

**MARLBOROUGH
HIS LIFE AND TIMES**

**VOLUME II
1688-1702**

BY WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

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VOLUME II
1688-1702

BY WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

THE WORLD CRISIS, 1911-1914

THE WORLD CRISIS, 1915

THE WORLD CRISIS, 1916-1918

THE WORLD CRISIS, 1911-1918

(Abridged, in one volume)

THE AFTERMATH

A ROVING COMMISSION

THE UNKNOWN WAR

AMID THESE STORMS

THE RIVER WAR

MARLBOROUGH

MARLBOROUGH
HIS LIFE AND TIMES

By
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL, C.H.

VOLUME II
1688-1702

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1950

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ABBREVIATIONS

C. = Chancery Records in the London Record Office.

C.J. = *House of Commons Journals*.

C.S.P. = *Calendar of State Papers*.

C.S.P. (Dom.) = *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series*.

D.N.B. = *Dictionary of National Biography*.

H.M.C. = *Report of the Royal Historical Manuscripts Commission*.

R.O. = The Public Record Office, London.

S.P. = State Papers.

For further details as to footnote references see the Bibliography (Vol. II, P. 273).

In quoting from old documents and letters the original text has been preserved wherever it is significant. Letters of Marlborough and Sarah which enter directly into the narrative have been modernized in spelling, grammar, and the use of capitals.

Documents never before made public are distinguished with an asterisk (*).

METHOD OF DATING

Until 1752 dates in England and on the Continent differed owing to our delay in adopting the Reformed Calendar of Gregory XIII. The dates which prevailed in England were known as Old Style, those abroad as New Style. In the seventeenth century the difference was ten days, in the eighteenth century eleven days. For example, January 1, 1601 (O.S.), was January 11, 1601 (N.S.), and January 1, 1701 (O.S.), was January 12, 1701 (N.S.).

The method I have used is to give all dates of events that occurred in England in the Old Style, and of events that occurred abroad in New Style. In sea battles and a few other convenient cases the dates are given in both styles.

It was also customary at this time—at any rate, in English official documents—to date the year as beginning on Lady Day, March 25. What we should call January 1, 1700, was then called January 1, 1699, and so on for all days up to March 25, when 1700 began. This has been a fertile source of confusion. In this book all dates between January 1 and March 25 have been made to conform to the modern practice.

CHAPTER I

MARLBOROUGH AND WILLIAM

(1688-90)

The Prince of Orange had now become the effective military ruler of his new country; but there was no lawful Government of any kind. The Convention Parliament—assembled on the authority of the revolutionary junta—dived lustily into academic disputes, and the differences between the Whigs and the Tories, temporarily merged in their common danger, soon reappeared. Was the throne vacant? Could the throne ever be vacant? Was there a contract between the King and the people which James had broken? Had he abdicated by flight, or merely deserted? Could he be deposed by Parliament? Arising from all this, should William become Regent, governing in the name of the absent James? Should Mary become Queen in her own right? Had she not, in view of the virtual demise of the Crown, in fact already become Queen? Or should William be made sole King; or should William and Mary reign jointly; and if Mary died, should Anne forthwith succeed, or should William continue to reign alone as long as he lived? Both Houses, both parties, and the Church applied themselves to these lively topics with zest and without haste.

William's aim from the first was to obtain the crown of England for himself alone. Until James's flight he would have been content with any solution which brought England into the coalition against France; but thenceforward he saw no obstacle to his full ambition. Years before Burnet had earned William's gratitude by inducing Mary to promise, should she succeed her father, that they should be joint-sovereigns. The Stadtholder now flew higher still. He intimated first that he would not be Regent, governing in the name and against the will of a dethroned sovereign with whom he would certainly be at war. "He had not," he said, "come over to establish a Commonwealth or be a Duke of Venice."^[1] Rather than that he would return to Holland. Mary's rights were espoused by Danby, who had been disappointed that William had not landed in Yorkshire, and that his own share in the event had not been larger. He proposed that Mary should be Queen. William disposed of this idea by putting it about that he would not be "his wife's gentleman-usher." Through Bentinck, his Dutch confidant, he bid high for the sole kingship, with his wife but a consort. Burnet was staggered by this ingratitude to Mary. The idea of supplanting her in her lawful and prior rights caused widespread anger. William's appetite found its

only prominent supporter in Halifax. It was, in fact, the first shock to his popularity in England.

Churchill steered a middle course, at once independent and judicious, through these controversies. Like most of the Tories, he could not vote directly for the dethronement of James; but neither would he actively support the Tory proposal for a regency to which William objected so strongly. He stayed away from the critical division on January 29, and a regency was voted down by fifty-one to forty-nine. He voted later that James had “deserted” the throne and had not “abdicated”; but when the Lords gave way to the Commons and agreed that the Prince and Princess of Orange should be joint sovereigns, he supported their decision. Sarah, under her husband’s advice, persuaded Anne to surrender in favour of William her right to succeed to the throne on Mary’s death. Thus William gained without dispute the crown for life. This was a service of the first order, and probably counted in William’s mind even above the desertion at Salisbury which had prevented a battle. From the very beginning, however, and even on this subject, the King showed a definite coolness towards the Churchills. On Halifax suggesting to him that Lord Churchill “might perhaps prevail with the Princess of Denmark to give her consent” he bridled, saying, “Lord Churchill could not govern him nor his wife as they did the Prince and Princess of Denmark.” Halifax, who recorded this conversation, noted in William “a great jealousy of being thought to be governed,” and added, “That apprehension will give uneasiness to men in great places. His dislikes of this kind have not always an immediate effect as in the instance of Lord Churchill,” but “like some slow poisons work at a great distance of time.”^[2]

William accepted the arrangements made by Parliament with good grace. He confirmed Churchill in his rank of Lieutenant-General. He employed him practically as Commander-in-Chief to reconstitute the English Army. In this important task Churchill’s military knowledge and organizing capacity had full scope. Schomberg, who presided over the process on William’s behalf, remarked laconically to Ailesbury, “My lord Churchill proposes all, I am sent for to say the general consents, and Monsieur Bentinck is the secretary for to write all.”^[3] The Dartmouth papers tell the same tale a year later. “Lord Churchill is the greatest man next to Marshal Schomberg in the army affairs.”^[4] Other extracts show that Churchill did not at this time forget his old friend Legge. “Lord Churchill has already acquainted the Prince how useful a minister in the management of affairs you are.”^[5] But Dartmouth soon fell upon evil days, and died in the Tower. At the coronation in April Churchill was created an earl. The reader will recall Eleanor Drake’s connexion by her sister’s marriage with James Ley, first Earl of

Marlborough. The third Earl had fallen in battle at sea with the Dutch in 1665, and the title so honourably borne had since 1680 been extinct. We can understand why Churchill chose it for his own.

In May war was formally declared against France; and as William was detained in England and later embroiled in Ireland, Marlborough led the English contingent of eight thousand men against the French in Flanders. The world conflict which had now begun only gradually reached its full intensity. The French, who had a magnificent army, found eventually in Luxembourg a commander not unworthy to be named with Condé and Turenne. The allies ranged themselves along a 300-mile crescent from the Upper Rhine to the Belgian coast. They were more numerous than the French, and able everywhere to assume the offensive. Four separate armies advanced simultaneously, but in the leisurely fashion of those days, against the French frontiers. In the north the Spaniards and Dutch moved through Belgium towards Courtrai under the Prince of Vaudemont. Next in the line and farther south the Dutch and Swedes, together with the English contingent, sought, under the command of the Prince of Waldeck, to operate between the Sambre and the Meuse. Beyond the Ardennes the Prussians and North Germans under the Elector of Brandenburg aimed at the capture of Bonn, upon the Rhine; and farther south still the forces of the Empire, under the able leadership of the Count of Lorraine, struck at Mainz. A modest but definite measure of success rewarded all these operations. Lorraine took Mainz and, moving down the Rhine, helped the Elector to capture Bonn. The Prince of Vaudemont possessed himself of Courtrai and forced the French to fall back upon strong lines between the Lys and the Scheldt. But the only real fight of the year belonged to the credit of the Prince of Waldeck and the army in which the English served.

When Marlborough landed at the end of May he found the British troops in very poor condition, and the three months which elapsed before active operations began were indispensable to their training and discipline. He made a great improvement in both. We have a letter from him to Mr Blathwayt, who had continued to be Secretary at War, from Maestricht in which he says:

I desire you will constantly let me have what passes in Ireland.
. . . I desire you would send me over a copy of the oath that Monsieur Schomberg gave to the officers about their never taking nor giving money for their employment, because I am resolved to give the same oath here.

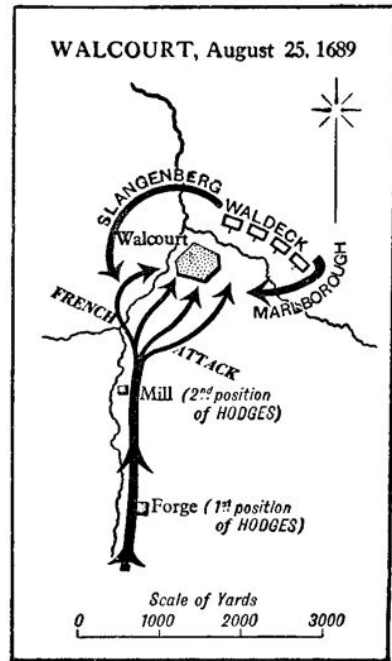
He requested William's decision upon whether he would have the Regiments of Foot learn the Dutch exercise or else continue the English.^[6] He drilled his men sedulously, saw to their pay, food, and clothing with that meticulous housekeeping from which his armies always profited, and repressed abuses of all kinds. In a few months the British force, from being the worst, was recognized as the best managed in Waldeck's army of about thirty-five thousand men.

The Prince of Waldeck was one of William's trusted leaders. His prolonged experience had made him a pedant in the art of war. Indeed, it was to him, as to most of the commanders at this time on both sides, very like a game of chess. The gambits and defences of each were well known to all players of a certain professional standing. As long as no obvious mistakes were made nor any serious risks run, no marked change in the situation was likely. Here a fortified town might be taken, there a small area of hostile country might be used as feeding-ground. But if the conventional counter-measures were taken by the opponent, these small prizes were placidly relinquished, and the armies continued to face and manoeuvre against each other with the decorum of performers in a minuet. For this sedate warfare Waldeck's age of sixty-nine was no disqualification. He soon saw the improvement in the quality of the British, and took a liking to Marlborough.^[7] On July 3 he wrote to William that he could not "sufficiently praise the English"; and on the 26th that the English numbered six thousand foot and five hundred horse, "the whole so well ordered that I have admired it, and I can say that Monsieur Milord Marlbourck and the Colonels have shown that their application has had a good effect." On August 24, having crossed the Sambre, he stood before the small ancient town of Walcourt, which rises on its hillock from an undulating and wooded landscape. Here he was well satisfied to live upon the enemy's country, sending his foraging parties out to gather supplies.

Marshal d'Humières, who commanded the opposing French army, felt bound to resent this trespass. D'Humières, though also a well-trained professional, had an irritable streak in his nature. He was said to have owed his appointment to the admiration which Louvois cherished for his wife. He marched with becoming haughtiness to expel the intruders, and on the morning of August 25^[8] fell upon the allied foraging parties and outposts about two miles south of Walcourt. It happened that Marlborough was in charge of these petty operations, and that the 16th Regiment of Foot (now the Bedfordshire Regiment), together with some three hundred Dutch horse and dragoons, formed their support. At nine o'clock the approach of large French forces was noticed, and soon after it was realized that these were the

vanguard of the whole French army. Cannon were fired to recall the foragers and alarm the camps. Meanwhile the English regiment barred the advance of the French. They were heavily attacked; but under Colonel Hodges offered a stubborn resistance. For nearly two hours these six hundred English infantry prevented the hostile advance. When Marlborough learned that all was in readiness in Waldeck's army, he directed them to withdraw to the higher ground on the east of the hill of Walcourt, where other British troops and several batteries had come into line. The manner in which this single battalion effected its orderly retreat in the closest presence of very powerful French cavalry was a foretaste of the qualities which Europe was taught reluctantly to recognize in the English Army.

Meanwhile the Prince of Waldeck had occupied the town of Walcourt and had posted his army in position mainly on its eastern side. All the foragers had returned to camp, and d'Humières could take his choice whether he wanted a battle or not. It was now noon. The ground was not at all favourable to the French, but d'Humières seems to have been inflamed by the sharp fighting in which his vanguard had been engaged and did not take the trouble to reconnoitre. He ordered a strong column of French infantry, including eight battalions of the French Guard, to carry the town of Walcourt by assault. This was certainly a very difficult task to undertake voluntarily. The defences of the town were antiquated, and the walls had crumbled in several places. Still, it stood upon a hill, was partly covered by a river, and was girt about with a strong field army. Nevertheless, the



French made a most determined attack upon the town, and although raked by Marlborough's flanking batteries from the eastern heights as they approached, they very nearly mastered its defenders. These were, however, reinforced by two battalions under the English Colonel Tollemache. Although the French Guard strove to burn the town gates, and everywhere fought with determination, they could make no progress, and the greensward around the ramparts was strewn with the bodies of five hundred of their men. D'Humières saw himself forced to widen the battle. He threw in his whole army in an improvised attack upon the allies' right, which had by now

been extended west of Walcourt. This was the moment for Waldeck's counter-stroke. At six o'clock Slangenberg led the Dutch infantry forward from the western side. Simultaneously Marlborough attacked from the eastern side of the town. Placing himself at the head of the Life Guards and Blues, and supported by two English regiments, he charged upon the French right flank, inflicting very grave injuries upon the troops already unduly tried. The French cavalry was not only numerous, but was led by that same Villars of whom we have heard twenty years before at the siege of Maestricht, and whom we shall meet twenty years later at Malplaquet. Villars saved the French infantry from destruction, and d'Humières was able to withdraw his army as the night fell with a loss of six guns and two thousand of the flower of the French foot. As the casualties of the allies were about three hundred, the action wore the aspect of a victory. Feuquières, the French military critic, remarks severely "that this combat should never be cited save as an example to avoid."^[9] D'Humières' military reputation received a fatal blow, and in the next campaign he was superseded by Luxembourg.

