

FRIEDRICH VON SCHILLER

THE THIRTY YEARS WAR —
VOLUME 02

Friedrich Schiller

The Thirty Years War — Volume 02

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The Thirty Years War — Volume 02

BOOK II

The resolution which Ferdinand now adopted, gave to the war a new direction, a new scene, and new actors. From a rebellion in Bohemia, and the chastisement of rebels, a war extended first to Germany, and afterwards to Europe. It is, therefore, necessary to take a general survey of the state of affairs both in Germany and the rest of Europe.

Unequally as the territory of Germany and the privileges of its members were divided among the Roman Catholics and the Protestants, neither party could hope to maintain itself against the encroachments of its adversary otherwise than by a prudent use of its peculiar advantages, and by a politic union among themselves. If the Roman Catholics were the more numerous party, and more favoured by the constitution of the empire, the Protestants, on the other hand, had the advantage of possessing a more compact and populous line of territories, valiant princes, a warlike nobility, numerous armies, flourishing free towns, the command of the sea, and even at the worst, certainty of support from Roman Catholic states. If the Catholics could arm Spain and Italy in their favour, the republics of Venice, Holland, and England, opened their treasures to the Protestants, while the states of the North and the formidable power of Turkey, stood ready to afford them prompt assistance. Brandenburg, Saxony, and the Palatinate, opposed three Protestant to three Ecclesiastical votes in the Electoral College; while to the Elector of Bohemia, as to the Archduke of Austria, the possession of the Imperial dignity was an important check, if the Protestants properly availed themselves of it. The sword of the Union might keep within its sheath the sword of the League; or if matters actually came to a war, might make the issue of it doubtful. But, unfortunately, private interests dissolved the band of union which should have held together the Protestant members of the empire. This critical conjuncture found none but second-rate actors on the political stage, and the decisive moment was neglected because the courageous were deficient in power, and the powerful in sagacity, courage, and resolution.

The Elector of Saxony was placed at the head of the German Protestants, by the services of his ancestor Maurice, by the extent of his territories, and by the influence of his electoral vote. Upon the resolution he might adopt, the fate of the contending parties seemed to depend; and John George was not insensible to the advantages which this important situation procured him. Equally valuable as an ally, both to the Emperor and to the Protestant Union, he cautiously avoided committing himself to either party; neither trusting himself by any irrevocable declaration entirely to the gratitude of the Emperor, nor renouncing the advantages which were to be gained from his fears. Uninfected by the contagion of religious and romantic enthusiasm which hurried sovereign after sovereign to risk both crown and life on the hazard of war, John George aspired to the more solid renown of improving and advancing the interests of his territories. His cotemporaries accused him of forsaking the Protestant cause in the very midst of the storm; of preferring the aggrandizement of his house to the emancipation of his country; of exposing the whole Evangelical or Lutheran church of Germany to ruin, rather than raise an arm in defence of the Reformed or Calvinists; of injuring the common cause by his suspicious friendship more seriously than the open enmity of its avowed opponents. But it would have been well if his accusers had imitated the wise policy of the Elector. If, despite of the prudent policy, the Saxons, like all others, groaned at the cruelties which marked the Emperor's progress; if all Germany was a witness how Ferdinand deceived his confederates and trifled with his engagements; if even the Elector himself at last perceived this — the more shame to the Emperor who could so basely betray such implicit confidence.

If an excessive reliance on the Emperor, and the hope of enlarging his territories, tied the hands of the Elector of Saxony, the weak George William, Elector of Brandenburg, was still more shamefully fettered by fear of Austria, and of the loss of his dominions. What was made a reproach against these princes would have preserved to the Elector Palatine his fame and his kingdom. A rash confidence in his untried strength, the influence of French counsels, and the temptation of a crown, had seduced that unfortunate prince into an enterprise for which he had neither adequate genius nor political capacity. The partition of his territories among discordant princes, enfeebled the Palatinate, which, united, might have made a longer resistance.

This partition of territory was equally injurious to the House of Hesse, in which, between Darmstadt and Cassel, religious dissensions had occasioned a fatal division. The line of Darmstadt, adhering to the Confession of Augsburg, had placed itself under the Emperor's protection, who favoured it at the expense of the Calvinists of Cassel. While his religious confederates were shedding their blood for their faith and their liberties, the Landgrave of Darmstadt was won over by the Emperor's gold. But William of Cassel, every way worthy of his ancestor who, a century before, had defended the freedom of Germany against the formidable Charles V., espoused the cause of danger and of honour. Superior to that pusillanimity which made far more powerful princes bow before Ferdinand's might, the Landgrave William was the first to join the hero of Sweden, and to set an example to the princes of Germany which all had hesitated to begin. The boldness of his resolve was equalled by the steadfastness of his perseverance and the valour of his exploits. He placed himself with unshrinking resolution before his bleeding country, and boldly confronted the fearful enemy, whose hands were still reeking from the carnage of Magdeburg.

