of eternal gratitude. "But if the States," he said, "should think of caressing the King of England more than him, or even of treating him on an equality with his Majesty, Henry would be very much affronted. He did not mean that they should neglect the friendship of the King of Britain, but that they should cultivate it after and in subordination to his own, for they might be sure that James held all things indifferent, their ruin or their conservation, while his Majesty had always manifested the contrary both by his counsels and by the constant furnishing of supplies."

Henry of France and Navarre—soldier, statesman, wit, above all a man and every inch a king—brimful of human vices, foibles, and humours, and endowed with those high qualities of genius which enabled him to mould events and men by his unscrupulous and audacious determination to conform to the spirit of his times which no man better understood than himself, had ever been in such close relations with the Netherlands as to seem in some sort their sovereign.

James Stuart, emerging from the school of Buchanan and the atmosphere of Calvinism in which he had been bred, now reigned in those more sunny and liberal regions where Elizabeth so long had ruled. Finding himself at once, after years of theological study, face to face with a foreign commonwealth and a momentous epoch, in which politics

were so commingled with divinity as to offer daily the most puzzling problems, the royal pedant hugged himself at beholding so conspicuous a field for his talents.

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To turn a throne into a pulpit, and amaze mankind with his learning, was an ambition most sweet to gratify. The Calvinist of Scotland now proclaimed his deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland, and denounced the Netherlanders as a pack of rebels whom it always pleased him to irritate, and over whom he too claimed, through the possession of the cautionary towns, a kind of sovereignty. Instinctively feeling that in the rough and unlovely husk of Puritanism was enclosed the germ of a wider human liberty than then existed, he was determined to give battle to it with his tongue, his pen, with everything but his sword.

Doubtless the States had received most invaluable assistance from both France and England, but the sovereigns of those countries were too apt to forget that it was their own battles, as well as those of the Hollanders, that had been fought in Flanders and Brabant. But for the alliance and subsidies of the faithful States, Henry would not so soon have ascended the throne of his ancestors, while it was matter of history that the Spanish government had for years been steadily endeavouring to subjugate England not so much for the value of the conquest in itself as for a stepping-stone to the recovery of the revolted Netherlands.

For the dividing line of nations or at least of national alliances was a frontier not of language but of faith. Germany was but a geographical expression. The union of Protestantism, subscribed by a large proportion of its three hundred and seven sovereigns, ran zigzag through the country, a majority probably of the people at that moment being opposed to the Roman Church.

It has often been considered amazing that Protestantism having accomplished so much should have fallen backwards so soon, and yielded almost undisputed sway in vast regions to the long dominant church. But in truth there is nothing surprising about it. Catholicism was and remained a unit, while its opponents were eventually broken up into hundreds of warring and politically impotent organizations. Religious faith became distorted into a weapon for selfish and greedy territorial aggrandizement in the hands of Protestant princes. "Cujus regio ejus religio" was the taunt hurled in the face of the imploring Calvinists of France and the Low Countries by the arrogant Lutherans of Germany. Such a sword smote the principle of religious freedom and mutual toleration into the dust, and rendered them comparatively weak in the conflict with the ancient and splendidly organized church.

The Huguenots of France, notwithstanding the protection grudgingly afforded them by their former chieftain, were dejected and discomfited by his apostasy, and Henry, placed in a fearfully false position, was an object of suspicion to both friends and foes. In England it is difficult to say whether a Jesuit or a Puritan was accounted the more noxious animal by the dominant party.

In the United Provinces perhaps one half the population was either openly or secretly attached to the ancient church, while among the Protestant portion a dire and tragic

convulsion was about to break forth, which for a time at least was to render Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants more fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists.

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The doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense had long been the prevailing one in the Reformed Church of the revolted Netherlands, as in those of Scotland, France, Geneva, and the Palatinate. No doubt up to the period of the truce a majority had acquiesced in that dogma and its results, although there had always been many preachers to advocate publicly a milder creed. It was not until the appointment of Jacob Arminius to the professorship of theology at Leyden, in the place of Francis Junius, in the year 1603, that a danger of schism in the Church, seemed impending. Then rose the great Gomarus in his wrath, and with all the powers of splendid eloquence, profound learning, and the intense bigotry of conviction, denounced the horrible heresy. Conferences between the two before the Court of Holland, theological tournaments between six champions on a side, gallantly led by their respective chieftains, followed, with the usual result of confirming both parties in the conviction that to each alone belonged exclusively the truth.

The original influence of Arminius had however been so great that when the preachers of Holland had been severally called on by a synod to sign the Heidelberg Catechism, many of them refused. Here was open heresy and revolt. It was time for the true church to vindicate its authority. The great war with Spain had been made, so it was urged and honestly believed, not against the Inquisition, not to prevent Netherlands from being burned and buried alive by the old true church, not in defence of ancient charters, constitutions, and privileges—the precious result of centuries of popular resistance to despotic force—not to maintain an amount of civil liberty and local self-government larger in extent than any then existing in the world, not to assert equality of religion for all men, but simply to establish the true religion, the one church, the only possible creed; the creed and church of Calvin.

It is perfectly certain that the living fire which glowed in the veins of those hot gossellers had added intense enthusiasm to the war spirit throughout that immense struggle. It is quite possible that without that enthusiasm the war might not have been carried on to its successful end. But it is equally certain that Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, and devotees of many other creeds, had taken part in the conflict in defence both of hearth and altar, and that without that aid the independence of the Provinces would never have been secured.

Yet before the war was ended the arrogance of the Reformed priesthood had begun to dig a chasm. Men who with William the Silent and Barneveld had indulged in the vision of religious equality as a possible result of so much fighting against the Holy Inquisition were perhaps to be disappointed.

Preachers under the influence of the gentle Arminius having dared to refuse signing the Creed were to be dealt with. It was time to pass from censure to action.

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Heresy must be trampled down. The churches called for a national synod, and they did this as by divine right. "My Lords the States-General must observe," they said, "that this assembly now demanded is not a human institution but an ordinance of the Holy Ghost in its community, not depending upon any man's authority, but proceeding from God to the community." They complained that the true church was allowed to act only through the civil government, and was thus placed at a disadvantage compared even with Catholics and other sects, whose proceedings were winked at. "Thus the true church suffered from its apparent and public freedom, and hostile sects gained by secret connivance."

A crisis was fast approaching. The one church claimed infallibility and superiority to the civil power. The Holy Ghost was placed in direct, ostentatious opposition to My Lords the States-General. It was for Netherlands to decide whether, after having shaken off the Holy Inquisition, and subjected the old true church to the public authority, they were now to submit to the imperious claims of the new true church.

There were hundreds of links connecting the Church with the State. In that day a divorce between the two was hardly possible or conceivable. The system of Congregationalism so successfully put into practice soon afterwards in the wilderness of New England, and to which so much of American freedom political as well as religious is due, was not easy to adopt in an old country like the Netherlands. Splendid churches and cathedrals, the legal possession of which would be contended for by rival sects, could scarcely be replaced by temporary structures of lath and plaster, or by humble back parlours of mechanics' shops. There were questions of property of complicated nature. Not only the states and the communities claimed in rivalry the ownership of church property, but many private families could show ancient advowsons and other claims to present or to patronize, derived from imperial or ducal charters.

So long as there could be liberty of opinion within the Church upon points not necessarily vital, open schism could be avoided, by which the cause of Protestantism throughout Europe must be weakened, while at the same time subordination of the priesthood to the civil authority would be maintained. But if the Holy Ghost, through the assembled clergy, were to dictate an iron formulary to which all must conform, to make laws for church government which every citizen must obey, and to appoint preachers and school-masters from whom alone old and young could receive illumination and instruction religious or lay, a theocracy would be established which no enlightened statesman could tolerate.

The States-General agreed to the synod, but imposed a condition that there should be a revision of Creed and Catechism. This was thundered down with one blast. The condition implied a possibility that the vile heresy of Arminius might be correct. An unconditional synod was demanded. The Heidelberg Creed and Netherland Catechism were sacred, infallible, not to be touched. The answer of the government, through the

mouth of Barneveld, was that “to My Lords the States-General as the foster-fathers and protectors of the churches every right belonged.”

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Thus far the States-General under the leadership of the Advocate were unanimous. The victory remained with State against Church. But very soon after the truce had been established, and men had liberty to devote themselves to peaceful pursuits, the ecclesiastical trumpet again sounded far and wide, and contending priests and laymen rushed madly to the fray. The Remonstrance and Contra-Remonstrance, and the appointment of Conrad Vorstius, a more abominable heretic than Arminius, to the vacant chair of Arminius—a step which drove Gomarus and the Gomarites to frenzy, although Gomarus and Vorstius remained private and intimate friends to the last—are matters briefly to be mentioned on a later page.

Thus to the four chief actors in the politico-religious drama, soon to be enacted as an interlude to an eighty years' war, were assigned parts at first sight inconsistent with their private convictions. The King of France, who had often abjured his religion, and was now the best of Catholics, was denounced ferociously in every Catholic pulpit in Christendom as secretly an apostate again, and the open protector of heretics and rebels. But the cheerful Henry troubled himself less than he perhaps had cause to do with these thunderblasts. Besides, as we shall soon see, he had other objects political and personal to sway his opinions.

James the ex-Calvinist, crypto-Arminian, pseudo-Papist, and avowed Puritan hater, was girding on his armour to annihilate Arminians and to defend and protect Puritans in Holland, while swearing that in England he would pepper them and harry them and hang them and that he would even like to bury them alive.

Barneveld, who turned his eyes, as much as in such an inflammatory age it was possible, from subtle points of theology, and relied on his great-grandfather's motto of humility, "Nil scire tutissima fides" was perhaps nearer to the dogma of the dominant Reformed Church than he knew, although always the consistent and strenuous champion of the civil authority over Church as well as State.

Maurice was no theologian. He was a steady churchgoer, and his favorite divine, the preacher at his court chapel, was none other than Uytenbogaert. The very man who was instantly to be the champion of the Arminians, the author of the Remonstrance, the counsellor and comrade of Barneveld and Grotius, was now sneered at by the Gomarites as the "Court Trumpeter." The preacher was not destined to change his opinions. Perhaps the Prince might alter. But Maurice then paid no heed to the great point at issue, about which all the Netherlanders were to take each other by the throat—absolute predestination. He knew that the Advocate had refused to listen to his stepmother's suggestion as to his obtaining the sovereignty. "He knew nothing of predestination," he was wont to say, "whether it was green or whether it was blue. He only knew that his pipe and the Advocate's were not likely to make music together." This much of predestination he did know, that if the Advocate and his friends were to come to open conflict with the Prince of Orange-Nassau, the conqueror of Nieuwpoort, it was predestined to go hard with the Advocate and his friends.

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The theological quibble did not interest him much, and he was apt to blunder about it.

"Well, preacher," said he one day to Albert Huttenus, who had come to him to intercede for a deserter condemned to be hanged, "are you one of those Arminians who believe that one child is born to salvation and another to damnation?"

Huttenus, amazed to the utmost at the extraordinary question, replied, "Your Excellency will be graciously pleased to observe that this is not the opinion of those whom one calls by the hateful name of Arminians, but the opinion of their adversaries."

"Well, preacher," rejoined Maurice, "don't you think I know better?" And turning to Count Lewis William, Stadholder of Friesland, who was present, standing by the hearth with his hand on a copper ring of the chimneypiece, he cried,

"Which is right, cousin, the preacher or I?"

"No, cousin," answered Count Lewis, "you are in the wrong."

Thus to the Catholic League organized throughout Europe in solid and consistent phalanx was opposed the Great Protestant Union, ardent and enthusiastic in detail, but undisciplined, disobedient, and inharmonious as a whole.

The great principle, not of religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult, but of religious equality, which is the natural right of mankind, was to be evolved after a lapse of, additional centuries out of the elemental conflict which had already lasted so long. Still later was the total divorce of State and Church to be achieved as the final consummation of the great revolution. Meantime it was almost inevitable that the privileged and richly endowed church, with ecclesiastical armies and arsenals vastly superior to anything which its antagonist could improvise, should more than hold its own.