The Prince of Waldeck rejoiced in his good fortune, nor was he ungenerous to those who had contributed to it. "All our troops," he wrote to the States-General, "showed great courage and desire to come to battle, and the English who were engaged in this action particularly behaved themselves very well."^[10] To William he wrote, "Colonel Hodges and the English did marvels and the Earl of Marlborough is assuredly one of the most gallant men I know."^[11] These comments are confirmed by the French accounts, which mention especially the Life Guards and two English battalions under the command of "Lieutenant General Marlbroch." Waldeck wrote further to William that "Marlborough *in spite of his youth*^[12] had displayed in this one battle greater military capacity than do most generals after a long series of wars." William, being, like Marlborough, only thirty-nine himself, was not perhaps deeply impressed by this reference to the infirmities of youth. He wrote, however, in handsome terms to Marlborough:

I am happy that my troops behaved so well in the affair of Walcourt. It is to you that this advantage is principally owing. You will please accordingly accept my thanks and rest assured that your conduct will induce me to confer on you still further marks of my esteem and friendship on which you may always rely.^[13]

Marlborough was made Colonel of the Royal Fusiliers, a regiment armed with a light musket called a fusil and employed in the special defence of the

artillery. Such appointments were lucrative, and the fact that this regiment was under the Master-General of the Ordnance might encourage Marlborough to hope that this financial plum, so necessary for the support of his earldom, would some day fall into his hands. Walcourt was the only recognizable success which greeted the Dutch and English peoples in the year 1689. Thus the new King's reign opened auspiciously for him.

It happened, however, that during the summer a dispute had arisen between the King and Queen Mary on the one hand and Anne and her husband on the other, the brunt of which fell entirely on the Churchills. Up to this point all had been love between the two royal sisters, with the added thrill of conspiracy against their father. Till now Sarah had seemed to be the bond of union between them. The cordial letters which Mary wrote to her have often been printed. "Your friendship makes my sister as dear to you as to me," the Princess of Orange had written on September 30, 1688, "and I am persuaded we shall ever agree in our care for her, as I believe she and I should in our kindness to you, were we near enough to renew our acquaintance." But all things change with time, and many in a very short time. Sarah has reason on her side when she contends that her influence upon the succession settlement in the event of Mary's dying before William was used in the general interest rather than from any unworthy eagerness to ingratiate herself or her husband with the new sovereigns. For soon afterwards came the question of the Parliamentary grants to the Royal Family. And here began the rift.

Anne, who had agreed willingly to the sacrifice of inestimable reversionary rights, naturally wished, especially in the event of her sister's death, to have an independent income granted directly to her by Parliament. William resented this desire, and his wife championed his view. Both thought, moreover, that £30,000 a year was ample for the Princess's household; indeed, William expressed his wonder to Lord Godolphin how the Princess could spend so much, "though," adds Sarah, "it appeared afterwards that some of his favourites had more." Considering that Anne already had £20,000 a year settled upon her for life by Parliament, this was not generous treatment of a Princess who had voluntarily resigned an important contingent claim upon the crown. The Cockpit household took care that Parliament was informed of the dispute, and, by way of having something to concede, suggested £70,000 as an appropriate figure. It was soon apparent that they had strong support. Mary sent for Anne and advised her to trust herself entirely to the King's gracious bounty. Anne replied sedately that "she understood her friends had a mind to make her some settlement." "Pray what friends have you," rejoined the Queen, "but the

King and me?" A nasty family dispute about money matters; and not only upon money matters, but status!

Anne was found to have the House of Commons on her side. The Marlboroughs steadfastly espoused her interest. While John was fighting at Walcourt Sarah had actively canvassed the Tory Party. An independent position for the Princess Anne was held in Parliament to be essential to the Revolution settlement. Tempers rose high on both sides. Every form of pressure from ugly threats to dazzling bribes was put upon Sarah to persuade her mistress to a compromise. The figure was no longer in dispute. Shrewsbury himself undertook to win through Sarah Anne's acceptance of £50,000 from the King. Sarah was impervious. After what the Cockpit had seen of the royal generosity, they insisted upon a Parliamentary title. Sarah stood by her mistress and her friend. She cast away for ever the Queen's favour; and this at a time when there was no reason to suppose that Anne would outlive Mary. There is no doubt that Marlborough guided the helm and faced the blizzard. But this was no Quixotism. It was his private interest that the matter should be settled so; it was his duty to the Princess; it was also the public interest, with a foreign king on the throne, and an ex-king claimant, that an English princess, heir designate, should be independently established. Again we see in Marlborough's story that strange coincidence of personal and national duties at crucial times. The new sovereigns had to accept a definite, public defeat, and the House of Commons voted the Princess Anne a life grant of £50,000 a year.



SARAH, COUNTESS OF MARLBOROUGH

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Marlborough had his own position in the country and with the King. But the Queen henceforward pursued Sarah with keen hostility, and this she soon extended to Sarah's husband. She blamed Sarah for the estrangement which had sprung up between herself and her once dearly loved sister. Repeatedly she urged Anne to remove this obstacle to their natural affection. Anne, forced to choose between the Queen and Sarah, made it plain with all the obstinate patience of her nature that she would stand by her friend, as her friend had stood by her. This choice, so deliberate and unshakable, was deeply wounding to her sister. Perhaps all this had as much to do in the

future with Marlborough not getting the commands to which by rank and capacity he was entitled as had the exigencies of William's political system or his proclivities for Dutchmen. At any rate, it lay and lurked behind the daily routine of war and government.

But we cannot convict Sarah of misbehaviour in this matter. Neither she nor her husband would yield the interests of the Princess Anne to win the favour of the new reign. On the lowest ground they looked farther ahead than that, and on the highest ground they stood by their patrons. All their moves were made with great good sense, and in this case with right feeling. They helped the King in the constitutional settlement; they withstood him when the interests of the Princess they served were unfairly assailed.

King William was neither the first nor the last statesman to underrate the Irish danger. He had at first regarded its existence as a good pretext for obtaining a substantial army from Parliament, and had neglected Tyrconnel's overtures for a settlement. By May, when the European campaign was beginning on all the fronts of France, he found a serious war on his hands in Ireland. James had arrived in Ireland, was welcomed as a deliverer, and now reigned in Dublin, aided by an Irish Parliament and defended by a Catholic army of a hundred thousand men, of whom half were organized by French officers and furnished with French munitions. The Irish army was further sustained by a disciplined French contingent. Soon the whole island except the Protestant settlements in the North was under Jacobite control. While William looked eastward to Flanders and the Rhine, the eyes of his Parliament were fixed upon the opposite quarter. When he reminded Parliament of Europe, they vehemently directed his attention to Ireland. Thus drawn by contrary calls, the King made the time-honoured mistake of meeting both inadequately. He had sent Marlborough to command the British contingent of eight thousand of the best British troops under the Prince of Waldeck in Flanders; later he sent Schomberg and Ginkel with newly raised regiments to Ulster. The European campaign was unfruitful, and the Irish disastrous. The year 1689 ended with James established in Ireland, with Schomberg's troops wasted by disease and reduced to the defensive, and the Protestant North in extreme distress and peril. Had William used his whole strength in Ireland in 1689 he would have been free to carry it to the Continent in 1690. But the new year did not renew the choices of the old. He found himself compelled to go in person with his main force to Ireland, and by the summer took the field at the head of thirty-six thousand men. Thus the French Government, at the cost only of five thousand troops, a few hundred extra officers, and moderate supplies, diverted the whole power of England from the main theatres of the war. Had

Louis backed the Irish enterprise with more force, he would have gained even larger rewards.

William left the government in the hands of Queen Mary, assisted by a council of nine, four Whigs and five Tories,^[14] of whom Marlborough was one, besides being at the same time Commander-in-Chief. A most critical situation now developed. The Prince of Waldeck was encouraged by the memory of Walcourt to lay a trap for the French. But Luxembourg was no d'Humières, and at the battle of Fleurus in June he inflicted a crushing defeat upon the allies. At the same time the French fleet was stronger in the Channel than the combined fleets of England and Holland. Admiral Herbert (now Earl of Torrington) was none the less ordered to bring them to battle. On June 30/July 10 he was defeated in a sea-fight off Beachy Head, the brunt of the action falling upon the Dutch. This was, according to Mahan, "the most conspicuous success the French have ever gained at sea over the English." It was said in London, "The Dutch had the honour, the French the advantage, and the English the shame." The French, under the energetic Tourville, now enjoyed the command of the sea. They could land an invading army in England; they could prevent the return of William from Ireland. The council of nine over which Queen Mary presided had to face an alarming crisis.

They were sustained by the loyalty and spirit of the nation. The whole country took up what arms could be found and feverishly organized the home defence. With a nucleus of about six thousand regular troops and the hastily improvised forces of the nation, Marlborough stood ready to resist an invasion for which an excellent French army of over twenty thousand men was available. William's decisive victory at the Boyne on July 1/11 threw James out of Ireland and back to France; but the English peril continued at its height. James implored Louis to give him an army for invasion, and there seems no doubt that in July and August 1690 this was the right strategy for France. Had it been adopted Marlborough's task would have been peculiarly difficult. He would have had to face the disciplined veterans of France with a mere handful of professional troops aided by brave but untrained masses, ill-armed and with hardly any experienced officers. Such a problem was novel to the military art of those days; but it was not necessarily beyond the resources of his flexible genius. He would probably 'have thought of something,' and our history might have dwelt with pride upon a battle of Dorking or a battle of London as the first example of the power of hardy, stubborn yeomanry and militia supported by the population against regular forces. But James's appeals were disregarded by the French King. His sympathy for the sufferings of the fugitive from the Boyne was more

marked than his admiration of his capacity. The anxious weeks of July and August slipped away, with no more injury or insult to England than the burning of Teignmouth by French troops. The French fleet was dismantled and laid up for the winter, and the English and Dutch fleets were refitted and again at sea. Thus the French opportunity was lost.

Torrington's conduct at the battle of Beachy Head drew upon him the fury of the King, the Council, Parliament, and the nation. He was instantly removed from his command, arrested, and tried for his life before a naval court. His tactics have not lacked defenders. He was unanimously acquitted by the court-martial, but their verdict could not save his reputation or restore his command.^[15]

When the news of the naval defeat had been received at Queen Mary's council board, Marlborough and Admiral Russell were among the few Cabinet officers who did not volunteer to take command of the fleet. We must admire the spirit of these elderly nobles, none of whom knew one end of a ship from the other, and most of whom were devoid of military instruction or experience. They said they would sit on board the flagship and make the sea captains fight. Fortunately such desperate remedies were not required.



THE EARL OF MARLBOROUGH IN 1690

Painted for Sarah “when he was sunburnt.”

By permission of Earl Spencer

In the middle of August the Council was astonished to receive from the Commander-in-Chief a proposal of which he guaranteed the success, and on which he declared to the Queen that he would stake his reputation. This was to send the bulk of the regular troops out of the country upon an expedition to Ireland. Their minds, so lately exposed to the apprehensions of invasion, did not respond to his view that the danger had passed, and that the initiative should be regained. Danby’s^[16] antagonism to Marlborough had become

personal and pronounced. When Marlborough wished his brother George to be promoted Admiral, Danby rudely remarked, “If Churchill have a flag, he will be called the flag by favour, as his brother is called the general of favour.”

Inspired by Danby, the Council vetoed the project, but since Marlborough was supported by Admiral Russell and aided by Nottingham, the Queen referred it to the King. Marlborough’s plan was to seize the ports of Cork and Kinsale, which were the principal contact bases of the French in Ireland, and thus cut Ireland from French reinforcements. A double attack on the Jacobite forces in Ireland from the south as well as from the north would, he declared, be decisive. William, who was besieging Limerick, debated the matter with his Dutch generals. They, like the English Council of State, were adverse. But the King saw at once the strategic merits and timeliness of the plan. He discarded his generals’ advice, overruled the Council, and placed Marlborough in charge of the expedition.

He wrote to him from the siege of Limerick:^[17]

August 14/24, 1690

* I have just received your letter of the 7th. I strongly approve of your plan to embark with four thousand infantry and the marines, which together make four thousand nine hundred men, and is a sufficient force to capture Cork and Kinsale. You will have to take enough munitions with you, and use the ships’ guns, for we can send you none from here. But for cavalry I can send you enough. Mind the army does not fall down on your hands [*prenderes bien soin que l’armee ne vous tombera pas sur les bras*]. The weather is what you will have to watch. Hasten all you can, and let me know about when you will be there.

WILLIAM R.^[18]

The Queen was still doubtful. “If the wind continues fair,” she wrote to her husband,

I hope this business will succeed; though I find, if it do not, those who have advised it will have an ill time, all except Lord Nott[ingham] being very much against it, Lord President only complying, because it is your order, but not liking it, and wondering England should be so exposed, thinking it too great a hazard.^[19]

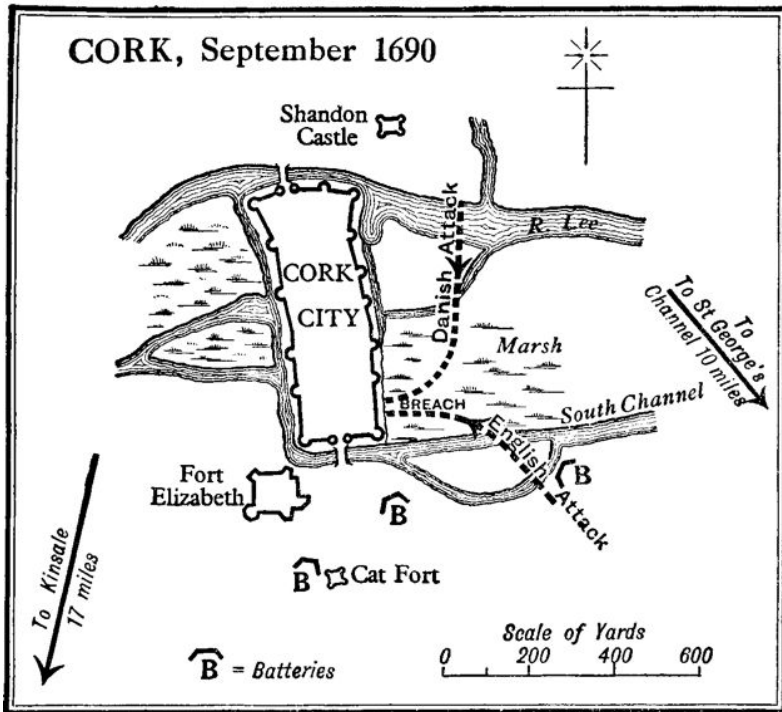
However, the orders were issued.

