GARDINER SAMUEL RAWSON

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR, 1618-1648

Samuel Gardiner

The Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=24858707
The Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648:

Содержание

Samuel Rawson Gardiner
The Thirty Years' War, 1618-1648

PREFACE

If the present work should appear to be written for more advanced students than those for whom most if not all the other books of the series are designed, the nature of the subject must be pleaded in excuse. The mere fact that it relates exclusively to Continental history makes it unlikely that junior pupils would approach it in any shape, and it is probably impossible to make the very complicated relations between the German states and other European nations interesting to those who are for the first time, or almost the first time, attempting to acquire historical knowledge. Every history, to be a history, must have a unity of its own, and here we have no unity of national life such as that which is reflected in the institutions of England and France, not even the unity of a great race of sovereigns handing down the traditions of government from one generation to another. The unity of the subject which I have chosen must be sought in the growth of the principle of religious toleration as it is adopted or repelled by the institutions under which Germany and France, the two principal

nations with which we are concerned, are living. Thus the history of the period may be compared to a gigantic dissolving view. As we enter upon it our minds are filled with German men and things. But Germany fails to find the solution of the problem before it. Gradually France comes with increasing distinctness before us. It succeeds where Germany had failed, and occupies us more and more till it fills the whole field of action.

But though, as I have said, the present work is not intended for young children, neither is it intended for those who require the results of original research. The data for a final judgment on the story are scattered in so many repositories that the Germans themselves have now discovered that a complete investigation into one or other of the sections into which the war naturally falls, is sufficient work for any man. There must surely, however, be many, as well in the upper classes of schools as in more advanced life, who would be glad to know at second hand what is the result of recent inquiry in Germany into the causes of the failure of the last attempt, before our own day, to constitute a united German nation. The writer who undertakes such a task encounters, with his eyes open, all the hazards to which a second-hand narrative is liable. His impressions are less sharp, and are exposed to greater risk of error than those of one who goes direct to the fountain head. He must be content to be the retailer rather than the manufacturer of history, knowing that each kind of work has its use.

Not that the present book is a mere collection of other

men's words. If I have often adopted without much change the narrative or opinions of German writers, I have never said any thing which I have not made my own, by passing it through my own mind. To reproduce with mere paste and scissors passages from the writings of men so opposed to one another as Ranke, Gindely, Ritter, Opel, Hurter, Droysen, Gfrörer, Klopp, Förster, Villermont, Uetterodt, Koch, and others, would be to bewilder, not to instruct. And in forming my own opinions I have had the advantage not merely of being in the habit of writing from original documents, but of having studied at least some of the letters and State papers of the time. I have thus, for example, been able, from my knowledge of the despatches of Sir Robert Anstruther, to neglect Droysen's elaborate argument that Christian IV. took part in the war through jealousy of Gustavus Adolphus; and to speak, in opposition to Onno Klopp, of the persistence of the Dukes of Mecklenburg in the support which they gave to the King of Denmark.

More valuable than the little additional knowledge thus obtained is the insight into the feelings and thoughts of the Catholic princes gained by a very slight acquaintance with their own correspondence. To start by trying to understand what a man appears to himself, and only when that has been done, to try him by the standard of the judgment of others, is in my opinion the first canon of historical portraiture; and it is one which till very recent times has been more neglected by writers on the Thirty Years' War than by students of any other portion of history.

My teachers in Germany from whom I have borrowed so freely, and according to the rules of the series, without acknowledgment in foot-notes, will, I hope, accept this little book, not as an attempt to do that which they are so much better qualified to execute, but as an expression of the sympathy which an Englishman cannot but feel for the misfortunes as well as the achievements of his kindred on the Continent, and as an effort to tell something of the by-gone fortunes of their race to those amongst his own countrymen to whom, from youth or from circumstances of education, German literature is a sealed book.

I have only to add that the dates are according to the New Style. Ten days must be deducted to bring them in accordance with those used at the time in England.

CHAPTER I.
CAUSES OF THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

Section I. —*Political Institutions of Germany*

§ 1. Want of national institutions in Germany.

It was the misfortune of Germany in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that, with most of the conditions requisite for the formation of national unity, she had no really national institutions. There was an emperor, who looked something like an English king, and a Diet, or General Assembly, which looked something like an English Parliament, but the resemblance was far greater in appearance than in reality.

§ 2. The Emperor.

The Emperor was chosen by three ecclesiastical electors, the Archbishops of Mentz, Treves and Cologne, and four lay electors, the Elector Palatine, the Electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia. In theory he was the successor of the Roman Emperors Julius and Constantine, the

ruler of the world, or of so much of it at least as he could bring under his sway. More particularly, he was the successor of Charles the Great and Otto the Great, the lay head of Western Christendom. The Emperor Sigismund, on his death-bed, had directed that his body should lie in state for some days, that men might see 'that the lord of all the world was dead.' 'We have chosen your grace,' said the electors to Frederick III., 'as head, protector, and governor of all Christendom.' Yet it would be hard to find a single fragment of reality corresponding to the magnificence of the claim.

§ 3. The German kingship.

As far, however, as the period now under review is concerned, though the name of Emperor was retained, it is unnecessary to trouble ourselves with the rights, real or imaginary, connected with the imperial dignity. Charles the Great, before the imperial crown was conferred on him, ruled as king, by national assent or by conquest, over a great part of Western Europe. When his dominions were divided amongst his successors, the rule of those successors in Germany or elsewhere had no necessary connexion with the imperial crown. Henry the Fowler, one of the greatest of the Kings of the Germans, was never an emperor at all, and though, after the reign of his son Otto the Great, the German kings claimed from the Pope the imperial crown as their right, they never failed also to receive a special German crown at Aachen (*Aix-la-Chapelle*) or at Frankfort as the symbol of their headship over German lands and German men.

§ 4. Its connexion with the Empire.

When, therefore, the writers of the 16th or 17th centuries speak of the rights of the Emperor in Germany, they really mean to speak of the rights of the Emperor in his capacity of German king, just as, when they speak of the Empire, they mean what we call Germany, together with certain surrounding districts, such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Lorraine, and Eastern Burgundy or Franche Comté, which are not now, if Alsace and the newly-conquered part of Lorraine be excepted, included under that name. In the same way the mere fragments of feudal supremacy, and the payment of feudal dues which the emperors claimed in Italy, belonged to them, not as emperors, but simply as Italian kings, and as wearers of the iron crown of Lombardy, which, as the legends told, was formed of nails taken from the Saviour's cross.

§ 5. Some confusion unavoidable.

Not that it would be wise, even if it were possible, to do otherwise than to follow the practice of contemporaries. The strange form, Emperor of Germany, by which, at a later period, men unfamiliar with Germany history strove to reconcile the old claims with something like the actual fact, had not been yet invented. And, after all, the confusions of history, the use of words and titles when their meaning is changed, are so many tokens to remind us of the unity of successive generations, and of the impossibility of any one of them building anew without

regarding the foundations of their fathers. All that is needed is to remember that the emperor of later times is a personage whose rights and functions can be profitably compared with those of Henry VIII. of England or Lewis XIV. of France, not with Julius or Constantine whose successor he professed himself to be.

§ 6. The great vassals.

'Take away the rights of the Emperor,' said a law book of the fifteenth century, in language which would have startled an old Roman legislator, 'and who can say, "This house is mine, this village belongs to me?"' But the princes and bishops, the counts and cities, who were glad enough to plead on their own behalf that their lands were held directly from the head of the Empire, took care to allow him scarcely any real authority. This kingly dignity which passed under the name of the Empire was indeed very weak. It had never outgrown the needs of the Middle Ages, and was still essentially a feudal kingship. From circumstances which it would take too much space to notice here, it had failed in placing itself at the head of a national organization, and in becoming the guardian of the rights of the tillers of the soil and the burghers of the towns, who found no place in the ranks of the feudal chivalry.

§ 7. Their independence.

The immediate vassals of the Empire, in fact, were almost independent sovereigns, like the Dukes of Normandy in the France of the tenth century, or the Dukes of Burgundy in the

France of the fifteenth century. They quarrelled and made war with one another like the Kings of England and France. Their own vassals, their own peasants, their own towns could only reach the Emperor through them, if anybody thought it worth while to reach him at all.

§ 8. Prospect of order.

The prospect of reviving the German kingship which was veiled under the august title of Emperor seemed far distant at the beginning of the fifteenth century. But whilst the Empire, in its old sense, with its claims to universal dominion, was a dream, this German kingship needed but wisdom in the occupant of the throne to seize the national feeling, which was certain sooner or later to call out for a national ruler, in order to clothe itself in all the authority which was needed for the maintenance of the unity and the safety of the German people. That, when the time came, the man to grasp the opportunity was not there, was the chief amongst the causes of that unhappy tragedy of disunion which culminated in the Thirty Years' War.

§ 9. Attempts to introduce order.

In the middle of the fifteenth century an effort was made to introduce a system of regular assemblies, under the name of a Diet, in order to stem the tide of anarchy. But it never entered into the mind of the wisest statesman living to summon any general representation of the people. In the old feudal assemblies no one had taken part who was not an immediate vassal of

the Empire, and the Diet professed to be only a more regular organization of the old feudal assemblies.

§ 10. The Diet, or general assemblies of the Empire.

From the Diet, therefore, all subjects of the territorial princes were rigorously excluded. Whatever their wishes or opinions might be, they had neither part nor lot in the counsels of the nation. There was nothing in the Diet answering to those representatives of English counties, men not great enough to assume the state of independent princes, nor small enough to be content simply to register without question the decrees of those in authority who with us did more than any other class to cement town and country, king and people together. Nor did even the less powerful of the immediate vassals take part in the meetings. Like the lesser barons of the early Plantagenet reigns, they slipped out of a position to which they seemed to have a right by the fact that they held their few square miles of land as directly from the Emperor as the Dukes of Bavaria or the Electors of Saxony held the goodly principalities over which they ruled.