At the outset of the epoch which now occupies our attention, Europe was in a state of exhaustion and longing for repose. Spain had submitted to the humiliation of a treaty of truce with its rebellious subjects which was substantially a recognition of their independence. Nothing could be more deplorable than the internal condition of the country which claimed to be mistress of the world and still aspired to universal monarchy.

It had made peace because it could no longer furnish funds for the war. The French ambassador, Barante, returning from Madrid, informed his sovereign that he had often seen officers in the army prostrating themselves on their knees in the streets before their sovereign as he went to mass, and imploring him for payment of their salaries, or at least an alms to keep them from starving, and always imploring in vain.

The King, who was less than a cipher, had neither capacity to feel emotion, nor intelligence to comprehend the most insignificant affair of state. Moreover the means were wanting to him even had he been disposed to grant assistance. The terrible Duke of Lerma was still his inexorably lord and master, and the secretary of that powerful personage, who kept an open shop for the sale of offices of state both high and low, took care that all the proceeds should flow into the coffers of the Duke and his own lap instead of the royal exchequer.

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In France both king and people declared themselves disgusted with war. Sully disapproved of the treaty just concluded between Spain and the Netherlands, feeling sure that the captious and equivocal clauses contained in it would be interpreted to the disadvantage of the Republic and of the Reformed religion whenever Spain felt herself strong enough to make the attempt. He was especially anxious that the States should make no concessions in regard to the exercise of the Catholic worship within their territory, believing that by so doing they would compromise their political independence besides endangering the cause of Protestantism everywhere. A great pressure was put upon Sully that moment by the King to change his religion.

"You will all be inevitably ruined if you make concessions in this regard," said he to Aerssens. "Take example by me. I should be utterly undone if I had listened to any overture on this subject."

Nevertheless it was the opinion of the astute and caustic envoy that the Duke would be forced to yield at last. The Pope was making great efforts to gain him, and thus to bring about the extirpation of Protestantism in France. And the King, at that time much under the influence of the Jesuits, had almost set his heart on the conversion. Aerssens insinuated that Sully was dreading a minute examination into the affairs of his administration of the finances—a groundless calumny—and would be thus forced to comply. Other enemies suggested that nothing would effect this much desired apostasy but the office of Constable of France, which it was certain would never be bestowed on him.

At any rate it was very certain that Henry at this period was bent on peace.

"Make your account," said Aerssens to Barneveld, as the time for signing the truce drew nigh, "on this indubitable foundation that the King is determined against war, whatever pretences he may make. His bellicose demeanour has been assumed only to help forward our treaty, which he would never have favoured, and ought never to have favoured, if he had not been too much in love with peace. This is a very important secret if we manage it discreetly, and a very dangerous one if our enemies discover it."

Sully would have much preferred that the States should stand out for a peace rather than for a truce, and believed it might have been obtained if the King had not begun the matter so feebly, and if he had let it be understood that he would join his arms to those of the Provinces in case of rupture.

He warned the States very strenuously that the Pope, and the King of Spain, and a host of enemies open and covert, were doing their host to injure them at the French court. They would find little hindrance in this course if the Republic did not show its teeth, and especially if it did not stiffly oppose all encroachments of the Roman religion, without even showing any deference to the King in this regard, who was much importuned on the subject.

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He advised the States to improve the interval of truce by restoring order to their finances and so arranging their affairs that on the resumption of hostilities, if come they must, their friends might be encouraged to help them, by the exhibition of thorough vigour on their part.

France then, although utterly indisposed for war at that moment, was thoroughly to be relied on as a friend and in case of need an ally, so long as it was governed by its present policy. There was but one king left in Europe since the death of Elizabeth of England.

But Henry was now on the abhorred threshold of old age which he obstinately refused to cross.

There is something almost pathetic, in spite of the censure which much of his private life at this period provokes, in the isolation which now seemed his lot.

Deceived and hated by his wife and his mistresses, who were conspiring with each other and with his ministers, not only against his policy but against his life; with a vile Italian adventurer, dishonouring his household, entirely dominating the queen, counteracting the royal measures, secretly corresponding, by assumed authority, with Spain, in direct violation of the King's instructions to his ambassadors, and gorging himself with wealth and offices at the expense of everything respectable in France; surrounded by a pack of malignant and greedy nobles, who begrudged him his fame, his authority, his independence; without a home, and almost without a friend, the Most Christian King in these latter days led hardly as merry a life as when fighting years long for his crown, at the head of his Gascon chivalry, the beloved chieftain of Huguenots.

Of the triumvirate then constituting his council, Villeroy, Sillery, and Sully, the two first were ancient Leaguers, and more devoted at heart to Philip of Spain than to Henry of France and Navarre.

Both silent, laborious, plodding, plotting functionaries, thriftily gathering riches; skilled in routine and adepts at intrigue; steady self-seekers, and faithful to office in which their lives had passed, they might be relied on at any emergency to take part against their master, if to ruin would prove more profitable than to serve him.

There was one man who was truer to Henry than Henry had been to himself. The haughty, defiant, austere grandee, brave soldier, sagacious statesman, thrifty financier, against whom the poisoned arrows of religious hatred, envious ambition, and petty court intrigue were daily directed, who watched grimly over the exchequer confided to him, which was daily growing fuller in despite of the cormorants who trembled at his frown; hard worker, good hater, conscientious politician, who filled his own coffers without dishonesty, and those of the state without tyranny; unsociable, arrogant; pious, very avaricious, and inordinately vain, Maximilian de Bethune, Duke of Sully, loved and

respected Henry as no man or woman loved and respected him. In truth, there was but one living being for whom the Duke had greater reverence and affection than for the King, and that was the Duke of Sully himself.

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At this moment he considered himself, as indeed he was, in full possession of his sovereign's confidence. But he was alone in this conviction. Those about the court, men like Epernon and his creatures, believed the great financier on the brink of perdition. Henry, always the loosest of talkers even in regard to his best friends, had declared, on some temporary vexation in regard to the affair between Aiguillon and Balagny, that he would deal with the Duke as with the late Marshal de Biron, and make him smaller than he had ever made him great: goading him on this occasion with importunities, almost amounting to commands, that both he and his son should forthwith change their religion or expect instant ruin. The blow was so severe that Sully shut himself up, refused to see anyone, and talked of retiring for good to his estates. But he knew, and Henry knew, how indispensable he was, and the anger of the master was as shortlived as the despair of the minister.

There was no living statesman for whom Henry had a more sincere respect than for the Advocate of Holland. "His Majesty admires and greatly extols your wisdom, which he judges necessary for the preservation of our State; deeming you one of the rare and sage counsellors of the age." It is true that this admiration was in part attributed to the singular coincidence of Barneveld's views of policy with the King's own. Sully, on his part, was a severe critic of that policy. He believed that better terms might have been exacted from Spain in the late negotiations, and strongly objected to the cavilling and equivocal language of the treaty. Rude in pen as in speech, he expressed his mind very freely in his conversation and correspondence with Henry in regard to leading personages and great affairs, and made no secret of his opinions to the States' ambassador.

He showed his letters in which he had informed the King that he ought never to have sanctioned the truce without better securities than existed, and that the States would never have moved in any matter without him. It would have been better to throw himself into a severe war than to see the Republic perish. He further expressed the conviction that Henry ought to have such authority over the Netherlands that they would embrace blindly whatever counsel he chose to give them, even if they saw in it their inevitable ruin; and this not so much from remembrance of assistance rendered by him, but from the necessity in which they should always feel of depending totally upon him.

"You may judge, therefore," concluded Aerssens, "as to how much we can build on such foundations as these. I have been amazed at these frank communications, for in those letters he spares neither My Lords the States, nor his Excellency Prince Maurice, nor yourself; giving his judgment of each of you with far too much freedom and without sufficient knowledge."

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Thus the alliance between the Netherlands and France, notwithstanding occasional traces of caprice and flaws of personal jealousy, was on the whole sincere, for it was founded on the surest foundation of international friendship, the self-interest of each. Henry, although boasting of having bought Paris with a mass, knew as well as his worst enemy that in that bargain he had never purchased the confidence of the ancient church, on whose bosom he had flung himself with so much dramatic pomp. His noble position, as champion of religious toleration, was not only unappreciated in an age in which each church and every sect arrogated to itself a monopoly of the truth, but it was one in which he did not himself sincerely believe.

After all, he was still the chieftain of the Protestant Union, and, although Eldest Son of the Church, was the bitter antagonist of the League and the sworn foe to the House of Austria. He was walking through pitfalls with a crowd of invisible but relentless foes dogging his every footstep. In his household or without were daily visions of dagger and bowl, and he felt himself marching to his doom. How could the man on whom the heretic and rebellious Hollanders and the Protestant princes of Germany relied as on their saviour escape the unutterable wrath and the patient vengeance of a power that never forgave?

In England the jealousy of the Republic and of France as co-guardian and protector of the Republic was even greater than in France. Though placed by circumstances in the position of ally to the Netherlands and enemy to Spain, James hated the Netherlands and adored Spain. His first thought on escaping the general destruction to which the Gunpowder Plot was to have involved himself and family and all the principal personages of the realm seems to have been to exculpate Spain from participation in the crime. His next was to deliver a sermon to Parliament, exonerating the Catholics and going out of his way to stigmatize the Puritans as entertaining doctrines which should be punished with fire. As the Puritans had certainly not been accused of complicity with Guy Fawkes or Garnet, this portion of the discourse was at least superfluous. But James loathed nothing so much as a Puritan. A Catholic at heart, he would have been the warmest ally of the League had he only been permitted to be Pope of Great Britain. He hated and feared a Jesuit, not for his religious doctrines, for with these he sympathized, but for his political creed. He liked not that either Roman Pontiff or British Presbyterian should abridge his heaven-born prerogative. The doctrine of Papal superiority to temporal sovereigns was as odious to him as Puritan rebellion to the hierarchy of which he was the chief. Moreover, in his hostility to both Papists and Presbyterians, there was much of professional rivalry. Having been deprived by the accident of birth of his true position as theological professor, he lost no opportunity of turning his throne into a pulpit and his sceptre into a controversial pen.

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Henry of France, who rarely concealed his contempt for Master Jacques, as he called him, said to the English ambassador, on receiving from him one of the King's books, and being asked what he thought of it—"It is not the business of us kings to write, but to fight. Everybody should mind his own business, but it is the vice of most men to wish to appear learned in matters of which they are ignorant."

The flatterers of James found their account in pandering to his sacerdotal and royal vanity. "I have always believed," said the Lord Chancellor, after hearing the King argue with and browbeat a Presbyterian deputation, "that the high-priesthood and royalty ought to be united, but I never witnessed the actual junction till now, after hearing the learned discourse of your Majesty." Archbishop Whitgift, grovelling still lower, declared his conviction that James, in the observations he had deigned to make, had been directly inspired by the Holy Ghost.

Nothing could be more illogical and incoherent with each other than his theological and political opinions. He imagined himself a defender of the Protestant faith, while hating Holland and fawning on the House of Austria.

In England he favoured Arminianism, because the Anglican Church recognized for its head the temporal chief of the State. In Holland he vehemently denounced the Arminians, indecently persecuting their preachers and statesmen, who were contending for exactly the same principle—the supremacy of State over Church. He sentenced Bartholomew Legate to be burned alive in Smithfield as a blasphemous heretic, and did his best to compel the States of Holland to take the life of Professor Vorstius of Leyden. He persecuted the Presbyterians in England as furiously as he defended them in Holland. He drove Bradford and Carver into the New England wilderness, and applauded Gomarus and Walaeus and the other famous leaders of the Presbyterian party in the Netherlands with all his soul and strength.

He united with the French king in negotiations for Netherland independence, while denouncing the Provinces as guilty of criminal rebellion against their lawful sovereign.

"He pretends," said Jeannin, "to assist in bringing about the peace, and nevertheless does his best openly to prevent it."

Richardot declared that the firmness of the King of Spain proceeded entirely from reliance on the promise of James that there should be no acknowledgment in the treaty of the liberty of the States. Henry wrote to Jeannin that he knew very well "what that was capable of, but that he should not be kept awake by anything he could do."