The Landgrave William deserves to descend to immortality with the heroic race of Ernest. Thy day of vengeance was long delayed, unfortunate John Frederick! Noble! never-to-be-forgotten prince! Slowly but brightly it broke. Thy times returned, and thy heroic spirit descended on thy grandson. An intrepid race of princes issues from the Thuringian forests, to shame, by immortal deeds, the unjust sentence which robbed thee of the electoral crown — to avenge thy offended shade by heaps of bloody sacrifice. The sentence of the conqueror could deprive thee of thy territories, but not that spirit of patriotism which staked them, nor that chivalrous courage which, a century afterwards, was destined to shake the throne of his descendant. Thy vengeance and that of Germany whetted the sacred sword, and one heroic hand after the other wielded the irresistible steel. As men, they achieved what as sovereigns they dared not undertake; they met in a glorious cause as the valiant soldiers of liberty. Too weak in territory to attack the enemy with their own forces, they directed foreign artillery against them, and led foreign banners to victory.

The liberties of Germany, abandoned by the more powerful states, who, however, enjoyed most of the prosperity accruing from them, were defended by a few princes for whom they were almost without value. The possession of territories and dignities deadened courage; the want of both made heroes. While Saxony, Brandenburg, and the rest drew back in terror, Anhalt, Mansfeld, the Prince of Weimar and others were shedding their blood in the field. The Dukes of Pomerania, Mecklenburg, Luneburg, and Wirtemberg, and the free cities of Upper Germany, to whom the name of EMPEROR was of course a formidable one, anxiously avoided a contest with such an opponent, and crouched murmuring beneath his mighty arm.

Austria and Roman Catholic Germany possessed in Maximilian of Bavaria a champion as prudent as he was powerful. Adhering throughout the war to one fixed plan, never divided between his religion and his political interests; not the slavish dependent of Austria, who was labouring for HIS advancement, and trembled before her powerful protector, Maximilian earned the territories and dignities that rewarded his exertions. The other Roman Catholic states, which were chiefly Ecclesiastical, too unwarlike to resist the multitudes whom the prosperity of their territories allured, became the victims of the war one after another, and were contented to persecute in the cabinet and in the pulpit, the enemy whom they could not openly oppose in the field. All of them, slaves either to

Austria or Bavaria, sunk into insignificance by the side of Maximilian; in his hand alone their united power could be rendered available.

The formidable monarchy which Charles V. and his son had unnaturally constructed of the Netherlands, Milan, and the two Sicilies, and their distant possessions in the East and West Indies, was under Philip III. and Philip IV. fast verging to decay. Swollen to a sudden greatness by unfruitful gold, this power was now sinking under a visible decline, neglecting, as it did, agriculture, the natural support of states. The conquests in the West Indies had reduced Spain itself to poverty, while they enriched the markets of Europe; the bankers of Antwerp, Venice, and Genoa, were making profit on the gold which was still buried in the mines of Peru. For the sake of India, Spain had been depopulated, while the treasures drawn from thence were wasted in the re-conquest of Holland, in the chimerical project of changing the succession to the crown of France, and in an unfortunate attack upon England. But the pride of this court had survived its greatness, as the hate of its enemies had outlived its power. Distrust of the Protestants suggested to the ministry of Philip III. the dangerous policy of his father; and the reliance of the Roman Catholics in Germany on Spanish assistance, was as firm as their belief in the wonder-working bones of the martyrs. External splendour concealed the inward wounds at which the life-blood of this monarchy was oozing; and the belief of its strength survived, because it still maintained the lofty tone of its golden days. Slaves in their palaces, and strangers even upon their own thrones, the Spanish nominal kings still gave laws to their German relations; though it is very doubtful if the support they afforded was worth the dependence by which the emperors purchased it. The fate of Europe was decided behind the Pyrenees by ignorant monks or vindictive favourites. Yet, even in its debasement, a power must always be formidable, which yields to none in extent; which, from custom, if not from the steadfastness of its views, adhered faithfully to one system of policy; which possessed well-disciplined armies and consummate generals; which, where the sword failed, did not scruple to employ the dagger; and converted even its ambassadors into incendiaries and assassins. What it had lost in three quarters of the globe, it now sought to regain to the eastward, and all Europe was at its mercy, if it could succeed in its long cherished design of uniting with the hereditary dominions of Austria all that lay between the Alps and the Adriatic.