§ 11. The princes care little for the Diet.

Such a body was more like a congress of the representatives of European sovereigns than an English Parliament. Each member came in his own right. He might or might not speak the sentiments of his subjects, and, even if he did, he naturally preferred deciding pretty much as he pleased at home to allowing the question to be debated by an assembly of his equals. An

Elector of Saxony, a Landgrave of Hesse, or an Archduke of Austria knew that taxes were levied, armies trained, temporal and spiritual wants provided for at his own court at Dresden, at Cassel, or at Vienna, and he had no wish that it should be otherwise. Nor was it easy, even when a prince had made himself so obnoxious as to call down upon himself the condemnation of his fellows, to subject him to punishment. He might, indeed, be put to the ban of the Empire, a kind of secular excommunication. But if he were powerful himself, and had powerful friends, it might be difficult to put it in execution. It would be necessary to levy war against him, and that war might not be successful.

§ 12. Some sort of order established.

Still, at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries some progress was made. An Imperial Court (*Reichskammergericht*) came into existence, mainly nominated by the princes of the Empire, and authorized to pronounce judgment upon cases arising between the rulers of the various territories. In order to secure the better execution of the sentences of this court, Germany was divided into circles, in each of which the princes and cities who were entitled to a voice in the Diet of the Empire were authorized to meet together and to levy troops for the maintenance of order.

§ 13. The three Houses of the Diet.

These princes, lay and ecclesiastical, together with the cities holding immediately from the Empire, were called the Estates

of the Empire. When they met in the general Diet they voted in three houses. The first house was composed of the seven Electors, though it was only at an Imperial election that the number was complete. At all ordinary meetings for legislation, or for the dispatch of business, the king of Bohemia was excluded, and six Electors only appeared. The next house was the House of Princes, comprising all those persons, lay or ecclesiastical, who had the right of sitting in the Diet. Lastly, came the Free Imperial Cities, the only popular element in the Diet. But they were treated as decidedly inferior to the other two houses. When the Electors and the Princes had agreed upon a proposition, then and not till then it was submitted to the House of Cities.

§ 14. The cities too weak.

The special risk attending such a constitution was that it provided almost exclusively for the wants of the princes and electors. In the Diet, in the circles, and in the Imperial Court, the princes and electors exercised a preponderating, if not quite an exclusive influence. In ordinary times there might be no danger. But if extraordinary times arose, if any great movement swept over the surface of the nation, it might very well be that the nation would be on one side and the princes and the electors on the other. And if this were the case there would be great difficulty in bringing the nation into harmony with its institutions. In England the sovereign could alter a hostile majority in the House of Lords by a fresh creation of peers, and the constituencies could alter a hostile majority of the House of Commons by a fresh election. In

Germany there was no House of Commons, and an emperor who should try to create fresh princes out of the immediate vassals who were too weak to be summoned to the Diet would only render himself ridiculous by an attempt to place in check the real possessors of power by the help of those who had the mere appearance of it.

Section II. —*Protestantism in Germany*

§ 1. The German people in favor of Protestantism; the Diet opposed to it.

When, in the sixteenth century, Protestantism suddenly raised its head, the institutions of the Empire were tried to the uttermost. For the mass of the nation declared itself in favour of change, and the Diet was so composed as to be hostile to change, as soon as it appeared that it was likely to take the direction of Lutheranism. In the Electoral House, indeed, the votes of the three ecclesiastical electors were met by the votes of the three lay electors. But in the House of Princes there were thirty-eight ecclesiastical dignitaries and but eighteen laymen. It was a body, in short, like the English House of Lords before the Reformation, and there was no Henry VIII. to bring it into harmony with the direction which lay society was taking, by some act equivalent to the dissolution of the monasteries, and the consequent exclusion of the mitred abbots from their seats in Parliament. To pass measures favourable to Protestantism through such a house was simply impossible. Yet it can hardly be doubted that a really national Parliament would have adopted Lutheranism, more or less modified, as the religion of the nation. Before Protestantism was fifty years old, in spite of all difficulties, ninety per cent. of the population of Germany were Protestant.

§ 2. Most of the lay princes adopt it.

In default of national action in favor of Protestantism, it was adopted and supported by most of the lay princes and electors. A new principle of disintegration was thus introduced into Germany, as these princes were forced to act in opposition to the views adopted by the Diet.

§ 3. The Emperor Charles V.

If the Diet was unlikely to play the part of an English Parliament, neither was the Emperor likely to play the part of Henry VIII. For the interests of Germany, Charles V., who had been elected in 1519, was weak where he ought to have been strong, and strong where he ought to have been weak. As Emperor, he was nothing. As feudal sovereign and national ruler, he was very little. But he was also a prince of the Empire, and as such he ruled over the Austrian duchies and Tyrol. Further than this, he was one of the most powerful sovereigns of Europe. He was king of Spain, and of the Indies with all their mines. In Italy, he disposed of Naples and the Milanese. Sicily and Sardinia were his, and, under various titles, he ruled over the fragments of the old Burgundian inheritance, Franche Comté, and the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands. Such a man would influence the progress of affairs in Germany with a weight out of all proportion to his position in the German constitution. And unhappily, with the power of a foreign sovereign, he brought the mind of a foreigner. His mother's Spanish blood beat in

his veins, and he had the instinctive aversion of a Spaniard to anything which savoured of opposition to the doctrines of the Church. 'That man,' he said, when he caught sight of Luther for the first time, 'shall never make me a heretic.'

1552.

§ 4. The Convention of Passau.

Of this antagonism between the minority of the princes backed by the majority of the nation, and the majority of the princes backed by an Emperor who was also a foreign sovereign, civil war was the natural result. In the end, the triumph of the Protestants was so far secured that they forced their opponents in 1552 to yield to the Convention of Passau, by which it was arranged that a Diet should be held as soon as possible for a general pacification.

1555

§ 5. The peace of Augsburg.

That Diet, which was assembled at Augsburg in 1555, met under remarkably favourable circumstances. Charles V., baffled and disappointed, had retired from the scene, and had left behind him, as his representative, his more conciliatory brother Ferdinand, who was already King of Hungary and Bohemia, and was his destined successor in the German possessions of the House of Austria. Both he and the leading men on either side were anxious for peace, and were jealous of the influence which Philip, the son of Charles V., and his successor in Spain, Italy,

and the Netherlands, might gain from a continuance of the war.

§ 6. Its terms.

There was little difficulty in arranging that the Protestant princes, who, before the date of the Convention of Passau, had seized ecclesiastical property within their own territories, either for their own purposes or for the support of Protestant worship, should no longer be subject to the law or authority of the Catholic clergy. The real difficulty arose in providing for the future. With Protestantism as a growing religion, the princes might be inclined to proceed further with the secularizing of the Church property still left untouched within their own territories; and besides this, it was possible that even bishops or abbots themselves, being princes of the Empire, might be inclined to abandon their religion, and to adopt Protestantism.

§ 7. Might the princes seize more lands?

The first of these difficulties was left by the treaty in some obscurity; but, from the stress laid on the abandonment by the Catholics of the lands secularized before the Convention of Passau, it would seem that they might fairly urge that they had never abandoned their claims to lands which at that date had not been secularized.

§ 8. Might the ecclesiastics turn Protestants?

The second difficulty led to long discussions. The Protestants wished that any bishop or abbot who pleased might be allowed to turn Protestant, and might then establish Protestantism as the

religion of his subjects. The Catholics insisted that any bishop or abbot who changed his religion should be compelled to vacate his post, and this view of the case prevailed, under the name of the Ecclesiastical Reservation. It was further agreed that the peace should apply to the Lutheran Church alone, no other confession having been as yet adopted by any of the princes.

§ 9. Dangers of the future.

Such a peace, acceptable as it was at the time, was pregnant with future evil. Owing its origin to a Diet in which everything was arranged by the princes and electors, it settled all questions as if nobody but princes and electors had any interest in the matter. And, besides this, there was a most unstatesmanlike want of provision for future change. The year 1552 was to give the line by which the religious institutions of Germany were to be measured for all time. There was nothing elastic about such legislation. It did not, on the one hand, adopt the religion of the vast majority as the established religion of the Empire. It did not, on the other hand, adopt the principle of religious liberty. In thinking of themselves and their rights, the princes had forgotten the German people.

§ 10. Fresh encroachments upon Church lands.

The barriers set up against Protestantism were so plainly artificial that they soon gave way. The princes claimed the right of continuing to secularize Church lands within their territories as inseparable from their general right of providing for the

religion of their subjects. At all events they had might on their side. About a hundred monasteries are said to have fallen victims in the Palatinate alone, and an almost equal number, the gleanings of a richer harvest which had been reaped before the Convention of Passau, were taken possession of in Northern Germany.

§ 11. The Ecclesiastical Reservation.

The Ecclesiastical Reservation applied to a different class of property, namely, to the bishoprics and abbeys held immediately of the Empire. Here, too, the Protestants found an excuse for evading the Treaty of Augsburg. The object of the reservation, they argued, was not to keep the bishoprics in Catholic hands, but to prevent quarrels arising between the bishops and their chapters. If, therefore, a bishop elected as a Catholic chose to turn Protestant, he must resign his see in order to avoid giving offence to the Catholic chapter. But where a chapter, itself already Protestant, elected a Protestant bishop, he might take the see without hesitation, and hold it as long as he lived.

§ 12. The northern bishoprics Protestant.