As a king he spent his reign—so much of it as could be spared from gourmandizing, drunkenness, dalliance with handsome minions of his own sex, and theological pursuits—in rescuing the Crown from dependence on Parliament; in straining to the utmost the royal prerogative; in substituting proclamations for statutes; in doing everything in his

power, in short, to smooth the path for his successor to the scaffold. As father of a family he consecrated many years of his life to the wondrous delusion of the Spanish marriages.

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The Gunpowder Plot seemed to have inspired him with an insane desire for that alliance, and few things in history are more amazing than the persistency with which he pursued the scheme, until the pursuit became not only ridiculous, but impossible.

With such a man, frivolous, pedantic, conceited, and licentious, the earnest statesmen of Holland were forced into close alliance. It is pathetic to see men like Barneveld and Hugo Grotius obliged, on great occasions of state, to use the language of respect and affection to one by whom they were hated, and whom they thoroughly despised.

But turning away from France, it was in vain for them to look for kings or men either among friends or foes. In Germany religious dissensions were gradually ripening into open war, and it would be difficult to imagine a more hopelessly incompetent ruler than the man who was nominally chief of the Holy Roman Realm. Yet the distracted Rudolph was quite as much an emperor as the chaos over which he was supposed to preside was an empire. Perhaps the very worst polity ever devised by human perverseness was the system under which the great German race was then writhing and groaning. A mad world with a lunatic to govern it; a democracy of many princes, little and big, fighting amongst each other, and falling into daily changing combinations as some masterly or mischievous hand whirled the kaleidoscope; drinking Rhenish by hogsheads, and beer by the tun; robbing churches, dictating creeds to their subjects, and breaking all the commandments themselves; a people at the bottom dimly striving towards religious freedom and political life out of abject social, ecclesiastical, and political serfdom, and perhaps even then dumbly feeling within its veins, with that prophetic instinct which never abandons great races, a far distant and magnificent Future of national unity and Imperial splendour, the very reverse of the confusion which was then the hideous Present; an Imperial family at top with many heads and slender brains; a band of brothers and cousins wrangling, intriguing, tripping up each others' heels, and unlucky Rudolph, in his Hradschin, looking out of window over the peerless Prague, spread out in its beauteous landscape of hill and dale, darkling forest, dizzy cliffs, and rushing river, at his feet, feebly cursing the unhappy city for its ingratitude to an invisible and impotent sovereign; his excellent brother Matthias meanwhile marauding through the realms and taking one crown after another from his poor bald head.

It would be difficult to depict anything more precisely what an emperor in those portentous times should not be. He collected works of art of many kinds—pictures, statues, gems. He passed his days in his galleries contemplating in solitary grandeur these treasures, or in his stables, admiring a numerous stud of horses which he never drove or rode. Ambassadors and ministers of state disguised themselves as grooms and

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stable-boys to obtain accidental glimpses of a sovereign who rarely granted audiences. His nights were passed in star-gazing with Tycho de Brake, or with that illustrious Suabian whose name is one of the great lights and treasures of the world. But it was not to study the laws of planetary motion nor to fathom mysteries of divine harmony that the monarch stood with Kepler in the observatory. The influence of countless worlds upon the destiny of one who, by capricious accident, if accident ever exists in history, had been entrusted with the destiny of so large a portion of one little world; the horoscope, not of the Universe, but of himself; such were the limited purposes with which the Kaiser looked upon the constellations.

For the Catholic Rudolph had received the Protestant Kepler, driven from Tubingen because Lutheran doctors, knowing from Holy Writ that the sun had stood still in Ajalon, had denounced his theory of planetary motion. His mother had just escaped being burned as a witch, and the world owes a debt of gratitude to the Emperor for protecting the astrologer, when enlightened theologians might, perhaps, have hanged the astronomer.

A red-faced, heavy fowled, bald-headed, somewhat goggle-eyed old gentleman, Rudolph did his best to lead the life of a hermit, and escape the cares of royalty. Timid by temperament, yet liable to fits of uncontrollable anger, he broke his furniture to pieces when irritated, and threw dishes that displeased him in his butler's face, but left affairs of state mainly to his valet, who earned many a penny by selling the Imperial signature.

He had just signed the famous "Majestatsbrief," by which he granted vast privileges to the Protestants of Bohemia, and had bitten the pen to pieces in a paroxysm of anger, after dimly comprehending the extent of the concessions which he had made.

There were hundreds of sovereign states over all of which floated the shadowy and impalpable authority of an Imperial crown scarcely fixed on the head of any one of the rival brethren and cousins; there was a confederation of Protestants, with the keen-sighted and ambitious Christian of Anhalt acting as its chief, and dreaming of the Bohemian crown; there was the just-born Catholic League, with the calm, far-seeing, and egotistical rather than self-seeking Maximilian at its head; each combination extending over the whole country, stamped with imbecility of action from its birth, and perverted and hampered by inevitable jealousies. In addition to all these furrows ploughed by the very genius of discord throughout the unhappy land was the wild and secret intrigue with which Leopold, Archduke and Bishop, dreaming also of the crown of Wenzel, was about to tear its surface as deeply as he dared.

Thus constituted were the leading powers of Europe in the earlier part of 1609—the year in which a peaceful period seemed to have begun. To those who saw the

entangled interests of individuals, and the conflict of theological dogmas and religious and political intrigue which furnished so much material out of which wide-reaching schemes of personal ambition could be spun, it must have been obvious that the interval of truce was necessarily but a brief interlude between two tragedies.

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It seemed the very mockery of Fate that, almost at the very instant when after two years' painful negotiation a truce had been made, the signal for universal discord should be sounded. One day in the early summer of 1609, Henry IV. came to the Royal Arsenal, the residence of Sully, accompanied by Zamet and another of his intimate companions. He asked for the Duke and was told that he was busy in his study. "Of course," said the King, turning to his followers, "I dare say you expected to be told that he was out shooting, or with the ladies, or at the barber's. But who works like Sully? Tell him," he said, "to come to the balcony in his garden, where he and I are not accustomed to be silent."

As soon as Sully appeared, the King observed: "Well; here the Duke of Cleve is dead, and has left everybody his heir."

It was true enough, and the inheritance was of vital importance to the world.

It was an apple of discord thrown directly between the two rival camps into which Christendom was divided. The Duchies of Cleve, Berg, and Julich, and the Counties and Lordships of Mark, Ravensberg, and Ravenstein, formed a triangle, political and geographical, closely wedged between Catholicism and Protestantism, and between France, the United Provinces, Belgium, and Germany. Should it fall into Catholic hands, the Netherlands were lost, trampled upon in every corner, hedged in on all sides, with the House of Austria governing the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt. It was vital to them to exclude the Empire from the great historic river which seemed destined to form the perpetual frontier of jealous powers and rival creeds.

Should it fall into heretic hands, the States were vastly strengthened, the Archduke Albert isolated and cut off from the protection of Spain and of the Empire. France, although Catholic, was the ally of Holland and the secret but well known enemy of the House of Austria. It was inevitable that the king of that country, the only living statesman that wore a crown, should be appealed to by all parties and should find himself in the proud but dangerous position of arbiter of Europe.

In this emergency he relied upon himself and on two men besides, Maximilian de Bethune and John of Barneveld. The conference between the King and Sully and between both and Francis Aerssens, ambassador of the States, were of almost daily occurrence. The minute details given in the adroit diplomatist's correspondence indicate at every stage the extreme deference paid by Henry to the opinion of Holland's Advocate and the confidence reposed by him in the resources and the courage of the Republic.

All the world was claiming the heritage of the duchies.

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It was only strange that an event which could not be long deferred and the consequences of which were soon to be so grave, the death of the Duke of Cleve, should at last burst like a bomb-shell on the council tables of the sovereigns and statesmen of Europe. That mischievous madman John William died childless in the spring of 1609. His sister Sibylla, an ancient and malignant spinster, had governed him and his possessions except in his lucid intervals. The mass of the population over which he ruled being Protestant, while the reigning family and the chief nobles were of the ancient faith, it was natural that the Catholic party under, the lead of Maximilian of Bavaria should deem it all-important that there should be direct issue to that family. Otherwise the inheritance on his death would probably pass to Protestant princes.

The first wife provided for him was a beautiful princess; Jacobea of Baden. The Pope blessed the nuptials, and sent the bride a golden rose, but the union was sterile and unhappy. The Duke, who was in the habit of careering through his palace in full armour, slashing at and wounding anyone that came in his way, was at last locked up. The hapless Jacobea, accused by Sibylla of witchcraft and other crimes possible and impossible, was thrown into prison. Two years long the devilish malignity of the sister-in-law was exercised upon her victim, who, as it is related, was not allowed natural sleep during all that period, being at every hour awakened by command of Sibylla. At last the Duchess was strangled in prison. A new wife was at once provided for the lunatic, Antonia of Lorraine. The two remained childless, and Sibylla at the age of forty-nine took to herself a husband, the Margrave of Burgau, of the House of Austria, the humble birth of whose mother, however, did not allow him the rank of Archduke. Her efforts thus to provide Catholic heirs to the rich domains of Clove proved as fruitless as her previous attempts.

And now Duke John William had died, and the representatives of his three dead sisters, and the living Sibylla were left to fight for the duchies.

It would be both cruel and superfluous to inflict on the reader a historical statement of the manner in which these six small provinces were to be united into a single state. It would be an equally sterile task to retrace the legal arguments by which the various parties prepared themselves to vindicate their claims, each pretender more triumphantly than the other. The naked facts alone retain vital interest, and of these facts the prominent one was the assertion of the Emperor that the duchies, constituting a fief masculine, could descend to none of the pretenders, but were at his disposal as sovereign of Germany.

On the other hand nearly all the important princes of that country sent their agents into the duchies to look after the interests real or imaginary which they claimed,

There were but four candidates who in reality could be considered serious ones.

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Mary Eleanor, eldest sister of the Duke, had been married in the lifetime of their father to Albert Frederic of Brandenburg, Duke of Prussia. To the children of this marriage was reserved the succession of the whole property in case of the masculine line becoming extinct. Two years afterwards the second sister, Anne, was married to Duke Philip Lewis, Count-Palatine of Neuburg; the children of which marriage stood next in succession to those of the eldest sister, should that become extinguished. Four years later the third sister, Magdalen, espoused the Duke John, Count-Palatine of Deux-Ponts; who, like Neuburg, made resignation of rights of succession in favour of the descendants of the Brandenburg marriage. The marriage of the youngest sister, Sibylla, with the Margrave of Burgau has been already mentioned. It does not appear that her brother, whose lunatic condition hardly permitted him to assure her the dowry which had been the price of renunciation in the case of her three elder sisters, had obtained that renunciation from her.

The claims of the childless Sibylla as well as those of the Deux-Ponts branch were not destined to be taken into serious consideration.

The real competitors were the Emperor on the one side and the Elector of Brandenburg and the Count-Palatine of Neuburg on the other.

It is not necessary to my purpose to say a single word as to the legal and historical rights of the controversy. Volumes upon volumes of forgotten lore might be consulted, and they would afford exactly as much refreshing nutriment as would the heaps of erudition hardly ten years old, and yet as antiquated as the title-deeds of the Pharaohs, concerning the claims to the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein. The fortunate house of Brandenburg may have been right or wrong in both disputes. It is certain that it did not lack a more potent factor in settling the political problems of the world in the one case any more than in the other.

But on the occasion with which we are occupied it was not on the might of his own right hand that the Elector of Brandenburg relied. Moreover, he was dilatory in appealing to the two great powers on whose friendship he must depend for the establishment of his claims: the United Republic and the King of France. James of England was on the whole inclined to believe in the rights of Brandenburg. His ambassador, however, with more prophetic vision than perhaps the King ever dreamt—of, expressed a fear lest Brandenburg should grow too great and one day come to the Imperial crown.

The States openly favoured the Elector. Henry as at first disposed towards Neuburg, but at his request Barneveld furnished a paper on the subject, by which the King seems to have been entirely converted to the pretensions of Brandenburg.

But the solution of the question had but little to do with the legal claim of any man. It was instinctively felt throughout Christendom that the great duel between the ancient

church and the spirit of the Reformation was now to be renewed upon that narrow, debateable spot.

