

Life and Death of John of Barneveld, Advocate of Holland : with a view of the primary causes and movements of the Thirty Years' War, 1613-15 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, 1613-15 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 91

Life of John of Barneveld, 1613-15

CHAPTER IX.

Aerssens remains Two Years longer in France—Derives many Personal Advantages from his Post—He visits the States-General—Aubery du Maurier appointed French Ambassador—He demands the Recall of Aerssens—Peace of Sainte-Menehould—Asperen de Langerac appointed in Aerssens' Place.

Francis Aerssens had remained longer at his post than had been intended by the resolution of the States of Holland, passed in May 1611.

It is an exemplification of the very loose constitutional framework of the United Provinces that the nomination of the ambassador to France belonged to the States of Holland, by whom his salary was paid, although, of course, he was the servant of the States-General, to whom his public and official correspondence was addressed. His most important despatches were however written directly to Barneveld so long as he remained in power, who had also the charge of the whole correspondence, public or private, with all the envoys of the States.

Aerssens had, it will be remembered, been authorized to stay one year longer in France if he thought he could be useful there. He stayed two years, and on the whole was not useful. He had too many eyes and too many ears. He had become mischievous by the very activity of his intelligence. He was too zealous. There were occasions in France at that moment in which it was as well to be blind and deaf. It was impossible for the Republic, unless driven to it by dire necessity, to quarrel with its great ally. It had been calculated by Duplessis-Mornay that France had paid subsidies to the Provinces amounting from first to last to 200

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millions of livres. This was an enormous exaggeration. It was Barneveld's estimate that before the truce the States had received from France eleven millions of florins in cash, and during the truce up to the year 1613, 3,600,000 in addition, besides a million still due, making a total of about fifteen millions. During the truce France kept two regiments of foot amounting to 4200 soldiers and two companies of cavalry in Holland at the service of the States, for which she was bound to pay yearly 600,000 livres. And the Queen-Regent had continued all the treaties by which these arrangements were secured, and professed sincere and continuous friendship for the States. While the French-Spanish marriages gave cause for suspicion, uneasiness, and constant watchfulness in the States, still the neutrality of France was possible in the coming storm. So long as that existed, particularly when the relations of England with Holland through the unfortunate character of King James were perpetually strained to a point of imminent rupture, it was necessary to hold as long as it was possible to the slippery embrace of France.

But Aerssens was almost aggressive in his attitude. He rebuked the vacillations, the shortcomings, the imbecility, of the Queen's government in offensive terms. He consorted openly with the princes who were on the point of making war upon the Queen-Regent. He made a boast to the Secretary of State Villeroy that he had unravelled all his secret plots against the Netherlands. He declared it to be understood in France, since the King's death, by the dominant and Jesuitical party that the crown depended temporally as well as spiritually on the good pleasure of the Pope.

No doubt he was perfectly right in many of his opinions. No ruler or statesman in France worthy of the name would hesitate, in the impending religious conflict throughout Europe and especially in Germany, to maintain for the kingdom that all controlling position which was its splendid privilege. But to preach this to Mary de' Medici was waste of breath. She was governed by the Concini's, and the Concini's were governed by Spain. The woman who was believed to have known beforehand of the plot to murder her great husband, who had driven the one powerful statesman on whom the King relied, Maximilian de Bethune, into retirement, and whose foreign affairs were now completely in the hands of the ancient Leaguer Villeroy—who had served every government in the kingdom for forty years—was not likely to be accessible to high views of public policy.

Two years had now elapsed since the first private complaints against the Ambassador, and the French government were becoming impatient at his presence. Aerssens had been supported by Prince Maurice, to whom he had long paid his court. He was likewise loyally protected by Barneveld, whom he publicly flattered and secretly maligned. But it was now necessary that he should be gone if peaceful relations with France were to be preserved.

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After all, the Ambassador had not made a bad business of his embassy from his own point of view. A stranger in the Republic, for his father the Greffier was a refugee from Brabant, he had achieved through his own industry and remarkable talents, sustained by the favour of Barneveld—to whom he owed all his diplomatic appointments—an eminent position in Europe. Secretary to the legation to France in 1594, he had been successively advanced to the post of resident agent, and when the Republic had been acknowledged by the great powers, to that of ambassador. The highest possible functions that representatives of emperors and kings could enjoy had been formally recognized in the person of the minister of a new-born republic. And this was at a moment when, with exception of the brave but insignificant cantons of Switzerland, the Republic had long been an obsolete idea.

In a pecuniary point of view, too, he had not fared badly during his twenty years of diplomatic office. He had made much money in various ways. The King not long before his death sent him one day 20,000 florins as a present, with a promise soon to do much more for him.

Having been placed in so eminent a post, he considered it as due to himself to derive all possible advantage from it. “Those who serve at the altar,” he said a little while after his return, “must learn to live by it. I served their High Mightinesses at the court of a great king, and his Majesty’s liberal and gracious favours were showered upon me. My upright conscience and steady obsequiousness greatly aided me. I did not look upon opportunity with folded arms, but seized it and made my profit by it. Had I not met with such fortunate accidents, my office would not have given me dry bread.”

Nothing could exceed the frankness and indeed the cynicism with which the Ambassador avowed his practice of converting his high and sacred office into merchandise. And these statements of his should be scanned closely, because at this very moment a cry was distantly rising, which at a later day was to swell into a roar, that the great Advocate had been bribed and pensioned. Nothing had occurred to justify such charges, save that at the period of the truce he had accepted from the King of France a fee of 20,000 florins for extra official and legal services rendered him a dozen years before, and had permitted his younger son to hold the office of gentleman-in-waiting at the French court with the usual salary attached to it. The post, certainly not dishonourable in itself, had been intended by the King as a kindly compliment to the leading statesman of his great and good ally the Republic. It would be difficult to say why such a favour conferred on the young man should be held more discreditable to the receiver than the Order of the Garter recently bestowed upon the great soldier of the Republic by another friendly sovereign. It is instructive however to note the language in which Francis Aerssens spoke of favours and money bestowed by a foreign monarch upon himself, for Aerssens had come back from his embassy full of gall and bitterness against Barneveld. Thenceforth he was to be his evil demon.