In this way eight of the great northern bishoprics soon came under Protestant rule. Not that the Protestant occupant was in any real sense of the word a bishop. He was simply an elected prince, calling himself a bishop, or often more modestly an administrator, and looking after the temporal affairs of his dominions.

§ 13. Good and bad side of the arrangement.

In some respects the arrangement was a good one. The populations of these territories were mainly Protestant, and they had no cause to complain. Besides, if only a sufficient number of these bishoprics could be gained to Protestantism, the factitious majority in the Diet might be reversed, and an assembly obtained more truly representing the nation than that which was in existence. But it must be acknowledged that the whole thing had an ugly look; and it is no wonder that Catholics pronounced these administrators to be no bishops at all, and to have no right to hold the bishops' lands, or to take their seat as bishops in the Diet of the Empire.

Section III. —*Reaction against Protestantism*

§ 1. Theological disputes among Protestants.

In course of time Protestantism, in its turn, exposed itself to attack. Each petty court soon had its own school of theologians, whose minds were dwarfed to the limits of the circle which they influenced with their logic and their eloquence. The healthful feeling which springs from action on a large stage was wanting to them. Bitterly wrangling with one another, they were eager to call in the secular arm against their opponents. Seizing the opportunity, the newly-constituted order of Jesuits stepped forward to bid silence in the name of the renovated Papal Church, alone, as they urged, able to give peace instead of strife, certainty instead of disputation. The Protestants were taken at a disadvantage. The enthusiasm of a national life, which repelled the Jesuits in the England of the sixteenth century, and the enthusiasm of scientific knowledge which repels them in the Germany of the nineteenth century, were alike wanting to a Germany in which national life was a dream of the past, and science a dream of the future. Luther had long ago passed away from the world. Melanchthon's last days were spent in hopeless protest against the evil around him. 'For two reasons,' he said, as he lay upon his death-bed, 'I desire to leave this life: First, that

I may enjoy the sight, which I long for, of the Son of God and of the Church in Heaven. Next, that I may be set free from the monstrous and implacable hatreds of the theologians.'

§ 2. The Catholics make progress.

In the face of a divided people, or self-seeking princes, and of conflicting theories, the Jesuits made their way. Step by step the Catholic reaction gained ground, not without compulsion, but also not without that moral force which makes compulsion possible. The bishops and abbots gave their subjects the choice between conversion and exile. An attempt made by the Archbishop of Cologne to marry and turn Protestant was too plainly in contradiction to the Ecclesiastical Reservation to prosper, and when the Protestant majority of the Chapter of Strasburg elected a Protestant bishop they were soon overpowered. A Protestant Archbishop of Magdeburg offering to take his place amongst the princes of the Empire at the Diet was refused admission, and though nothing was done to dispossess him and the other northern administrators of their sees, yet a slur had been cast upon their title which they were anxious to efface. A few years later a legal decision was obtained in the cases of four monasteries secularized after the Convention of Passau, and that decision was adverse to the claim of the Protestants.

§ 3. The disputes which led finally to war.

Out of these two disputes – the dispute about the Protestant administrators and the dispute about the secularized lands – the

Thirty Years' War arose. The Catholic party stood upon the strict letter of the law, according, at least, to their own interpretation, and asked that everything might be replaced in the condition in which it was in 1552, the date of the Convention of Passau. The Protestant view, that consideration should be taken for changes, many of which at the end of the sixteenth century were at least a generation old, may or may not have been in accordance with the law, but it was certainly in accordance with the desires of the greater part of the population affected by them.

§ 4. No popular representation.

There is every reason to believe that if Germany had possessed anything like a popular representation its voice would have spoken in favour of some kind of compromise. There is no trace of any mutual hostility between the populations of the Catholic and Protestant districts apart from their rulers.

Section IV. —*Three Parties and Three Leaders*

§ 1. The leaders of parties.

Two men stood forward to personify the elements of strife – Maximilian, the Catholic Duke of Bavaria, and the Calvinist Prince Christian of Anhalt, whilst the warmest advocate of peace was John George, the Lutheran Elector of Saxony.

§ 2. Maximilian of Bavaria.

Maximilian of Bavaria was the only lay prince of any importance on the side of the Catholics. He had long been known as a wise administrator of his own dominions. No other ruler was provided with so well-filled a treasury, or so disciplined an army. No other ruler was so capable of forming designs which were likely to win the approbation of others, or so patient in waiting till the proper time arrived for their execution. 'What the Duke of Bavaria does,' said one of his most discerning opponents, 'has hands and feet.' His plans, when once they were launched into the world, seemed to march forwards of themselves to success.

§ 3. His love of legality.

Such a man was not likely to take up the wild theories which were here and there springing up, of the duty of uprooting Protestantism at all times and all places, or to declare, as some

were declaring, that the Peace of Augsburg was invalid because it had never been confirmed by the Pope. To him the Peace of Augsburg was the legal settlement by which all questions were to be tried. What he read there was hostile to the Protestant administrators and the secularizing princes. Yet he did not propose to carry his views into instant action. He would await his opportunity. But he would do his best to be strong, in order that he might not be found wanting when the opportunity arrived, and, in spite of his enthusiasm for legal rights, it was by no means unlikely that, if a difficult point arose, he might be inclined to strain the law in his own favour.

§ 4. Danger of the Protestants.

Such an opponent, so moderate and yet so resolute, was a far more dangerous enemy to the Protestants than the most blatant declaimer against their doctrines. Naturally, the Protestants regarded his views as entirely inadmissible. They implied nothing less than the forcible conversion of the thousands of Protestants who were inhabitants of the administrators' dominions, and the occupation by the Catholic clergy of points of vantage which would serve them in their operations upon the surrounding districts. It is true that the change, if effected would simply replace matters in the position which had been found endurable in 1552. But that which could be borne when the Catholics were weak and despondent might be an intolerable menace when they were confident and aggressive.

§ 5. Danger of the Protestants.

Resistance, therefore, became a duty, a duty to which the princes were all the more likely to pay attention because it coincided with their private interest. In the bishoprics and chapters they found provision for their younger sons, from which they would be cut off if Protestants were hereafter to be excluded.

§ 6. Protestants of the north and south.

The only question was in what spirit the resistance should be offered. The tie which bound the Empire together was so loose, and resistance to law, or what was thought to be law, was so likely to lead to resistance to law in general, that it was the more incumbent on the Protestants to choose their ground well. And in Germany, at least, there was not likely to be any hasty provocation to give Maximilian an excuse for reclaiming the bishoprics. Far removed from the danger, these northern Lutherans found it difficult to conceive that there was any real danger at all. The states of the south, lying like a wedge driven into the heart of European Catholicism, were forced by their geographical position to be ever on the alert. They knew that they were the advanced guard of Protestantism. On the one flank was the Catholic duchy of Bavaria, and the bishoprics of Würzburg and Bamberg. On the other flank were the ecclesiastical electorates on the Rhine and the Moselle, the bishoprics of Worms, Spires, and Strasburg, the Austrian lands

in Swabia and Alsace, and the long line of the Spanish frontier in Franche Comté and the Netherlands garrisoned by the troops of the first military monarchy in Europe. What wonder if men so endangered were in haste to cut the knot which threatened to strangle them, and to meet the enemy by flying in his face rather than by awaiting the onslaught which they believed to be inevitable.

§ 7. Spread of Calvinism.

Under the influence of this feeling the princes of these southern regions for the most part adopted a religion very different from the courtly Lutheranism of the north. If Würtemberg continued Lutheran under the influence of the University of Tübingen, the rulers of the Palatinate, of Hesse Cassel, of Baden-Durlach, of Zwei-Brücken, sought for strength in the iron discipline of Calvinism, a form of religion which always came into favour when there was an immediate prospect of a death-struggle with Rome.

§ 8. Courtly character of Calvinism in Germany.

Unhappily, German Calvinism differed from that of Scotland and the Netherlands. Owing to its adoption by the princes rather than by the people, it failed in gaining that hardy growth which made it invincible on its native soil. It had less of the discipline of an army about it, less resolute defiance, less strength altogether. And whilst it was weaker it was more provocative. Excluded from the benefits of the Peace of Augsburg, which knew of

no Protestant body except the Lutheran, the Calvinists were apt to talk about the institutions of the Empire in a manner so disparaging as to give offence to Lutherans and Catholics alike.

§ 9. Frederick IV., Elector Palatine.

Of this Calvinist feeling Christian of Anhalt became the impersonation. The leadership of the Calvinist states in the beginning of the seventeenth century would naturally have devolved on Frederick IV., Elector Palatine. But Frederick was an incapable drunkard, and his councillors, with Christian at their head, were left to act in his name.

§ 10. Christian of Anhalt.

Christian of Anhalt possessed a brain of inexhaustible fertility. As soon as one plan which he had framed appeared impracticable, he was ready with another. He was a born diplomatist, and all the chief politicians of Europe were intimately known to him by report, whilst with many of them he carried on a close personal intercourse. His leading idea was that the maintenance of peace was hopeless, and that either Protestantism must get rid of the House of Austria, or the House of Austria would get rid of Protestantism. Whether this were true or false, it is certain that he committed the terrible fault of underestimating his enemy. Whilst Maximilian was drilling soldiers and saving money, Christian was trusting to mere diplomatic finesse. He had no idea of the tenacity with which men will cling to institutions, however rotten, till they feel sure

that some other institutions will be substituted for them, or of the strength which Maximilian derived from the appearance of conservatism in which his revolutionary designs were shrouded even from his own observation. In order to give to Protestantism that development which in Christian's eyes was necessary to its safety, it would be needful to overthrow the authority of the Emperor and of the Diet. And if the Emperor and the Diet were overthrown, what had Christian to offer to save Germany from anarchy? If his plan included, as there is little doubt that it did, the seizure of the lands of the neighbouring bishops, and a fresh secularization of ecclesiastical property, even Protestant towns might begin to ask whether their turn would not come next. A return to the old days of private war and the law of the strongest would be welcome to very few.