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The Emperor at once proclaimed his right to arbitrate on the succession and to hold the territory until decision should be made; that is to say, till the Greek Kalends. His familiar and most tricky spirit, Bishop-Archduke Leopold, played at once on his fears and his resentments, against the ever encroaching, ever menacing, Protestantism of Germany, with which he had just sealed a compact so bitterly detested.

That bold and bustling prelate, brother of the Queen of Spain and of Ferdinand of Styria, took post from Prague in the middle of July. Accompanied by a certain canon of the Church and disguised as his servant, he arrived after a rapid journey before the gates of Julich, chief city and fortress of the duchies. The governor of the place, Nestelraed, inclined like most of the functionaries throughout the duchies to the Catholic cause, was delighted to recognize under the livery of the lackey the cousin and representative of the Emperor. Leopold, who had brought but five men with him, had conquered his capital at a blow. For while thus comfortably established as temporary governor of the duchies he designed through the fears or folly of Rudolph to become their sovereign lord. Strengthened by such an acquisition and reckoning on continued assistance in men and money from Spain and the Catholic League, he meant to sweep back to the rescue of the perishing Rudolph, smite the Protestants of Bohemia, and achieve his appointment to the crown of that kingdom.

The Spanish ambassador at Prague had furnished him with a handsome sum of money for the expenses of his journey and preliminary enterprise. It should go hard but funds should be forthcoming to support him throughout this audacious scheme. The champion of the Church, the sovereign prince of important provinces, the possession of which ensured conclusive triumph to the House of Austria and to Rome—who should oppose him in his path to Empire? Certainly not the moody Rudolph, the slippery and unstable Matthias, the fanatic and Jesuit-ridden Ferdinand.

“Leopold in Julich,” said Henry’s agent in Germany, “is a ferret in a rabbit warren.”

But early in the spring and before the arrival of Leopold, the two pretenders, John Sigismund, Elector of Brandenburg, and Philip Lewis, Palatine of Neuburg, had made an arrangement. By the earnest advice of Barneveld in the name of the States-General and as the result of a general council of many Protestant princes of Germany, it had been settled that those two should together provisionally hold and administer the duchies until the principal affair could be amicably settled.

The possessory princes were accordingly established in Dusseldorf with the consent of the provincial estates, in which place those bodies were wont to assemble.

Here then was Spain in the person of Leopold quietly perched in the chief citadel of the country, while Protestantism in the shape of the possessory princes stood menacingly in the capital.

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Hardly was the ink dry on the treaty which had suspended for twelve years the great religious war of forty years, not yet had the ratifications been exchanged, but the trumpet was again sounding, and the hostile forces were once more face to face.

Leopold, knowing where his great danger lay, sent a friendly message to the States-General, expressing the hope that they would submit to his arrangements until the Imperial decision should be made.

The States, through the pen and brain of Barneveld, replied that they had already recognized the rights of the possessory princes, and were surprised that the Bishop-Archduke should oppose them. They expressed the hope that, when better informed, he would see the validity of the Treaty of Dortmund. "My Lords the States-General," said the Advocate, "will protect the princes against violence and actual disturbances, and are assured that the neighbouring kings and princes will do the same. They trust that his Imperial Highness will not allow matters, to proceed to extremities."

This was language not to be mistaken. It was plain that the Republic did not intend the Emperor to decide a question of life and death to herself, nor to permit Spain, exhausted by warfare, to achieve this annihilating triumph by a petty intrigue.

While in reality the clue to what seemed to the outside world a labyrinthine maze of tangled interests and passions was firmly held in the hand of Barneveld, it was not to him nor to My Lords the States-General that the various parties to the impending conflict applied in the first resort.

Mankind were not yet sufficiently used to this young republic, intruding herself among the family of kings, to defer at once to an authority which they could not but feel.

Moreover, Henry of France was universally looked to both by friends and foes as the probable arbiter or chief champion in the great debate. He had originally been inclined to favour Neuberg, chiefly, so Aerssens thought, on account of his political weakness. The States-General on the other hand were firmly disposed for Brandenburg from the first, not only as a strenuous supporter of the Reformation and an ancient ally of their own always interested in their safety, but because the establishment of the Elector on the Rhine would roll back the Empire beyond that river. As Aerssens expressed it, they would have the Empire for a frontier, and have no longer reason to fear the Rhine.

The King, after the representations of the States, saw good ground to change his opinion and; becoming convinced that the Palatine had long been coquetting with the Austrian party, soon made no secret of his preference for Brandenburg. Subsequently Neuburg and Brandenburg fell into a violent quarrel notwithstanding an arrangement that the Palatine should marry the daughter of the Elector. In the heat of discussion Brandenburg on one occasion is said to have given his

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intended son-in-law a box on the ear! an argument 'ad hominem' which seems to have had the effect of sending the Palatine into the bosom of the ancient church and causing him to rely thenceforth upon the assistance of the League. Meantime, however, the Condominium settled by the Treaty of Dortmund continued in force; the third brother of Brandenburg and the eldest son of Neuburg sharing possession and authority at Dusseldorf until a final decision could be made.

A flock of diplomatists, professional or volunteers, openly accredited or secret, were now flying busily about through the troubled atmosphere, indicating the coming storm in which they revelled. The keen-sighted, subtle, but dangerously intriguing ambassador of the Republic, Francis Aerssens, had his hundred eyes at all the keyholes in Paris, that centre of ceaseless combination and conspiracy, and was besides in almost daily confidential intercourse with the King. Most patiently and minutely he kept the Advocate informed, almost from hour to hour, of every web that was spun, every conversation public or whispered in which important affairs were treated anywhere and by anybody. He was all-sufficient as a spy and intelligencer, although not entirely trustworthy as a counsellor. Still no man on the whole could scan the present or forecast the future more accurately than he was able to do from his advantageous position and his long experience of affairs.

There was much general jealousy between the States and the despotic king, who loved to be called the father of the Republic and to treat the Hollanders as his deeply obliged and very ungrateful and miserly little children. The India trade was a sore subject, Henry having throughout the negotiations sought to force or wheedle the States into renouncing that commerce at the command of Spain, because he wished to help himself to it afterwards, and being now in the habit of secretly receiving Isaac Le Maire and other Dutch leaders in that lucrative monopoly, who lay disguised in Paris and in the house of Zamet—but not concealed from Aerssens, who pledged himself to break, the neck of their enterprise—and were planning with the King a French East India Company in opposition to that of the Netherlands.

On the whole, however, despite these commercial intrigues which Barneveld through the aid of Aerssens was enabled to baffle, there was much cordiality and honest friendship between the two countries. Henry, far from concealing his political affection for the Republic, was desirous of receiving a special embassy of congratulation and gratitude from the States on conclusion of the truce; not being satisfied with the warm expressions of respect and attachment conveyed through the ordinary diplomatic channel.

"He wishes," wrote Aerssens to the Advocate, "a public demonstration—in order to show on a theatre to all Christendom the regard and deference of My Lords the States for his Majesty." The Ambassador suggested that Cornelis van der Myle, son-in-law of

Barneveld, soon to be named first envoy for Holland to the Venetian republic, might be selected as chief of such special embassy.

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"Without the instructions you gave me," wrote Aerssens, "Neuburg might have gained his cause in this court. Brandenburg is doing himself much injury by not soliciting the King."

"Much deference will be paid to your judgment," added the envoy, "if you see fit to send it to his Majesty."

Meantime, although the agent of Neuburg was busily dinning in Henry's ears the claims of the Palatine, and even urging old promises which, as he pretended, had been made, thanks to Barneveld, he took little by his importunity, notwithstanding that in the opinion both of Barneveld and Villeroy his claim 'stricti-juris' was the best. But it was policy and religious interests, not the strict letter of the law, that were likely to prevail. Henry, while loudly asserting that he would oppose any usurpation on the part of the Emperor or any one else against the Condominium, privately renewed to the States assurances of his intention to support ultimately the claims of Brandenburg, and notified them to hold the two regiments of French infantry, which by convention they still kept at his expense in their service, to be ready at a moment's warning for the great enterprise which he was already planning. "You would do well perhaps," wrote Aerssens to Barneveld, "to set forth the various interests in regard to this succession, and of the different relations of the claimants towards our commonwealth; but in such sort nevertheless and so dexterously that the King may be able to understand your desires, and on the other hand may see the respect you bear him in appearing to defer to his choice."

Neuburg, having always neglected the States and made advances to Archduke Albert, and being openly preferred over Brandenburg by the Austrians, who had however no intention of eventually tolerating either, could make but small headway at court, notwithstanding Henry's indignation that Brandenburg had not yet made the slightest demand upon him for assistance.

The Elector had keenly solicited the aid of the states, who were bound to him by ancient contract on this subject, but had manifested wonderful indifference or suspicion in regard to France. "These nonchalant Germans," said Henry on more than one occasion, "do nothing but sleep or drink."

It was supposed that the memory of Metz might haunt the imagination of the Elector. That priceless citadel, fraudulently extorted by Henry II. as a forfeit for assistance to the Elector of Saxony three quarters of a century before, gave solemn warning to Brandenburg of what might be exacted by a greater Henry, should success be due to his protection. It was also thought that he had too many dangers about him at home, the Poles especially, much stirred up by emissaries from Rome, making many troublesome demonstrations against the Duchy of Prussia.

It was nearly midsummer before a certain Baron Donals arrived as emissary of the Elector. He brought with him, many documents in support of the Brandenburg claims,

and was charged with excuses for the dilatoriness of his master. Much stress was laid of course on the renunciation made by Neuburg at the title of his marriage, and Henry was urged to grant his protection to the Elector in his good rights. But thus far there were few signs of any vigorous resolution for active measures in an affair which could scarcely fail to lead to war.

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"I believe," said Henry to the States ambassador, "that the right of Brandenburg is indubitable, and it is better for you and for me that he should be the man rather than Neuburg, who has always sought assistance from the House of Austria. But he is too lazy in demanding possession. It is the fault of the doctors by whom he is guided. This delay works in favour of the Emperor, whose course however is less governed by any determination of his own than by the irresolution of the princes."

Then changing the conversation, Henry asked the Ambassador whether the daughter of de Maldere, a leading statesman of Zealand, was married or of age to be married, and if she was rich; adding that they must make a match between her and Barneveld's second son, then a young gentleman in the King's service, and very much liked by him.

Two months later a regularly accredited envoy, Belin by name, arrived from the Elector. His instructions were general. He was to thank the King for his declarations in favour of the possessory princes, and against all usurpation on the part of the Spanish party. Should the religious cord be touched, he was to give assurances that no change would be made in this regard. He was charged with loads of fine presents in yellow amber, such as ewers, basins, tables, cups, chessboards, for the King and Queen, the Dauphin, the Chancellor, Villeroy, Sully, Bouillon, and other eminent personages. Beyond the distribution of these works of art and the exchange of a few diplomatic commonplaces, nothing serious in the way of warlike business was transacted, and Henry was a few weeks later much amused by receiving a letter from the possessory princes coolly thrown into the post-office, and addressed like an ordinary letter to a private person, in which he was requested to advance them a loan of 400,000 crowns. There was a great laugh at court at a demand made like a bill of exchange at sight upon his Majesty as if he had been a banker, especially as there happened to be no funds of the drawers in his hands. It was thought that a proper regard for the King's quality and the amount of the sum demanded required that the letter should be brought at least by an express messenger, and Henry was both diverted and indignant at these proceedings, at the months long delay before the princes had thought proper to make application for his protection, and then for this cool demand for alms on a large scale as a proper beginning of their enterprise.

Such was the languid and extremely nonchalant manner in which the early preparations for a conflict which seemed likely to set Europe in a blaze, and of which possibly few living men might witness the termination, were set on foot by those most interested in the immediate question.

Chessboards in yellow amber and a post-office order for 400,000 crowns could not go far in settling the question of the duchies in which the great problem dividing Christendom as by an abyss was involved.

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Meantime, while such were the diplomatic beginnings of the possessory princes, the League was leaving no stone unturned to awaken Henry to a sense of his true duty to the Church of which he was Eldest Son.