This was Marlborough's first independent command. He had not sought to go to Ireland before, and it is presumed that he did not wish to fight against an army led by King James in person. But now James was gone. The season was far advanced, and all preparations were made with the utmost speed. The expedition and its shipping were concentrated at Portsmouth, whither Marlborough repaired by August 26, and embarked on the 30th. He spread false rumours that it was intended to raid the coast of Normandy as a reprisal for Teignmouth; but the French were not deceived. Marlborough's sailing was delayed for a fortnight by contrary winds while every day was precious. The health of the troops on board suffered, and their supplies were partly consumed. But the mere rumour of the thrust produced a strategic effect. Leaving their Irish allies to their fate, Lauzun and Tyrconnel, who were tired of Ireland, and had no intention of being cut off there, retreated to France with the remainder of the French contingent.

Marlborough, very seasick, sailed on September 17, "bound (by God's assistance)," as the cautious master of the flagship wrote, "for ye coast of Ireland, Being of all Sorts about 82 Sayle."^[20] After silencing the batteries at the mouth of Cork Harbour he ran in upon the tide to Passage West and disembarked his army of about six thousand men seven miles inland during Tuesday, September 22. William meanwhile had abandoned the siege of Limerick, and returned to London. He had left orders with Ginkel to send five thousand men to join Marlborough in accordance with the plan. Marlborough had particularly asked that this detachment should consist of English troops, of whom there was no lack in the main army, and for Kirke, who was available, to command them. The Dutch general had no intention of allowing any purely English force or English commander to gain an independent success. It was with all the Dutchmen from William downward a maxim that the English were ignorant of war and must be strongly led by trained foreign officers and upheld by disciplined foreign troops. Ginkel had therefore, with many profuse apologies, selected five thousand Danes, Dutch, and Huguenots, who had now arrived on the north side of Cork under the Duke of Würtemberg.

This magnifico was junior in military rank to Marlborough, but far above him in birth. He claimed, as a prince of a royal house, to command the whole operation. A vexatious dispute, which Ginkel had foreseen with relish, arose. Marlborough displayed his commission from the Queen, and the Duke referred to his lineage and lost his temper. Meanwhile their two forces occupied the outlying works of Cork by separate action. There was no time to appeal for a decision about the command to William, and no

certainly how he would have settled it. To secure unity, therefore, Marlborough was forced, not for the last time in his life, to propose the vicious expedient of antiquity that the rival generals should exercise command on alternate days. Würtemberg was with difficulty persuaded to accept this compromise. When the first day fell by lot to Marlborough he chose “Würtemberg” as the password for the troops. The Duke, surprised and mollified by this courtesy, selected “Marlborough” as the word for the second day, and thereafter made no further difficulties. Indeed, he seems to have yielded himself naturally and easily to Marlborough’s guidance, once he felt it.



The governor of Cork, Colonel McElligott, returned a disdainful answer to the summons to surrender, and the attack upon the city was at once begun. Its defences were in a neglected condition, and its garrison of about five thousand men was too small to hold all the necessary works. Powerful batteries were landed from the fleet, and a breach made in the eastern wall. Marlborough was ready to assault on the evening of the 26th; but the governor beat a parley, which, though it came to nothing, allowed the tide to rise and gained him another day. At dawn on Sunday, the 27th, all was again in readiness. The batteries, supported by a frigate, which came up the river

on the flood, bombarded the breach in the town. A Danish column a thousand strong forded the northern arm of the river, and at one o'clock Charles Churchill, Marlborough's brother, whom he had made a Brigadier, with fifteen hundred English infantry, headed by many noblemen and gentlemen volunteers, plunged into the estuary. The water, though ebbing, was breast-high, the current strong, and the fire from the ramparts heavy. But both Danes and English advanced undaunted and occupied the counterscarp. As they re-formed here for the final storm McElligott hoisted the white flag. In view of his trick of the day before, no terms were offered. What was left of the garrison, about four thousand men, became prisoners of war. Marlborough entered the city the next day, and sternly suppressed the looting which had begun.^[21]

A Marlborough le 4^{me} d'Oct. 1703.
14

Vous pouvez croire comme j'ay esté ravi de la
perte de Cork vous en félicitant aussi pour le succès
que vous y avez eue dont je vous remercie, j'espère que
j'ay prendrez bientôt de mesme toutes places
de Kingdom, et que je vous reverray en peu
en parfaite santé, A l'égard des Prisonniers
que vous avez fait à Cork, l'on dit qu'il y a une Galle
aupres, ou l'on les pourroit garder seulement, et quoy
qu'ils me coûteront beaucoup en pain, cette dépense
est insupportable jusqu'à ce que j'en puis disposer
autrement ce que je ne puis faire si tost, je suis
toujours assure de la continuation de votre Amitié.

William R

WILLIAM'S LETTER TO MARLBOROUGH AFTER THE STORMING
OF CORK

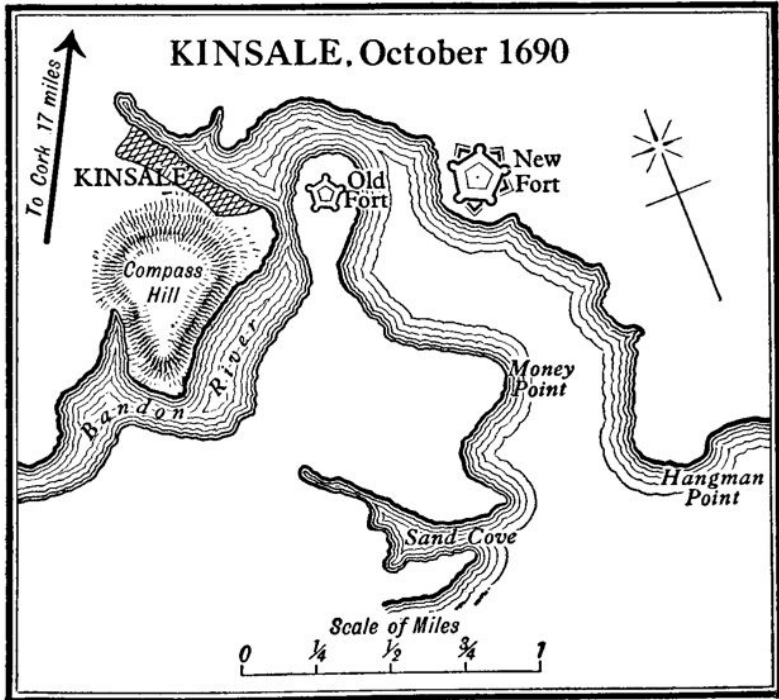
Blenheim MSS.

The world of those days was small, and many intimate ties existed across the fronts of war. After the departure of Tyrconnel the Duke of Berwick, now nineteen, commanded what was left of James's adherents in Ireland. He approached with a force of five or six thousand men as near as he dared to the city, hoping to extricate the garrison; but the quality of his troops did not permit him to intervene. He was the spectator, by no means for the last time, of his uncle's success. Although their lives lay on opposite sides, they both felt the bond of kinship, corresponded in a manner which would not be tolerated in any modern war, and admired each other's growing military repute.

There was another reminder of the jovial times. While Arabella's son by James II hung upon the outskirts of Marlborough's army, the Duke of Grafton, Barbara's son by Charles II, had fallen in the forefront of the attack. He was but twenty-six, and cherished the warmest sentiments of friendship and admiration for his mother's old lover. Together they had plotted against James; together they had quitted the camp at Salisbury; together they had restored order among Feversham's disbanded troops. William, wrongly suspecting Charles II's bastard of Jacobite inclinations and offended by his vote for a regency, had deprived him of his regiment, the 1st Guards, but gave him instead a man-of-war. In this ship, the *Grafton*, the Duke had carried Marlborough from Portsmouth, and, landing with six hundred seamen, had planted the besieging batteries. Exposing himself with his customary bravery when trying to advance some of his guns, he received a wound of which he died eleven days later. "I die contented," he said with dignity at the end, "but I should be more satisfied were I leaving my country in a happier and more tranquil state." He will best be remembered for his answer to James, who, irritated at his remonstrating with him about Popery, had exclaimed, "What have you to say about it? You have no conscience." "I may have no conscience," replied Grafton, "but I belong to a party which has plenty."

From Cork Marlborough, without an hour's delay, turned to Kinsale, and the very next day his cavalry summoned the two forts which guarded the harbour to surrender. The town, which was undefended, was seized before it could be burned, thus affording the necessary shelter for the troops. Marlborough arrived himself on the Thursday, October 1, by which time considerable infantry forces had entered the town. He saw at once that the "New Fort" was much stronger than had been reported and if defended would require a regular siege. The governor, Sir Edward Scott, rejected the very favourable conditions that were offered, and, treating with contempt the threat that he would be hanged if he put the assailants to the trouble of a formal siege, addressed himself to a stubborn defence. The "Old Fort" was

less well equipped, and Marlborough decided to attempt its storm. Tettau, the Dane, at the head of eight hundred men, was chosen for this rough task. At dawn on the Friday the assault was delivered. The garrison proved three times as numerous as had been reported, but after a fierce and bloody fight the place was carried. A hundred Irish were killed and two hundred taken prisoners.



Undeterred by this example, Scott refused a renewed summons to surrender, answering coolly that he might consider it in another month. Trenches were opened forthwith, and by October 7 the English and Danes had sapped almost to the counterscarp. On the 11th the heavy batteries, transported with the utmost difficulty over the appalling roads from Cork, began their bombardment, and by the 15th a breach was pronounced ready for assault. Sarsfield, whose cavalry were in the neighbourhood, was not able to help the defenders, and the intrepid governor felt that enough was done for honour. He therefore opened negotiations, and Marlborough, whose trenches were knee-deep in water and who was worried by the approach of winter and fearful for the health of his troops, was glad to give him generous terms. Scott was allowed to march off to Limerick with his twelve hundred survivors under the customary compliments of war. But "as the enemy

marched out, the Earl took a note of all their names, telling them that if ever they were hereafter in arms against King William, they should have no quarter.”^[22] The siege had cost Marlborough 250 men, and the hospitals were already crowded with sick. A hundred pieces of cannon and much military supplies fell to the victors. But this was the least part of the success. The capture of these southern harbours deprived Irish resistance of all hope of French succour, and rendered the entire reduction of the country possible as soon as the winter was over. Charles Churchill was appointed governor of Kinsale, and Marlborough’s army went into winter quarters. He himself landed at Deal on October 28, having accomplished what he had planned and guaranteed with complete success.

He was extremely well received in London. “In twenty-three days,” says Lord Wolseley, “Marlborough had achieved more than all William’s Dutch commanders had done both in Ireland and abroad during the whole of the previous year.”^[23] “In the matter of skill,” says Fortescue,^[24] “the quiet and unostentatious captures of Cork and Kinsale in 1690 were far the most brilliant achievements of the war.” William was most gracious: but the patronizing compliment he paid was characteristic of the Dutch attitude towards British generals. “No officer living,” he said, “*who has seen so little service as my Lord Marlborough,*^[25] is so fit for great commands.” Was Churchill’s service, then, so scanty? Tangier, Sole Bay, Maestricht, at least two campaigns under Turenne, Sedgemoor, and now this very year Walcourt and Cork, certainly constituted a record of varied experience, of hard fighting and invariable good conduct by land and sea, in almost every rank from an ensign to a Lieutenant-General in independent command.

Marlborough did not return to Ireland, as some writers aver. We find him dining in January with Lord Lucas, Constable of the Tower, and ordering £100 to be distributed among “the poor Irish taken at Cork and Kinsale.”^[26] He certainly desired to have the chief command in Ireland in the campaign of 1691, and public opinion expected it. But it was no part of William’s policy to let English soldiers gather laurels. The closing scenes in Ireland were reserved for Ginkel, while Marlborough, at the head of the British contingent in Flanders, was to make the campaign as one of the generals of the large army William had determined to command in person. He no doubt appreciated the kindness of the King in thus repairing the deficiencies of his military education; and his experiences in this campaign must at least have had the value of showing him some methods of war to be avoided.

The years 1689 and 1690 now lie exposed before us, and what was mystery to the actors is obvious to posterity. William had “taken England on his way to France”; James had looked upon Ireland as a stepping-stone to

England. Although propagating the Catholic religion played so large a part in French policy, the times were too serious for excessive zeal. Attacked upon all sides by the coalition of Europe, Louis had to lay hold of material resources and attune his affairs to the severely practical requirements of self-preservation. James had therefore been instructed by the French Government, and was himself entirely disposed, to gather all Ireland to himself by an even-handed policy fair to Protestant and Catholic alike and thus prepare for his return to England. But the Irish people and army who welcomed him with so much enthusiasm knew little and recked less of these larger aspects of the Continental problem. They wanted to trample down the Protestants and take back the lands stolen from the monasteries at the Reformation and from their forefathers by Cromwell. They sought to return definitely to the old fifteenth-century position and to blot out altogether the events which had since occurred. In fact, they demanded then what they seek to-day—an independent Catholic establishment with the land in the possession of its original owners, subject only to the tribal and ancient customs of rural life in primitive communities. They took little interest in James's larger plans of recovering the English crown, and still less in Louis's dreams of French ascendancy throughout the world. In 1689 both William in England and James in Ireland found themselves gravely embarrassed by the smaller and more local views intensely held by the populations whose respective champions they sought and seemed to be. To William England was a somewhat sluggish recruit for an anti-French coalition. To James Ireland was a stage upon which he must pose effectively before an English audience. To Louis England and Ireland were areas which must be thrown into sufficient disorder to improve the military situation on the challenged frontiers of France. Thus, much confusion arose on all sides; but in the end the main antagonisms of Europe predominated. The supreme duel of William *versus* Louis and of Europe *versus* France drew all other passionate interests into its vortex, and all subsidiary divergent issues, although they produced an infinity of perplexity and suffering, were drilled, cudgelled, disciplined, and forced to range themselves in one line or the other of the general war.

[1] Foxcroft, *Halifax*, ii, 203.

[2] Foxcroft, *Halifax*, *loc. cit.*

[3] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 245.