1607

§ 11. The occupation of Donauwörth.

In 1607 an event occurred which raised the alarm of the southern Protestants to fever heat. In the free city of Donauwörth the abbot of a monastery saw fit to send out a procession to flaunt its banners in the face of an almost entirely Protestant population. Before the starting-point was regained mud and stones were thrown, and some of those who had taken part in the proceedings were roughly handled. The Imperial Court (*Reichskammergericht*), whose duty it was to settle such quarrels, was out of working order in consequence of the religious disputes; but there was an Imperial Council (*Reichshofrath*),

consisting of nominees of the Emperor, and professing to act out of the plenitude of imperial authority. By this council Donauwörth was put to the ban of the Empire without due form of trial, and Maximilian was appointed to execute the decree. He at once marched a small army into the place, and, taking possession of the town, declared his intention of retaining his hold till his expenses had been paid, handing over the parish church in the meanwhile to the Catholic clergy. It had only been given over to Protestant worship after the date of the Convention of Passau, and Maximilian could persuade himself that he was only carrying out the law.

1608

§ 12. The Diet of 1608.

It was a flagrant case of religious aggression under the name of the law. The knowledge that a partial tribunal was ready to give effect to the complaints of Catholics at once threw the great Protestant cities of the South – Nüremberg, Ulm, and Strasburg into the arms of the neighbouring princes of whom they had hitherto been jealous. Yet there was much in the policy of those princes which would hardly have reassured them. At the Diet of 1608 the representatives of the Elector Palatine were foremost in demanding that the minority should not be bound by the majority in questions of taxation or religion; that is to say, that they should not contribute to the common defence unless they pleased, and that they should not be subject to any regulation about ecclesiastical property unless they pleased. Did this mean

only that they were to keep what they had got, or that they might take more as soon as it was convenient? The one was the Protestant, the other the Catholic interpretation of their theory.

§ 13. Formation of the Union.

On May 14, 1608, the Protestant Union, to which Lutherans and Calvinists were alike admitted, came into existence under the guidance of Christian of Anhalt. It was mainly composed of the princes and towns of the south. Its ostensible purpose was for self-defence, and in this sense it was accepted by most of those who took part in it. Its leaders had very different views.

§ 14. Formation of the League.

A Catholic League was at once formed under Maximilian. It was composed of a large number of bishops and abbots, who believed that the princes of the Union wished to annex their territories. Maximilian's ability gave it a unity of action which the Union never possessed. It, too, was constituted for self-defence, but whether that word was to include the resumption of the lands lost since the Convention of Passau was a question probably left for circumstances to decide.

§ 15. Revolutionary tendencies of the Union.

Whatever the majority of the princes of the Union may have meant, there can be no doubt that Christian of Anhalt meant aggression. He believed that the safety of Protestantism could not be secured without the overthrow of the German branch of the House of Austria, and he was sanguine enough to fancy that

an act which would call up all Catholic Europe in arms against him was a very easy undertaking.

1609

§ 16. The succession of Cleves.

Scarcely had the Union been formed when events occurred which almost dragged Germany into war. In the spring of 1609 the Duke of Cleves died. The Elector of Brandenburg and the son of the Duke of Neuburg laid claim to the succession. On the plea that the Emperor had the right to settle the point, a Catholic army advanced to take possession of the country. The two pretenders, both of them Lutherans, made common cause against the invaders. 1610.Henry IV. of France found in the dispute a pretext for commencing his long-meditated attack upon Spain and her allies. But his life was cut short by an assassin, and his widow only thought of sending a small French force to join the English and the Dutch in maintaining the claims of the two princes, who were ready to unite for a time against a third party.

1613

§ 17. The box on the ear.

It was not easy to bring the princes to an arrangement for the future. One day the young Prince of Neuburg proposed what seemed to him an excellent way out of the difficulty. 'He was ready,' he said, 'to marry the Elector's daughter, if only he might have the territory.' Enraged at the impudence of the proposal, the Elector raised his hand and boxed his young rival's ears. The blow

had unexpected consequences. The injured prince renounced his Protestantism, and invoked, as a good Catholic, the aid of Spain and the League. The Elector passed from Lutheranism to Calvinism, and took a more active part than before in the affairs of the Union. That immediate war in Germany did not result from the quarrel is probably the strongest possible evidence of the reluctance of the German people to break the peace.

1612

§ 18. John George, Elector of Saxony.

The third party, the German Lutherans, looked with equal abhorrence upon aggression on either side. Their leader, John George, Elector of Saxony, stood aloof alike from Christian of Anhalt, and from Maximilian of Bavaria. He was attached by the traditions of his house as well as by his own character to the Empire and the House of Austria. But he was anxious to obtain security for his brother Protestants. He saw there must be a change; but he wisely desired to make the change as slight as possible. In 1612, therefore, he proposed that the highest jurisdiction should still be retained by the Imperial Council, but that the Council, though still nominated by the Emperor, should contain an equal number of Catholics and Protestants. Sentences such as that which had deprived Donauwörth of its civil rights would be in future impossible.

§ 19. His weakness of character.

Unhappily, John George had not the gift of ruling men. He

was a hard drinker and a bold huntsman, but to convert his wishes into actual facts was beyond his power. When he saw his plan threatened with opposition on either side he left it to take care of itself. In 1613 a Diet met, and broke up in confusion, leaving matters in such a state that any spark might give rise to a general conflagration.

CHAPTER II.
THE BOHEMIAN REVOLUTION

Section I. —*The House of Austria and its Subjects*

§ 1. The Austrian dominions.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the dominions of the German branch of the House of Austria were parcelled out amongst the various descendants of Ferdinand I., the brother of Charles V. The head of the family, the Emperor Rudolph II., was Archduke of Austria – a name which in those days was used simply to indicate the archduchy itself, and not the group of territories which are at present ruled over by the Austrian sovereign – and he was also King of Bohemia and of Hungary. His brother Maximilian governed Tyrol, and his cousin Ferdinand ruled in Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola.

§ 2. Aristocracy and Protestantism.

The main difficulty of government arose from the fact that whilst every member of the family clung firmly to the old creed, the greater part of the population, excepting in Tyrol, had adopted the new; that is to say, that on the great question of

the day the subjects and the rulers had no thoughts in common. And this difficulty was aggravated by the further fact that Protestantism prospered mainly from the support given to it by a powerful aristocracy, so that political disagreement was added to the difference in religion. Ferdinand had, indeed, contrived to put down with a strong hand the exercise of Protestantism in his own dominions so easily as almost to suggest the inference that it had not taken very deep root in those Alpine regions. But Rudolph was quite incapable of following his example. If not absolutely insane, he was subject to sudden outbursts of temper, proceeding from mental disease.

1606

§ 3. Rudolph and Matthias.

In 1606, a peace having been concluded with the Turks, Rudolph fancied that his hands were at last free to deal with his subjects as Ferdinand had dealt with his. The result was a general uprising, and if Rudolph's brother Matthias had not placed himself at the head of the movement, in order to save the interests of the family, some stranger would probably have been selected as a rival to the princes of the House of Austria.

In the end, two years later, Austria and Hungary were assigned to Matthias, whilst Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia were left to Rudolph for his lifetime.

1609

§ 4. The Royal Charter of Bohemia.

The result of Rudolph's ill-advised energy was to strengthen the hands of the Protestant nobility. In Hungary the Turks were too near to make it easy for Matthias to refuse concessions to a people who might, at any time, throw themselves into the arms of the enemy, and in Austria he was driven, after some resistance, to agree to a compromise. In Bohemia, in 1609, the Estates extorted from Rudolph the Royal Charter (*Majestätts brief*) which guaranteed freedom of conscience to every inhabitant of Bohemia, as long as he kept to certain recognised creeds. But freedom of conscience did not by any means imply freedom of worship. A man might think as he pleased, but the building of churches and the performance of divine service were matters for the authorities to decide upon. The only question was, who the authorities were.

§ 5. Position of the landowner.

By the Royal Charter this authority was given over to members of the Estates, that is to say, to about 1,400 of the feudal aristocracy and 42 towns. In an agreement attached to the charter, a special exception was made for the royal domains. A Protestant landowner could and would prohibit the erection of a Catholic church on his own lands, but the king was not to have that privilege. On his domains worship was to be free.

§ 6. Rudolph tries to get rid of it.

From this bondage, as he counted it, Rudolph struggled to liberate himself. There was fresh violence, ending in 1611 in

Rudolph's dethronement in favour of Matthias, who thus became king of Bohemia. The next year he died, and Matthias succeeded him as Emperor also.

§ 7. Christian of Anhalt hopes for general confusion.

During all these troubles, Christian of Anhalt had done all that he could to frustrate a peaceful settlement. 'When Hungary, Moravia, Austria, and Silesia are on our side,' he explained, before the Royal Charter had been granted, to a diplomatist in his employment, 'the House of Hapsburg will have no further strength to resist us, except in Bohemia, Bavaria, and a few bishoprics. Speaking humanly, we shall be strong enough not only to resist these, but to reform all the clergy, and bring them into submission to our religion. The game will begin in this fashion. As soon as Bavaria arms to use compulsion against Austria,' (that is to say, against the Austrian Protestants, who were at that time resisting Matthias) 'we shall arm to attack Bavaria, and retake Donauwörth. In the same way, we shall get hold of two or three bishops to supply us with money. Certainly, it seems that by proceeding dexterously we shall give the law to all, and set up for rulers whom we will.'

§ 8. Matthias King of Bohemia.