Don Pedro de Toledo's mission in regard to the Spanish marriages had failed because Henry had spurned the condition which was unequivocally attached to them on the part of Spain, the king's renunciation of his alliance with the Dutch Republic, which then seemed an equivalent to its ruin. But the treaty of truce and half-independence had been signed at last by the States and their ancient master, and the English and French negotiators had taken their departure, each receiving as a present for concluding the convention 20,000 livres from the Archdukes, and 30,000 from the States-General. Henry, returning one summer's morning from the chase and holding the Count of Soissons by one hand and Ambassador Aerssens by the other, told them he had just received letters from Spain by which he learned that people were marvellously rejoiced at the conclusion of the truce. Many had regretted that its conditions were so disadvantageous and so little honourable to the grandeur and dignity of Spain, but to these it was replied that there were strong reasons why Spain should consent to peace on these terms rather than not have it at all. During the twelve years to come the King could repair his disasters and accumulate mountains of money in order to finish the war by the subjugation of the Provinces by force of gold.

Soissons here interrupted the King by saying that the States on their part would finish it by force of iron.

Aerssens, like an accomplished courtier, replied they would finish it by means of his Majesty's friendship.

The King continued by observing that the clear-sighted in Spain laughed at these rodomontades, knowing well that it was pure exhaustion that had compelled the King to such extremities. "I leave you to judge," said Henry, "whether he is likely to have any courage at forty-five years of age, having none now at thirty-two. Princes show what they have in them of generosity and valour at the age of twenty-five or never." He said that orders had been sent from Spain to disband all troops in the obedient Netherlands except Spaniards and Italians, telling the Archdukes that they must raise the money out of the country to content them. They must pay for a war made for their benefit, said Philip. As for him he would not furnish one maravedi.

Aerssens asked if the Archdukes would disband their troops so long as the affair of Cleve remained unsettled. "You are very lucky," replied the King, "that Europe is governed by such princes as you wot of. The King of Spain thinks of nothing but tranquillity. The Archdukes will never move except on compulsion. The Emperor, whom every one is so much afraid of in this matter, is in such plight that one of these days, and before long, he will be stripped of all his possessions. I have news that the Bohemians are ready to expel him."

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It was true enough that Rudolph hardly seemed a formidable personage. The Utraquists and Bohemian Brothers, making up nearly the whole population of the country, were just extorting religious liberty from their unlucky master in his very palace and at the point of the knife. The envoy of Matthias was in Paris demanding recognition of his master as King of Hungary, and Henry did not suspect the wonderful schemes of Leopold, the ferret in the rabbit warren of the duchies, to come to the succour of his cousin and to get himself appointed his successor and guardian.

Nevertheless, the Emperor's name had been used to protest solemnly against the entrance into Dusseldorf of the Margrave Ernest of Brandenburg and Palatine Wolfgang William of Neuburg, representatives respectively of their brother and father.

The induction was nevertheless solemnly made by the Elector-Palatine and the Landgrave of Hesse, and joint possession solemnly taken by Brandenburg and Neuburg in the teeth of the protest, and expressly in order to cut short the dilatory schemes and the artifices of the Imperial court.

Henry at once sent a corps of observation consisting of 1500 cavalry to the Luxemburg frontier by way of Toul, Mezieres, Verdun, and Metz, to guard against movements by the disbanded troops of the Archdukes, and against any active demonstration against the possessory princes on the part of the Emperor.

The 'Condominium' was formally established, and Henry stood before the world as its protector threatening any power that should attempt usurpation. He sent his agent Vidomacq to the Landgrave of Hesse with instructions to do his utmost to confirm the princes of the Union in organized resistance to the schemes of Spain, and to prevent any interference with the Condominium.

He wrote letters to the Archdukes and to the Elector of Cologne, sternly notifying them that he would permit no assault upon the princes, and meant to protect them in their rights. He sent one of his most experienced diplomatists, de Boississe, formerly ambassador in England, to reside for a year or more in the duchies as special representative of France, and directed him on his way thither to consult especially with Barneveld and the States-General as to the proper means of carrying out their joint policy either by diplomacy or, if need should be, by their united arms.

Troops began at once to move towards the frontier to counteract the plans of the Emperor's council and the secret levies made by Duchess Sibylla's husband, the Margrave of Burgau. The King himself was perpetually at Monceaux watching the movements of his cavalry towards the Luxemburg frontier, and determined to protect the princes in their possession until some definite decision as to the sovereignty of the duchies should be made.

Meantime great pressure was put upon him by the opposite party. The Pope did his best through the Nuncius at Paris directly, and through agents at Prague, Brussels, and Madrid indirectly, to awaken the King to a sense of the enormity of his conduct.

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Being a Catholic prince, it was urged, he had no right to assist heretics. It was an action entirely contrary to his duty as a Christian and of his reputation as Eldest Son of the Church. Even if the right were on the side of the princes, his Majesty would do better to strip them of it and to clothe himself with it than to suffer the Catholic faith and religion to receive such notable detriment in an affair likely to have such important consequences.

Such was some of the advice given by the Pontiff. The suggestions were subtle, for they were directed to Henry's self-interest both as champion of the ancient church and as a possible sovereign of the very territories in dispute. They were also likely, and were artfully so intended, to excite suspicion of Henry's designs in the breasts of the Protestants generally and of the possessory princes especially. Allusions indeed to the rectification of the French border in Henry II.'s time at the expense of Lorraine were very frequent. They probably accounted for much of the apparent supineness and want of respect for the King of which he complained every day and with so much bitterness.

The Pope's insinuations, however, failed to alarm him, for he had made up his mind as to the great business of what might remain to him of life; to humble the House of Austria and in doing so to uphold the Dutch Republic on which he relied for his most efficient support. The situation was a false one viewed from the traditional maxims which governed Europe. How could the Eldest Son of the Church and the chief of an unlimited monarchy make common cause with heretics and republicans against Spain and Rome? That the position was as dangerous as it was illogical, there could be but little doubt. But there was a similarity of opinion between the King and the political chief of the Republic on the great principle which was to illumine the distant future but which had hardly then dawned upon the present; the principle of religious equality. As he protected Protestants in France so he meant to protect Catholics in the duchies. Apostate as he was from the Reformed Church as he had already been from the Catholic, he had at least risen above the paltry and insolent maxim of the princely Protestantism of Germany: "Cujus regio ejus religio."

While refusing to tremble before the wrath of Rome or to incline his ear to its honeyed suggestions, he sent Cardinal Joyeuse with a special mission to explain to the Pope that while the interests of France would not permit him to allow the Spaniard's obtaining possession of provinces so near to her, he should take care that the Church received no detriment and that he should insist as a price of the succour he intended for the possessory princes that they should give ample guarantees for the liberty of Catholic worship.

There was no doubt in the mind either of Henry or of Barneveld that the secret blows attempted by Spain at the princes were in reality aimed at the Republic and at himself as her ally.

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While the Nuncius was making these exhortations in Paris, his colleague from Spain was authorized to propound a scheme of settlement which did not seem deficient in humour. At any rate Henry was much diverted with the suggestion, which was nothing less than that the decision as to the succession to the duchies should be left to a board of arbitration consisting of the King of Spain, the Emperor, and the King of France. As Henry would thus be painfully placed by himself in a hopeless minority, the only result of the scheme would be to compel him to sanction a decision sure to be directly the reverse of his own resolve. He was hardly such a schoolboy in politics as to listen to the proposal except to laugh at it.

Meantime arrived from Julich, without much parade, a quiet but somewhat pompous gentleman named Teynagel. He had formerly belonged to the Reformed religion, but finding it more to his taste or advantage to become privy councillor of the Emperor, he had returned to the ancient church. He was one of the five who had accompanied the Archduke Leopold to Julich.

That prompt undertaking having thus far succeeded so well, the warlike bishop had now despatched Teynagel on a roving diplomatic mission. Ostensibly he came to persuade Henry that, by the usages and laws of the Empire, fiefs left vacant for want of heirs male were at the disposal of the Emperor. He expressed the hope therefore of obtaining the King's approval of Leopold's position in Julich as temporary vicegerent of his sovereign and cousin. The real motive of his mission, however, was privately to ascertain whether Henry was really ready to go to war for the protection of the possessory princes, and then, to proceed to Spain. It required an astute politician, however, to sound all the shoals, quicksands, and miseries through which the French government was then steering, and to comprehend with accuracy the somewhat varying humours of the monarch and the secret schemes of the ministers who immediately surrounded him.

People at court laughed at Teynagel and his mission, and Henry treated him as a crackbrained adventurer. He announced himself as envoy of the Emperor, although he had instructions from Leopold only. He had interviews with the Chancellor and with Villeroy, and told them that Rudolf claimed the right of judge between the various pretenders to the duchies. The King would not be pleased, he observed, if the King of Great Britain should constitute himself arbiter among claimants that might make their appearance for the crown of France; but Henry had set himself up as umpire without being asked by any one to act in that capacity among the princes of Germany. The Emperor, on the contrary, had been appealed to by the Duke of Nevers, the Elector of Saxony, the Margrave of Burgau, and other liege subjects of the Imperial crown as a matter of course and of right. This policy of the King, if persisted in, said Teynagel, must lead to war. Henry might begin such a war, but he would be obliged to bequeath it to the Dauphin. He should remember that France had always been unlucky when waging war with the Empire and with the house of Austria.'

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The Chancellor and Villeroy, although in their hearts not much in love with Henry's course, answered the emissary with arrogance equal to his own that their king could finish the war as well as begin it, that he confided in his strength and the justice of his cause, and that he knew very well and esteemed very little the combined forces of Spain and the Empire. They added that France was bound by the treaty of Vervins to protect the princes, but they offered no proof of that rather startling proposition.

Meantime Teynagel was busy in demonstrating that the princes of Germany were in reality much more afraid of Henry than of the Emperor. His military movements and deep designs excited more suspicion throughout that country and all Europe than the quiet journey of Leopold and five friends by post to Julich.

He had come provided with copies of the King's private letters to the princes, and seemed fully instructed as to his most secret thoughts. For this convenient information he was supposed to be indebted to the revelations of Father Cotton, who was then in disgrace; having been detected in transmitting to the General of Jesuits Henry's most sacred confidences and confessions as to his political designs.

Fortified with this private intelligence, and having been advised by Father Cotton to carry matters with a high hand in order to inspire the French court with a wholesome awe, he talked boldly about the legitimate functions of the Emperor. To interfere with them, he assured the ministers, would lead to a long and bloody war, as neither the King nor the Archduke Albert would permit the Emperor to be trampled upon.

Peter Pecquius, the crafty and experienced agent of the Archduke at Paris, gave the bouncing envoy more judicious advice, however, than that of the Jesuit, assuring him that he would spoil his whole case should he attempt to hold such language to the King.

He was admitted to an audience of Henry at Monceaux, but found him prepared to show his teeth as Aerssens had predicted. He treated Teynagel as a mere madcap and, adventurer who had no right to be received as a public minister at all, and cut short his rodomontades by assuring him that his mind was fully made up to protect the possessory princes. Jeannin was present at the interview, although, as Aerssens well observed, the King required no pedagogue on such an occasion? Teynagel soon afterwards departed malcontent to Spain, having taken little by his abnormal legation to Henry, and being destined to find at the court of Philip as urgent demands on that monarch for assistance to the League as he was to make for Leopold and the House of Austria.

For the League, hardly yet thoroughly organized under the leadership of Maximilian of Bavaria, was rather a Catholic corral than cordial ally of the Imperial house. It was universally suspected that Henry meant to destroy and discrown the Habsburgs, and it lay not in the schemes of Maximilian to suffer the whole Catholic policy to be bound to the fortunes of that one family.

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Whether or not Henry meant to commit the anachronism and blunder of reproducing the part of Charlemagne might be doubtful. The supposed design of Maximilian to renew the glories of the House of Wittelsbach was equally vague. It is certain, however, that a belief in such ambitious schemes on the part of both had been insinuated into the ears of Rudolf, and had sunk deeply into his unsettled mind.

Scarcely had Teynagel departed than the ancient President Richardot appeared upon the scene. "The mischievous old monkey," as he had irreverently been characterized during the Truce negotiations, "who showed his tail the higher he climbed," was now trembling at the thought that all the good work he had been so laboriously accomplishing during the past two years should be annihilated. The Archdukes, his masters, being sincerely bent on peace, had deputed him to Henry, who, as they believed, was determined to rekindle war. As frequently happens in such cases, they were prepared to smooth over the rough and almost impassable path to a cordial understanding by comfortable and cheap commonplaces concerning the blessings of peace, and to offer friendly compromises by which they might secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers of making it.