To the great alarm of the native states, this formidable power had gained a footing in Italy, where its continual encroachments made the neighbouring sovereigns to tremble for their own possessions. The Pope himself was in the most dangerous situation; hemmed in on both sides by the Spanish Viceroy of Naples on the one side, and that of Milan upon the other. Venice was confined between the Austrian Tyrol and the Spanish territories in Milan. Savoy was surrounded by the latter and France. Hence the wavering and equivocal policy, which from the time of Charles V. had been pursued by the Italian States. The double character which pertained to the Popes made them perpetually vacillate between two contradictory systems of policy. If the successors of St. Peter found in the Spanish princes their most obedient disciples, and the most steadfast supporters of the Papal See, yet the princes of the States of the Church had in these monarchs their most dangerous neighbours, and most formidable opponents. If, in the one capacity, their dearest wish was the destruction of the Protestants, and the triumph of Austria, in the other, they had reason to bless the arms of the Protestants, which disabled a dangerous enemy. The one or the other sentiment prevailed, according as the love of temporal dominion, or zeal for spiritual supremacy, predominated in the mind of the Pope. But the policy of Rome was, on the whole, directed to immediate dangers; and it is well known how far more powerful is the apprehension of losing a present good, than anxiety to recover a long lost possession. And thus it becomes intelligible how the Pope should first combine with Austria for the destruction of heresy, and then conspire with these very heretics for the destruction of Austria. Strangely blended are the threads of human affairs! What would have become of the Reformation, and of the liberties of Germany, if the Bishop of Rome and the Prince of Rome had had but one interest?

France had lost with its great Henry all its importance and all its weight in the political balance of Europe. A turbulent minority had destroyed all the benefits of the able administration of Henry. Incapable ministers, the creatures of court intrigue, squandered in a few years the treasures which Sully's economy and Henry's frugality had amassed. Scarce able to maintain their ground against internal factions, they were compelled to resign to other hands the helm of European affairs. The same civil war which armed Germany against itself, excited a similar commotion in France; and Louis XIII. attained majority only to wage a war with his own mother and his Protestant subjects. This party, which had been kept quiet by Henry's enlightened policy, now seized the opportunity to take up arms, and, under the command of some adventurous leaders, began to form themselves into a party within the state, and to fix on the strong and powerful town of Rochelle as the capital of their intended kingdom. Too little of a statesman to suppress, by a prudent toleration, this civil commotion in its birth, and too little master of the resources of his kingdom to direct them with energy, Louis XIII. was reduced to the degradation of purchasing the submission of the rebels by large sums of money. Though policy might incline him, in one point of view, to assist the Bohemian insurgents against Austria, the son of Henry the Fourth was now compelled to be an inactive spectator of their destruction, happy enough if the Calvinists in his own dominions did not unseasonably bethink them of their confederates beyond the Rhine. A great mind at the helm of state would have reduced the Protestants in France to obedience, while it employed them to fight for the independence of their German brethren. But Henry IV. was no more, and Richelieu had not yet revived his system of policy.

While the glory of France was thus upon the wane, the emancipated republic of Holland was completing the fabric of its greatness. The enthusiastic courage had not yet died away which, enkindled by the House of Orange, had converted this mercantile people into a nation of heroes, and had enabled them to maintain their independence in a bloody war against the Spanish monarchy. Aware how much they owed their own liberty to foreign support, these republicans were ready to assist their German brethren in a similar cause, and the more so, as both were opposed to the same enemy, and the liberty of Germany was the best warrant for that of Holland. But a republic which had still to battle for its very existence, which, with all its wonderful exertions, was scarce a match for the formidable enemy within its own territories, could not be expected to withdraw its troops from the necessary work of self-defence to employ them with a magnanimous policy in protecting foreign states.

England too, though now united with Scotland, no longer possessed, under the weak James, that influence in the affairs of Europe which the governing mind of Elizabeth had procured for it. Convinced that the welfare of her dominions depended on the security of the Protestants, this politic princess had never swerved from the principle of promoting every enterprise which had for its object the diminution of the Austrian power. Her successor was no less devoid of capacity to comprehend, than of vigour to execute, her views. While the economical Elizabeth spared not her treasures to support the Flemings against Spain, and Henry IV. against the League, James abandoned his daughter, his son-in-law, and his grandchild, to the fury of their enemies. While he exhausted his learning to establish the divine right of kings, he allowed his own dignity to sink into the dust; while he exerted his rhetoric to prove the absolute authority of kings, he reminded the people of theirs; and by a useless profusion, sacrificed the chief of his sovereign rights — that of dispensing with his parliament, and thus depriving liberty of its organ. An innate horror at the sight of a naked sword averted him from the most just of wars; while his favourite Buckingham practised on his weakness, and his own complacent vanity rendered him an easy dupe of Spanish artifice. While his son-in-law was ruined, and the inheritance of his grandson given to others, this weak prince was imbibing, with satisfaction, the incense which was offered to him by Austria and Spain. To divert his attention from the German war, he was amused with the proposal of a Spanish marriage for his son, and the ridiculous parent encouraged the romantic youth in the foolish project of paying his addresses in person to the Spanish princess. But his son lost his bride, as his son-in-law lost the crown of Bohemia and the Palatine

Electorate; and death alone saved him from the danger of closing his pacific reign by a war at home, which he never had courage to maintain, even at a distance.