For the time Christian was disappointed. The dominions of Matthias settled down into quietness. But Matthias was preparing another opportunity for his antagonist. Whether it would have been possible in those days for a Catholic king to have kept

a Protestant nation in working order we cannot say. At all events, Matthias did not give the experiment a fair trial. He did not, indeed, attack the Royal Charter directly on the lands of the aristocracy. But he did his best to undermine it on his own. The Protestants of Braunau, on the lands of the Abbot of Braunau and the Protestants of Klostergrab, on the lands of the Archbishop of Prague, built churches for themselves, the use of which was prohibited by the abbot and the archbishop. A dispute immediately arose as to the rights of ecclesiastical landowners, and it was argued on the Protestant side, that their lands were technically Crown lands, and that they had therefore no right to close the churches. Matthias took the opposite view.

§ 9. He evades the charter.

On his own estates Matthias found means to evade the charter. He appointed Catholic priests to Protestant churches, and allowed measures to be taken to compel Protestants to attend the Catholic service. Yet for a long time the Protestant nobility kept quiet. Matthias was old and infirm, and when he died they would, as they supposed, have an opportunity of choosing their next king, and it was generally believed that the election would fall upon a Protestant. The only question was whether the Elector Palatine or the Elector of Saxony would be chosen.

1617

§ 10. Ferdinand proposed as king of Bohemia.

Suddenly, in 1617, the Bohemian Diet was summoned. When

the Estates of the kingdom met they were told that it was a mistake to suppose that the crown of Bohemia was elective. Evidence was produced that for some time before the election of Matthias the Estates had acknowledged the throne to be hereditary, and the precedent of Matthias was to be set aside as occurring in revolutionary times. Intimidation was used to assist the argument, and men in the confidence of the court whispered in the ears of those who refused to be convinced that it was to be hoped that they had at least two heads on their shoulders.

§ 11. The Bohemians acknowledge him as their king.

If ever there was a moment for resistance, if resistance was to be made at all, it was this. The arguments of the court were undoubtedly strong, but a skilful lawyer could easily have found technicalities on the other side, and the real evasion of the Royal Charter might have been urged as a reason why the court had no right to press technical arguments too closely. The danger was all the greater as it was known that by the renunciation of all intermediate heirs the hereditary right fell upon Ferdinand of Styria, the man who had already stamped Protestantism out in his own dominions. Yet, in spite of this, the Diet did as it was bidden, and renounced the right of election by acknowledging Ferdinand as their hereditary king.

§ 12. His character.

The new king was more of a devotee and less of a statesman than Maximilian of Bavaria, his cousin on his mother's side.

But their judgments of events were formed on the same lines. Neither of them were mere ordinary bigots, keeping no faith with heretics. But they were both likely to be guided in their interpretation of the law by that which they conceived to be profitable to their church. Ferdinand was personally brave; but except when his course was very clear before him, he was apt to let difficulties settle themselves rather than come to a decision.

§ 13. He takes the oath to the Royal Charter.

He had at once to consider whether he would swear to the Royal Charter. He consulted the Jesuits, and was told that, though it had been a sin to grant it, it was no sin to accept it now that it was the law of the land. As he walked in state to his coronation, he turned to a nobleman who was by his side. 'I am glad,' he said, 'that I have attained the Bohemian crown without any pangs of conscience.' He took the oath without further difficulty.

The Bohemians were not long in feeling the effects of the change. Hitherto the hold of the House of Austria upon the country had been limited to the life of one old man. It had now, by the admission of the Diet itself, fixed itself for ever upon Bohemia. The proceedings against the Protestants on the royal domains assumed a sharper character. The Braunau worshippers were rigorously excluded from their church. The walls of the new church of Klostergrab were actually levelled with the ground.

Section II. —*The Revolution at Prague*

1618. § 1. The Bohemians petition Matthias.

The Bohemians had thus to resist in 1618, under every disadvantage, the attack which they had done nothing to meet in 1617. Certain persons named Defensors had, by law, the right of summoning an assembly of representatives of the Protestant Estates. Such an assembly met on March 5, and having prepared a petition to Matthias, who was absent from the kingdom, adjourned to May 21.

§ 2. Reply of Matthias.

Long before the time of meeting came, an answer was sent from Matthias justifying all that had been done, and declaring the assembly illegal. It was believed at the time, though incorrectly, that the answer was prepared by Slawata and Martinitz, two members of the regency who had been notorious for the vigour of their opposition to Protestantism.

§ 3. Violent counsels.

In the Protestant assembly there was a knot of men, headed by Count Henry of Thurn, which was bent on the dethronement of Ferdinand. They resolved to take advantage of the popular feeling to effect the murder of the two regents, and so to place an impassable gulf between the nation and the king.

§ 4. Martinitz and Slawata thrown out of window.

Accordingly, on the morning of May 23, the 'beginning and cause,' as a contemporary calls it, 'of all the coming evil,' the first day, though men as yet knew it not, of thirty years of war, Thurn sallied forth at the head of a band of noblemen and their followers, all of them with arms in their hands. Trooping into the room where the regents were seated, they charged the obnoxious two with being the authors of the king's reply. After a bitter altercation both Martinitz and Slawata were dragged to a window which overlooked the fosse below from a dizzy height of some seventy feet. Martinitz, struggling against his enemies, pleaded hard for a confessor. 'Commend thy soul to God,' was the stern answer. 'Shall we allow the Jesuit scoundrels to come here?' In an instant he was hurled out, crying, 'Jesus, Mary!' 'Let us see,' said some one mockingly, 'Whether his Mary will help him.' A moment later he added: 'By God, his Mary has helped him.' Slawata followed, and then the secretary Fabricius. By a wonderful preservation, in which pious Catholics discerned the protecting hand of God, all three crawled away from the spot without serious hurt.

§ 5. A bad beginning.

There are moments when the character of a nation or party stands revealed as by a lightning flash, and this was one of them. It is not in such a way as this that successful revolutions are begun.

§ 6. The revolutionary government.

The first steps to constitute a new government were easy. Thirty Directors were appointed, and the Jesuits were expelled from Bohemia. The Diet met and ordered soldiers to be levied to form an army. But to support this army money would be needed, and the existing taxes were insufficient. A loan was accordingly thought of, and the nobles resolved to request the towns to make up the sum, they themselves contributing nothing. The project falling dead upon the resistance of the towns, new taxes were voted; but no steps were taken to collect them, and the army was left to depend in a great measure upon chance.

§ 7. The Elector of Saxony wishes for peace.

Would the princes of Germany come to the help of the Directors? John George of Saxony told them that he deeply sympathized with them, but that rebellion was a serious matter. To one who asked him what he meant to do, he replied, 'Help to put out the fire.'

§ 8. The Elector Palatine holds out hopes of assistance.

There was more help for them at Heidelberg than at Dresden. Frederick IV. had died in 1610, and his son, the young Frederick V., looked up to Christian of Anhalt as the first statesman of his age. By his marriage with Elizabeth, the daughter of James I. of England, he had contracted an alliance which gave him the appearance rather than the reality of strength. He offered every encouragement to the Bohemians, but for the time held back from giving them actual assistance.

Section III. —*The War in Bohemia*

§ 1. Outbreak of war.

The Directors were thus thrown on their own resources. Ferdinand had secured his election as king of Hungary, and, returning to Vienna, had taken up the reins of government in the name of Matthias. He had got together an army of 14,000 men, under the command of Bucquoi, an officer from the great school of military art in the Netherlands, and on August 13, the Bohemian frontier was invaded. War could hardly be avoided by either side. Budweis and Pilsen, two Catholic towns in Bohemia, naturally clung to their sovereign, and as soon as the Directors ordered an attack upon Budweis, the troops of Matthias prepared to advance to its succour.

§ 2. The Bohemians vote men, but object to paying taxes.

The Directors took alarm, and proposed to the Diet that new taxes should be raised and not merely voted, and that, in addition to the army of regular soldiers, there should be a general levy of a large portion of the population. To the levy the Diet consented without difficulty. But before the day fixed for discussing the proposed taxes arrived, the majority of the members deliberately returned to their homes, and no new taxes were to be had.

§ 3. They are not likely to prosper.

This day, August 30, may fairly be taken as the date of the political suicide of the Bohemian aristocracy. In almost every country in Europe order was maintained by concentrating the chief powers of the State in the hands of a single governor, whether he were called king, duke, or elector. To this rule there were exceptions in Venice, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, and by-and-by there would be an exception on a grander scale in England. But the peoples who formed these exceptions had proved themselves worthy of the distinction, and there would be no room in the world for men who had got rid of their king without being able to establish order upon another basis.

§ 4. Help from Savoy.

Still there were too many governments in Europe hostile to the House of Austria to allow the Bohemians to fall at once. Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, had just brought a war with Spain to a close, but he had not become any better disposed towards his late adversary. He accordingly entered into an agreement with the leaders of the Union, by which 2,000 men who had been raised for his service were to be placed at the disposal of the Bohemian Directors.

§ 5. Mansfeld.

The commander of these troops was Count Ernest of Mansfeld, an illegitimate son of a famous general in the service of Spain. He had changed his religion and deserted his king. He now put himself forward as a champion of Protestantism.

He was brave, active, and versatile, and was possessed of those gifts which win the confidence of professional soldiers. But he was already notorious for the readiness with which he allowed his soldiers to support themselves on the most unbridled pillage. An adventurer himself, he was just the man to lead an army of adventurers.

§ 6. A forced loan.

Soon after his arrival in Bohemia, Mansfeld was employed in the siege of Pilsen, whilst Thurn was occupied with holding Bucquoi in check. The failure in obtaining additional taxes had led the Directors to adopt the simple expedient of levying a forced loan from the few rich.