They had been solemnly notified by Henry that he would go to war rather than permit the House of Austria to acquire the succession to the duchies. They now sent Richardot to say that neither the Archdukes nor the King of Spain would interfere in the matter, and that they hoped the King of France would not prevent the Emperor from exercising his rightful functions of judge.

Henry, who knew that Don Baltasar de Cuniga, Spanish ambassador at the Imperial court, had furnished Leopold, the Emperor's cousin, with 50,000 crowns to defray his first expenses in the Julich expedition, considered that the veteran politician had come to perform a school boy's task. He was more than ever convinced by this mission of Richardot that the Spaniards had organized the whole scheme, and he was likely only to smile at any propositions the President might make.

At the beginning of his interview, in which the King was quite alone, Richardot asked if he would agree to maintain neutrality like the King of Spain and the Archdukes, and allow the princes to settle their business with the Emperor.

"No," said the King.

He then asked if Henry would assist them in their wrong.

"No," said the King.

He then asked if the King thought that the princes had justice on their side, and whether, if the contrary were shown, he would change his policy?

Henry replied that the Emperor could not be both judge and party in the suit and that the King of Spain was plotting to usurp the provinces through the instrumentality of his brother-in-law Leopold and under the name of the Emperor. He would not suffer it, he said.

“Then there will be a general war,” replied Richardot, since you are determined to assist these princes.”

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"Be it so," said the King.

"You are right," said the President, "for you are a great and puissant monarch, having all the advantages that could be desired, and in case of rupture I fear that all this immense power will be poured out over us who are but little princes."

"Cause Leopold to retire then and leave the princes in their right," was the reply. "You will then have nothing to fear. Are you not very unhappy to live under those poor weak archdukes? Don't you foresee that as soon as they die you will lose all the little you have acquired in the obedient Netherlands during the last fifty years?"

The President had nothing to reply to this save that he had never approved of Leopold's expedition, and that when Spaniards make mistakes they always had recourse to their servants to repair their faults. He had accepted this mission inconsiderately, he said, inspired by a hope to conjure the rising storms mingled with fears as to the result which were now justified. He regretted having come, he said.

The King shrugged his shoulders.

Richardot then suggested that Leopold might be recognized in Julich, and the princes at Dusseldorf, or that all parties might retire until the Emperor should give his decision.

All these combinations were flatly refused by the King, who swore that no one of the House of Austria should ever perch in any part of those provinces. If Leopold did not withdraw at once, war was inevitable.

He declared that he would break up everything and dare everything, whether the possessory princes formally applied to him or not. He would not see his friends oppressed nor allow the Spaniard by this usurpation to put his foot on the throat of the States-General, for it was against them that this whole scheme was directed.

To the President's complaints that the States-General had been moving troops in Gelderland, Henry replied at once that it was done by his command, and that they were his troops.

With this answer Richardot was fain to retire crestfallen, mortified, and unhappy. He expressed repentance and astonishment at the result, and protested that those peoples were happy whose princes understood affairs. His princes were good, he said, but did not give themselves the trouble to learn their business.

Richardot then took his departure from Paris, and very soon afterwards from the world. He died at Arras early in September, as many thought of chagrin at the ill success of his mission, while others ascribed it to a surfeit of melons and peaches.

"Senectus edam maorbus est," said Aerssens with Seneca.

Henry said he could not sufficiently wonder at these last proceedings at his court, of a man he had deemed capable and sagacious, but who had been committing an irreparable blunder. He had never known two such impertinent ambassadors as Don Pedro de Toledo and Richardot on this occasion. The one had been entirely ignorant of the object of his mission; the other had shown a vain presumption in thinking he could drive him from his fixed purpose by a flood of words. He had accordingly answered him on the spot without consulting his council, at which poor Richardot had been much amazed.

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And now another envoy appeared upon the scene, an ambassador coming directly from the Emperor. Count Hohenzollern, a young man, wild, fierce, and arrogant, scarcely twenty-three years of age, arrived in Paris on the 7th of September, with a train of forty horsemen.

De Colly, agent of the Elector-Palatine, had received an outline of his instructions, which the Prince of Anhalt had obtained at Prague. He informed Henry that Hohenzollern would address him thus: "You are a king. You would not like that the Emperor should aid your subjects in rebellion. He did not do this in the time of the League, although often solicited to do so. You should not now sustain the princes in disobeying the Imperial decree. Kings should unite in maintaining the authority and majesty of each other." He would then in the Emperor's name urge the claims of the House of Saxony to the duchies.

Henry was much pleased with this opportune communication by de Colly of the private instructions to the Emperor's envoy, by which he was enabled to meet the wild and fierce young man with an arrogance at least equal to his own.

The interview was a stormy one. The King was alone in the gallery of the Louvre, not choosing that his words and gestures should be observed. The Envoy spoke much in the sense which de Colly had indicated; making a long argument in favour of the Emperor's exclusive right of arbitration, and assuring the King that the Emperor was resolved on war if interference between himself and his subjects was persisted in. He loudly pronounced the proceedings of the possessory princes to be utterly illegal, and contrary to all precedent. The Emperor would maintain his authority at all hazards, and one spark of war would set everything in a blaze within the Empire and without.

Henry replied sternly but in general terms, and referred him for a final answer to his council.

"What will you do," asked the Envoy, categorically, at a subsequent interview about a month later, "to protect the princes in case the Emperor constrains them to leave the provinces which they have unjustly occupied?"

"There is none but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say," replied the King. "It is enough for you to know that I will never abandon my friends in a just cause. The Emperor can do much for the general peace. He is not to lend his name to cover this usurpation."

And so the concluding interview terminated in an exchange of threats rather than with any hope of accommodation.

Hohenzollern used as high language to the ministers as to the monarch, and received payment in the same coin. He rebuked their course not very adroitly as being contrary

to the interests of Catholicism. They were placing the provinces in the hands of Protestants, he urged. It required no envoy from Prague to communicate this startling fact. Friends and foes, Villeroy and Jeannin, as well as Sully and Duplessis, knew well enough that Henry was not taking up arms for Rome. "Sir! do you look at the matter in that way?" cried Sully, indignantly. "The Huguenots are as good as the Catholics. They fight like the devil!"

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"The Emperor will never permit the, princes to remain nor Leopold to withdraw," said the Envoy to Jeannin.

Jeannin replied that the King was always ready to listen to reason, but there was no use in holding language of authority to him. It was money he would not accept.

"Fiat justitia pereat mundus," said the haggard Hohenzollern.

"Your world may perish," replied Jeannin, "but not ours. It is much better put together."

A formal letter was then written by the King to the Emperor, in which Henry expressed his desire to maintain peace and fraternal relations, but notified him that if, under any pretext whatever, he should trouble the princes in their possession, he would sustain them with all his power, being bound thereto by treaties and by reasons of state.

This letter was committed to the care of Hohenzollern, who forthwith departed, having received a present of 4000 crowns. His fierce, haggard face thus vanishes for the present from our history.

The King had taken his ground, from which there was no receding. Envoys or agents of Emperor, Pope, King of Spain, Archduke at Brussels, and Archduke at Julich, had failed to shake his settled purpose. Yet the road was far from smooth. He had thus far no ally but the States-General. He could not trust James of Great Britain. Boderie came back late in the summer from his mission to that monarch, reporting him as being favourably inclined to Brandenburg, but hoping for an amicable settlement in the duchies. No suggestion being made even by the sagacious James as to the manner in which the ferret and rabbits were to come to a compromise, Henry inferred, if it came to fighting, that the English government would refuse assistance. James had asked Boderie in fact whether his sovereign and the States, being the parties chiefly interested, would be willing to fight it out without allies. He had also sent Sir Ralph Winwood on a special mission to the Hague, to Dusseldorf, and with letters to the Emperor, in which he expressed confidence that Rudolph would approve the proceedings of the possessory princes. As he could scarcely do that while loudly claiming through his official envoy in Paris that the princes should instantly withdraw on pain of instant war, the value of the English suggestion of an amicable compromise might easily be deduced.

Great was the jealousy in France of this mission from England. That the princes should ask the interference of James while neglecting, despising, or fearing Henry, excited Henry's wrath. He was ready, and avowed his readiness, to put on armour at once in behalf of the princes, and to arbitrate on the destiny of Germany, but no one seemed ready to follow his standard. No one asked him to arbitrate. The Spanish faction wheedled and threatened by turns, in order to divert him from his purpose, while the Protestant party held aloof, and babbled of Charlemagne and of Henry II.

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He said he did not mean to assist the princes by halves, but as became a King of France, and the princes expressed suspicion of him, talked of the example of Metz, and called the Emperor their very clement lord.

It was not strange that Henry was indignant and jealous. He was holding the wolf by the ears, as he himself observed more than once. The war could not long be delayed; yet they in whose behalf it was to be waged treated him with a disrespect and flippancy almost amounting to scorn.

They tried to borrow money of him through the post, and neglected to send him an ambassador. This was most decidedly putting the cart before the oxen, so Henry said, and so thought all his friends. When they had blockaded the road to Julich, in order to cut off Leopold's supplies, they sent to request that the two French regiments in the States' service might be ordered to their assistance, Archduke Albert having threatened to open the passage by force of arms. "This is a fine stratagem," said Aerssens, "to fling the States-General headlong into the war, and, as it were, without knowing it."

But the States-General, under the guidance of Barneveld, were not likely to be driven headlong by Brandenburg and Neuburg. They managed with caution, but with perfect courage, to move side by side with Henry, and to leave the initiative to him, while showing an unfaltering front to the enemy. That the princes were lost, Spain and the Emperor triumphant, unless Henry and the States should protect them with all their strength, was as plain as a mathematical demonstration.

Yet firm as were the attitude and the language of Henry, he was thought to be hoping to accomplish much by bluster. It was certain that the bold and unexpected stroke of Leopold had produced much effect upon his mind, and for a time those admitted to his intimacy saw, or thought they saw, a decided change in his demeanour. To the world at large his language and his demonstrations were even more vehement than they had been at the outset of the controversy; but it was believed that there was now a disposition to substitute threats for action. The military movements set on foot were thought to be like the ringing of bells and firing of cannon to dissipate a thunderstorm. Yet it was treason at court to doubt the certainty of war. The King ordered new suits of armour, bought splendid chargers, and gave himself all the airs of a champion rushing to a tournament as gaily as in the earliest days of his king-errantry. He spoke of his eager desire to break a lance with Spinola, and give a lesson to the young volunteer who had sprung into so splendid a military reputation, while he had been rusting, as he thought, in pacific indolence, and envying the laurels of the comparatively youthful Maurice. Yet those most likely to be well informed believed that nothing would come of all this fire and fury.

The critics were wrong. There was really no doubt of Henry's sincerity, but his isolation was terrible. There was none true to him at home but Sully. Abroad, the States-General alone were really friendly, so far as positive agreements existed. Above all, the

intolerable tergiversations and suspicions of those most interested, the princes in possession, and their bickerings among themselves, hampered his movements.

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Treason and malice in his cabinet and household, jealousy and fear abroad, were working upon and undermining him like a slow fever. His position was most pathetic, but his purpose was fixed.

James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry, was wont to moralize on his character and his general unpopularity, while engaged in negotiations with him. He complained that in the whole affair of the truce he had sought only his particular advantage. "This is not to be wondered at in one of his nature," said the King, "who only careth to provide for the felicities of his present life, without any respect for his life to come. Indeed, the consideration of his own age and the youth of his children, the doubt of their legitimation, the strength of competitioners, and the universal hatred borne unto him, makes him seek all means of security for preventing of all dangers."

There were changes from day to day; hot and cold fits necessarily resulting from the situation. As a rule, no eminent general who has had much experience wishes to go into a new war inconsiderately and for the mere love of war. The impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants. Henry was no exception to the rule. He felt that the complications then existing, the religious, political, and dynastic elements arrayed against each other, were almost certain to be brought to a crisis and explosion by the incident of the duchies. He felt that the impending struggle was probably to be a desperate and a general one, but there was no inconsistency in hoping that the show of a vigorous and menacing attitude might suspend, defer, or entirely dissipate the impending storm.