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"I didn't inherit property," said this diplomatist. "My father and mother, thank God, are yet living. I have enjoyed the King's liberality. It was from an ally, not an enemy, of our country. Were every man obliged to give a reckoning of everything he possesses over and above his hereditary estates, who in the government would pass muster? Those who declare that they have served their country in her greatest trouble, and lived in splendid houses and in service of princes and great companies and the like on a yearly salary of 4000 florins, may not approve these maxims."

It should be remembered that Barneveld, if this was a fling at the Advocate, had acquired a large fortune by marriage, and, although certainly not averse from gathering gear, had, as will be seen on a subsequent page, easily explained the manner in which his property had increased. No proof was ever offered or attempted of the anonymous calumnies levelled at him in this regard.

"I never had the management of finances," continued Aerssens. "My profits I have gained in foreign parts. My condition of life is without excess, and in my opinion every means are good so long as they are honourable and legal. They say my post was given me by the Advocate. Ergo, all my fortune comes from the Advocate. Strenuously to have striven to make myself agreeable to the King and his counsellors, while fulfilling my office with fidelity and honour, these are the arts by which I have prospered, so that my splendour dazzles the eyes of the envious. The greediness of those who believe that the sun should shine for them alone was excited, and so I was obliged to resign the embassy."

So long as Henry lived, the Dutch ambassador saw him daily, and at all hours, privately, publicly, when he would. Rarely has a foreign envoy at any court, at any period of history, enjoyed such privileges of being useful to his government. And there is no doubt that the services of Aerssens had been most valuable to his country, notwithstanding his constant care to increase his private fortune through his public opportunities. He was always ready to be useful to Henry likewise. When that monarch same time before the truce, and occasionally during the preliminary negotiations for it, had formed a design to make himself sovereign of the Provinces, it was Aerssens who charged himself with the scheme, and would have furthered it with all his might, had the project not met with opposition both from the Advocate and the Stadholder. Subsequently it appeared probable that Maurice would not object to the sovereignty himself, and the Ambassador in Paris, with the King's consent, was not likely to prove himself hostile to the Prince's ambition.

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"There is but this means alone," wrote Jeannini to Villeroy, "that can content him, although hitherto he has done like the rowers, who never look toward the place whither they wish to go." The attempt of the Prince to sound Barneveld on this subject through the Princess-Dowager has already been mentioned, and has much intrinsic probability. Thenceforward, the republican form of government, the municipal oligarchies, began to consolidate their power. Yet although the people as such were not sovereigns, but subjects, and rarely spoken of by the aristocratic magistrates save with a gentle and patronizing disdain, they enjoyed a larger liberty than was known anywhere else in the world. Buzenval was astonished at the "infinite and almost unbridled freedom" which he witnessed there during his embassy, and which seemed to him however "without peril to the state."

The extraordinary means possessed by Aerssens to be important and useful vanished with the King's death. His secret despatches, painting in sombre and sarcastic colours the actual condition of affairs at the French court, were sent back in copy to the French court itself. It was not known who had played the Ambassador this vilest of tricks, but it was done during an illness of Barneveld, and without his knowledge. Early in the year 1613 Aerssens resolved, not to take his final departure, but to go home on leave of absence. His private intention was to look for some substantial office of honour and profit at home. Failing of this, he meant to return to Paris. But with an eye to the main chance as usual, he ingeniously caused it to be understood at court, without making positive statements to that effect, that his departure was final. On his leavetaking, accordingly, he received larger presents from the crown than had been often given to a retiring ambassador. At least 20,000 florins were thus added to the frugal store of profits on which he prided himself. Had he merely gone away on leave of absence, he would have received no presents whatever. But he never went back. The Queen-Regent and her ministers were so glad to get rid of him, and so little disposed, in the straits in which they found themselves, to quarrel with the powerful republic, as to be willing to write very complimentary public letters to the States, concerning the character and conduct of the man whom they so much detested.

Pluming himself upon these, Aerssens made his appearance in the Assembly of the States-General, to give account by word of mouth of the condition of affairs, speaking as if he had only come by permission of their Mightinesses for temporary purposes. Two months later he was summoned before the Assembly, and ordered to return to his post.

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Meantime a new French ambassador had arrived at the Hague, in the spring of 1613. Aubery du Maurier, a son of an obscure country squire, a Protestant, of moderate opinions, of a sincere but rather obsequious character, painstaking, diligent, and honest, had been at an earlier day in the service of the turbulent and intriguing Due de Bouillon. He had also been employed by Sully as an agent in financial affairs between Holland and France, and had long been known to Villeroy. He was living on his estate, in great retirement from all public business, when Secretary Villeroy suddenly proposed him the embassy to the Hague. There was no more important diplomatic post at that time in Europe. Other countries were virtually at peace, but in Holland, notwithstanding the truce, there was really not much more than an armistice, and great armies lay in the Netherlands, as after a battle, sleeping face to face with arms in their hands. The politics of Christendom were at issue in the open, elegant, and picturesque village which was the social capital of the United Provinces. The gentry from Spain, Italy, the south of Europe, Catholic Germany, had clustered about Spinola at Brussels, to learn the art of war in his constant campaigning against Maurice. English and Scotch officers, Frenchmen, Bohemians, Austrians, youths from the Palatinate and all Protestant countries in Germany, swarmed to the banners of the prince who had taught the world how Alexander Farnese could be baffled, and the great Spinola outmanoeuvred. Especially there was a great number of Frenchmen of figure and quality who thronged to the Hague, besides the officers of the two French regiments which formed a regular portion of the States' army. That army was the best appointed and most conspicuous standing force in Europe. Besides the French contingent there were always nearly 30,000 infantry and 3000 cavalry on a war footing, splendidly disciplined, experienced, and admirably armed. The navy, consisting of thirty war ships, perfectly equipped and manned, was a match for the combined marine forces of all Europe, and almost as numerous.