The domestic disturbances which his misgovernment had gradually excited burst forth under his unfortunate son, and forced him, after some unimportant attempts, to renounce all further participation in the German war, in order to stem within his own kingdom the rage of faction. Two illustrious monarchs, far unequal in personal reputation, but equal in power and desire of fame, made the North at this time to be respected. Under the long and active reign of Christian IV., Denmark had risen into importance. The personal qualifications of this prince, an excellent navy, a formidable army, well-ordered finances, and prudent alliances, had combined to give her prosperity at home and influence abroad. Gustavus Vasa had rescued Sweden from vassalage, reformed it by wise laws, and had introduced, for the first time, this newly-organized state into the field of European politics. What this great prince had merely sketched in rude outline, was filled up by Gustavus Adolphus, his still greater grandson.

These two kingdoms, once unnaturally united and enfeebled by their union, had been violently separated at the time of the Reformation, and this separation was the epoch of their prosperity. Injurious as this compulsory union had proved to both kingdoms, equally necessary to each apart were neighbourly friendship and harmony. On both the evangelical church leaned; both had the same seas to protect; a common interest ought to unite them against the same enemy. But the hatred which had dissolved the union of these monarchies continued long after their separation to divide the two nations. The Danish kings could not abandon their pretensions to the Swedish crown, nor the Swedes banish the remembrance of Danish oppression. The contiguous boundaries of the two kingdoms constantly furnished materials for international quarrels, while the watchful jealousy of both kings, and the unavoidable collision of their commercial interests in the North Seas, were inexhaustible sources of dispute.

Among the means of which Gustavus Vasa, the founder of the Swedish monarchy, availed himself to strengthen his new edifice, the Reformation had been one of the principal. A fundamental law of the kingdom excluded the adherents of popery from all offices of the state, and prohibited every future sovereign of Sweden from altering the religious constitution of the kingdom. But the second son and second successor of Gustavus had relapsed into popery, and his son Sigismund, also king of Poland, had been guilty of measures which menaced both the constitution and the established church. Headed by Charles, Duke of Sudermania, the third son of Gustavus, the Estates made a courageous resistance, which terminated, at last, in an open civil war between the uncle and nephew, and between the King and the people. Duke Charles, administrator of the kingdom during the absence of the king, had availed himself of Sigismund's long residence in Poland, and the just displeasure of the states, to ingratiate himself with the nation, and gradually to prepare his way to the throne. His views were not a little forwarded by Sigismund's imprudence. A general Diet ventured to abolish, in favour of the Protector, the rule of primogeniture which Gustavus had established in the succession, and placed the Duke of Sudermania on the throne, from which Sigismund, with his whole posterity, were solemnly excluded. The son of the new king (who reigned under the name of Charles IX.) was Gustavus Adolphus, whom, as the son of a usurper, the adherents of Sigismund refused to recognize. But if the obligations between monarchy and subjects are reciprocal, and states are not to be transmitted, like a lifeless heirloom, from hand to hand, a nation acting with unanimity must have the power of renouncing their allegiance to a sovereign who has violated his obligations to them, and of filling his place by a worthier object.

Gustavus Adolphus had not completed his seventeenth year, when the Swedish throne became vacant by the death of his father. But the early maturity of his genius enabled the Estates to abridge in his favour the legal period of minority. With a glorious conquest over himself he commenced a reign which was to have victory for its constant attendant, a career which was to begin and end in success. The young Countess of Brahe, the daughter of a subject, had gained his early affections, and he had

resolved to share with her the Swedish throne. But, constrained by time and circumstances, he made his attachment yield to the higher duties of a king, and heroism again took exclusive possession of a heart which was not destined by nature to confine itself within the limits of quiet domestic happiness.

Christian IV. of Denmark, who had ascended the throne before the birth of Gustavus, in an inroad upon Sweden, had gained some considerable advantages over the father of that hero. Gustavus Adolphus hastened to put an end to this destructive war, and by prudent sacrifices obtained a peace, in order to turn his arms against the Czar of Muscovy. The questionable fame of a conqueror never tempted him to spend the blood of his subjects in unjust wars; but he never shrunk from a just one. His arms were successful against Russia, and Sweden was augmented by several important provinces on the east.

In the meantime, Sigismund of Poland retained against the son the same sentiments of hostility which the father had provoked, and left no artifice untried to shake the allegiance of his subjects, to cool the ardour of his friends, and to embitter his enemies. Neither the great qualities of his rival, nor the repeated proofs of devotion which Sweden gave to her loved monarch, could extinguish in this infatuated prince the foolish hope of regaining his lost throne. All Gustavus's overtures were haughtily rejected. Unwillingly was this really peaceful king involved in a tedious war with Poland, in which the whole of Livonia and Polish Prussia were successively conquered. Though constantly victorious, Gustavus Adolphus was always the first to hold out the hand of peace.