- [4] P. Frowde to Dartmouth, January 3, 1690, Dartmouth Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 249.
- [5] P. Bowles to Dartmouth, December 1, 1688, *ibid.*, 242.
- [6] Add. MSS., 21506, ff. 96, 98.
- [7] See summaries of his letters to William in *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1689-90. William to Marlborough, July 6/16, 1689: “J’ay bien de joye d’aprendre que vous vous accordez si bien avec le Prince de Waldec.” (Blenheim MSS.)
- [8] Misdated by Wolseley the 27th and by Macaulay the 5th. See p. 18, n. 3.
- [9] *Mémoires de Feuquières*, iii, 262.
- [10] *London Gazette*, No. 428 (1689).
- [11] *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, King William’s Chest, 5, No. 96, letter dated August 25.
- [12] Author’s italics.
- [13] William III to Marlborough, September 3/13, 1689 (Blenheim MSS.).
- [14] Besides Marlborough the members were Danby (now Marquess of Caermarthen), Lord President; Godolphin at the Treasury; Nottingham and Henry Sidney (now Viscount Sidney), Secretaries of State; together with Russell, Devonshire, Monmouth (afterwards Earl of Peterborough), and Sir John Lowther (afterwards Lord Lonsdale).

[15] One of King William's letters to Marlborough at this time deserves publication.

“AU CAMP DE CRUMLIN
“9/19 de Juillet 1690

* “Vous pouvez facilement croire combien j'ay este touche du Malheur qu'est arive a ma flote je doute fort que Mr Torrington pourra se justifier de sa conduite. J'espere que l'on fera tous les efforts possible pour la remettre bien tost en Mer. Je n'aprehende pas beaucoup une descente car selon les informations les ennemis n'ont point des troupes sur leur Flote. Et j'y suis confirme par les lettres que nous avons pris lesquels vous seront communiquees, mais ils pourront bien envoyer en ces Mers un detachment de fregattes qui nous incomoderoit fort. Et nous aurons bien de la piene d'empescher qu'il ne nous brulent nos Vesseaux de Vivres et de Transport, Je suis tres aise des assurances que vous me donnez d'affection des Troupes et du vostre. Apres les advantages que j'ay emporte icy je croi que les Malintensiones en Angletere n'auseront se remuer, soiez assuree de la continuation de mon amitie.

“WILLIAM R.

“Je n'aires plus besoin des deux Batt des Gardes. Et mesme si vous aviez encore besoin de Troupes je poures bien tost vous en envoyer pourveu que le passage soit libre.

“Ce que vous m'avez ecrit il y a quelque temps que Sr J[ohn] G[uise] m'auroit dit, je vous assure qu'il ne m'a jamais parle de vous ny que je n'ay rien houi de ce que vous m'avez mande.”

This last sentence was in answer to a letter of Marlborough dated June 17 in which he refers to an

accusation brought against him by a quarrelsome Colonel Sir John Guise to the effect that he had made a large sum of money out of his command in Holland. See *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1690-91, p. 34; Dalton, *Army Lists*, ii, 244. This may conceivably be connected with the Jacobite story that Marlborough when in Flanders had drawn pay for more men than were actually in his command. In any case, he had instantly referred the matter to the King. See also below, p. 181.

[16] Now Marquess of Caermarthen.

[17] Blenheim MSS.

[18]

14/24 d'Aoust 1690

Je vien de recevoir vostre lettre du 7, J'approuve fort le dessin que vous avez de vous embarquer sur la flote avec 4000 fantaissons et les Regt: Mariniers qui fairont ensemble 4900 hommes ce qui est un corps sufficient pour prendre Kingsale et Corck. Il faudra que vous preniez l'ammunition sufficient Et quelque canon des Vesseaux car nous vous en pouvons point envoie d'icy. Mais pour la Cavallerie je vous en enverres ces sufficientment et prenderes bien soin que l'armee ne vous tombera pas sur les bras, il n'y a que le temps qu'il faut bien menager et vous depescher le plus tost qu'il vous sera possible et m'advertir environ du temps que vous y pourez estre.

WILLIAM R.

[19] August 26/September 5 (Dalrymple, iii, Book v, 128).

[20] Finch MS, ii, pp. 438-439.

[21] Another of William's letters to Marlborough is of interest.

“A KENSINGTON
“*ce 4/14 Oct. 1690*”

* “Vous pouvez croire comme j'ay este rejoui de la prise de Cork, vous en felicitent aussi pour la part que vous y avez dont je vous remercie, j'espere que j'aprenderes bien tost le meme heuraux succes de Kingsale. Et que je vous revoirez en peu en parfaite sante. A l'eguard des Prisonniers que vous avez fait a Cork l'on dit qu'il y a une Isle aupres, ou l'on les pouroit garder seurement. Et quoy qu'ils me couteront beaucoup en pain, cette depense est inevitable, jusques a ce que j'en puis disposer autrement et que je ne puis faire si tost, soiyez tousjour asseure de la continuation de Mon Amitie.”

[22] Le Fleming Papers, *H.M.C.*, p. 301, News-letter of November 1, 1690.

[23] ii, 216.

[24] *History of the British Army*, i, 350.

[25] Author's italics.

[26] Luttrell, *Relation*, ii, 167.

CHAPTER II

THE PERSONAL CLEAVAGE

(1690-91)

To understand history the reader must always remember how small is the proportion of what is recorded to what actually took place, and above all how severely the time factor is compressed. Years pass with chapters and sometimes with pages, and the tale abruptly reaches new situations, changed relationships, and different atmospheres. Thus the figures of the past are insensibly portrayed as more fickle, more harlequin, and less natural in their actions than they really were. But if anyone will look back over the last three or four years of his own life or of that of his country, and pass in detailed review events as they occurred and the successive opinions he has formed upon them, he will appreciate the pervading mutability of all human affairs. Combinations long abhorred become the order of the day. Ideas last year deemed inadmissible form the pavement of daily routine. Political antagonists make common cause and, abandoning old friends, find new. Bonds of union die with the dangers that created them. Enthusiasm and success give place to resentment and reaction. The popularity of Governments departs as the too bright hopes on which it was founded fade into normal and general disappointment. But all this seems natural to those who live through a period of change. All men and all events are moving forward together in a throng. Each individual decision is the result of all the forces at work at any given moment, and the passage of even a few years enables—nay, compels—men and peoples to think, feel, and act quite differently without any insincerity or baseness.

Thus we have seen our England, maddened by the Popish Plot into Test Acts and Exclusion Bills, placing after a few years a Popish sovereign on the throne with general acclamation. We have seen her also, angered by his offences, unseat him by an almost universal shrug of the shoulders and set the island crown upon the brow of a foreign prince. And now we shall see a very strong reaction which arose against that Prince or Parliamentary King and cast gleams of public favour upon the true King over the water. The possibility of the return of James could never be absent from the minds of those who had been witnesses of the miracle of the restoration of Charles. Moreover, many of the reasons which had led to the expulsion of James had disappeared. A new Constitution had established the power of Parliament and limited effectually the prerogative and authority of the Crown. No one

could doubt that if James returned it would be as the result of a bargain which consolidated the principles of a limited monarchy and upheld beyond the chance of challenge the Protestant character of the English people. Those who write with crude censure of the shame of deserting James for William or William for James seem to forget that James and William were not ends in themselves. They were the instruments by which the power and happiness of England might be gained or marred. The loyalties due to their kingly office or hereditary titles were not the only loyalties to which English statesmen had a right and duty to respond. There was, for instance, the interest of the country, to which an increasingly conscious loyalty was due. In those days, as in these, men were by character true or false; but unswerving fidelity to a particular king was no test of their virtue or baseness.

The events of the Revolution had created conditions in England to which no parallel exists in later times. Many of the magnates who had dethroned and expelled James still revered him in their hearts, in spite of all the Acts of Parliament they had passed, as their real, natural sovereign. Every one regarded the imperious and disagreeable Dutchman who had had to be brought in and set up for the sake of Protestantism and civil liberty as a necessary evil. They saw his dislike and contempt for Englishmen. They understood that he regarded England mainly as a powerful tool for his Continental schemes, conceived primarily in the interest of Holland. With anxious eyes they watched his unpopularity increasing with the growth of taxes and distress through long years of war rarely lighted by success. The danger of his death from natural causes, from assassination or upon the battlefield, where he so often bravely exposed himself, and the grave constitutional issues which would renew themselves upon such an event, were ever present to their minds. Devoted to the Protestant faith, and determined that the English Constitution should not sink to a despotism upon the French model, they none the less had to take into account the possible pursuance of their objects under violently and suddenly changed conditions. It was not wonderful that they should have acted upon the ancient Greek maxim, "Love as though you shall hereafter hate, and hate as though you shall hereafter love." It was an epoch of divided loyalties, of conflicting interests, of criss-cross ties, of secret reserves and much dissembling. When kings forswear their oaths of duty and conspire against their peoples, when rival kings or their heirs crowd the scene, statesmen have to pick and choose between sovereigns of fluctuating values, as kings are wont to pick and choose between politicians according to their temporary serviceableness. The conditions and standards of this period, like its tests and stresses, were different from our own. Nevertheless, as we

contend, the main feature which emerges is that of steadfastness and not deceit, of patriotism above self-interest, and of courage and earnestness, rather than of craft and opportunism.

Through all these baffling changes, of which only the barest outline can be realized by posterity, Halifax seems to have threaded his way with truer hold upon the essential interest of England than any other figure of whom we have record. We have seen him a Protestant opponent of the Exclusion Bill and a Minister of James II. We have seen him an opponent of James II. We have seen him harshly conducting that fallen sovereign to Rochester. We have seen him the trusted counsellor of William III. We shall soon see him reopening his relations with the exiled James. No one but a blind partisan of the Whig or Tory factions of those vanished days would find it impossible to vindicate all these successive and superficially inconsistent actions of Halifax as being both sincere and in the public interest. On the whole throughout this long, tempestuous period Marlborough, as we have seen, moved politically with Halifax. His broad outlook upon affairs, his sane and reasonable temperament, his indifference towards the two parties, his hatred of excess or revenge, his antagonism to France, his adherence to the Protestant cause, all conform to the Halifax type, and step by step his actions harmonize with those of the illustrious 'Trimmer.'

Longer than any other race in the world the English have exercised the right or power of dismissing a Government of which they have tired, and in the main our civilization has gained by this process. But in the days when party leaders were rival kings, when dislike of bad government was disloyalty, when resistance to a misguided king was treason, the ordinary transactions of modern political life wore a dire and sinister aspect. It was not possible to take part in public affairs without giving solemn oaths, nor to address the royal personage who was the party-leader except in the obsequious and adulatory terms which are still conventional. Not merely exclusion from public office, but confiscation of goods, imprisonment, and possibly death overhung all who were found on the losing side in any of the convulsions of State. In consequence public men often endeavoured when possible to minimize their risks and to mitigate for themselves and their families the consequences of a dynastic change. No such anxieties beset the Victorians or trouble us to-day. All our fundamentals have been for many generations securely established. The prizes of public life have diminished; its risks have been almost entirely removed. High office now means not the road to riches, but in most cases financial sacrifice. Power under the Crown passes from hand to hand with smooth decorum. The 'Ins' and 'Outs' take their turn in His Majesty's Government and in His Majesty's Opposition usually without a thought of personal vengeance, and often without a ruffle

of private friendship. But are we really so sure that the statesmen of the twentieth century are entitled to sit in judgment upon those of the seventeenth? The age is gentler, the personal stakes and the players themselves are smaller, but the standard is not always so far superior that we should watch with unshakable confidence our modern political leaders subjected to the strains of Halifax, Shrewsbury, Godolphin, or Marlborough.

We must now look more closely upon the extraordinary Prince who for good reasons and in the general interest had robbed his father-in-law of his throne. From his earliest years William's circumstances had been harsh and sombre. His life was loveless. He was always fatherless and childless. His marriage was dictated by reasons of State. He was brought up by his termagant grandmother, Amalia of Solms, and in his youth was passed for regulation from one Dutch committee to another. His childhood was unhappy and his health bad. He had a tubercular lung, was asthmatic and partly crippled. But within this emaciated and defective frame there burned a remorseless fire, fanned by the storms of Europe, and intensified by the stern compression of his surroundings. His great actions began before he was twenty-one. From that age he had fought constantly in the field and toiled through every intrigue of Dutch domestic politics and of the European scene. For the last four years he had been the head of the English conspiracy against James.

Women meant little to him. For a long time he treated his loving, faithful wife with much severity. As a husband he was arbitrary without being uxorious. He was at once exacting and cold. Mary's life in Holland for ten years was narrow and restricted. William fenced her about with Dutch attendants and chased away even her English chaplain. She had to be taught to look at the world entirely through his eyes, and not to see too much through them. Bishop Ken's account of this period is not pleasant reading. Although the witty Elizabeth Villiers (afterwards Lady Orkney) upheld the family tradition by becoming his titular mistress, he was certainly not a squire of dames. Later on, towards the end of his reign, when he saw how much Mary had helped him in the English sphere of his policy, he was sincerely grateful to her, as to a faithful friend or Cabinet officer who had maintained the Government. His grief at her death was unaffected.

In religion he was, of course, a Calvinist; but he does not seem to have derived much spiritual solace from these forbidding doctrines. In practice as a sovereign and commander he was entirely without religious prejudices. No agnostic could have displayed more philosophic impartiality. Protestant, Catholic, Jew, or infidel were all the same to him. He dreaded and hated Gallican Catholicism less because it was to him idolatrous than because it

was French; he employed Catholic officers without hesitation when they would serve his purpose. He used religious questions as counters in his political combinations. While he beat the Protestant drum in England and Ireland, he had potent influence with the Pope, with whom his relations were at all times a model of comprehending statesmanship. It almost seemed that a being had been created for the sole purpose of resisting the domination of France and the Great King. His public hatred of France and his personal quarrel with Louis XIV constituted the main theme of his life. All his exertions were directed against the tyrant who had not only compassed the ruin of the Dutch Republics, but had actually seized and dragooned the small principality of Orange from which he had sprung, and with which his native pride and affections were interwoven.