When the Ambassador went to solemn audience of the States-General, he was attended by a brilliant group of gentlemen and officers, often to the number of three hundred, who volunteered to march after him on foot to honour their sovereign in the person of his ambassador; the Envoy's carriage following empty behind. Such were the splendid diplomatic processions often received by the stately Advocate in his plain civic garb, when grave international questions were to be publicly discussed.

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There was much murmuring in France when the appointment of a personage comparatively so humble to a position so important was known. It was considered as a blow aimed directly at the malcontent princes of the blood, who were at that moment plotting their first levy of arms against the Queen. Du Maurier had been ill-treated by the Due de Bouillon, who naturally therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured to the government to which he was accredited. Being the agent of Mary de' Medici, he was, of course, described as a tool of the court and a secret pensioner of Spain. He was to plot with the arch traitor Barneveld as to the best means for distracting the Provinces and bringing them back into Spanish subjection. Du Maurier, being especially but secretly charged to prevent the return of Francis Aerssens to Paris, incurred of course the enmity of that personage and of the French grandees who ostentatiously protected him. It was even pretended by Jeannin that the appointment of a man so slightly known to the world, so inexperienced in diplomacy, and of a parentage so little distinguished, would be considered an affront by the States-General.

But on the whole, Villeroy had made an excellent choice. No safer man could perhaps have been found in France for a post of such eminence, in circumstances so delicate, and at a crisis so grave. The man who had been able to make himself agreeable and useful, while preserving his integrity, to characters so dissimilar as the refining, self-torturing, intellectual Duplessis-Mornay, the rude, aggressive, and straightforward Sully, the deep-revolving, restlessly plotting Bouillon, and the smooth, silent, and tortuous Villeroy—men between whom there was no friendship, but, on the contrary, constant rancour—had material in him to render valuable services at this particular epoch. Everything depended on patience, tact, watchfulness in threading the distracting, almost inextricable, maze which had been created by personal rivalries, ambitions, and jealousies in the state he represented and the one to which he was accredited. "I ascribe it all to God," he said, in his testament to his children, "the impenetrable workman who in His goodness has enabled me to make myself all my life obsequious, respectful, and serviceable to all, avoiding as much as possible, in contenting some, not to discontent others." He recommended his children accordingly to endeavour "to succeed in life by making themselves as humble, intelligent, and capable as possible."

This is certainly not a very high type of character, but a safer one for business than that of the arch intriguer Francis Aerssens. And he had arrived at the Hague under trying circumstances. Unknown to the foreign world he was now entering, save through the disparaging rumours concerning him, sent thither in advance by the powerful personages arrayed against his government, he might have sunk under such a storm at the outset, but for the incomparable kindness and friendly aid of the Princess-Dowager, Louise de Coligny. "I had need of her protection and recommendation as much as of life," said du Maurier; "and she gave them in such excess as to annihilate an infinity of calumnies which envy had excited against me on every side." He had also a most difficult and delicate matter to arrange at the very moment of his arrival.

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For Aerssens had done his best not only to produce a dangerous division in the politics of the Republic, but to force a rupture between the French government and the States. He had carried matters before the assembly with so high a hand as to make it seem impossible to get rid of him without public scandal. He made a parade of the official letters from the Queen-Regent and her ministers, in which he was spoken of in terms of conventional compliment. He did not know, and Barneveld wished, if possible, to spare him the annoyance of knowing, that both Queen and ministers, so soon as informed that there was a chance of coming back to them, had written letters breathing great repugnance to him and intimating that he would not be received. Other high personages of state had written to express their resentment at his duplicity, perpetual mischief-making, and machinations against the peace of the kingdom, and stating the impossibility of his resuming the embassy at Paris. And at last the queen wrote to the States-General to say that, having heard their intention to send him back to a post "from which he had taken leave formally and officially," she wished to prevent such a step. "We should see M. Aerssens less willingly than comports with our friendship for you and good neighbourhood. Any other you could send would be most welcome, as M. du Maurier will explain to you more amply."

And to du Maurier himself she wrote distinctly, "Rather than suffer the return of the said Aerssens, you will declare that for causes which regard the good of our affairs and our particular satisfaction we cannot and will not receive him in the functions which he has exercised here, and we rely too implicitly upon the good friendship of My Lords the States to do anything in this that would so much displease us."

And on the same day Villeroy privately wrote to the Ambassador, "If, in spite of all this, Aerssens should endeavour to return, he will not be received, after the knowledge we have of his factious spirit, most dangerous in a public personage in a state such as ours and in the minority of the King."

Meantime Aerssens had been going about flaunting letters in everybody's face from the Duc de Bouillon insisting on the necessity of his return! The fact in itself would have been sufficient to warrant his removal, for the Duke was just taking up arms against his sovereign. Unless the States meant to interfere officially and directly in the civil war about to break out in France, they could hardly send a minister to the government on recommendation of the leader of the rebellion.

It had, however, become impossible to remove him without an explosion. Barneveld, who, said du Maurier, "knew the man to his finger nails," had been reluctant to "break the ice," and wished for official notice in the matter from the Queen. Maurice protected the troublesome diplomatist. "'Tis incredible," said the French ambassador "how covertly Prince Maurice is carrying himself, contrary to his wont, in this whole affair. I don't know whether it is from simple jealousy to Barneveld, or if there is some mystery concealed below the surface."