This contest between Sweden and Poland falls somewhere about the beginning of the Thirty Years' War in Germany, with which it is in some measure connected. It was enough that Sigismund, himself a Roman Catholic, was disputing the Swedish crown with a Protestant prince, to assure him the active support of Spain and Austria; while a double relationship to the Emperor gave him a still stronger claim to his protection. It was his reliance on this powerful assistance that chiefly encouraged the King of Poland to continue the war, which had hitherto turned out so unfavourably for him, and the courts of Madrid and Vienna failed not to encourage him by high-sounding promises. While Sigismund lost one place after another in Livonia, Courland, and Prussia, he saw his ally in Germany advancing from conquest after conquest to unlimited power. No wonder then if his aversion to peace kept pace with his losses. The vehemence with which he nourished his chimerical hopes blinded him to the artful policy of his confederates, who at his expense were keeping the Swedish hero employed, in order to overturn, without opposition, the liberties of Germany, and then to seize on the exhausted North as an easy conquest. One circumstance which had not been calculated on — the magnanimity of Gustavus — overthrew this deceitful policy. An eight years' war in Poland, so far from exhausting the power of Sweden, had only served to mature the military genius of Gustavus, to inure the Swedish army to warfare, and insensibly to perfect that system of tactics by which they were afterwards to perform such wonders in Germany.

After this necessary digression on the existing circumstances of Europe,

I now resume the thread of my history.

Ferdinand had regained his dominions, but had not indemnified himself for the expenses of recovering them. A sum of forty millions of florins, which the confiscations in Bohemia and Moravia had produced, would have sufficed to reimburse both himself and his allies; but the Jesuits and his favourites soon squandered this sum, large as it was. Maximilian, Duke of Bavaria, to whose victorious arm, principally, the Emperor owed the recovery of his dominions; who, in the service of religion and the Emperor, had sacrificed his near relation, had the strongest claims on his gratitude; and moreover, in a treaty which, before the war, the duke had concluded with the Emperor, he had expressly stipulated for the reimbursement of all expenses. Ferdinand felt the full weight of the obligation imposed upon him by this treaty and by these services, but he was not disposed to discharge it at his own cost. His purpose was to bestow a brilliant reward upon the duke, but without detriment to himself. How could this be done better than at the expense of the unfortunate prince who, by his revolt, had given the Emperor a right to punish him, and whose offences might be painted in

colours strong enough to justify the most violent measures under the appearance of law. That, then, Maximilian may be rewarded, Frederick must be further persecuted and totally ruined; and to defray the expenses of the old war, a new one must be commenced.

But a still stronger motive combined to enforce the first. Hitherto Ferdinand had been contending for existence alone; he had been fulfilling no other duty than that of self-defence. But now, when victory gave him freedom to act, a higher duty occurred to him, and he remembered the vow which he had made at Loretto and at Rome, to his generalissima, the Holy Virgin, to extend her worship even at the risk of his crown and life. With this object, the oppression of the Protestants was inseparably connected. More favourable circumstances for its accomplishment could not offer than those which presented themselves at the close of the Bohemian war. Neither the power, nor a pretext of right, were now wanting to enable him to place the Palatinate in the hands of the Catholics, and the importance of this change to the Catholic interests in Germany would be incalculable. Thus, in rewarding the Duke of Bavaria with the spoils of his relation, he at once gratified his meanest passions and fulfilled his most exalted duties; he crushed an enemy whom he hated, and spared his avarice a painful sacrifice, while he believed he was winning a heavenly crown.

In the Emperor's cabinet, the ruin of Frederick had been resolved upon long before fortune had decided against him; but it was only after this event that they ventured to direct against him the thunders of arbitrary power. A decree of the Emperor, destitute of all the formalities required on such occasions by the laws of the Empire, pronounced the Elector, and three other princes who had borne arms for him at Silesia and Bohemia, as offenders against the imperial majesty, and disturbers of the public peace, under the ban of the empire, and deprived them of their titles and territories. The execution of this sentence against Frederick, namely the seizure of his lands, was, in further contempt of law, committed to Spain as Sovereign of the circle of Burgundy, to the Duke of Bavaria, and the League. Had the Evangelic Union been worthy of the name it bore, and of the cause which it pretended to defend, insuperable obstacles might have prevented the execution of the sentence; but it was hopeless for a power which was far from a match even for the Spanish troops in the Lower Palatinate, to contend against the united strength of the Emperor, Bavaria, and the League. The sentence of proscription pronounced upon the Elector soon detached the free cities from the Union; and the princes quickly followed their example. Fortunate in preserving their own dominions, they abandoned the Elector, their former chief, to the Emperor's mercy, renounced the Union, and vowed never to revive it again.