It was the natural characteristic of such an upbringing and of such a mission that William should be ruthless. Although he did not conspire in the murder of the de Witts, he rejoiced at it, profited by it, and protected and pensioned the murderers. His conduct in the Massacre of Glencoe was entirely unfeeling. Neither the treachery nor the butchery of that crime disturbed his cynical serenity. He was vexed and worried only about the outcry that arose afterwards. He would break a political opponent without pity, but he was never needlessly cruel, and was glad to treat foes no longer dangerous with contempt or indifference. He wasted no time on minor revenges. His sole vendetta was with Louis. For all his experience from his youth at the head of armies and for all his dauntless heart, he was never a great commander. He had not a trace of that second-sight of the battlefield which is the mark of military genius. He was no more than a resolute man of good common sense whom the accident of birth had carried to the conduct of war. It was in the sphere of politics that his inspiration lay. Perhaps he has never been surpassed in the sagacity, patience, and discretion of his statecraft. The combinations he made, the difficulties he surmounted, the adroitness with which he used the time factor, or played upon the weakness of others, the unerring sense of proportion and power of assigning to objectives their true priorities, all mark him for the highest fame.

William watched with ill-concealed disfavour the protracted wranglings of the English chiefs and parties. His paramount interest was in the great war now begun throughout Europe and in the immense confederacy he had brought into being. He despised the insularity and lack of vision, as it seemed to him, of those over whom he was now to rule. He had regarded the English expedition as a divagation, a duty necessary but tiresome, which had to be accomplished for a larger purpose. He grudged the delays which held him in London, and later in Ireland, from the decisive theatre of world events. He was never fond of England, nor interested in her domestic affairs.

Her seamy side was all he knew. He repeatedly urged Parliament to address itself to the Continental situation. He required the wealth and power of England by land and sea for the European war. It was for this he had come in person to enlist her. Although he had himself darkly and deviously conspired the undoing of his foolish kinsman, he thought little of the English public men who had been his confederates. A prince himself, he could not but distrust men who, albeit at his instigation, had been guilty of treason to their royal master. He knew too much about their jealousies and intrigues to cherish for them sentiments of liking or respect. He had used them for his own ends, and would reward them for their services; but as a race he regarded them as inferior in fibre and fidelity to his Dutchmen. English statesmen to him were perjured, and what was even worse, local-minded. English soldiers seemed to him uncouth and ill-trained by Continental standards. English generals lacked the professional knowledge which, he believed, long experience of war alone could give. The English Navy was no doubt brave and hardy, but his own sentiments naturally rested upon the traditions of Tromp and de Ruyter. The Dutch were his children; the English could never be more than his step-children, to whom, indeed, he owed a parental duty and from whose estate he was entitled during his guardianship to draw substantial advantages.

Once securely seated on the throne he scarcely troubled to disguise these sentiments. A Jacobite observer, General Dillon, who as a page at this time had good opportunities, has recorded that in 1689

he never saw English noblemen dine with the Prince of Orange, but only the Duke of Schomberg who was always placed at his right hand and his Dutch general officers. The English noblemen that were there stood behind the Prince of Orange's chair but never were admitted to eat and sit.

The Earls of Marlborough and Clarendon were often in attendance, but "were dismissed when the dinner was half over." Dillon says that he was there for several days before he ever heard the Prince of Orange speak a word at table. On his asking his companion page, the young, handsome Keppel, whether he never spoke, Keppel replied "that he talked enough at night over his bottle when he was got with his friends."^[27] It was not surprising that these manners, and still more the mood from which they evidently arose, gave deep offence. For the English, although submissive to the new authority of which they had felt the need, were as proud and haughty as any race in Europe. No one relishes being an object of aversion and contempt, especially when these affronts are unstudied, spontaneous,

and sincere. The great nobles and Parliamentarians who had made the Revolution and were still rigidly set upon its purpose could not but muse upon the easy gaiety and grace of the Court of Charles II. They remembered that James, with all his political faults, had the courtesy and dignity which distinguished the later Stuarts. Politics apart, they soon began wistfully to look back to the days when they had a king of their own.

The King's unsociable disposition, his greediness at table, his silence and surliness in company, his dislike of women, his neglect of London, all prejudiced him with polite society. The ladies voted him "a low Dutch bear." The English Army too was troubled in its soul. Neither officers nor men could dwell without a sense of humiliation upon the military aspects of the Revolution. They did not like to see all the most important commands entrusted to Dutchmen. They eyed sourly the Dutch infantry who paced incessantly the sentry-beats of Whitehall and St James's, and contrasted their shabby blue uniforms and small stature with the scarlet pomp of the 1st Guards and Coldstreamers now banished from London. It was a pity, thought they, that the public interest had not allowed them to give these fellows a drubbing.

It is curious indeed that the English statesman who most commanded the new King's confidence and enjoyed his intimacy was the one who least deserved it. Sunderland had fled to Holland when King James's power collapsed, in fear apparently of Catholic vengeance for having led his master to ruin. We have found at Blenheim one of his few surviving letters. It is of interest for the light it casts both upon his own position and upon his relations with Churchill. He wrote to Churchill from Rotterdam on December 19, 1688:

* After the long friendship we have had and our manner of living for many years, I can not doubt but you will contribute what you can to make things easy for a man in my condition; therefore it is not necessary for me to write at this time. But, my wife going into England, I would not omit putting you in mind of me and begging you will assist her and always wanting money and never so much as now. If she speakes to you for the George and Garter which I desired you or My Lady Churchill would keep for me, pray give them to her. This I think was unnecessary but so are many other things I do, particularly my going away; for when I saw you last and a great while before, I apprehended nothing but from the Papists. I hope I was in the right and that it is so still.

It seems incredible that one so exposed in character and discredited in counsel should regain a foremost position in the country he had served so queerly. Yet within two years this Papist recusant who had contrived at the same moment to be false to England and to King James, while drawing a salary from France and intriguing with William, found himself in the highest favour of the Protestant deliverer, became the chief influence in the forming of Cabinets, and was soon again the most intimate adviser of the Crown. Castlereagh in another century was to justify his support of Talleyrand after Waterloo on the grounds that the French were a nation of criminals and that the biggest criminal was most capable of managing them. A similar reasoning seems to have drawn William to Sunderland. His only other English favourite was Henry Sidney, whose influence and affluence were a cause of comment. For the rest his well-proved Dutch or foreign friends were the recipients of the royal bounty. Bentinck became Earl of Portland, Zulestein Earl of Rochford, Ruvigny Earl of Galway, old Schomberg Duke of Schomberg,^[28] young Schomberg Duke of Leinster; and all were enriched by well-paid offices and large estates granted them from the Crown lands.

Cracks had speedily appeared in the fabric of the original National Government. The Whigs considered that the Revolution belonged to them. All they had suffered since their far-seeing Exclusion Bills, all that they had risked in the great conspiracy, should now be rewarded. Their judgment, their conduct, their principles, had been vindicated. Ought they not, then, to have all the offices? Was it just they should be thrust aside in many cases for the “evil counsellors of the late king”? But William knew that he could never have gained the crown of England but by the help of the Cavaliers and Anglicans who formed the staple of the Tory Party. Moreover at this time, as a king he liked the Tory mood. Here was a party who exalted the authority of the Crown. Here was a Church devoted to hereditary monarchy and profoundly grieved to have been driven by the crisis from the doctrine of non-resistance. William felt that Whig principles would ultimately lead to a republic. Under the name of Stadtholder he was really the King of Holland; he had no desire under the name of King to be only Stadtholder of England. He was therefore ready to break up the convention Parliament which had given him the crown while, as the Whigs said, “its work was all unfinished.” At the election of February 1690 “the buried names of Whig and Tory revived”; and the Tories won. Henceforward the party cleavage and party system became rigid, formal, and—down to our own days—permanent.

There was, moreover, a moderate view. Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Marlborough, and Sunderland, and from a somewhat different angle Halifax,

now ageing, held a middle position apart from party, and, as they no doubt thought, above it. "Their notion of party," writes Mr Feiling,

was to use both or either of the factions to keep themselves well above water, and to further the royal service. For this last part should not be forgotten; if they could go to any lengths to ensure their own future, three of them could in an emergency, if the nation's interests at the moment happened to coincide with their own, shew magnificent patriotism and industry.^[29]

Each of these men drew in others. "Shrewsbury was usually hand in glove with Wharton. Godolphin and Marlborough shared confidences with Russell."^[30] It was upon this central body of men, pre-eminent for their gifts, unrivalled in experience of affairs and knowledge of the Court and Parliament, that William was naturally inclined to rely either as counsellors or Ministers, and he added thoroughpaced Whigs or Tories in different proportions to either flank to suit the changing needs of the years.

But the King's affairs moved inevitably in a vicious circle. He could not trust high military authority to Englishmen, nor allow English soldiers to win fame in the field, without, as he thought, placing himself in their power. In all the key posts of the Army he must have Dutchmen or foreigners. Thus he angered the English officers and the English Army, and found new justification for his distrust in their resentment. Most of all this cycle prejudiced the relations between him and Marlborough. Marlborough's desire was above everything to command armies in the great war now raging. He felt within himself qualities which, if they had their chance, would produce remarkable results for himself, for England, and for Europe. But though William desired the same political ends, he feared their being gained by Marlborough. He remembered General Monk; he remembered what had happened at Salisbury. Therefore it became with him a necessary principle of his existence to bar Marlborough's natural and legitimate professional career. The abler general Marlborough showed himself, the more he must be kept in a subordinate station; the greater his talents the more imperative their repression.

Marlborough was made to realize all this, and perhaps its inevitability, at the beginning of 1691. He had rendered immense and even decisive services to the new régime both in the crisis of the Revolution and during the Revolution settlement. His had been almost the only military achievements of 1690. The charge at Walcourt, the swift seizure of Cork and Kinsale, were outstanding episodes. It was variously rumoured in London that he would be

created a Duke and Knight of the Garter, would be appointed Master-General of the Ordnance, and would be commander-in-chief in Ireland for the coming campaign. A dukedom he considered beyond his means, and he was to refuse one ten years later on the same grounds; but we know from letters which Anne and her husband wrote to the King that he desired the Garter. He wanted the Ordnance to support his title; and above all he sought an independent command in one of the theatres of war. He found himself denied on all points. The Ordnance went to Henry Sidney, a civilian who was destitute of any qualifications of which history can take notice. Ginkel had the command in Ireland, and Waldeck, in spite of Fleurus, had, under the King, the command in Flanders. Of course Marlborough ought not to have minded such treatment. He ought to have been indifferent, like our modern generals, statesmen, and financiers, to personal ambitions or material interests. However, he took it all very much amiss. He seems to have come to the conclusion that William meant to keep him down. Under James he saw his path blocked by Papists: under William by Dutchmen.

The campaign of 1691 opened in imposing style with a conference at The Hague. A league of nations assembled to concert measures against the common enemy, France. England, Holland, Prussia, the German states, the Empire, Spain, and a dozen smaller powers—all sent their representatives. Such a gathering of princes and statesmen had scarcely been seen before in Christendom. At the summit stood William in all his glory, the architect of this immense confederation of rival states and conflicting faiths, the sovereign of its two most vigorous nations, the chief commander of its armies, lacking nothing but the military art. This splendid ceremonial was rudely interrupted by the cannon. It was scarcely etiquette to begin operations before April or May; but early in March Louis XIV, with Luxembourg as his general and Vauban as his engineer, suddenly appeared with a hundred thousand men before the valuable barrier fortress of Mons. William was forced to descend from his pedestal and mount his horse. He could muster an army of barely fifty thousand, and these could only be spectators of the fall of Mons. So much for the Hague conference.

Marlborough had been left in England charged with the task of recruitment for the Army. We have a letter which shows that he was on bad terms with Danby, but still on good terms with the King.^[31]

WHITEHALL
February 17, 1691

I here send your Majesty a copy of what we have done concerning the recruits. I must at the same time take leave to tell

your Majesty that I am tired out of my life with the unreasonable way of proceeding of [the] Lord President, for he is very ignorant what is fit for an officer, both as to recruits and everything else as to a soldier; so that when I have given such as I think necessary orders, he does what he thinks fit, and enters into the business of tents, arms, and the off-reckonings, which were all settled before your Majesty left England, so that at this rate business is never done; but I think all this proceeds from, I hope, the unreasonable prejudice he has taken against me, which makes me incapable of doing you that service which I do with all my heart, and should wish to do, for I do with much truth wish both your person and Government to prosper. I hope it will not be long before your Majesty will be here, after which I shall beg never to be in England when you are not.

In May the allied forces took the field with the object at least of recovering Mons. William gave Marlborough the command of the British contingent, and to make the necessary vacancy moved Tollemache to Ireland, to serve under Ginkel. Marlborough and Count Solms were sent forward to organize the assembly of the main army in the neighbourhood of Brussels. Waldeck commanded while William rested awhile in his home palace at Loo. Luxembourg, with a solid French army, barred the way to Mons. At the end of June William arrived at headquarters, and the campaign began in earnest. It was the first time since the reign of Henry VIII that a King of England had commanded in person on the Continent, and all the young bloods of quality and fashion had hurried from London to let off their pistols. But nothing happened. Luxembourg stood on the defensive in positions too well chosen for William to attack. The great armies marched and counter-marched according to the orthodox rules of war, and the precious summer months slipped away. By the end of August all was over. William, baffled and a trifle humiliated, led his armies back to their cantonments. They passed on their way the field of Fleurus, where the grisly spectacle of Waldeck's unburied corpses struck a chill through a disappointed host. William handed over the command to Waldeck and returned to Loo.

But the adversities of the campaign were not yet ended. In the middle of September, when custom should have enforced upon Luxembourg the propriety of retiring into winter quarters, he organized an outrageous cavalry attack upon the rearguard of the allied army while it was moving from Leuze to Grammont. The rising French officer Villars routed the Dutch cavalry and sabred them from the field. The confusion spread to the infantry. The sudden

heavy firing rang through the autumn air. There was a tumult of scampering horses and men. Marlborough, marching in his station with the British contingent, had already passed the Catoise stream. He turned sharply back and marched towards the bridges at the utmost speed, apparently in the mood for battle. A broad flush of red and steel spread menacingly across the landscape. But Luxembourg, cool and composed in the cavalry action and content with the day, disengaged his excited army before the British brigades could deploy; and the fighting of the year ended for the allies upon this somewhat ridiculous incident, in which there were, however, above seven hundred casualties.^[32] The Prince of Waldeck led the discomfited Dutch and angry English into their winter quarters; and in all their camps and garrisons the word ran round that King William had “entered the field too late, and quitted it too soon.”