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Du Maurier had accordingly been obliged to ask his government for distinct and official instructions. "He holds to his place," said he, "by so slight and fragile a root as not to require two hands to pluck him up, the little finger being enough. There is no doubt that he has been in concert with those who are making use of him to re-establish their credit with the States, and to embark Prince Maurice contrary to his preceding custom in a cabal with them."

Thus a question of removing an obnoxious diplomatist could hardly be graver, for it was believed that he was doing his best to involve the military chief of his own state in a game of treason and rebellion against the government to which he was accredited. It was not the first nor likely to be the last of Bouillon's deadly intrigues. But the man who had been privy to Biron's conspiracy against the crown and life of his sovereign was hardly a safe ally for his brother-in-law, the straightforward stadholder.

The instructions desired by du Maurier and by Barneveld had, as we have seen, at last arrived. The French ambassador thus fortified appeared before the Assembly of the States-General and officially demanded the recall of Aerssens. In a letter addressed privately and confidentially to their Mightinesses, he said, "If in spite of us you throw him at our feet, we shall fling him back at your head."

At last Maurice yielded to, the representations of the French envoy, and Aerssens felt obliged to resign his claims to the post. The States-General passed a resolution that it would be proper to employ him in some other capacity in order to show that his services had been agreeable to them, he having now declared that he could no longer be useful in France. Maurice, seeing that it was impossible to save him, admitted to du Maurier his unsteadiness and duplicity, and said that, if possessed of the confidence of a great king, he would be capable of destroying the state in less than a year.

But this had not always been the Prince's opinion, nor was it likely to remain unchanged. As for Villeroy, he denied flatly that the cause of his displeasure had been that Aerssens had penetrated into his most secret affairs. He protested, on the contrary, that his annoyance with him had partly proceeded from the slight acquaintance he had acquired of his policy, and that, while boasting to be better informed than any one, he was in the habit of inventing and imagining things in order to get credit for himself.

It was highly essential that the secret of this affair should be made clear; for its influence on subsequent events was to be deep and wide. For the moment Aerssens remained without employment, and there was no open rupture with Barneveld. The only difference of opinion between the Advocate and himself, he said, was whether he had or had not definitely resigned his post on leaving Paris.

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Meantime it was necessary to fix upon a successor for this most important post. The war soon after the new year had broken out in France. Conde, Bouillon, and the other malcontent princes with their followers had taken possession of the fortress of Mezieres, and issued a letter in the name of Conde to the Queen-Regent demanding an assembly of the States-General of the kingdom and rupture of the Spanish marriages. Both parties, that of the government and that of the rebellion, sought the sympathy and active succour of the States. Maurice, acting now in perfect accord with the Advocate, sustained the Queen and execrated the rebellion of his relatives with perfect frankness. Conde, he said, had got his head stuffed full of almanacs whose predictions he wished to see realized. He vowed he would have shortened by a head the commander of the garrison who betrayed Mezieres, if he had been under his control. He forbade on pain of death the departure of any officer or private of the French regiments from serving the rebels, and placed the whole French force at the disposal of the Queen, with as many Netherland regiments as could be spared. One soldier was hanged and three others branded with the mark of a gibbet on the face for attempting desertion. The legal government was loyally sustained by the authority of the States, notwithstanding all the intrigues of Aerssens with the agents of the princes to procure them assistance. The mutiny for the time was brief, and was settled on the 15th of May 1614, by the peace of Sainte-Menehould, as much a caricature of a treaty as the rising had been the parody of a war. Van der Myle, son-in-law of Barneveld, who had been charged with a special and temporary mission to France, brought back the terms, of the convention to the States-General. On the other hand, Conde and his confederates sent a special agent to the Netherlands to give their account of the war and the negotiation, who refused to confer either with du Maurier or Barneveld, but who held much conference with Aerssens.

It was obvious enough that the mutiny of the princes would become chronic. In truth, what other condition was possible with two characters like Mary de' Medici and the Prince of Conde respectively at the head of the government and the revolt? What had France to hope for but to remain the bloody playground for mischievous idiots, who threw about the firebrands and arrows of reckless civil war in pursuit of the paltriest of personal aims?

Van der Myle had pretensions to the vacant place of Aerssens. He had some experience in diplomacy. He had conducted skilfully enough the first mission of the States to Venice, and had subsequently been employed in matters of moment. But he was son-in-law to Barneveld, and although the Advocate was certainly not free from the charge of nepotism, he shrank from the reproach of having apparently removed Aerssens to make a place for one of his own family.

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Van der Myle remained to bear the brunt of the late ambassador's malice, and to engage at a little later period in hottest controversy with him, personal and political. "Why should van der Myle strut about, with his arms akimbo like a peacock?" complained Aerssens one day in confused metaphor. A question not easy to answer satisfactorily.

The minister selected was a certain Baron Asperen de Langerac, wholly unversed in diplomacy or other public affairs, with abilities not above the average. A series of questions addressed by him to the Advocate, the answers to which, scrawled on the margin of the paper, were to serve for his general instructions, showed an ingenuousness as amusing as the replies of Barneveld were experienced and substantial.

In general he was directed to be friendly and respectful to every one, to the Queen-Regent and her counsellors especially, and, within the limits of becoming reverence for her, to cultivate the good graces of the Prince of Conde and the other great nobles still malcontent and rebellious, but whose present movement, as Barneveld foresaw, was drawing rapidly to a close. Langerac arrived in Paris on the 5th of April 1614.

Du Maurier thought the new ambassador likely to "fall a prey to the specious language and gentle attractions of the Due de Bouillon." He also described him as very dependent upon Prince Maurice. On the other hand Langerac professed unbounded and almost childlike reverence for Barneveld, was devoted to his person, and breathed as it were only through his inspiration. Time would show whether those sentiments would outlast every possible storm.