§ 7. Success of the Bohemians.

For a time this desperate expedient was successful. The help offered to Ferdinand by Spain was not great, and it was long in coming. The prudent Maximilian refused to ruin himself by engaging in an apparently hopeless cause. At last the Silesians, who had hesitated long, threw in their lot with their neighbours, and sent their troops to their help early in November. Bucquoi was in full retreat to Budweis. On the 21st Pilsen surrendered to Mansfeld. Further warfare was stopped as winter came on – a terrible winter for the unhappy dwellers in Southern Bohemia. Starving armies are not particular in their methods of supplying their wants. Plunder, devastation and reckless atrocities of every kind fell to the lot of the doomed peasants, Bucquoi's Hungarians

being conspicuous for barbarity.

§ 8. Scheme of Christian of Anhalt.

Meanwhile, Christian of Anhalt was luring on the young Elector Palatine to more active intervention. The Bohemian leaders had already begun to talk of placing the crown on Frederick's head. Frederick, anxious and undecided, consented on the one hand, at the Emperor's invitation, to join the Duke of Bavaria and the Electors of Mentz and Saxony in mediating an arrangement, whilst, on the other hand, he gave his assent to an embassy to Turin, the object of which was to dazzle the Duke of Savoy with the prospect of obtaining the imperial crown after the death of Matthias, and to urge him to join in an attack upon the German dominions of the House of Austria.

§ 9. Coolness of the Union.

The path on which Frederick was entering was the more evidently unsafe, as the Union, which met at Heilbronn in September, had shown great coolness in the Bohemian cause. Christian of Anhalt had not ventured even to hint at the projects which he entertained. If he was afterwards deserted by the Union he could not say that its members as a body had engaged to support him.

1619

§ 10. The Duke of Savoy gives hopes.

The Duke of Savoy, on the other hand, at least talked as if the Austrian territories were at his feet. In August 1618 he had

given his consent to the proposed elevation of Frederick to the Bohemian throne. In February 1619 he explained that he wished to have Bohemia for himself. Frederick might be compensated with the Austrian lands in Alsace and Swabia. He might, perhaps, have the Archduchy of Austria too, or become King of Hungary. If he wished to fall upon the bishops' lands, let him do it quickly, before the Pope had time to interfere. This sort of talk, wild as it was, delighted the little circle of Frederick's confidants. The Margrave of Anspach, who, as general of the army of the Union, was admitted into the secret, was beyond measure pleased: 'We have now,' he said, 'the means of upsetting the world.'

§ 11. Conservative feeling alienated.

For the present, these negotiations were veiled in secresy. They engendered a confident levity, which was certain to shock that conservative, peace-loving feeling which the Bohemians had already done much to alienate.

Section IV. —*Ferdinand on his Defence*

§ 1. The Bohemians look for aid from foreign powers.

If the assistance of the Union was thus likely to do more harm than good to the Bohemians, their hopes of aid from other powers were still more delusive. The Dutch, indeed, sent something, and would willingly have sent more, but they had too many difficulties at home to be very profuse in their offers. James of England told his son-in-law plainly that he would have nothing to do with any encroachment upon the rights of others, and he had undertaken at the instigation of Spain a formal mediation between the Bohemians and their king – a mediation which had been offered him merely in order to keep his hands tied whilst others were arming.

§ 2. Attack upon Vienna.

On March 20, before the next campaign opened, Matthias died. Ferdinand's renewed promises to respect the Royal Charter – made doubtless under the reservation of putting his own interpretation upon the disputed points – were rejected with scorn by the Directors. The sword was to decide the quarrel. With the money received from the Dutch, and with aid in money and munitions of war from Heidelberg, Thurn and Mansfeld were enabled to take the field. The latter remained to watch Bucquoi, whilst the former undertook to win the other territories, which

had hitherto submitted to Matthias, and had stood aloof from the movement in Bohemia. Without much difficulty he succeeded in revolutionizing Moravia, and he arrived on June 5 under the walls of Vienna. Within was Ferdinand himself, with a petty garrison of 300 men, and as many volunteers as he could attach to his cause. Thurn hoped that his partisans inside the cities would open the gates to admit him. But he lost time in negotiations with the Austrian nobility. The estates of the two territories of Upper and Lower Austria were to a great extent Protestant, and they had refused to do homage to Ferdinand on the death of Matthias. The Lower Austrians now sent a deputation to Vienna to demand permission to form a confederation with the Bohemians, on terms which would practically have converted the whole country, from the Styrian frontier to the borders of Silesia, into a federal aristocratic republic.

§ 3. Ferdinand resists the demands of the Lower Austrian Estates.

In Ferdinand they had to do with a man who was not to be overawed by personal danger. He knew well that by yielding he would be giving a legal basis to a system which he regarded as opposed to all law, human and divine. Throwing himself before the crucifix, he found strength for the conflict into which he entered on behalf of his family, his church, and, as he firmly believed, of his country and his God – strength none the less real because the figure on the cross did not, as men not long afterwards came fondly to believe, bow its head towards the

suppliant, or utter the consoling words: 'Ferdinand, I will not forsake thee.'

§ 4. Rescue arrives.

To a deputation from the Austrian Estates he was firm and unbending. They might threaten as they pleased, but the confederation with Bohemia he would not sign. Rougher and rougher grew the menaces addressed to him. Some one, it is said, talked of dethroning him and of educating his children in the Protestant religion. Suddenly the blare of a trumpet was heard in the court below. A regiment of horses had slipped in through a gate unguarded by Thurn, and had hurried to Ferdinand's defence. The deputation, lately so imperious, slunk away, glad enough to escape punishment.

§ 5. The siege raised.

Little would so slight a reinforcement have availed if Thurn had been capable of assaulting the city. But, unprovided with stores of food or siege munitions, he had counted on treason within. Disappointed of his prey, he returned to Bohemia, to find that Bucquoi had broken out of Budweis, and had inflicted a serious defeat on Mansfeld.

§ 6. The Imperial election.

Ferdinand did not linger at Vienna to dispute his rights with his Austrian subjects. The election of a new Emperor was to take place at Frankfort, and it was of importance to him to be on the spot. To the German Protestants the transfer of the Imperial

crown to his head could not be a matter of indifference. If he succeeded, as there seemed every probability of his succeeding, in re-establishing his authority over Bohemia, he would weigh with a far heavier weight than Matthias upon the disputes by which Germany was distracted. The Elector Palatine and his councillors had a thousand schemes for getting rid of him, without fixing upon any. John George of Saxony, in 1619 as in 1612, had a definite plan to propose. Ferdinand, he said, was not in possession of Bohemia, and could not, therefore, vote as King of Bohemia at the election. The election must, therefore, be postponed till the Bohemian question had been settled by mediation. If only the three Protestant electors could have been brought to agree to this course, an immediate choice of Ferdinand would have been impossible.

§ 7. Ferdinand chosen Emperor.

Whatever might be the merits of the proposal itself, it had the inestimable advantage of embarking the Lutherans of the North and the Calvinists of the South in a common cause. But Frederick distrusted John George, and preferred another plan of his own. John George lost his temper, and voted unconditionally for Ferdinand. Frederick, if he did not mean to be left alone in impotent isolation, had nothing for it but to follow his example. He had no other candidate seriously to propose; and on August 28, 1619, Ferdinand was chosen by a unanimous vote. He was now known as the Emperor Ferdinand II.

§ 8. Frederick elected King of Bohemia.

Two days before, another election had taken place at Prague. The Bohemians, after deposing Ferdinand from the throne, which in 1617 they had acknowledged to be his, chose Frederick to fill the vacant seat.

§ 9. He accepts the throne.

Would Frederick accept the perilous offer? Opinions round him were divided on the advisability of the step. The princes of the Union, and even his own councillors, took opposite sides. In his own family, his mother raised a voice of warning. His wife, Elizabeth of England, the beautiful and high-spirited, urged him to the enterprise. The poor young man himself was well-nigh distracted. At last he found a consolation in the comfortable belief that his election was the act of God. Amidst the tears of the good people of Heidelberg he set out from the proud castle, magnificent even now in its ruins as it looks down upon the rushing stream of the Neckar. 'He is carrying the Palatinate into Bohemia,' said his sorrowing mother. On November 4 he was crowned at Prague, and the last act of the Bohemian Revolution was accomplished.

CHAPTER III.
IMPERIALIST VICTORIES IN BOHEMIA AND THE PALATINATE

Section I. —*The Attack upon Frederick*

§ 1. Maximilian prepares for war.

The news of Frederick's acceptance of the Bohemian crown sent a thrill of confidence through the ranks of his opponents. 'That prince,' said the Pope, 'has cast himself into a fine labyrinth.' 'He will only be a winter-king,' whispered the Jesuits to one another, certain that the summer's campaign would see his pretensions at an end. Up to that time the Bohemian cause stood upon its own merits. But if one prince of the Empire was to be allowed, on any pretext, to seize upon the territories of another, what bulwark was there against a return of the old fist-right, or general anarchy? Frederick had attacked the foundations on which the institutions of his time rested, without calling up anything to take their place.

§ 2. Makes use of Frederick's mistakes.

Maximilian saw more clearly than any one the mistake that had been committed. In an interview with the new Emperor

he engaged to forsake his inaction. Hitherto he had kept quiet, because he knew well that the apparent aggressor would have the general opinion of the world against him. Now that the blunder had been committed, he was ready to take advantage of it. At the same time, he did not forget his own interests, and he stipulated that, when all was over, Frederick's electoral dignity – not necessarily his territory – should be transferred to himself, and that he should retain Upper Austria in pledge till his military expenses had been repaid.

§ 3. Bethlen Gabor attacks Austria.