But while thus ingloriously the German princes deserted the unfortunate Frederick, and while Bohemia, Silesia, and Moravia submitted to the Emperor, a single man, a soldier of fortune, whose only treasure was his sword, Ernest Count Mansfeld, dared, in the Bohemian town of Pilsen, to defy the whole power of Austria. Left without assistance after the battle of Prague by the Elector, to whose service he had devoted himself, and even uncertain whether Frederick would thank him for his perseverance, he alone for some time held out against the imperialists, till the garrison, mutinying for want of pay, sold the town to the Emperor. Undismayed by this reverse, he immediately commenced new levies in the Upper Palatinate, and enlisted the disbanded troops of the Union. A new army of 20,000 men was soon assembled under his banners, the more formidable to the provinces which might be the object of its attack, because it must subsist by plunder. Uncertain where this swarm might light, the neighbouring bishops trembled for their rich possessions, which offered a tempting prey to its ravages. But, pressed by the Duke of Bavaria, who now entered the Upper Palatinate, Mansfeld was compelled to retire. Eluding, by a successful stratagem, the Bavarian general, Tilly, who was in pursuit of him, he suddenly appeared in the Lower Palatinate, and there wreaked upon the bishoprics of the Rhine the severities he had designed for those of Franconia. While the imperial and Bavarian allies thus overran Bohemia, the Spanish general, Spinola, had penetrated with a numerous army from the Netherlands into the Lower Palatinate, which, however, the pacification of Ulm permitted the Union to defend. But their measures were so badly concerted, that one place after another fell

into the hands of the Spaniards; and at last, when the Union broke up, the greater part of the country was in the possession of Spain. The Spanish general, Corduba, who commanded these troops after the recall of Spinola, hastily raised the siege of Frankenthal, when Mansfeld entered the Lower Palatinate. But instead of driving the Spaniards out of this province, he hastened across the Rhine to secure for his needy troops shelter and subsistence in Alsace. The open countries on which this swarm of marauders threw themselves were converted into frightful deserts, and only by enormous contributions could the cities purchase an exemption from plunder. Reinforced by this expedition, Mansfeld again appeared on the Rhine to cover the Lower Palatinate.

So long as such an arm fought for him, the cause of the Elector Frederick was not irretrievably lost. New prospects began to open, and misfortune raised up friends who had been silent during his prosperity. King James of England, who had looked on with indifference while his son-in-law lost the Bohemian crown, was aroused from his insensibility when the very existence of his daughter and grandson was at stake, and the victorious enemy ventured an attack upon the Electorate. Late enough, he at last opened his treasures, and hastened to afford supplies of money and troops, first to the Union, which at that time was defending the Lower Palatinate, and afterwards, when they retired, to Count Mansfeld. By his means his near relation, Christian, King of Denmark, was induced to afford his active support. At the same time, the approaching expiration of the truce between Spain and Holland deprived the Emperor of all the supplies which otherwise he might expect from the side of the Netherlands. More important still was the assistance which the Palatinate received from Transylvania and Hungary. The cessation of hostilities between Gabor and the Emperor was scarcely at an end, when this old and formidable enemy of Austria overran Hungary anew, and caused himself to be crowned king in Presburg. So rapid was his progress that, to protect Austria and Hungary, Boucquoi was obliged to evacuate Bohemia. This brave general met his death at the siege of Neuhausel, as, shortly before, the no less valiant Dampierre had fallen before Presburg. Gabor's march into the Austrian territory was irresistible; the old Count Thurn, and several other distinguished Bohemians, had united their hatred and their strength with this irreconcilable enemy of Austria. A vigorous attack on the side of Germany, while Gabor pressed the Emperor on that of Hungary, might have retrieved the fortunes of Frederick; but, unfortunately, the Bohemians and Germans had always laid down their arms when Gabor took the field; and the latter was always exhausted at the very moment that the former began to recover their vigour.

Meanwhile Frederick had not delayed to join his protector Mansfeld. In disguise he entered the Lower Palatinate, of which the possession was at that time disputed between Mansfeld and the Bavarian general, Tilly, the Upper Palatinate having been long conquered. A ray of hope shone upon him as, from the wreck of the Union, new friends came forward. A former member of the Union, George Frederick, Margrave of Baden, had for some time been engaged in assembling a military force, which soon amounted to a considerable army. Its destination was kept a secret till he suddenly took the field and joined Mansfeld. Before commencing the war, he resigned his Margraviate to his son, in the hope of eluding, by this precaution, the Emperor's revenge, if his enterprize should be unsuccessful. His neighbour, the Duke of Wirtemberg, likewise began to augment his military force. The courage of the Palatine revived, and he laboured assiduously to renew the Protestant Union. It was now time for Tilly to consult for his own safety, and he hastily summoned the Spanish troops, under Corduba, to his assistance. But while the enemy was uniting his strength, Mansfeld and the Margrave separated, and the latter was defeated by the Bavarian general near Wimpfen (1622).

To defend a king whom his nearest relation persecuted, and who was deserted even by his own father-in-law, there had come forward an adventurer without money, and whose very legitimacy was questioned. A sovereign had resigned possessions over which he reigned in peace, to hazard the uncertain fortune of war in behalf of a stranger. And now another soldier of fortune, poor in territorial possessions, but rich in illustrious ancestry, undertook the defence of a cause which the former despaired of. Christian, Duke of Brunswick, administrator of Halberstadt, seemed to have

learnt from Count Mansfeld the secret of keeping in the field an army of 20,000 men without money. Impelled by youthful presumption, and influenced partly by the wish of establishing his reputation at the expense of the Roman Catholic priesthood, whom he cordially detested, and partly by a thirst for plunder, he assembled a considerable army in Lower Saxony, under the pretext of espousing the defence of Frederick, and of the liberties of Germany. "God's Friend, Priest's Foe", was the motto he chose for his coinage, which was struck out of church plate; and his conduct belied one half at least of the device.