CHAPTER X

Weakness of the Rulers of France and England—The Wisdom of Barneveld inspires Jealousy—Sir Dudley Carleton succeeds Winwood—Young Neuburg under the Guidance of Maximilian—Barneveld strives to have the Treaty of Xanten enforced—Spain and the Emperor wish to make the States abandon their Position with regard to the Duchies—The French Government refuses to aid the States—Spain and the Emperor resolve to hold Wesel—The great Religious War begun—The Protestant Union and Catholic League both wish to secure the Border Provinces—Troubles in Turkey—Spanish Fleet seizes La Roche—Spain places large Armies on a War Footing.

Few things are stranger in history than the apathy with which the wide designs of the Catholic party were at that moment regarded. The preparations for the immense struggle which posterity learned to call the Thirty Years' War, and to shudder when speaking of it, were going forward on every side. In truth the war had really begun, yet those most deeply menaced by it at the outset looked on with innocent calmness because their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze. The passage of arms in the

duchies, the outlines of which have just been indicated, and which was the natural sequel of the campaign carried

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out four years earlier on the same territory, had been ended by a mockery. In France, reduced almost to imbecility by the absence of a guiding brain during a long minority, fallen under the distaff of a dowager both weak and wicked, distracted by the intrigues and quarrels of a swarm of self-seeking grandees, and with all its offices, from highest to lowest, of court, state, jurisprudence, and magistracy, sold as openly and as cynically as the commonest wares, there were few to comprehend or to grapple with the danger. It should have seemed obvious to the meanest capacity in the kingdom that the great house of Austria, reigning supreme in Spain and in Germany, could not be allowed to crush the Duke of Savoy on the one side, and Bohemia, Moravia, and the Netherlands on the other without danger of subjection for France. Yet the aim of the Queen-Regent was to cultivate an impossible alliance with her inevitable foe.

And in England, ruled as it then was with no master mind to enforce against its sovereign the great lessons of policy, internal and external, on which its welfare and almost its imperial existence depended, the only ambition of those who could make their opinions felt was to pursue the same impossibility, intimate alliance with the universal foe.

Any man with slightest pretensions to statesmanship knew that the liberty for Protestant worship in Imperial Germany, extorted by force, had been given reluctantly, and would be valid only as long as that force could still be exerted or should remain obviously in reserve. The "Majesty-Letter" and the "Convention" of the two religions would prove as flimsy as the parchment on which they were engrossed, the Protestant churches built under that sanction would be shattered like glass, if once the Catholic rulers could feel their hands as clear as their consciences would be for violating their sworn faith to heretics. Men knew, even if the easy-going and uxorious emperor, into which character the once busy and turbulent Archduke Matthias had subsided, might be willing to keep his pledges, that Ferdinand of Styria, who would soon succeed him, and Maximilian of Bavaria were men who knew their own minds, and had mentally never resigned one inch of the ground which Protestantism imagined itself to have conquered.

These things seem plain as daylight to all who look back upon them through the long vista of the past; but the sovereign of England did not see them or did not choose to see them. He saw only the Infanta and her two millions of dowry, and he knew that by calling Parliament together to ask subsidies for an anti-Catholic war he should ruin those golden matrimonial prospects for his son, while encouraging those "shoemakers," his subjects, to go beyond their "last," by consulting the representatives of his people on matters pertaining to the mysteries of government. He was slowly digging the grave of the monarchy and building the scaffold of his son; but he did his work

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with a laborious and pedantic trifling, when really engaged in state affairs, most amazing to contemplate. He had no penny to give to the cause in which his nearest relatives were so deeply involved and for which his only possible allies were pledged; but he was ready to give advice to all parties, and with ludicrous gravity imagined himself playing the umpire between great contending hosts, when in reality he was only playing the fool at the beck of masters before whom he quaked.

"You are not to vilipend my counsel," said he one day to a foreign envoy. "I am neither a camel nor an ass to take up all this work on my shoulders. Where would you find another king as willing to do it as I am?"

The King had little time and no money to give to serve his own family and allies and the cause of Protestantism, but he could squander vast sums upon worthless favourites, and consume reams of paper on controverted points of divinity. The appointment of Vorstius to the chair of theology in Leyden aroused more indignation in his bosom, and occupied more of his time, than the conquests of Spinola in the duchies, and the menaces of Spain against Savoy and Bohemia. He perpetually preached moderation to the States in the matter of the debateable territory, although moderation at that moment meant submission to the House of Austria. He chose to affect confidence in the good faith of those who were playing a comedy by which no statesman could be deceived, but which had secured the approbation of the Solomon of the age.

But there was one man who was not deceived. The warnings and the lamentations of Barneveld sound to us out of that far distant time like the voice of an inspired prophet. It is possible that a portion of the wrath to come might have been averted had there been many men in high places to heed his voice. I do not wish to exaggerate the power and wisdom of the man, nor to set him forth as one of the greatest heroes of history. But posterity has done far less than justice to a statesman and sage who wielded a vast influence at a most critical period in the fate of Christendom, and uniformly wielded it to promote the cause of temperate human liberty, both political and religious. Viewed by the light of two centuries and a half of additional experience, he may appear to have made mistakes, but none that were necessarily disastrous or even mischievous. Compared with the prevailing idea of the age in which he lived, his schemes of polity seem to dilate into large dimensions, his sentiments of religious freedom, however limited to our modern ideas, mark an epoch in human progress, and in regard to the general commonwealth of Christendom, of which he was so leading a citizen, the part he played was a lofty one. No man certainly understood the tendency of his age more exactly, took a broader and more comprehensive view than he did of the policy necessary to preserve the largest portion of the results of the past three-quarters of a century,