The appearance of vacillation on his part from day to day was hardly deserving of the grave censure which it received, and was certainly in the interests of humanity.

His conferences with Sully were almost daily and marked by intense anxiety. He longed for Barneveld, and repeatedly urged that the Advocate, laying aside all other business, would come to Paris, that they might advise together thoroughly and face to face. It was most important that the combination of alliances should be correctly arranged before hostilities began, and herein lay the precise difficulty. The princes applied formally and freely to the States-General for assistance. They applied to the King of Great Britain. The agents of the opposite party besieged Henry with entreaties, and, failing in those, with threats; going off afterwards to Spain, to the Archdukes, and to other Catholic powers in search of assistance.

The States-General professed their readiness to put an army of 15,000 foot and 3000 horse in the field for the spring campaign, so soon as they were assured of Henry's determination for a rupture.

"I am fresh enough still," said he to their ambassador, "to lead an army into Cleve. I shall have a cheap bargain enough of the provinces. But these Germans do nothing but eat and sleep. They will get the profit and assign to me the trouble. No matter, I will

never suffer the aggrandizement of the House of Austria. The States-General must disband no troops, but hold themselves in readiness."

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Secretary of State Villeroy held the same language, but it was easy to trace beneath his plausible exterior a secret determination to traverse the plans of his sovereign. "The Cleve affair must lead to war," he said. "The Spaniard, considering how necessary it is for him to have a prince there at his devotion, can never quietly suffer Brandenburg and Neuburg to establish themselves in those territories. The support thus gained by the States-General would cause the loss of the Spanish Netherlands."

This was the view of Henry, too, but the Secretary of State, secretly devoted to the cause of Spain, looked upon the impending war with much aversion.

"All that can come to his Majesty from war," he said, "is the glory of having protected the right. Counterbalance this with the fatigue, the expense, and the peril of a great conflict, after our long repose, and you will find this to be buying glory too dearly."

When a Frenchman talked of buying glory too dearly, it seemed probable that the particular kind of glory was not to his taste.

Henry had already ordered the officers, then in France, of the 4000 French infantry kept in the States' service at his expense to depart at once to Holland, and he privately announced his intention of moving to the frontier at the head of 30,000 men.

'Yet not only Villeroy, but the Chancellor and the Constable, while professing opposition to the designs of Austria and friendliness to those of Brandenburg and Neuburg, deprecated this precipitate plunge into war. "Those most interested," they said, "refuse to move; fearing Austria, distrusting France. They leave us the burden and danger, and hope for the spoils themselves. We cannot play cat to their monkey. The King must hold himself in readiness to join in the game when the real players have shuffled and dealt the cards. It is no matter to us whether the Spaniard or Brandenburg or anyone else gets the duchies. The States-General require a friendly sovereign there, and ought to say how much they will do for that result."

The Constable laughed at the whole business. Coming straight from the Louvre, he said "there would be no serious military movement, and that all those fine freaks would evaporate in air."

But Sully never laughed. He was quietly preparing the ways and means for the war, and he did not intend, so far as he had influence, that France should content herself with freaks and let Spain win the game. Alone in the council he maintained that "France had gone too far to recede without sacrifice of reputation."—"The King's word is engaged both within and without," he said. "Not to follow it with deeds would be dangerous to the kingdom. The Spaniard will think France afraid of war. We must strike a sudden blow, either to drive the enemy away or to crush him at once. There is no time for delay. The Netherlands must prevent the aggrandizement of Austria or consent to their own ruin."

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Thus stood the game therefore. The brother of Brandenburg and son of Neuburg had taken possession of Dusseldorf.

The Emperor, informed of this, ordered them forthwith to decamp. He further summoned all pretenders to the duchies to appear before him, in person or by proxy, to make good their claims. They refused and appealed for advice and assistance to the States-General. Barneveld, aware of the intrigues of Spain, who disguised herself in the drapery of the Emperor, recommended that the Estates of Cleve, Julich, Berg, Mark, Ravensberg, and Ravenstein, should be summoned in Dusseldorf. This was done and a resolution taken to resist any usurpation.

The King of France wrote to the Elector of Cologne, who, by directions of Rome and by means of the Jesuits, had been active in the intrigue, that he would not permit the princes to be disturbed.

The Archduke Leopold suddenly jumped into the chief citadel of the country and published an edict of the Emperor. All the proceedings were thereby nullified as illegal and against the dignity of the realm and the princes proclaimed under ban.

A herald brought the edict and ban to the princes in full assembly. The princes tore it to pieces on the spot. Nevertheless they were much frightened, and many members of the Estates took themselves off; others showing an inclination to follow.

The princes sent forth with a deputation to the Hague to consult My Lords the States-General. The States-General sent an express messenger to Paris. Their ambassador there sent him back a week later, with notice of the King's determination to risk everything against everything to preserve the rights of the princes. It was added that Henry required to be solicited by them, in order not by volunteer succour to give cause for distrust as to his intentions. The States-General were further apprised by the King that his interests and theirs were so considerable in the matter that they would probably be obliged to go into a brisk and open war, in order to prevent the Spaniard from establishing himself in the duchies. He advised them to notify the Archdukes in Brussels that they would regard the truce as broken if, under pretext of maintaining the Emperor's rights, they should molest the princes. He desired them further to send their forces at once to the frontier of Gelderland under Prince Maurice, without committing any overt act of hostility, but in order to show that both the King and the States were thoroughly in earnest.

The King then sent to Archduke Albert, as well as to the Elector of Cologne, and despatched a special envoy to the King of Great Britain.

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Immediately afterwards came communications from Barneveld to Henry, with complete adhesion to the King's plans. The States would move in exact harmony with him, neither before him nor after him, which was precisely what he wished. He complained bitterly to Aerssens, when he communicated the Advocate's despatches, of the slothful and timid course of the princes. He ascribed it to the arts of Leopold, who had written and inspired many letters against him insinuating that he was secretly in league and correspondence with the Emperor; that he was going to the duchies simply in the interest of the Catholics; that he was like Henry II. only seeking to extend the French frontier; and Leopold, by these intrigues and falsehoods, had succeeded in filling the princes with distrust, and they had taken umbrage at the advance of his cavalry.

Henry professed himself incapable of self-seeking or ambition. He meant to prevent the aggrandizement of Austria, and was impatient at the dilatoriness and distrust of the princes.

"All their enemies are rushing to the King of Spain. Let them address themselves to the King of France," he said, "for it is we two that must play this game."

And when at last they did send an embassy, they prefaced it by a post letter demanding an instant loan, and with an intimation that they would rather have his money than his presence!

Was it surprising that the King's course should seem occasionally wavering when he found it so difficult to stir up such stagnant waters into honourable action? Was it strange that the rude and stern Sully should sometimes lose his patience, knowing so much and suspecting more of the foul designs by which his master was encompassed, of the web of conspiracy against his throne, his life, and his honour, which was daily and hourly spinning?

"We do nothing and you do nothing," he said one day to Aerssens. "You are too soft, and we are too cowardly. I believe that we shall spoil everything, after all. I always suspect these sudden determinations of ours. They are of bad augury. We usually founder at last when we set off so fiercely at first. There are words enough on every side, but there will be few deeds. There is nothing to be got out of the King of Great Britain, and the King of Spain will end by securing these provinces for himself by a treaty." Sully knew better than this, but he did not care to let even the Dutch envoy know, as yet, the immense preparations he had been making for the coming campaign.

The envoys of the possessory princes, the Counts Solms, Colonel Pallandt, and Dr. Steyntgen, took their departure, after it had been arranged that final measures should be concerted at the general congress of the German Protestants to be held early in the ensuing year at Hall, in Suabia.

At that convention de Boississe would make himself heard on the part of France, and the representatives of the States-General, of Venice, and Savoy, would also be present.

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Meantime the secret conferences between Henry and his superintendent of finances and virtual prime minister were held almost every day. Scarcely an afternoon passed that the King did not make his appearance at the Arsenal, Sully's residence, and walk up and down the garden with him for hours, discussing the great project of which his brain was full. This great project was to crush for ever the power of the Austrian house; to drive Spain back into her own limits, putting an end to her projects for universal monarchy; and taking the Imperial crown from the House of Habsburg. By thus breaking up the mighty cousinship which, with the aid of Rome, overshadowed Germany and the two peninsulas, besides governing the greater part of both the Indies, he meant to bring France into the preponderant position over Christendom which he believed to be her due.

It was necessary, he thought, for the continued existence of the Dutch commonwealth that the opportunity should be taken once for all, now that a glorious captain commanded its armies and a statesman unrivalled for experience, insight, and patriotism controlled its politics and its diplomacy, to drive the Spaniard out of the Netherlands.

The Cleve question, properly and vigorously handled, presented exactly the long desired opportunity for carrying out these vast designs.

The plan of assault upon Spanish power was to be threefold. The King himself at the head of 35,000 men, supported by Prince Maurice and the States' forces amounting to at least 14,000, would move to the Rhine and seize the duchies. The Duke de la Force would command the army of the Pyrenees and act in concert with the Moors of Spain, who roused to frenzy by their expulsion from the kingdom could be relied on for a revolt or at least a most vigorous diversion. Thirdly, a treaty with the Duke of Savoy by which Henry accorded his daughter to the Duke's eldest son, the Prince of Piedmont, a gift of 100,000 crowns, and a monthly pension during the war of 50,000 crowns a month, was secretly concluded.

Early in the spring the Duke was to take the field with at least 10,000 foot and 1200 horse, supported by a French army of 12,000 to 15,000 men under the experienced Marshal de Lesdiguières. These forces were to operate against the Duchy of Milan with the intention of driving the Spaniards out of that rich possession, which the Duke of Savoy claimed for himself, and of assuring to Henry the dictatorship of Italy. With the cordial alliance of Venice, and by playing off the mutual jealousies of the petty Italian princes, like Florence, Mantua, Montserrat, and others, against each other and against the Pope, it did not seem doubtful to Sully that the result would be easily accomplished. He distinctly urged the wish that the King should content himself with political influence, with the splendid position of holding all Italy dependent upon his will and guidance, but without annexing a particle of territory to his own crown.

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It was Henry's intention, however, to help himself to the Duchy of Savoy, and to the magnificent city and port of Genoa as a reward to himself for the assistance, matrimonial alliance, and aggrandizement which he was about to bestow upon Charles Emmanuel. Sully strenuously opposed these self-seeking views on the part of his sovereign, however, constantly placing before him the far nobler aim of controlling the destinies of Christendom, of curbing what tended to become omnipotent, of raising up and protecting that which had been abased, of holding the balance of empire with just and steady hand in preference to the more vulgar and commonplace ambition of annexing a province or two to the realms of France.

It is true that these virtuous homilies, so often preached by him against territorial aggrandizement in one direction, did not prevent him from indulging in very extensive visions of it in another. But the dreams pointed to the east rather than to the south. It was Sully's policy to swallow a portion not of Italy but of Germany. He persuaded his master that the possessory princes, if placed by the help of France in the heritage which they claimed, would hardly be able to maintain themselves against the dangers which surrounded them except by a direct dependence upon France. In the end the position would become an impossible one, and it would be easy after the war was over to indemnify Brandenburg with money and with private property in the heart of France for example, and obtain the cession of those most coveted provinces between the Meuse and the Weser to the King. "What an advantage for France," whispered Sully, "to unite to its power so important a part of Germany. For it cannot be denied that by accepting the succour given by the King now those princes oblige themselves to ask for help in the future in order to preserve their new acquisition. Thus your Majesty will make them pay for it very dearly."

Thus the very virtuous self-denial in regard to the Duke of Savoy did not prevent a secret but well developed ambition at the expense of the Elector of Brandenburg. For after all it was well enough known that the Elector was the really important and serious candidate. Henry knew full well that Neuburg was depending on the Austrians and the Catholics, and that the claims of Saxony were only put forward by the Emperor in order to confuse the princes and excite mutual distrust.