The progress of these banditti was, as usual, marked by the most frightful devastation. Enriched by the spoils of the chapters of Lower Saxony and Westphalia, they gathered strength to plunder the bishoprics upon the Upper Rhine. Driven from thence, both by friends and foes, the Administrator approached the town of Hoechst on the Maine, which he crossed after a murderous action with Tilly, who disputed with him the passage of the river. With the loss of half his army he reached the opposite bank, where he quickly collected his shattered troops, and formed a junction with Mansfeld. Pursued by Tilly, this united host threw itself again into Alsace, to repeat their former ravages. While the Elector Frederick followed, almost like a fugitive mendicant, this swarm of plunderers which acknowledged him as its lord, and dignified itself with his name, his friends were busily endeavouring to effect a reconciliation between him and the Emperor. Ferdinand took care not to deprive them of all hope of seeing the Palatine restored to his dominion. Full of artifice and dissimulation, he pretended to be willing to enter into a negotiation, hoping thereby to cool their ardour in the field, and to prevent them from driving matters to extremity. James I., ever the dupe of Spanish cunning, contributed not a little, by his foolish intermeddling, to promote the Emperor's schemes. Ferdinand insisted that Frederick, if he would appeal to his clemency, should, first of all, lay down his arms, and James considered this demand extremely reasonable. At his instigation, the Elector dismissed his only real defenders, Count Mansfeld and the Administrator, and in Holland awaited his own fate from the mercy of the Emperor.

Mansfeld and Duke Christian were now at a loss for some new name; the cause of the Elector had not set them in motion, so his dismissal could not disarm them. War was their object; it was all the same to them in whose cause or name it was waged. After some vain attempts on the part of Mansfeld to be received into the Emperor's service, both marched into Lorraine, where the excesses of their troops spread terror even to the heart of France. Here they long waited in vain for a master willing to purchase their services; till the Dutch, pressed by the Spanish General Spinola, offered to take them into pay. After a bloody fight at Fleurus with the Spaniards, who attempted to intercept them, they reached Holland, where their appearance compelled the Spanish general forthwith to raise the siege of Bergen-op-Zoom. But even Holland was soon weary of these dangerous guests, and availed herself of the first moment to get rid of their unwelcome assistance. Mansfeld allowed his troops to recruit themselves for new enterprises in the fertile province of East Friesland. Duke Christian, passionately enamoured of the Electress Palatine, with whom he had become acquainted in Holland, and more disposed for war than ever, led back his army into Lower Saxony, bearing that princess's glove in his hat, and on his standards the motto "All for God and Her". Neither of these adventurers had as yet run their career in this war.

All the imperial territories were now free from the enemy; the Union was dissolved; the Margrave of Baden, Duke Christian, and Mansfeld, driven from the field, and the Palatinate overrun by the executive troops of the empire. Manheim and Heidelberg were in possession of Bavaria, and Frankenthal was shortly afterwards ceded to the Spaniards. The Palatine, in a distant corner of Holland, awaited the disgraceful permission to appease, by abject submission, the vengeance of the Emperor; and an Electoral Diet was at last summoned to decide his fate. That fate, however, had been long before decided at the court of the Emperor; though now, for the first time, were circumstances favourable for giving publicity to the decision. After his past measures towards the Elector, Ferdinand believed that a sincere reconciliation was not to be hoped for. The violent course

he had once begun, must be completed successfully, or recoil upon himself. What was already lost was irrecoverable; Frederick could never hope to regain his dominions; and a prince without territory and without subjects had little chance of retaining the electoral crown. Deeply as the Palatine had offended against the House of Austria, the services of the Duke of Bavaria were no less meritorious. If the House of Austria and the Roman Catholic church had much to dread from the resentment and religious rancour of the Palatine family, they had as much to hope from the gratitude and religious zeal of the Bavarian. Lastly, by the cession of the Palatine Electorate to Bavaria, the Roman Catholic religion would obtain a decisive preponderance in the Electoral College, and secure a permanent triumph in Germany.

The last circumstance was sufficient to win the support of the three Ecclesiastical Electors to this innovation; and among the Protestants the vote of Saxony was alone of any importance. But could John George be expected to dispute with the Emperor a right, without which he would expose to question his own title to the electoral dignity? To a prince whom descent, dignity, and political power placed at the head of the Protestant church in Germany, nothing, it is true, ought to be more sacred than the defence of the rights of that church against all the encroachments of the Roman Catholics. But the question here was not whether the interests of the Protestants were to be supported against the Roman Catholics, but which of two religions equally detested, the Calvinistic and the Popish, was to triumph over the other; to which of the two enemies, equally dangerous, the Palatinate was to be assigned; and in this clashing of opposite duties, it was natural that private hate and private gain should determine the event. The born protector of the liberties of Germany, and of the Protestant religion, encouraged the Emperor to dispose of the Palatinate by his imperial prerogative; and to apprehend no resistance on the part of Saxony to his measures on the mere ground of form. If the Elector was afterwards disposed to retract this consent, Ferdinand himself, by driving the Evangelical preachers from Bohemia, was the cause of this change of opinion; and, in the eyes of the Elector, the transference of the Palatine Electorate to Bavaria ceased to be illegal, as soon as Ferdinand was prevailed upon to cede Lusatia to Saxony, in consideration of six millions of dollars, as the expenses of the war.