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or had pondered the relative value of great conflicting forces more skilfully. Had his counsels been always followed, had illustrious birth placed him virtually upon a throne, as was the case with William the Silent, and thus allowed him occasionally to carry out the designs of a great mind with almost despotic authority, it might have been better for the world. But in that age it was royal blood alone that could command unflinching obedience without exciting personal rivalry. Men quailed before his majestic intellect, but hated him for the power which was its necessary result. They already felt a stupid delight in cavilling at his pedigree. To dispute his claim to a place among the ancient nobility to which he was an honour was to revenge themselves for the rank he unquestionably possessed side by side in all but birth with the kings and rulers of the world. Whether envy and jealousy be vices more incident to the republican form of government than to other political systems may be an open question. But it is no question whatever that Barneveld's every footstep from this period forward was dogged by envy as patient as it was devouring. Jealousy stuck to him like his shadow. We have examined the relations which existed between Winwood and himself; we have seen that ambassador, now secretary of state for James, never weary in denouncing the Advocate's haughtiness and grim resolution to govern the country according to its laws rather than at the dictate of a foreign sovereign, and in flinging forth malicious insinuations in regard to his relations to Spain. The man whose every hour was devoted in spite of a thousand obstacles strewn by stupidity, treachery, and apathy, as well as by envy, hatred, and bigotry—to the organizing of a grand and universal league of Protestantism against Spain, and to rolling up with strenuous and sometimes despairing arms a dead mountain weight, ever ready to fall back upon and crush him, was accused in dark and mysterious whispers, soon to grow louder and bolder, of a treacherous inclination for Spain.

There is nothing less surprising nor more sickening for those who observe public life, and wish to retain faith in the human species, than the almost infinite power of the meanest of passions.

The Advocate was obliged at the very outset of Langerac's mission to France to give him a warning on this subject.

"Should her Majesty make kindly mention of me," he said, "you will say nothing of it in your despatches as you did in your last, although I am sure with the best intentions. It profits me not, and many take umbrage at it; wherefore it is wise to forbear."

But this was a trifle. By and by there would be many to take umbrage at every whisper in his favour, whether from crowned heads or from the simplest in the social scale. Meantime he instructed the Ambassador, without paying heed to personal compliments to his chief, to do his best to keep the French government out of the hands of Spain, and with that object in view to smooth over the differences between the two great

parties in the kingdom, and to gain the confidence, if possible, of Conde and Nevers and Bouillon, while never failing in straightforward respect and loyal friendship to the Queen-Regent and her ministers, as the legitimate heads of the government.

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From England a new ambassador was soon to take the place of Winwood. Sir Dudley Carleton was a diplomatist of respectable abilities, and well trained to business and routine. Perhaps on the whole there was none other, in that epoch of official mediocrity, more competent than he to fill what was then certainly the most important of foreign posts. His course of life had in no wise familiarized him with the intricacies of the Dutch constitution, nor could the diplomatic profession, combined with a long residence at Venice, be deemed especially favourable for deep studies of the mysteries of predestination. Yet he would be found ready at the bidding of his master to grapple with Grotius and Barneveld on the field of history and law, and thread with Uytenbogaert or Taurinus all the subtleties of Arminianism and Gomarism as if he had been half his life both a regular practitioner at the Supreme Court of the Hague and professor of theology at the University of Leyden. Whether the triumphs achieved in such encounters were substantial and due entirely to his own genius might be doubtful. At all events he had a sovereign behind him who was incapable of making a mistake on any subject.

“You shall not forget,” said James in his instructions to Sir Dudley, “that you are the minister of that master whom God hath made the sole protector of his religion and you may let fall how hateful the maintaining of erroneous opinions is to the majesty of God and how displeasing to us.”

The warlike operations of 1614 had been ended by the abortive peace of Xanten. The two rival pretenders to the duchies were to halve the territory, drawing lots for the first choice, all foreign troops were to be withdrawn, and a pledge was to be given that no fortress should be placed in the hands of any power. But Spain at the last moment had refused to sanction the treaty, and everything was remitted to what might be exactly described as a state of sixes and sevens. Subsequently it was hoped that the States' troops might be induced to withdraw simultaneously with the Catholic forces on an undertaking by Spinola that there should be no re-occupation of the disputed territory either by the Republic or by Spain. But Barneveld accurately pointed out that, although the Marquis was a splendid commander and, so long as he was at the head of the armies, a most powerful potentate, he might be superseded at any moment. Count Bucquoy, for example, might suddenly appear in his place and refuse to be bound by any military arrangement of his predecessor. Then the Archduke proposed to give a guarantee that in case of a mutual withdrawal there should be no return of the troops, no recapture of garrisons. But Barneveld, speaking for the States, liked not the security. The Archduke was but the puppet of Spain, and Spain had no part in the guarantee. She held the strings, and might cause him at any moment to play what pranks she chose. It would be the easiest thing in

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the world for despotic Spain, so the Advocate thought, to reappear suddenly in force again at a moment's notice after the States' troops had been withdrawn and partially disbanded, and it would be difficult for the many-headed and many-tongued republic to act with similar promptness. To withdraw without a guarantee from Spain to the Treaty of Xanten, which had once been signed, sealed, and all but ratified, would be to give up fifty points in the game. Nothing but disaster could ensue. The Advocate as leader in all these negotiations and correspondence was ever actuated by the favourite quotation of William the Silent from Demosthenes, that the safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust. And he always distrusted in these dealings, for he was sure the Spanish cabinet was trying to make fools of the States, and there were many ready to assist it in the task. Now that one of the pretenders, temporary master of half the duchies, the Prince of Neuburg, had espoused both Catholicism and the sister of the Archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Bavaria, it would be more safe than ever for Spain to make a temporary withdrawal. Maximilian of Bavaria was beyond all question the ablest and most determined leader of the Catholic party in Germany, and the most straightforward and sincere. No man before or since his epoch had, like him, been destined to refuse, and more than once refuse, the Imperial crown.