The effect of the change from the passive endurance of Ferdinand to the active vigour of Maximilian was immediately perceptible. His first object was to gain over or neutralize the German Protestants, and events in the East were seconding him to a marvel. About one-fifth only of Hungary was in Ferdinand's possession. The rest was about equally divided between the Turks and Bethlen Gabor, the Protestant Prince of Transylvania, a semi-barbarous but energetic chieftain, who hoped, with Turkish support, to make himself master of all Hungary, if not of Austria as well. In the first days of November, his hordes, in friendly alliance with the Bohemians, were burning and plundering round the walls of Vienna. But such armies as his can only support themselves by continuous success; and Bethlen Gabor found the capture of Vienna as hopeless in the winter as Thurn had found it in the summer. Retiring eastwards, he left behind him a bitter indignation against those who had abetted his proceedings, and

who had not been ashamed, as their adversaries declared, to plant the Crescent upon the ruins of Christianity and civilization.

§ 4. The Union refuses to support Frederick.

Such declamation, overstrained as it was, was not without its effect. German Protestantism had no enthusiasm to spare for Frederick's enterprise in Bohemia. At a meeting of the Union at Nüremberg, Frederick's cause found no support. Maximilian could well afford to leave the Union to its own hesitation, and to think only of conciliating the Elector of Saxony and the North German princes.

1620

§ 5. The agreement of Mühlhausen.

That John George should have taken serious alarm at his rival's increase of power is not surprising. Not only did it assail whatever shadow still remained of the protecting institutions of the Empire, but it did so in a way likely to be especially disagreeable at Dresden. The revolution at Prague did not simply raise an otherwise powerless person into Ferdinand's place. It gave the crown of Bohemia to a man whose territories were already so extensive that if he managed to consolidate his new dominion with them he would unite in his hands a power which would be unequalled in the Empire, and which would bring with it the unheard-of accumulation of two votes upon one person at imperial elections. John George would descend from being one of the first of the German princes to a mere second-rate position.

§ 6. The ecclesiastical lands held by Protestants guaranteed under conditions.

John George was not to be won for nothing. At an assembly held at Mühlhausen in March 1620, the League promised that they would never attempt to recover by force the lands of the Protestant administrators, or the secularized lands in the northern territories, as long as the holders continued to act as loyal subjects; and this promise was confirmed by the Emperor.

§ 7. Spinola prepares to attack the Palatinate.

That this engagement was not enough, later events were to show. For the present it seemed satisfactory to John George, and Maximilian was able to turn his attention to the actual preparations for war. In May orders had been issued from Madrid to Spinola, the Spanish general in the Netherlands, to make ready to march to the Emperor's defence; and on June 3 the frightened Union signed the treaty of Ulm, by which they promised to observe neutrality towards the League, thus securing to Maximilian freedom from attack in the rear during his march into Bohemia. The Union, however, if it should be attacked, was to be allowed to defend its own territories, including the Palatinate.

§ 8. The invasions.

At the head of Maximilian's army was the Walloon Tilly, a man capable of inspiring confidence alike by the probity of his character and by the possession of eminent military capacity.

On June 23 he crossed the Austrian frontier. On August 20 the Estates of Upper Austria unconditionally bowed to Ferdinand as their lord and master. Lower Austria had already submitted to its fate. About the same time John George had entered Lusatia, and was besieging Bautzen in Ferdinand's name. Spinola, too, had marched along the Rhine, and had reached Mentz by the end of August.

§ 9. Spinola subdues the Western Palatinate.

The army of the Union was drawn up to oppose the Spaniards. But there was no harmony amongst the leaders; no spirit in the troops. Falling upon one town after another, Spinola now brought into his power nearly the whole of that portion of the Palatinate which lay on the left bank of the Rhine. The army of the Union retreated helplessly to Worms, waiting for what might happen next.

§ 10. Invasion of Bohemia.

Maximilian was now ready to attack Bohemia. He soon effected a junction with Bucquoi. Frederick's position was deplorable.

§ 11. Growing unpopularity of Frederick.

At first he had been received at Prague with the liveliest joy. When a son was born to him, who was in after days to become the Prince Rupert of our English civil wars, every sign of rejoicing accompanied the child to the font. But it was not long before Frederick's Lutheran subjects were offended by his

Calvinistic proceedings. In the royal chapel pictures of the saints were ruthlessly torn down from the walls, and the great crucifix, an object of reverence to the Lutheran as well as the Catholic, was tossed aside like a common log of wood. The treasures of art which Rudolph II. had collected during his life of seclusion were catalogued that they might be offered for sale; and it is said that many of them were carried off by the officials entrusted with the duty. And besides real grievances, there were others that were purely imaginary. A story has been told which, whether true or false, is a good illustration of the impracticable nature of the Bohemian aristocracy. Frederick is said to have convened some of them to council early in the morning and to have received an answer that it was against their privileges to get up so soon.

§ 12. Frederick brings no strength to the Bohemians.

The Bohemians were not long in discovering that no real strength had been brought to them by Frederick. He had been set upon the throne, not for his personal qualities, but because he was supposed to have good friends, and to be able to prop up the falling cause of Bohemia by aid from all parts of Protestant Europe. But his friends gave him little or no help, and he was himself looking tranquilly on whilst the storm was gathering before his eyes. In his ranks there was neither organization nor devotion. Christian of Anhalt had been placed in command of the army, but, though personally brave he did not inspire confidence. The other generals were quarrelling about precedence. New levies were ordered, but the men either

remained at home or took the earliest opportunity to slink away. Those who remained, scantily provided with the necessities of life, were on the verge of mutiny.

§ 13. March of Tilly and Bucquoi.

On September 28 Frederick joined the army. He still cherished hope. Bethlen Gabor, who had deserted his cause a few months before, had repented his defection, and was now coming to his aid. Sickness was raging in the enemy's camp. Yet, in spite of sickness, Tilly pressed on, taking town after town, and choosing his positions too skilfully to be compelled to fight unless it suited him. On the morning of November 8 the Imperialists were close upon Prague. The enemy was posted on the White Hill, a rising ground of no great height outside the walls. The Imperial army had been weakened by its sufferings; and Bucquoi still counselled delay. But Tilly knew better, and urged an immediate advance. As the commanders were disputing, a Dominican friar, who accompanied the armies, stepped forward. 'Sons of the church,' he said, 'why do you hang back? We ought to march straight forward, for the Lord hath delivered the enemy into our hands. We shall overcome them as sure as we are alive.' Then showing them a figure of the Virgin which had been defaced by Protestant hands, 'See here,' he said, 'what they have done. The prayers of the Holy Virgin shall be yours. Trust in God, and go boldly to the battle. He fights on your side, and will give you the victory.' Before the fiery utterances of the friar Bucquoi withdrew his opposition.

§ 14. The battle of the White Hill.

It was a Sunday morning, and the gospel of the day contained the words, 'Render unto Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's,' and the warriors of the Cæsar at Vienna felt themselves inspired to fulfil the Saviour's words. The task which they had before them was more difficult in appearance than in reality. Frederick was inside the city entertaining two English ambassadors at dinner whilst the blow was being struck. Some Hungarians on whom he chiefly relied set the example of flight, and the day was irretrievably lost. Frederick fled for his life through North Germany, till he found a refuge at the Hague.

§ 15. Submission of Bohemia.

The reign of the Bohemian aristocracy was at an end. Tilly, indeed, had mercifully given time to the leaders to make their escape. But, blind in adversity as they had been in prosperity, they made no use of the opportunity. The chiefs perished on the scaffold. Their lands were confiscated, and a new German and Catholic nobility arose, which owed its possessions to its sovereign, and which, even if the Royal Charter had remained in existence, would have entered into the privileges which allowed their predecessors to convert the churches in their domains to what use they pleased. But the Royal Charter was declared to have been forfeited by rebellion, and the Protestant churches in the towns and on the royal estates had nothing to depend on but the will of the conqueror. The ministers of one great body, – the

Bohemian Brethren – were expelled at once. The Lutherans were spared for a time.

§ 16. Frederick put to the ban.

Was it yet possible to keep the Bohemian war from growing into a German one? Ferdinand and Maximilian were hardly likely to stop of themselves in their career of victory. To them Frederick was a mere aggressor, on whom they were bound to inflict condign punishment. Would he not, if he were allowed to recover strength, play the same game over again? Besides, the expenses of the war had been heavy. Ferdinand had been obliged to leave Upper Austria in pledge with Maximilian till his share of those expenses had been repaid to him. It would be much pleasanter for both parties if Maximilian could have a slice of the Palatinate instead. With this and the promised transference of the electorate to Maximilian, there would be some chance of securing order and a due respect for the Catholic ecclesiastical lands. On January 22, therefore, Frederick was solemnly put to the ban, and his lands and dignities declared to be forfeited.

§ 17. Danger of the Protestants.

Whether Ferdinand was justified in doing this was long a moot point. He had certainly promised at his election that he would not put anyone to the ban without giving him the benefit of a fair trial. But he argued that this only applied to one whose guilt was doubtful, and that Frederick's guilt had been open and palpable. However this may have been, something of far greater

importance than a legal or personal question was at issue. For Frederick there was little sympathy in Germany; but there was a strong feeling that it would not do to allow a Protestant country to fall into Catholic hands, both for its own sake and for the sake of its Protestant neighbours.

Section II. —*The War in the Upper Palatinate*

§ 1. Frederick does not give up hope.

If Frederick could only have made it clear that he had really renounced all his pretensions to meddle with other people's lands he might possibly have ended his days peaceably at Heidelberg. But he could not give up his hopes of regaining his lost kingdom. One day he talked of peace; another day he talked of war. When he was most peaceably inclined he would give up his claim if he could have an amnesty for the past. But he would not first give up his claim and then ask for an amnesty.