Thus, in defiance of all Protestant Germany, and in mockery of the fundamental laws of the empire, which, as his election, he had sworn to maintain, Ferdinand at Ratisbon solemnly invested the Duke of Bavaria with the Palatinate, without prejudice, as the form ran, to the rights which the relations or descendants of Frederick might afterwards establish. That unfortunate prince thus saw himself irrevocably driven from his possessions, without having been even heard before the tribunal which condemned him — a privilege which the law allows to the meanest subject, and even to the most atrocious criminal.

This violent step at last opened the eyes of the King of England; and as the negotiations for the marriage of his son with the Infanta of Spain were now broken off, James began seriously to espouse the cause of his son-in-law. A change in the French ministry had placed Cardinal Richelieu at the head of affairs, and this fallen kingdom soon began to feel that a great mind was at the helm of state. The attempts of the Spanish Viceroy in Milan to gain possession of the Valtelline, and thus to form a junction with the Austrian hereditary dominions, revived the olden dread of this power, and with it the policy of Henry the Great. The marriage of the Prince of Wales with Henrietta of France, established a close union between the two crowns; and to this alliance, Holland, Denmark, and some of the Italian states presently acceded. Its object was to expel, by force of arms, Spain from the Valtelline, and to compel Austria to reinstate Frederick; but only the first of these designs was prosecuted with vigour. James I. died, and Charles I., involved in disputes with his Parliament, could not bestow attention on the affairs of Germany. Savoy and Venice withheld their assistance; and the French minister thought it necessary to subdue the Huguenots at home, before he supported the German Protestants against the Emperor. Great as were the hopes which had been formed from this alliance, they were yet equalled by the disappointment of the event.

Mansfeld, deprived of all support, remained inactive on the Lower Rhine; and Duke Christian of Brunswick, after an unsuccessful campaign, was a second time driven out of Germany. A fresh irruption of Bethlen Gabor into Moravia, frustrated by the want of support from the Germans, terminated, like all the rest, in a formal peace with the Emperor. The Union was no more; no Protestant prince was in arms; and on the frontiers of Lower Germany, the Bavarian General Tilly, at the head of a victorious army, encamped in the Protestant territory. The movements of the Duke of Brunswick had drawn him into this quarter, and even into the circle of Lower Saxony, when he made himself master of the Administrator's magazines at Lippstadt. The necessity of observing this enemy, and preventing him from new inroads, was the pretext assigned for continuing Tilly's stay in the country. But, in truth, both Mansfeld and Duke Christian had, from want of money, disbanded their armies, and Count Tilly had no enemy to dread. Why, then, still burden the country with his presence?

It is difficult, amidst the uproar of contending parties, to distinguish the voice of truth; but certainly it was matter for alarm that the League did not lay down its arms. The premature rejoicings of the Roman Catholics, too, were calculated to increase apprehension. The Emperor and the League stood armed and victorious in Germany without a power to oppose them, should they venture to attack the Protestant states and to annul the religious treaty. Had Ferdinand been in reality far from disposed to abuse his conquests, still the defenceless position of the Protestants was most likely to suggest the temptation. Obsolete conventions could not bind a prince who thought that he owed all to religion, and believed that a religious creed would sanctify any deed, however violent. Upper Germany was already overpowered. Lower Germany alone could check his despotic authority. Here the Protestants still predominated; the church had been forcibly deprived of most of its endowments; and the present appeared a favourable moment for recovering these lost possessions. A great part of the strength of the Lower German princes consisted in these Chapters, and the plea of restoring its own to the church, afforded an excellent pretext for weakening these princes. Unpardonable would have been their negligence, had they remained inactive in this danger. The remembrance of the ravages which Tilly's army had committed in Lower Saxony was too recent not to arouse the Estates to measures of defence. With all haste, the circle of Lower Saxony began to arm itself. Extraordinary contributions were levied, troops collected, and magazines filled. Negotiations for subsidies were set on foot with Venice, Holland, and England. They deliberated, too, what power should be placed at the head of the confederacy. The kings of the Sound and the Baltic, the natural allies of this circle, would not see with indifference the Emperor treating it as a conqueror, and establishing himself as their neighbour on the shores of the North Sea. The twofold interests of religion and policy urged them to put a stop to his progress in Lower Germany. Christian IV. of Denmark, as Duke of Holstein, was himself a prince of this circle, and by considerations equally powerful, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden was induced to join the confederacy.

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