Through his apostasy the Prince of Neuburg was in danger of losing his hereditary estates, his brothers endeavouring to dispossess him on the ground of the late duke's will, disinheriting any one of his heirs who should become a convert to Catholicism. He had accordingly implored aid from the King of Spain. Archduke Albert had urged Philip to render such assistance as a matter of justice, and the Emperor had naturally declared that the whole right as eldest son belonged, notwithstanding the will, to the Prince.

With the young Neuburg accordingly under the able guidance of Maximilian, it was not likely that the grasp of the Spanish party upon these all-important territories would be really loosened. The Emperor still claimed the right to decide among the candidates and to hold the provinces under sequestration till the decision should be made—that was to say, until the Greek Kalends. The original attempt to do this through Archduke Leopold had been thwarted, as we have seen, by the prompt movements of Maurice sustained by the policy of Barneveld. The Advocate was resolved that the Emperor's name should not be mentioned either in the preamble or body of the treaty. And his course throughout the simulations, which were never negotiations, was perpetually baffled as much by the easiness and languor of his allies as the ingenuity of the enemy.

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He was reproached with the loss of Wesel, that Geneva of the Rhine, which would never be abandoned by Spain if it was not done forthwith. Let Spain guarantee the Treaty of Xanten, he said, and then she cannot come back. All else is illusion. Moreover, the Emperor had given positive orders that Wesel should not be given up. He was assured by Villeroy that France would never put on her harness for Aachen, that cradle of Protestantism. That was for the States-General to do, whom it so much more nearly concerned. The whole aim of Barneveld was not to destroy the Treaty of Xanten, but to enforce it in the only way in which it could be enforced, by the guarantee of Spain. So secured, it would be a barrier in the universal war of religion which he foresaw was soon to break out. But it was the resolve of Spain, instead of pledging herself to the treaty, to establish the legal control of the territory in the hand of the Emperor. Neuburg complained that Philip in writing to him did not give him the title of Duke of Julich and Cleve, although he had been placed in possession of those estates by the arms of Spain. Philip, referring to Archduke Albert for his opinion on this subject, was advised that, as the Emperor had not given Neuburg the investiture of the duchies, the King was quite right in refusing him the title. Even should the Treaty of Xanten be executed, neither he nor the Elector of Brandenburg would be anything but administrators until the question of right was decided by the Emperor.

Spain had sent Neuburg the Order of the Golden Fleece as a reward for his conversion, but did not intend him to be anything but a man of straw in the territories which he claimed by sovereign right. They were to form a permanent bulwark to the Empire, to Spain, and to Catholicism.

Barneveld of course could never see the secret letters passing between Brussels and Madrid, but his insight into the purposes of the enemy was almost as acute as if the correspondence of Philip and Albert had been in the pigeonholes of his writing-desk in the Kneuterdyk.

The whole object of Spain and the Emperor, acting through the Archduke, was to force the States to abandon their positions in the duchies simultaneously with the withdrawal of the Spanish troops, and to be satisfied with a bare convention between themselves and Archduke Albert that there should be no renewed occupation by either party. Barneveld, finding it impossible to get Spain upon the treaty, was resolved that at least the two mediating powers, their great allies, the sovereigns of Great Britain and France, should guarantee the convention, and that the promises of the Archduke should be made to them. This was steadily refused by Spain; for the Archduke never moved an inch in the matter except according to the orders of Spain, and besides battling and buffeting with the Archduke, Barneveld was constantly deafened with the clamour of the English king, who always declared Spain to be in the right whatever she did, and forced to endure with what patience he might the goading of that King's envoy. France, on the other hand, supported the States as firmly as could have been reasonably expected.

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"We proposed," said the Archduke, instructing an envoy whom he was sending to Madrid with detailed accounts of these negotiations, "that the promise should be made to each other as usual in treaties. But the Hollanders said the promise should be made to the Kings of France and England, at which the Emperor would have been deeply offended, as if in the affair he was of no account at all. At any moment by this arrangement in concert with France and England the Hollanders might walk in and do what they liked."

Certainly there could have been no succincter eulogy of the policy steadily recommended, as we shall have occasion to see, by Barneveld. Had he on this critical occasion been backed by England and France combined, Spain would have been forced to beat a retreat, and Protestantism in the great general war just beginning would have had an enormous advantage in position. But the English Solomon could not see the wisdom of this policy. "The King of England says we are right," continued the Archduke, "and has ordered his ambassador to insist on our view. The French ambassador here says that his colleague at the Hague has similar instructions, but admits that he has not acted up to them. There is not much chance of the Hollanders changing. It would be well that the King should send a written ultimatum that the Hollanders should sign the convention which we propose. If they don't agree, the world at least will see that it is not we who are in fault."

The world would see, and would never have forgiven a statesman in the position of Barneveld, had he accepted a bald agreement from a subordinate like the Archduke, a perfectly insignificant personage in the great drama then enacting, and given up guarantees both from the Archduke's master and from the two great allies of the Republic. He stood out manfully against Spain and England at every hazard, and under a pelting storm of obloquy, and this was the man whose designs the English secretary of state had dared to describe "as of no other nature than to cause the Provinces to relapse into the hands of Spain."

It appeared too a little later that Barneveld's influence with the French government, owing to his judicious support of it so long as it was a government, had been decidedly successful. Drugged as France was by the Spanish marriage treaty, she was yet not so sluggish nor spell-bound as the King of Great Britain.

"France will not urge upon the Hollanders to execute the proposal as we made it," wrote the Archduke to the King, "so negotiations are at a standstill. The Hollanders say it is better that each party should remain with what each possesses. So that if it does not come to blows, and if these insolences go on as they have done, the Hollanders will be gaining and occupying more territory every day."