§ 2. Part taken by James of England.

Even to this he had been driven half unwillingly by his father-in-law. The King of England charged himself with the office of a mediator, and fancied that it was unnecessary to arm in the meantime.

§ 3. Dissolution of the Union.

The states of the Union were in great perplexity. The Landgrave of Hesse Cassel was compelled by his own subjects to come to terms with Spinola. The cities of Strasburg, Ulm, and Nüremberg were the next to give way. On April 12 a treaty was signed at Mentz, by which the Union dissolved itself, and

engaged to withdraw its troops from the Palatinate. On the other hand, Spinola promised to suspend hostilities till May 14.

§ 4. Chances in Frederick's favour.

The danger to which the Palatinate was exposed, and the hints let drop that the conquest of the Palatinate might be followed by the transference of the electorate, caused alarm in quarters by no means favourable to Frederick. John George began to raise objections, and even the Catholic ecclesiastics were frightened at the prospects of the enlargement of the war, and at the risk of seeing many powers, hitherto neutral, taking the part of the proscribed Elector.

§ 5. He still holds places in Bohemia.

The claim kept up by Frederick to Bohemia was something more than a claim to an empty title. He had appointed Mansfeld to act there as his general; and, though Mansfeld had lost one post after another, at the end of April he still held Tabor and Wittingau in Frederick's name.

§ 6. Mansfeld's army.

The appointment of Mansfeld was unfortunately in itself fatal to the chances of peace. Ever since the capture of Pilsen, his troops, destitute of support, had been the terror of the country they were called upon to defend. In those days, indeed, the most disciplined army was often guilty of excesses from which in our days the most depraved outcasts would shrink. The soldiers, engaged merely for as long a time as they happened to be wanted,

passed from side to side as the prospect of pay or booty allured them. No tie of nationality bound the mercenary to the standard under which accident had placed him. He had sold himself to his hirer for the time being, and he sought his recompense in the gratification of every evil passion of which human nature in its deepest degradation is capable.

§ 7. Soldiers of the Thirty Years' War.

Yet, even in this terrible war, there was a difference between one army and another. In an enemy's country all plundered alike. Tilly's Bavarians had been guilty of horrible excesses in Bohemia. But a commander like Tilly, who could pay his soldiers, and could inspire them with confidence in his generalship, had it in his power to preserve some sort of discipline; and if, as Tilly once told a complaining official, his men were not nuns, they were at all events able to refrain on occasion from outrageous villany. A commander, like Mansfeld, who could not pay his soldiers, must, of necessity, plunder wherever he was. His movements would not be governed by military or political reasons. As soon as his men had eaten up one part of the country they must go to another, if they were not to die of starvation. They obeyed, like the elements, a law of their own, quite independent of the wishes or needs of the sovereign whose interests they were supposed to serve.

§ 8. Mansfeld takes the offensive.

Before the end of May the breaking up of the army of

the Union sent fresh swarms of recruits to Mansfeld's camp. He was soon at the head of a force of 16,000 men in the Upper Palatinate. The inhabitants suffered terribly, but he was strong enough to maintain his position for a time. Nor was he content with standing on the defensive. He seized a post within the frontiers of Bohemia, and threatened to harry the lands of the Bishop of Bamberg and Würzburg if he did not withdraw his troops from the army of the League. He then fell upon Leuchtenberg, and carried off the Landgrave a prisoner to his camp.

§ 9. A truce impossible for him.

The first attack of the Bavarians failed entirely. Bethlen Gabor, too, was again moving in Hungary, had slain Bucquoi, and was driving the Emperor's army before him. Under these circumstances, even Ferdinand seems to have hesitated, and to have doubted whether he had not better accept the English offer of mediation. Yet such was the character of Mansfeld's army that it made mediation impossible. It must attack somebody in order to exist.

§ 10. Vere in the Lower Palatinate.

Yet it was in the Lower, not in the Upper, Palatinate that the first blow was struck. Sir Horace Vere, who had gone out the year before, with a regiment of English volunteers, was now in command for Frederick. But Frederick had neither money nor provisions to give him, and the supplies of the Palatinate were

almost exhausted. The existing truce had been prolonged by the Spaniards. But the lands of the Bishop of Spires lay temptingly near. Salving his conscience by issuing the strictest orders against pillage, he quartered some of his men upon them.

§ 11. War recommenced in the Lower Palatinate.

The whole Catholic party was roused to indignation. Cordova, left in command of the Spanish troops after Spinola's return to Brussels, declared the truce to have been broken, and commenced operations against Vere.

§ 12. Mansfeld driven from the Upper Palatinate.

By this time Mansfeld's power of defending the Upper Palatinate was at an end. The magistrates of the towns were sick of his presence, and preferred coming to terms with Maximilian to submitting any longer to the extortions of their master's army. Mansfeld, seeing how matters stood, offered to sell himself and his troops to the Emperor. But he had no real intention of carrying out the bargain. On October 10 he signed an engagement to disband his forces. Before the next sun arose he had slipped away, and was in full march for Heidelberg.

Tilly followed hard upon his heels. But Mansfeld did not stop to fight him. Throwing himself upon Alsace, he seized upon Hagenau, and converted it into a place of strength.

Section III. —*Frederick's Allies*

§ 1. Proposal to take Mansfeld into English pay.

The winter was coming on, and there would be time for negotiations before another blow was struck. But to give negotiations a chance it was necessary that Mansfeld's army should be fed, in order that he might be able to keep quiet while the diplomatists were disputing. James, therefore, wisely proposed to provide a sum of money for this purpose. But a quarrel with the House of Commons hurried on a dissolution, and he was unable to raise money sufficient for the purpose without a grant from Parliament.

§ 2. England and Spain.

James, poor and helpless, was thus compelled to fall back upon the friendship of Spain, a friendship which he hoped to knit more closely by a marriage between his son, the Prince of Wales, and a Spanish Infanta. The Spanish Government was anxious, if possible, to avoid an extension of the war in Germany. Though all the riches of the Indies were at its disposal, that government was miserably poor. In a land where industry, the source of wealth, was held in dishonour, all the gold in the world was thrown away. Scarcely able to pay the armies she maintained in time of peace, Spain had now again to find money for the war in the Netherlands. In 1621 the twelve years' truce with the Dutch had

come to an end, and Spinola's armies in Brabant and Flanders could not live, like Mansfeld's at the expense of the country, for fear of throwing the whole of the obedient provinces, as they were called, into the enemies' hands. If possible, therefore, that yawning gulf of the German war, which threatened to swallow up so many millions of ducats, must be closed. And yet how was it to be done? The great difficulty in the way of peace did not lie in Frederick's pretensions. They could easily be swept aside. The great difficulty lay in this – that the Catholics, having already the institutions of the Empire in their hands, were now also in possession of a successful army. How, under such circumstances, was Protestantism, with which so many temporal interests were bound up, to feel itself secure? And without giving security to Protestantism, how could a permanent peace be obtained?

§ 3. Spanish plans.

To this problem the Spanish ministers did not care to address themselves. They thought that it would be enough to satisfy personal interests. They offered James a larger portion with the Infanta than any other sovereign in Europe would have given. They opposed tooth and nail the project for transferring the Electorate to Maximilian, as likely to lead to endless war. But into the heart of the great question they dared not go, tied and bound as they were by their devotion to the Church. Could not Frederick and James, they asked, be bought off by the assurance of the Palatinate to Frederick's heirs, on the simple condition of his delivering up his eldest son to be educated at Vienna? Though

they said nothing whatever about any change in the boy's religion, they undoubtedly hoped that he would there learn to become a good Catholic.

§ 4. Frederick not likely to accede to them.

Such a policy was hopeless from the beginning. Frederick had many faults. He was shallow and obstinate. But he really did believe in his religion as firmly as any Spaniard in Madrid believed in his; and it was certain that he would never expose his children to the allurements of the Jesuits of Vienna.

§ 5. A conference to be held at Brussels.

It was settled that a conference should be held at Brussels, the capital of the Spanish Netherlands, first to arrange terms for a suspension of arms, and then to prepare the way for a general peace. The Spanish plan of pacification was not yet announced. But Frederick can hardly be blamed for suspecting that no good would come from diplomacy, or for discerning that a few regiments on his side would weigh more heavily in his favour than a million of words.

§ 6. Where was Frederick to expect help?

The only question for him to decide was the quarter in which he should seek for strength. His weakness had hitherto arisen from his confidence in physical strength alone. To get together as many thousand men as possible and to launch them at the enemy had been his only policy, and he had done nothing to conciliate the order-loving portion of the population. The cities

stood aloof from his cause. The North German princes would have nothing to say to him. If he could only have renounced his past, if he could have acknowledged that all he had hitherto done had been the fruitful root of disaster, if he could, with noble self-renunciation, have entreated others to take up the cause of German Protestantism, which in his hands had suffered so deeply, then it is not impossible that opinion, whilst opinion was still a power in Germany, would have passed over to his side, and that the coming mischief might yet have been averted.

§ 7. His preparations for war.

But Frederick did not do this. If he had been capable of doing it he must have been other than he was. In 1622, as in 1619, the pupil of Christian of Anhalt looked to the mere development of numerical strength, without regard to the moral basis of force.

§ 8. Frederick's allies.

It must be acknowledged that if numbers could give power, Frederick's prospects were never better than in the spring of 1622. Mansfeld's army was not, this time, to stand alone. In the south the Margrave of Baden-Durlach was arming in Frederick's cause. In the north, Christian of Brunswick was preparing to march to the aid of the Palatinate. Such names as these call up at once before us the two main difficulties which would have remained in the way of peace even if the question of the Palatinate could have been laid aside.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.