We have two sketches of our hero in the setting of these unsatisfactory affairs. The first, at William’s headquarters, rests on the account of the Pensionary Heinsius, afterwards Marlborough’s greatest standby in Holland. The King asked the Prince of Vaudemont what he thought of his English generals. Although Marlborough had had no opportunity of handling the troops in the field, his personality, his organizing and administrative powers, and his part in council had produced an impression. Vaudemont is said to have answered in these words: “Kirke has fire, Lanier thought, Mackay skill, and Colchester bravery; but there is something inexpressible in the Earl of Marlborough. All their virtues seem to be united in his single person. I have lost,” he added emphatically, “my wonted skill in physiognomy, if any subject of your Majesty can ever attain such a height of military glory as that to which this combination of sublime perfections must raise him.” “Cousin,” said King William, who was never incapable of discerning unwelcome truths, “you have done your part in answering my question, and I believe the Earl of Marlborough will do his to verify your prediction.”^[33]

The second glimpse—one of the very few which reveal Marlborough’s enthusiasm—we owe to the Comte de Dohna. The armies had been drawn up at Beaumont in the hope of battle. The British were in their full array.

“We had become acquainted,” writes the Prussian general,

and as between soldiers, especially on such an occasion, it is customary to talk shop, Marlborough showed me his English, smart troops and brisk. He asked me if I did not believe them invincible and whether with such men were we not sure to beat the French? “Sir,” I said, “you may see on the other side troops who

believe themselves apparently equally invincible, and if that be so, there is clearly a conflict of opinion.”^[34]

This was an issue which was not to be settled for some time.

It was a heavy exertion for the states of those days, with their narrow finances, to keep such large armies in contact with an equal enemy for a whole season. The loss of a year weighed heavily on the fragile structure of the Grand Alliance. All William’s skill in diplomacy had come to nothing at the point of action. John Churchill was then forty-three, in his prime. He possessed all the military knowledge and experience upon which he afterwards acted. As he watched those infirm yet stilted manoeuvres, as he brooded on these wasted opportunities, as he no doubt felt how surely and how swiftly he could reshape the scene, and yet how carefully and tightly trammelled he was, can we wonder at the anger that possessed his soul? There was no prophetic spirit at his side to whisper, “Patience! The opportunity will yet be yours.” His patience is almost proverbial. He had need for it all. Ten years, half of them years of war—ten years when the chances of a lifetime seemed finally to die—were to pass before he was again to exercise a military command.

[27] Macpherson, *Original State Papers*, i, 284 (based on Carte’s memorandum of an actual conversation with Dillon in 1724).

[28] Killed at the Boyne in 1690.

[29] P. 282.

[30] P. 281.

[31] Dalrymple, iii, Part II, 247.

[32] Cf. Carstares to Lord Polwarth, Loo, September 17, 1691, *H.M.C.*, XIV, iii, 123.

[33] *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*.

[34] Christophe de Dohna, *Mémoires Originaux* (1883), pp. 151-152.

CHAPTER III

KING JAMES'S MEMOIRS

History cannot proceed by silences. The chronicler of ill-recorded times has none the less to tell his tale. If facts are lacking, rumour must serve. Failing affidavits, he must build with gossip. Everything is relative. One doubtful fact has to be weighed against another. A rogue's testimony is better than no evidence. A forged letter, if ancient, is at least to be preferred to mere vacuity. Authentic documents and credible witnesses may be sought with perseverance; but where they do not exist the less trustworthy understudies who present themselves must be suffered, often without the proper apologies and reserves, to play the major parts, if the drama is to be presented at all. "Marry! this is something," and something at any rate is better than nothing. But when the process is complete, when every vestige of knowledge, such as it is, has been gathered, sifted, weighed, and fitted into the story, it may be well to ask whether the result corresponds at all with what actually happened. Listen to the confession of Ranke, most pregnant and fairest of historians.

Some years ago I was reproved with writing history out of scraps. Certainly I do not, so long as detailed informants hold out. But when the originals were either lost, or are kept concealed, it is absolutely necessary to make use of less perfect accounts and fragmentary communications. It is just at such points that cases are wont to occur, which are purposely kept dark and which are among the most important.^[35]

The historians of two hundred years have generally accepted the view that the leading Englishmen who made the Revolution of 1688 soon afterwards became traitors to the Protestant and constitutional cause. They conspired in the full and treacherous sense of the word against William III. They opened a close correspondence with the exiled King, and sought by every form of repentance and atonement to win his forgiveness. They divulged the secrets of the Council, betrayed naval and military war plans, tried to seduce the Army, or to put the fleet out of the way of an invader, and generally plotted to bring about a restoration backed by French bayonets. This they did in their base pursuit of wealth and honours, and to insure these enjoyments, if King James returned. These charges assail in varying degrees, but all effectively, Marlborough, Shrewsbury, Russell, Godolphin,

Sunderland, Halifax, and later Somers, together with many other less important figures. If sustained, they depict them all as cheats and villains of the deepest dye. In fact, the types portrayed are those of Chinese mandarins rather than of European statesmen.

It has gratified the self-esteem of succeeding generations to dwell upon the depravity of an earlier and more famous age. However, it seems unlikely that persons in the highest station, devoted to solemn public causes, possessing high capacities and many noble and heroic gifts, should have all been of such shameful character. It is important to see whether what has been written against them is a fair representation of the truth; whether the versions given of their conduct are authoritative, authentic, impartial; whether and how far the evidence is untrustworthy, distorted, exaggerated, or definitely malicious; and whether what remains indisputable has been judged in its proper relation to the circumstances of the time. For this purpose it is necessary to search and test the foundations upon which the enormous and imposing façade of history is supported.

With these preliminaries let us proceed to survey the materials which actually exist. The reader must choose between accepting conclusions and going into the details for himself. The account of the documents is here presented in a simplified form. But most of the statements of fact are supported by a consensus of authorities. Where the authorities are at variance their division of opinion is recorded in the footnotes.

Apart from the gossip recorded in various English memoirs and contemporary letters, and a few documents in the French archives, the whole of the charge against the Revolution leaders rests upon such records as exist of what the Jacobites at Saint-Germains thought or wrote down about them. There are no holograph letters of any kind in existence. With the notable exception of the Camaret Bay Letter, to which a separate chapter will be devoted, there are not even reputed copies of any of Marlborough's letters. Surely this is remarkable. Whereas King William's archives contain many holograph letters tantamount to treason written to him before the Revolution, and in particular Marlborough's letter of August 4, 1688, the Jacobite records are destitute of any similar original documents. Yet if the object of the conspirators was, as we are assured, to obtain pardons from James in the event of a restoration, it would have been natural for the exiled King to require some compromising gage, such as Churchill had so freely given to William. That Churchill would not have feared to do so can be judged from his action in William's case. If it be true that he begged for "two lines in the King's handwriting" according him his pardon, would it not have been reasonable for James to reply, "Then send me just two lines in

yours.” We may be sure that if any holograph letters had existed they would have been preserved in the Jacobite archives with jealous care; and would have come down to us through the same channels as many less significant documents. However, there are none. None have come down, because none existed. There remain only the assertions of the Jacobite records. These records are therefore of the utmost interest.

In his early life James II was accustomed to write memoirs and notes of the events with which he was concerned. “He kept,” says Burnet, “a constant Journal of all that passed, of which he showed me a great deal.” His first wife, who died in 1671, began a Life of her husband “all drawn from his Journal.” She showed a volume of her work to Burnet, whom James later on thought of employing to finish it. In his flight from England the King managed to save his papers. They were flung into a box and entrusted to the Tuscan Ambassador, who eventually sent them from Leghorn to Saint-Germains. Thirteen years later, on March 24, 1701, James by warrant entrusted “the original Memoirs . . . writ in our own hand” to the custody of Louis Inesse, or Inese (Innes), Principal of the Scots Jesuit College in Paris, and of his successors. On January 22, 1707, his son the Old Pretender signed a warrant for the removal to Saint-Germains for some months of that part of “His Majesty’s Memoirs and other papers written in his own hand” which relates to 1678 and later times. On November 9, 1707, he likewise signed a promise to settle one hundred pounds a year within six months of his restoration on the Scots College, “where the original Memoirs and MSS. of our Royal Father are deposited by his especial warrant.” Louis Inesse was alive in 1734, and the papers were still in his custody. There is no doubt about the existence of the Memoirs nor where they lay during the whole of the eighteenth century. On the outbreak of the French Revolution the Scots College tried by various channels to send these historical treasures to England for safety. In 1793 it is believed that a Monsieur Charpentier finally undertook the task. He was arrested at Saint-Omer, and his wife, fearing lest the Royal Arms of hostile England on the bindings might be compromising, first buried the volumes in the garden of her house, and later dug them up and burned them. Thus ended the travels of the Memoirs, the only original memoirs “writ in the King’s own hand.”^[36]

However, his son the Old Pretender had fortunately caused a detailed biography of his father to be compiled from the Memoirs and other papers. This work in four volumes was also deposited at the Scots College, and rested there for many years side by side with the materials on which it was based and which it largely incorporated. A single sentence typical of many other indications shows that this “Life” was written some time in the first

seventeen years of the eighteenth century. “Never child [the Old Pretender] had greater resemblance to his parents both in body and mind than *his present Majesty* has of the *late King* his Father and of the Queen his Mother.”^[37]

This sentence was evidently written after the death of James II and before that of the Queen. Further minute researches have narrowed the period to between the years 1704 and 1710; and many will think it reasonable to centre it about the year 1707, when, as we have seen, an important section of the documents was brought to Saint-Germains for some months. Thus there were the *Memoirs*, now defunct, and the *Life*, written after James’s death by direction of the Old Pretender.

There has been much more doubt about the authorship of the *Life* than about its date. Some authorities consider it was written by Inesse himself. The other view is that it is the work of a Jacobite gentleman, a clerk at Saint-Germains, named Dicconson. The point is of small importance, but a letter will soon be placed before the reader which proves that Dicconson is the author.

A copy of Dicconson’s work found a home with the English Benedictines in Italy, and during the Napoleonic wars was purchased by the Prince of Wales, and with much difficulty and six years of circuitous travel transported to England, where it arrived about the beginning of 1813. It was edited and published in 1816 by the Rev. James Stanier Clarke, historiographer to the Prince of Wales, then become the Regent, as *The Life of James II collected out of Memoirs writ of his own hand*. This is a book of the highest interest and value. In all parts not attributable to James it is extremely well written. It is almost our only window on this sector of the past. It quotes or condenses a portion of the original *Memoirs*. The rest is the view of a Jacobite Catholic exile serving at the Court of Saint-Germains in the first decade of the eighteenth century. The facts are set forth as the Court at Saint-Germains viewed them and wished them to be believed.

Without hesitation we are told how James when Duke of York in 1669 formed his design for the forcible conversion of the English people to Rome; the arrangements with Louis, the French money, the seaports to be placed in the hands of trusty Papist governors, the measures to secure a Papist complexion and control of the Army, the cautious acquiescences of King Charles II, the long perseverance for nearly twenty years now by this path, now by that—all are laid bare as performances of the highest virtue. Unconscious of the perfidy to every human engagement, to the laws of England, to the rights of subjects, to the repeated public and royal declarations and professions, and in apparent complete ignorance of the real

facts of Charles's secret policy, as we have described them, the tale is told and counted as meritorious.

Here, then, in the Scots Jesuit College in Paris, was the fountain-head; and to that fountain during the eighteenth century a few select persons came from time to time to sip and drink, or even to carry away a beaker or two.

The first of these, a conscientious investigator, Thomas Carte, a clergyman of the Church of England and a devoted adherent of the house of Stuart, had published his *Life of the Duke of Ormonde* in 1736. He then began collecting his materials for writing a history of England after Cromwell, to promote their restoration. He managed to purchase the papers of David Nairne, under-secretary to James II during his exile, and subsequently employed in the household of the Queen. He then applied for permission to make extracts from James's papers in the Scots College. Permission was granted to him in a letter written from Rome by one James Edgar, secretary to the Old Pretender, dated January 10, 1741.

"The King is pleased," ran the letter,

by this post to send directions to Messrs Innes to give you the perusal at the Scots College at Paris of the complete *Life of the late King his father, writ by Mr Dicconson in consequence of royal orders,*^[38] all taken out of, and supported by the late King's MSS.

Carte's extracts from the archives of the Scots College were duly published. His original transcripts do not exist among the Carte papers, and historians have disputed whether the extracts were made from the *Memoirs* or from the *Life*.^[39] He did not live to complete his history; but before he died in April 1754 he presented to the Bodleian Library at Oxford the first two instalments of thirty and twenty-six volumes respectively of the manuscripts in the collection of which his life had been largely spent. He left the remainder of his collection to his widow. She sent nine more volumes to the Bodleian in 1757, and bequeathed the rest to her second husband, Mr Nicholas Jernegan, with reversion to the University of Oxford. Jernegan sold the use of these documents for £300 to a certain James Macpherson, who used them for his publication of *Original Papers containing the secret history of Great Britain from the Restoration to the accession of the House of Hanover*. In 1778 Mr Jernegan sold his life interest in the Carte Collection to the University for £50, and the whole mass, aggregating with the previous gift nearly 250 volumes, was deposited in the Bodleian Library. Among these records are the seven volumes usually called "The Nairne Papers," of which more hereafter.

These papers, the fragmentary extracts said to have been made from James's Memoirs, and finally Dicconson's *Life* of James, edited by Clarke, are, virtually, the sole sources of knowledge of all the alleged transactions and communications between the Ministers, soldiers, and sailors of William III and Saint-Germains, and they form the only foundation upon which this part of the history of those times has been built by Macaulay and other famous writers. There is no doubt that these three sources are mainly one. The *Life* claims to be based on the Memoirs. The episodes and transactions recorded in the Nairne Papers, whether great or trivial, are those which figure with disproportionate prominence in the *Life*. Evidently Dicconson had the Nairne Papers before him at the time when he was working up the King's memoirs into the *Life*.

When the historian Hume went to Paris as Secretary to the British Embassy he, though a Protestant, was allowed, on account of his renown, access to the papers in the Scots College, which were perhaps by then no longer so jealously kept secret. In the 1770 edition of his *History* he added in a note that

From the humanity and candour of the Principal of the Scots College in Paris he was admitted to peruse James II's Memoirs, kept there. They amount to several volumes, of small folio, all writ with that Prince's own hand and comprehending the remarkable incidents of his life, from his early youth till near the time of his death.