Thus once more the ancient enemies and masters of the Republic were making the eulogy of the Dutch statesman. It was impossible at present for the States to regain

Wesel, nor that other early stronghold of the Reformation, the old Imperial city of Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle). The price to be paid was too exorbitant.

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The French government had persistently refused to assist the States and possessory princes in the recovery of this stronghold. The Queen-Regent was afraid of offending Spain, although her government had induced the citizens of the place to make the treaty now violated by that country. The Dutch ambassador had been instructed categorically to enquire whether their Majesties meant to assist Aachen and the princes if attacked by the Archdukes. "No," said Villeroy; "we are not interested in Aachen, 'tis too far off. Let them look for assistance to those who advised their mutiny."

To the Ambassador's remonstrance that France was both interested in and pledged to them, the Secretary of State replied, "We made the treaty through compassion and love, but we shall not put on harness for Aachen. Don't think it. You, the States and the United Provinces, may assist them if you like."

The Envoy then reminded the Minister that the States-General had always agreed to go forward evenly in this business with the Kings of Great Britain and France and the united princes, the matter being of equal importance to all. They had given no further pledge than this to the Union.

It was plain, however, that France was determined not to lift a finger at that moment. The Duke of Bouillon and those acting with him had tried hard to induce their Majesties "to write seriously to the Archduke in order at least to intimidate him by stiff talk," but it was hopeless. They thought it was not a time then to quarrel with their neighbour and give offence to Spain.

So the stiff talk was omitted, and the Archduke was not intimidated. The man who had so often intimidated him was in his grave, and his widow was occupied in marrying her son to the Infanta. "These are the first-fruits," said Aerssens, "of the new negotiations with Spain."

Both the Spanish king and the Emperor were resolved to hold Wesel to the very last. Until the States should retire from all their positions on the bare word of the Archduke, that the Spanish forces once withdrawn would never return, the Protestants of those two cities must suffer. There was no help for it. To save them would be to abandon all. For no true statesman could be so ingenuous as thus to throw all the cards on the table for the Spanish and Imperial cabinet to shuffle them at pleasure for a new deal. The Duke of Neuburg, now Catholic and especially protected by Spain, had become, instead of a pretender with more or less law on his side, a mere standard-bearer and agent of the Great Catholic League in the debateable land. He was to be supported at all hazard by the Spanish forces, according to the express command of Philip's government, especially now that his two brothers with the countenance of the States were disputing his right to his hereditary dominions in Germany.

The Archduke was sullen enough at what he called the weak-mindedness of France. Notwithstanding that by express orders from Spain he had sent 5000 troops under

command of Juan de Rivas to the Queen's assistance just before the peace of Sainte-Menehould, he could not induce her government to take the firm part which the English king did in browbeating the Hollanders.

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"Tis certain," he complained, "that if, instead of this sluggishness on the part of France, they had done us there the same good services we have had from England, the Hollanders would have accepted the promise just as it was proposed by us." He implored the King, therefore, to use his strongest influence with the French government that it should strenuously intervene with the Hollanders, and compel them to sign the proposal which they rejected. "There is no means of composition if France does not oblige them to sign," said Albert rather piteously.

But it was not without reason that Barneveld had in many of his letters instructed the States' ambassador, Langerac, "to caress the old gentleman" (meaning and never naming Villeroy), for he would prove to be in spite of all obstacles a good friend to the States, as he always had been. And Villeroy did hold firm. Whether the Archduke was right or not in his conviction, that, if France would only unite with England in exerting a strong pressure on the Hollanders, they would evacuate the duchies, and so give up the game, the correspondence of Barneveld shows very accurately. But the Archduke, of course, had not seen that correspondence.

The Advocate knew what was plotting, what was impending, what was actually accomplished, for he was accustomed to sweep the whole horizon with an anxious and comprehensive glance. He knew without requiring to read the secret letters of the enemy that vast preparations for an extensive war against the Reformation were already completed. The movements in the duchies were the first drops of a coming deluge. The great religious war which was to last a generation of mankind had already begun; the immediate and apparent pretext being a little disputed succession to some petty sovereignties, the true cause being the necessity for each great party—the Protestant Union and the Catholic League—to secure these border provinces, the possession of which would be of such inestimable advantage to either. If nothing decisive occurred in the year 1614, the following year would still be more convenient for the League. There had been troubles in Turkey. The Grand Vizier had been murdered. The Sultan was engaged in a war with Persia. There was no eastern bulwark in Europe to the ever menacing power of the Turk and of Mahometanism in Europe save Hungary alone. Supported and ruled as that kingdom was by the House of Austria, the temper of the populations of Germany had become such as to make it doubtful in the present conflict of religious opinions between them and their rulers whether the Turk or the Spaniard would be most odious as an invader. But for the moment, Spain and the Emperor had their hands free. They were not in danger of an attack from below the Danube. Moreover, the Spanish fleet had been achieving considerable successes on the Barbary coast, having seized La Roche, and one or two important citadels, useful both against

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the corsairs and against sudden attacks by sea from the Turk. There were at least 100,000 men on a war footing ready to take the field at command of the two branches of the House of Austria, Spanish and German. In the little war about Montserrat, Savoy was on the point of being crushed, and Savoy was by position and policy the only possible ally, in the south, of the Netherlands and of Protestant Germany.

While professing the most pacific sentiments towards the States, and a profound anxiety to withdraw his troops from their borders, the King of Spain, besides daily increasing those forces, had just raised 4,000,000 ducats, a large portion of which was lodged with his bankers in Brussels. Deeds like those were of more significance than sugared words.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Almost infinite power of the meanest of passions
Ludicrous gravity
Safest citadel against an invader and a tyrant is distrust
Their own roofs were not quite yet in a blaze
Therefore now denounced the man whom he had injured

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