The King's conferences with the great financier were most confidential, and Sully was as secret as the grave. But Henry never could keep a secret even when it concerned his most important interests, and nothing would serve him but he must often babble of his great projects even to their minutest details in presence of courtiers and counsellors whom in his heart he knew to be devoted to Spain and in receipt of pensions from her king. He would boast to them of the blows by which he meant to demolish Spain and the whole house of Austria, so that there should

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be no longer danger to be feared from that source to the tranquillity and happiness of Europe, and he would do this so openly and in presence of those who, as he knew, were perpetually setting traps for him and endeavouring to discover his deepest secrets as to make Sully's hair stand on end. The faithful minister would pluck his master by the cloak at times, and the King, with the adroitness which never forsook him when he chose to employ it, would contrive to extricate himself from a dilemma and pause at the brink of tremendous disclosures.—[Memoires de Sully, t. vii. p. 324.]—But Sully could not be always at his side, nor were the Nuncius or Don Inigo de Cardenas or their confidential agents and spies always absent. Enough was known of the general plan, while as to the probability of its coming into immediate execution, perhaps the enemies of the King were often not more puzzled than his friends.

But what the Spanish ambassador did not know, nor the Nuncius, nor even the friendly Aerssens, was the vast amount of supplies which had been prepared for the coming conflict by the finance minister. Henry did not know it himself. “The war will turn on France as on a pivot,” said Sully; “it remains to be seen if we have supplies and money enough. I will engage if the war is not to last more than three years and you require no more than 40,000 men at a time that I will show you munitions and ammunition and artillery and the like to such an extent that you will say, ‘It is enough.’”

“As to money—”

“How much money have I got?” asked the King; “a dozen millions?”

“A little more than that,” answered the Minister.

“Fourteen millions?”

“More still.”

“Sixteen?” continued the King.

“More yet,” said Sully.

And so the King went on adding two millions at each question until thirty millions were reached, and when the question as to this sum was likewise answered in the affirmative, he jumped from his chair, hugged his minister around the neck, and kissed him on both cheeks.

“I want no more than that,” he cried.

Sully answered by assuring him that he had prepared a report showing a reserve of forty millions on which he might draw for his war expenses, without in the least degree infringing on the regular budget for ordinary expenses.

The King was in a transport of delight, and would have been capable of telling the story on the spot to the Nuncius had he met him that afternoon, which fortunately did not occur.

But of all men in Europe after the faithful Sully, Henry most desired to see and confer daily and secretly with Barneveld. He insisted vehemently that, neglecting all other business, he should come forthwith to Paris at the head of the special embassy which it had been agreed that the States should send. No living statesman, he said, could compare to Holland's Advocate in sagacity, insight, breadth of view, knowledge of mankind and of great affairs, and none he knew was more sincerely attached to his person or felt more keenly the value of the French alliance.

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With him he indeed communicated almost daily through the medium of Aerssens, who was in constant receipt of most elaborate instructions from Barneveld, but he wished to confer with him face to face, so that there would be no necessity of delay in sending back for instructions, limitations, and explanation. No man knew better than the King did that so far as foreign affairs were concerned the States-General were simply Barneveld.

On the 22nd January the States' ambassador had a long and secret interview with the King.' He informed him that the Prince of Anhalt had been assured by Barneveld that the possessory princes would be fully supported in their position by the States, and that the special deputies of Archduke Albert, whose presence at the Hague made Henry uneasy, as he regarded them as perpetual spies, had been dismissed. Henry expressed his gratification. They are there, he said, entirely in the interest of Leopold, who has just received 500,000 crowns from the King of Spain, and is to have that sum annually, and they are only sent to watch all your proceedings in regard to Cleve.

The King then fervently pressed the Ambassador to urge Barneveld's coming to Paris with the least possible delay. He signified his delight with Barneveld's answer to Anhalt, who thus fortified would be able to do good service at the assembly at Hall. He had expected nothing else from Barneveld's sagacity, from his appreciation of the needs of Christendom, and from his affection for himself. He told the Ambassador that he was anxiously waiting for the Advocate in order to consult with him as to all the details of the war. The affair of Cleve, he said, was too special a cause. A more universal one was wanted. The King preferred to begin with Luxemburg, attacking Charlemont or Namur, while the States ought at the same time to besiege Venlo, with the intention afterwards of uniting with the King in laying siege to Maestricht.

He was strong enough, he said, against all the world, but he still preferred to invite all princes interested to join him in putting down the ambitious and growing power of Spain. Cleve was a plausible pretext, but the true cause, he said, should be found in the general safety of Christendom.

Boississe had been sent to the German princes to ascertain whether and to what extent they would assist the King. He supposed that once they found him engaged in actual warfare in Luxemburg, they would get rid of their jealousy and panic fears of him and his designs. He expected them to furnish at least as large a force as he would supply as a contingent.

For it was understood that Anhalt as generalissimo of the German forces would command a certain contingent of French troops, while the main army of the King would be led by himself in person.

Henry expressed the conviction that the King of Spain would be taken by surprise finding himself attacked in three places and by three armies at once, he believing that

the King of France was entirely devoted to his pleasures and altogether too old for warlike pursuits, while the States, just emerging from the misery of their long and cruel conflict, would be surely unwilling to plunge headlong into a great and bloody war.

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Henry inferred this, he said, from observing the rude and brutal manner in which the soldiers in the Spanish Netherlands were now treated. It seemed, he said, as if the Archdukes thought they had no further need of them, or as if a stamp of the foot could raise new armies out of the earth. "My design," continued the King, "is the more likely to succeed as the King of Spain, being a mere gosling and a valet of the Duke of Lerma, will find himself stripped of all his resources and at his wits' end; unexpectedly embarrassed as he will be on the Italian side, where we shall be threatening to cut the jugular vein of his pretended universal monarchy."

He intimated that there was no great cause for anxiety in regard to the Catholic League just formed at Wurzburg. He doubted whether the King of Spain would join it, and he had learned that the Elector of Cologne was making very little progress in obtaining the Emperor's adhesion. As to this point the King had probably not yet thoroughly understood that the Bavarian League was intended to keep clear of the House of Habsburg, Maximilian not being willing to identify the success of German Catholicism with the fortunes of that family.

Henry expressed the opinion that the King of Spain, that is to say, his counsellors, meant to make use of the Emperor's name while securing all the profit, and that Rudolph quite understood their game, while Matthias was sure to make use of this opportunity, supported by the Protestants of Bohemia, Austria, and Moravia, to strip the Emperor of the last shred of Empire.

The King was anxious that the States should send a special embassy at once to the King of Great Britain. His ambassador, de la Boderie, gave little encouragement of assistance from that quarter, but it was at least desirable to secure his neutrality. "'Tis a prince too much devoted to repose," said Henry, "to be likely to help in this war, but at least he must not be allowed to traverse our great designs. He will probably refuse the league offensive and defensive which I have proposed to him, but he must be got, if possible, to pledge himself to the defensive. I mean to assemble my army on the frontier, as if to move upon Julich, and then suddenly sweep down on the Meuse, where, sustained by the States' army and that of the princes, I will strike my blows and finish my enterprise before our adversary has got wind of what is coming. We must embark James in the enterprise if we can, but at any rate we must take measures to prevent his spoiling it."

Henry assured the Envoy that no one would know anything of the great undertaking but by its effect; that no one could possibly talk about it with any knowledge except himself, Sully, Villeroy, Barneveld, and Aerssens. With them alone he conferred confidentially, and he doubted not that the States would embrace this opportunity to have done for ever with the Spaniards. He should take the field in person, he said, and with several powerful armies would sweep the enemy away from the Meuse, and after obtaining control of that river would quietly take possession of the sea-coast of Flanders, shut up

Archduke Albert between the States and the French, who would thus join hands and unite their frontiers.

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Again the King expressed his anxiety for Barneveld's coming, and directed the Ambassador to urge it, and to communicate to him the conversation which had just taken place. He much preferred, he said, a general war. He expressed doubts as to the Prince of Anhalt's capacity as chief in the Cleve expedition, and confessed that being jealous of his own reputation he did not like to commit his contingent of troops to the care of a stranger and one so new to his trade. The shame would fall on himself, not on Anhalt in case of any disaster. Therefore, to avoid all petty jealousies and inconveniences of that nature by which the enterprise might be ruined, it was best to make out of this small affair a great one, and the King signified his hope that the Advocate would take this view of the case and give him his support. He had plenty of grounds of war himself, and the States had as good cause of hostilities in the rupture of the truce by the usurpation attempted by Leopold with the assistance of Spain and in the name of the Emperor. He hoped, he said, that the States would receive no more deputations from Archduke Albert, but decide to settle everything at the point of the sword. The moment was propitious, and, if neglected, might never return. Marquis Spinola was about to make a journey to Spain on various matters of business. On his return, Henry said, he meant to make him prisoner as a hostage for the Prince of Conde, whom the Archdukes were harbouring and detaining. This would be the pretext, he said, but the object would be to deprive the Archdukes of any military chief, and thus to throw them into utter confusion. Count van den Berg would never submit to the authority of Don Luis de Velasco, nor Velasco to his, and not a man could come from Spain or Italy, for the passages would all be controlled by France.

Fortunately for the King's reputation, Spinola's journey was deferred, so that this notable plan for disposing of the great captain fell to the ground.

Henry agreed to leave the two French regiments and the two companies of cavalry in the States' service as usual, but stipulated in certain contingencies for their use.

Passing to another matter concerning which there had been so much jealousy on the part of the States, the formation of the French East India Company—to organize which undertaking Le Roy and Isaac Le Maire of Amsterdam had been living disguised in the house of Henry's famous companion, the financier Zamet at Paris—the King said that Barneveld ought not to envy him a participation in the great profits of this business.

Nothing would be done without consulting him after his arrival in Paris. He would discuss the matter privately with him, he said, knowing that Barneveld was a great personage, but however obstinate he might be, he felt sure that he would always yield to reason. On the other hand the King expressed his willingness to submit to the Advocate's opinions if they should seem the more just.

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On leaving the King the Ambassador had an interview with Sully, who again expressed his great anxiety for the arrival of Barneveld, and his hopes that he might come with unlimited powers, so that the great secret might not leak out through constant referring of matters back to the Provinces.

After rendering to the Advocate a detailed account of this remarkable conversation, Aerssens concluded with an intimation that perhaps his own opinion might be desired as to the meaning of all those movements developing themselves so suddenly and on so many sides.

"I will say," he observed, "exactly what the poet sings of the army of ants—

'Hi motus animorum atque haec certamina tanta
Pulveris exigui jactu contacts quiescunt.'

If the Prince of Conde comes back, we shall be more plausible than ever. If he does not come back, perhaps the consideration of the future will sweep us onwards. All have their special views, and M. de Villeroy more warmly than all the rest."

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Abstinence from inquisition into consciences and private parlour
Allowed the demon of religious hatred to enter into its body
Behead, torture, burn alive, and bury alive all heretics
Christian sympathy and a small assistance not being sufficient
Contained within itself the germs of a larger liberty
Could not be both judge and party in the suit
Covered now with the satirical dust of centuries
Deadly hatred of Puritans in England and Holland
Doctrine of predestination in its sternest and strictest sense
Emperor of Japan addressed him as his brother monarch
Estimating his character and judging his judges
Everybody should mind his own business
He was a sincere bigot
Impatience is often on the part of the non-combatants
Intense bigotry of conviction
International friendship, the self-interest of each
It was the true religion, and there was none other
James of England, who admired, envied, and hated Henry
Jealousy, that potent principle
Language which is ever living because it is dead
More fiercely opposed to each other than to Papists
None but God to compel me to say more than I choose to say



Power the poison of which it is so difficult to resist
Presents of considerable sums of money to the negotiators made
Princes show what they have in them at twenty-five or never
Putting the cart before the oxen
Religious toleration, which is a phrase of insult
Secure the prizes of war without the troubles and dangers
Senectus edam maorbus est
So much in advance of his time as to favor religious equality
The Catholic League and the Protestant Union
The truth in shortest about matters of importance
The vehicle is often prized more than the freight
There was but one king in Europe, Henry the Bearnese
There was no use in holding language of authority to him
Thirty Years' War tread on the heels of the forty years
Unimaginable outrage as the most legitimate industry
Wish to appear learned in matters of which they are ignorant

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****The Legal Small Print****

(Three Pages)

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