This is generally accepted as indisputable evidence that the manuscripts which Hume perused were the Memoirs and not the *Life*. But he left behind no transcripts. He surveyed but he kept no record.

We may dismiss briefly, as irrelevant or redundant for our purposes, the labours of James Macpherson. This gentleman, a Tory Member of Parliament and a paid supporter of King George III, having purchased from Mr Jernegan access to Mr Carte's collection of manuscripts, and having read and made extracts of his own from the *Life* in the Scots College, published in 1775 his so-called *Original State Papers*. Macpherson has been proved to have garbled his extracts and to have shown prejudice against the leaders of 1688. His conduct in respect of the Ossian poems, another of his literary exploitations, shows him capable of deliberate, elaborate, and well-executed forgery. Certainly his description of the Nairne Papers as "original" is misleading, and his repeated references to the *Life* as having been "*written in the king's own hand*" are untrue.

The great Mr Fox, while engaged upon a history of James II, was keenly interested in this controversy and one of the first to probe it. When he visited Paris in 1802, during the fleeting peace of Amiens, he sought out personally the heads of the Scots College. He was soon convinced of one at least of the many lies of which Macpherson stands convicted.

“With respect to Carte’s extract,” he wrote,

I have no doubt but it is faithfully copied; but on this extract it is necessary to make an observation, which applies to all the rest, both of Carte’s and Macpherson’s, and which leads to the detection of an imposture of the latter, as impudent as Ossian itself.

The extracts are evidently made, not from a journal, but from a narrative; I have now ascertained beyond all doubt, that there were in the Scotch College two distinct manuscripts, one in James’s own hand consisting of papers of different sizes bound up together, and the other a sort of historical narrative, compiled from the former. The narrative was said to have been revised and corrected, as to style by Dryden the poet (meaning probably Charles Dryden the great poet’s son) and it was not known in the College, whether it was drawn up in James’s life, or by the direction of his son, the Pretender. I doubt whether Carte ever saw the original journal; but I learn, from undoubted authority that Macpherson never did; and yet to read his Preface, page 6 and 7 (which pray advert to,) one would have supposed, not only that he had inspected it accurately, but that all *his* extracts at least, if not Carte’s also, were taken from it. Macpherson’s impudence in attempting such an imposture, at a time when almost any man could have detected him, would have been in another man, incredible, if the internal evidence of the extracts themselves against him were not corroborated by the testimony of the principal persons of the College.^[40]

Macpherson’s credit stands so low that several authorities have suggested that he tampered with the Nairne Papers while they were in his temporary possession. But we have several indications that the bulk of them had been seen by other persons before they came into his hands or at least before their publication in 1775.^[41]

We may, therefore, base ourselves on Carte’s collection of the Nairne Papers and on Dicconson’s compilation of James’s Memoirs and allow

Macpherson to pass without further comment from the account.

We have assembled this mass of detail and disputation only for the purpose of sweeping it once for all out of the historical argument. A search of the Stuart papers at Windsor, rendered possible by the gracious permission of his present Majesty, has revealed a letter never before published or noticed by any of the historians of the last two centuries. This letter is written by Mr Thomas Inesse (or Inese), brother to Louis Inesse, and his successor as Principal of the Scots College, in 1740 to the same James Edgar, secretary to the Old Pretender, whose consequential letter of January 10, 1741, we have already quoted. It is of such far-reaching importance that it must be printed textually:

PARIS
17 Octob. 1740

HON^D SIR,

In my last of the 11th Current I touched only by the by what concerns M. Carte's copying his late Matys Original Memoires, delaying to give you a more full account to be layd before the King, till M. Carte should have finisht his Copy, which taking more time than I thought it would, I shall put off no longer.

What I had chiefly to say is that judging by the singular privilege of H. Ms allowing M. Carte the use of the Originals, that H. Ms Intention was that his Copy of these Memoires should be in all its perfection. Now the Orig. Memoires having been at first all written upon papers of different Seizes such as his late Maty had about him or at hand during his Campagnes or in the different parts he happened to be; were in no kind of order till by his late Maties directions, my Brother arranged them and caused bind them up in three vols with references to mark the suite [sequence]. Besides this, they are in some places by length of time and bad ink become almost illegible So that M. Carte was sometimes not a little puzzled to make them out: To remedy this I thought propper to communicate to him a fair Copy we have of these Memoires *ending, as the Orgls do, at the Restoration*^[42] in 3 vols in 4^o, upon the first Volume of which is the following Notte in my Brothers hand. . . . [Transcribed in 3 volumes in 4^o from the Kings Original Memoires by M. Dryden the famous Poet, in the year 1686, and afterwards revised by his Majesty, and in Severall places corrected in his own hand.]

There are besides some other Markes upon this Copy of Mr Dryden by which it would appear that A.D. 1686 when it was made it was making ready for the Press and probably it had been published, if the unhappy Revolution had not soon after fallen out.

This Copy is indeed very valuable it itself being made under his late Majesty's eye, and no doubt all the differences in it from the Original have been made by H. Ms. directions or by himself. Besides severall words or expressions written in H. Ms. own hand, the chief differences between this Copy and the Original consist in this that whereas in the Origl Memoires H M speaks always of himself in the third person e.g. The D. of York was born the 14 Octob. 1633 in this Copy of M. Dryden he is made always to speak in the first persone e.g. I was born 14 Octob. &c and so all over where there is mention of the Battles, Sieges, Marches where he was.

I leave to M. Carte himself to give a particular account of the Copies or Abstracts he is making of these Memoires of the late King and of the use to which he designs them; *our orders being only to communicate to him precisely what his order bears and no more.*^[43] And therefore tho we have here besides the Original papers and Letters of the late King Since Restoration, as they are Sett down in the Severall Inventories Sent to his Majesty by my Brother and by me, none of these have been communicated to M. Carte nor to any other, nor shall they be without an express order in Write from His Maty.

With the Same Caution and Secrecy we keep the late Queen Mother's life written by Fr. Gaill d. *and of the full life at large of the late B. King written by M. Dicconson upon his late Matys Memoires, Letters and Papers both before and Since the Restoration*^[42] all which were by Special orders in write of his present Majesty, as well as two Boxes with H Ms papers of which M. Dicconson hath the Kyes ever Since the late Queen Mother's death in whose closet these papers were found and putt up into the two boxes by the late E. of Middleton, M. Dicconson and other Commissaries appointed by H.M. at the time.

I take the liberty to sett down this detail in order to refresh H. Ms memory to find more readily when any thing is required. I beg you will assure H.M. of my most dutifull & most profound respects and believe me ever Hod Sir Your most humble and most obedt Servitor

Here we have the fact established upon unimpeachable and responsible authority that King James's Memoirs ended at the Restoration in 1660. All the rest of the *Life* was compiled by Mr Dicconson some years after King James's death. All controversies about whether Carte, Macpherson, Dalrymple, or Hume saw the Memoirs or the *Life* are wholly irrelevant to the historical drama with which we are concerned.

James's personal testimony "writ of his own hand" ended more than thirty years before the events affecting the conduct of Marlborough and other Revolution leaders. Instead of dealing with the evidence of the exiled King, who had lived in the centre of the affairs he described, we have only the assertions of Mr Dicconson, who had no personal knowledge of what took place, and compiled his history fifteen to twenty years after the crucial period had passed. Macaulay bases tens of pages of his history upon James's *Life*. He transcribes and translates into his own inimitable story-telling the charges made therein against Marlborough and others. Even so friendly a biographer as Wolseley tamely accepts the *Life* as if it were King James's personal handiwork. In reality friend and foe alike are resting, not on King James's Memoirs written at the time, but only upon the work of Mr Dicconson. Dicconson and the forlorn group of Jacobites and Jesuits among whom he lived had every motive known to the human heart to hate and traduce the English revolutionary leaders; and of all those leaders none more than Marlborough, who at the time when Dicconson was writing was at the height of his career. Yet everything that Dicconson chose to write has been accepted as if it were the contemporary testimony of King James and as if it were true. On these unsure foundations some of the greatest and most erudite scholars and writers of our language have erected that vast structure of calumny and distortion which has hitherto served as history.

Dicconson had in his possession some time after the year 1704 both the holograph Memoirs of James II which went no further than 1660 and the documents forming the Nairne Papers, and perhaps other documents of which we know nothing. He certainly had the power to record or suppress or alter as he thought fit the whole of the material; or to put upon it whatever construction he chose, or to invent or add anything he chose. James was dead; his two Secretaries of State, Melfort and Middleton, were dead; Nairne was dead; but the Jacobite clerk remained with a jumble of papers and the priceless but irrelevant holograph of the Memoirs of the King, now lost for ever.

- [35] Ranke, *History of England*, vi, 42.
- [36] See, *inter alia*, Stuart Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, and the introductions to Campana de Cavelli, *Les derniers Stuarts*, and C. J. Fox, *James II*.
- [37] *Life of James II*, p. 195.
- [38] This in itself seems conclusive upon the question of authorship; but further proof is available.
- [39] Ranke considered that they were made from the Memoirs. “No one has ever,” he wrote in 1875, “doubted their authenticity”; and he proceeded to use them as a means of criticizing the value of Clarke’s *Life*. He detected several notable differences between the Memoirs and the *Life*, and argued that in all cases the Memoirs, so far as they were represented by Carte’s extracts—his only guide—were the more trustworthy. On the other hand, in a commentary on Clarke’s *Life* in the *Edinburgh Review* of June 1816, a writer, anonymous but certainly of much learning, claimed to prove that Clarke had only seen the *Life*, and that therefore the extracts had no independent value. He, like Ranke, closely compared passages of Carte’s extracts from the Memoirs with Clarke’s *Life* based on the Memoirs, coming to the opposite conclusion that Carte had made his extracts only from the *Life*. Finally he relied upon the Edgar letter, quoted above; which in itself appears almost decisive.
- [40] Charles James Fox to Laing, apud *James II*, introduction.

[41] For instance, in 1769 the Curator of the Bodleian Library nominated Thomas Monkhouse to inspect the “Carte Papers” in Jernegan’s possession. Monkhouse’s report and extract are preserved in the University archives, and prove that he examined volumes containing the Nairne manuscript in 1770.

The Earl of Hardwicke paid Jernegan £200 for the perusal of them for the purpose of his annotations on Burnet’s *History of My Own Time*. Sir John Dalrymple, a Jacobite, in his preface to the second edition of his *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland*, published in 1771, wrote:

“Since the first edition of the Memoirs was published, I have, fortunately, fallen upon a collection of papers in London which vouch almost all the new facts that are to be found in them. The papers I mean are those of the late Mr Carte, now in the possession of Mr Jernegan, who married his widow. They consist of very full notes, extracted from the ‘Memoirs of James II’ now in the Scotch Collection at Paris, written by that Prince’s own hand, and of many original State papers and copies of others of the Court of St. Germain’s.”

Although, as Fox surmised and as we shall prove, Dalrymple was misled in thinking that Macpherson’s extracts were from the holograph autobiography, instead of being from Dicconson’s version of it, it is obvious that he had seen the Nairne Papers of the Carte collection, substantially in the form in which they were subsequently published by Macpherson.

[42] Author’s italics.

[43] Author’s italics.

[44] Stuart Papers at Windsor, MSS.

CHAPTER IV

THE JACOBITE ILLUSION

We now approach the most unhappy and questionable period in Marlborough's life. The peccadilloes of youth, the work he had to do as confidential servant of the Duke of York, his treasonable letter to the Prince of Orange, his desertion of James at Salisbury, are all capable of either excuse or vindication. Indeed, his conduct towards James was justified not only by his religious and political convictions, but even more by the broad and long interest of England. But it entailed consequences.

“Lord Churchill,” says Hume in a severe passage,

had been raised from the rank of a page, had been invested with the High Command in the army, had been created a peer, and had owed his whole fortune to the King's favour; yet even he could resolve during the present extremity to desert his unhappy Majesty, who had ever reposed entire confidence in him. This conduct was a signal sacrifice to public virtue of every duty in private life; and required ever after the most upright, disinterested and public-spirited behaviour to render it justifiable.^[45]

Yet now we must record that opposition to King William, those intrigues with King James, which seem to stultify his former action, to rob it of its basis of conscientious scruple, and to arm his innumerable assailants with every weapon that indignant rectitude or implacable malice could desire. Moreover, the picture is not one to be painted in bold blacks and whites. We gaze upon a scene of greys shading indefinably, mysteriously, in and out of one another. A mere recital of facts and outlines would give no true description without a comprehension of the atmosphere. We have to analyse half-tones and discern the subtle planes upon which the subject depends for its interpretation. Finally we have, to some extent, to judge the work by standards different from those which now prevail. Nor shall we try to prove too much. Our task is to repel erroneous or exaggerated criticism, to separate censure from cant, to strip prejudice of its malignancy, and to unmask imposture. And to do this with the recognition that when all is said and done, no complete justification will be found.

In judging the character of Marlborough the question arises whether his actions were dictated by undue self-interest. Reasonable care for a man's own interest is neither a public nor a private vice. It is affectation to pretend

that statesmen and soldiers who have gained fame in history have been indifferent to their own advancement, incapable of resenting injuries, or guided in their public action only by altruism. It is when self-interest assumes a slavish or ferocious form, or when it outweighs all other interests in a man's soul, that the censures of history are rightly applied. That Marlborough, like most Englishmen, together with all the Revolution statesmen, should become estranged from the new Government; that he should quarrel personally with King William; that he should seek to safeguard himself in the increasingly probable event of a Jacobite restoration, are not in themselves, and under the conditions of the period, wrongful or odious behaviour. The test is whether he was false in intention or in fact to the cause of Protestantism and constitutional freedom, and above all whether the safety of England or the lives of her soldiers and sailors were jeopardized by his actions; and it is to these aspects that the attention of the reader will be directed.

In those days confidential communications between the chief actors on opposite sides across the frontiers of hostile states and the lines of warring armies were frequent. A polished veneer of courtesy and ceremony prevailed among the nobility, even in the field. Elaborate codes, apparently observed with effective good faith, regulated the exchange of prisoners and of hostages. Passes were issued to privileged individuals to traverse enemy territory. Trumpets came and went frequently between the armies on a wide variety of missions. Many of the combatants had been allies in former wars. Many of the opposing leaders were related by blood or marriage. All the royal houses were closely interwoven, and family ties subsisted to some extent in spite of the shifting political antagonisms. The Jacobites in England were numerous and influential. They were a definite, powerful party, in the bosom of which ceaseless conspiracies to bring back the rightful sovereign waxed and waned. Jacobite opinion, as such, was not proscribed by the Government. The cause could be openly avowed. There was a regular political party with its club and adherents, ranging from law-abiding gentlefolk at the summit through every grade of disaffection to fanatical physical-force men and downright murderers at the bottom. The Jacobite circles were linked to the ordinary life of every class of the nation by innumerable ties, and nowhere was there a gulf unbridged. It was all a slippery slope.

King James and his family dwelt, refugees, by the throne of Louis XIV. They and their shadow Court, with its handful of Irish troops and Guards, its functionaries and its Ministers, were all dependent for their daily bread upon the bounty or policy of their protector. The vanity of Louis was gratified by

the presence in his orbit of a suppliant monarch. He indulged to the full the easy chivalry of affluent pity. Sometimes, indeed, his sentiments for a brother monarch, in whose person not only the Catholic faith but even the Divine Right of Kings had been assaulted, carried him beyond purely French interests. But, in the main, a cool statecraft ruled. The exiled family at Saint-Germains depended for their treatment upon their usefulness in the Continental schemes of France. That usefulness for this purpose was measured by the strength and reality of their English connexions. They had, thus, the strongest inducements—and, indeed, compulsions—to magnify the importance and the intimacy of their British ties and the general vitality of the Jacobite cause. Their supreme object was to obtain from Louis a French fleet to carry them to England, and a French army to re-establish King James upon his throne. They therefore, in their unhappy plight, continually represented themselves to the French Government as being in the most confidential relations with the leading men in England, especially with the members of King William's Council. They developed every possible contact with English Jacobites and friends, real or pretended, across the Channel. They put their own gloss upon whatever news they could get, and served the result up—more often, perhaps, than was tactful—to the French Ministers. Always they laboured to paint a picture of an England longing for their return and ready to rise the moment a chance presented itself. Let the French supply the army and the ships, and they would make the attempt. Once they landed, all would be well. But the French Ministers were sceptical; they had many independent sources of information, and they had a different point of view.

This process continued for a long period. To and fro across the Channel sped the busy couriers and spies of the Jacobite Party, and within a year of William's landing some sort of contact was re-established between the Revolution leaders—the former courtiers and servants of King James—and the new centre at Saint-Germains. The exiled officials hashed up the reports of their secret agents and the perpetual series of messages, rumours, and whispers, which reached them from across the Channel. Anything that tended to increase the belief of Louis in the reality and ardour of their party in England and Scotland was a godsend. The Earl of Melfort, brother of the Perth whose atrocities in Scotland have left him an evil fame, sat at the receipt of custom. His office was a factory of rosy reports, sustained by titbits of information, all served up to convince King Louis and comfort King James.

As early as 1689 Marlborough was reported to James as being dissatisfied with the new régime and anxious to make his peace with the old.

But nothing definite was asserted until the beginning of 1691, about which Dicconson's *Life of James* sets forth at length a series of reports by three Jacobite agents, Mr Bulkeley, Colonel Sackville, and Mr Floyd, or Lloyd, of conversations which they declared they had had with Admiral Russell, Godolphin, Halifax, and Churchill.^[46] That all these servants of King William allowed or invited Jacobite agents to visit them, and that conversations took place, may well be true. But Dicconson's version of what passed is at once malicious and absurd.^[47] Upon this basis, the authenticity of which we have already examined, Macaulay tells a fine tale.

After describing the successive seductions of Russell and Godolphin he comes to Marlborough.

But all the agents of the banished Court stood aloof from the deserter of Salisbury. That shameful night seemed to have for ever separated the false friend from the Prince whom he had ruined. James had, even in the last extremity, when his army was in full retreat, when his whole kingdom had risen against him, declared that he would never pardon Churchill, never, never. By all the Jacobites the name of Churchill was held in peculiar abhorrence; and, in the prose and verse which came forth daily from their secret presses, a precedence in infamy, among all the many traitors of the age, was assigned to him.

But the guilty villain was not so easily to be excluded from future favours.

He therefore sent to beg an interview with Colonel Edward Sackville.

Sackville was astonished and not much pleased by the message. . . . It was not without reluctance that the stanch royalist crossed the hated threshold of the deserter. He was repaid for his effort by the edifying spectacle of such an agony of repentance as he had never before seen. "Will you," said Marlborough, "be my intercessor with the King? Will you tell him what I suffer? My crimes now appear to me in their true light; and I shrink with horror from the contemplation. The thought of them is with me day and night. I sit down to table: but I cannot eat. I throw myself on my bed: but I cannot sleep."

Apparently, however, up till January 1690 he had still been able to drink; for the French archives record on similar authority that he, Shrewsbury,

Godolphin, and two or three others had been present at a drinking-party with King William at which they drank the health of the monarchy, the Anglican Church, the reduction of Ireland, and the invasion of France. “A la fin ils se soulèrent de telle manière qu’ils n’y en eut pas un qui ne perdît toute connoissance.”^[48] (“In the end they got so drunk that there was not one that did not lose all consciousness.”)

Macaulay makes Marlborough continue, “I am ready to sacrifice everything, to brave everything, to bring utter ruin on my fortunes, if only I may be free from the misery of a wounded spirit.”

Hitherto Macaulay is more highly coloured than Dicconson. But Dicconson has qualities of his own. We may note the ecclesiastical flavour.

Churchill was in appearance the greatest penitent imaginable. He begged of him [Sackville] to go to the King and acquaint him with his sincere repentance and to intercede for mercy, that he was ready to redeem his apostasy with the hazard of his utter ruine, his crimes appeareing so horrid to him that he could neither sleep, nor eat but in continual anguish, and a great deal to that purpose.

It is an unconscious contest in imaginative embroidery. “Colonel Sackville,” says Dicconson,

. . . resolved at the same time to search him [Marlborough] to the Quick and try whether by informeing them readily of what he knew, they might depend upon his sincerity as to what he pretended [promised]. . . My Lord . . . without the least hezitation gave them both an account of all the forces, preparations and designes both in England, Scotland and Ireland, whither the Prince of Orange intended to go himself, if the French pressed not too hard upon the Confederates in Flanders, and that he hoped to reduce Ireland so soon as to be able to bring part of that Army into the Low Countrys that very Campaign; he gave likewise an account of the Fleet and in fine of whatever was intended either by Sea or land, *which concurring with the informations they had from other hands*^[49] was a great argument of his sincerity; . . . he desired instructions which way he might be serviceable, without being admitted into the King’s secrets, owning that the vilanies he had committed, did but too justly debar him from expecting any such confidence; . . . he proffer’d to bring over the English troops that were in Flanders if the King required it, but rather proposed he should act in consert with many more who were intent upon the

same thing, that is, to endeavour next Sessions to get all the foreigners sent out of the Kingdom which would bring home more English troops and those he hoped he could influence to better purpose; . . . he advised him [James] when he came, not to bring too numerous an Army, a French power, he sayd, was terrifying to the people; nevertheless a competent force was necessary; . . . it would neither be fair in him to propose, nor prudent in His Majesty to trust, to those alone who had used him so treacherously already, . . . and upon the whole, he appeared the most Sollicitous imaginable for the King's intrest, and the most penitant man upon earth for his own fault, say'd a thousand things to express the horror he *had of his vilanies to ye best of Kings, and yt it would be impossible for him to be at rest*^[50] till he had in some measure made an attonement, by endeavouring (tho with the utmost peril of his life) to restore his injured Prince and beloved Master. “. . . He would give up his life with pleasure if he could thereby recall the fault he had committed . . . that he was so entirely returned to his duty, and love to His Majesty's person that he would be ready with joy upon the least command to abandon Wife, Children and country to regain and preserve his esteem. . . .”

Even Macaulay loses faith in these absurdities; for, after having exploited them as offensively as possible, he snaps at the hands of Dicconson, from which he has hitherto fed with such relish. With a parting insult, he tells us:

The truth was that when Marlborough told the Jacobites that his sense of guilt prevented him from swallowing his food by day and taking his rest at night he was laughing at them. The loss of half a guinea would have done more to spoil his appetite and to disturb his slumbers than all the terrors of an evil conscience.

No one knows, of course, what Marlborough said or did not say. Dicconson—the sole authority—can only tell us what he thought fit to record of the Jacobite agents' reports of fifteen years before. All this is one-sided assertion. Marlborough never volunteered explanations or justification. He appeared unconscious that there was anything to explain.

To what extent he deceived the Jacobite agents with the fair words and pious assurances; to what extent they boasted the value of the fish they thought they had caught; to what extent Melfort and Nairne exaggerated the secret service information, the collection of which was their main duty, are

mysteries; but in this case, as also with Godolphin, Russell, Shrewsbury, and others, we certainly have at one end of the chain an important personage anxious not to be too much hated or too much overlooked at Saint-Germains, and at the other an unhappy exile in no position to be vindictive or particular in receiving friendly overtures.

Marlborough's communications with the Jacobite Court, or with his sister's son, the Duke of Berwick, or with James's son, the Old Pretender, were no passing intrigue. They were a system. They were a lifelong policy—just so much and no more—pursued continually for a quarter of a century. Under King William there was no written correspondence. There are accounts of messages and conversations, of promises and assurances without number, many of which may be fabrications, but others which could not have been wholly invented and bear in part the stamp of truth.

In the first phase Marlborough's object, like that of the other Revolution leaders, was to obtain a formal pardon from the Exile, in the unpleasant but by no means improbable event of his restoration. This was a phase in the communications of which William was generally aware, which even had his acquiescence. The following extract from Ailesbury's *Memoirs* is significant.

It is very certain that the King [William] gave leave to the Earl of Marlborough, my lord Godolphin, the Duke of Shrewsbury and Admiral Russell to correspond with my lord Middleton at St Germain. They infused into the King the great advantage that might arise to him by it, and on my conscience I believe it. The plausible pretext was that my lord Middleton should be deluded, that he should know nothing of what passed in England of high secret moment, but that they four would wire-draw all out of my Lord Middleton; and no doubt our famous Minister [Sunderland] was at the head of this—but was never named. . . . The four lords set a value on themselves as by that means all secrets at St Germain would come to their knowledge, so all lord Middleton set a value on himself that by this correspondence he should know what was doing at London, and that unfortunate Prince, King James, gave into it, notwithstanding all former representations made to him in order to open his eyes.^[51]

This probably goes beyond the truth; but at the least William viewed all these intrigues with Saint-Germains with a tolerant eye. "With respect to the riots in Northamptonshire," he wrote on July 15, 1694,

I recollect that not long ago I was informed that Lord Monmouth^[52] had made his peace at St Germain's. Not knowing what to believe, you must try to discover, if possible, whether he, who is lord lieutenant of the county, has fomented or interfered in those riots; and you will please to give me your opinion, whether that employment should not be given to another person.

Here we see the King, the person most affected and best informed, drawing a clear distinction between "making peace with St Germain's" and overt unlawful action. Shrewsbury in reply wrote (July 17, 1694):

I can give no answer to what your majesty is pleased to inquire concerning my lord Monmouth's making his peace at St Germain's. It is natural for a man that is very ill on one side, to desire not to be so on the other; but I dare say, let him have made what advances are possible of that kind, if he could find his account under your majesty's government, it is what he would prefer much before any such alteration; and at this time he appears in so much a better temper to act anything for your majesty's service than you can believe, that I should not think it at all advisable to turn him out of his lieutenantancy; and for his having any thing to do in that disturbance at Northampton, I dare engage he knew no more than an accidental tumult of the rabble, occasioned by their seeing corn sold in quantities out of the town, and is now quiet, without any other interposition, but that of the magistrates alone.^[53]

This interchange of letters probably gives us a truer guide to the actual significance of intrigues with Saint-Germain's than any of the diatribes of the historians. The mere "making peace with St Germain's," even by one of his Lord-Lieutenants, was not regarded either by the King or the high circles around him upon the footing of treason; and since almost every prominent leader had safeguarded himself in this way it did not seem to them to be a dishonourable action. It is not our purpose to defend such conduct, but only to reduce it to its proper place in the perilous, tragical politics of those days.

Under Anne we enter a region of purely military camouflage, as in 1702, when Marlborough, actively frustrating the French in the field and seeking eagerly to fight a decisive battle, received Jacobite envoys in his camp, sending them away with who shall say what cryptic or encouraging words; or as in 1708, when he is besieging Lille in circumstances of extraordinary military difficulty, and keeps up at the same time a lengthy and active

correspondence with the Duke of Berwick, possibly with the knowledge of the Pensionary Heinsius, about peace negotiations. We shall return to this later.

But the most remarkable illustration of this second phase is found among the Nairne Papers in the Bodleian. It is a letter written, evidently to Middleton, from London by the Jacobite agent Hooke in April 1704. Marlborough was about to set out for Holland, and the secret of his intended march to the Danube lay locked in his mind. He allowed Hooke to come to see him, and a most agreeable conversation ensued.

Some days before leaving for Holland, Lord Churchill had me sought out, and made me so many promises, and gave me such proof of the rightness of his intention to wish to pay the debt which he had recognized so long was due to your family, that I could have no doubt of his sincerity. He seemed astonished that the Duke of Berwick had been sent to Spain and engaged so far afield, and he asked me how you could have consented to such a thing. I told him that you had already written to me on the subject and that the Duke's employment in so considerable a post would be certainly highly advantageous for our common interests. I perceived, however, that he thought that the Duke would have been more useful in the theatre where he was last year. He directed me besides in his absence to go and see Lord Godolphin and let him know anything which I should receive of importance to you and to your family.

Mr. Floyd is most zealous in your family interest. He also a little while ago saw Lord Churchill and has begged me to inform you that this nobleman has given him every promise and assurance which he could have hoped for of his intention to pay his debt. Thus I am daily more convinced of the probability that our affairs will turn out well; and the misunderstandings which exist here between the Party leaders will contribute not a little in my opinion to justify good hopes.^[54]

The reader should notice that in this interview it is Hooke who, according to his own naïve account, gives or confirms the valuable information that Berwick is to command in Spain, while Marlborough tells him nothing in return. But Hooke was quite content to be able to report to Saint-Germain that he had been kindly received by the great man, and had been told to visit Godolphin in his absence from time to time, and bring him any news of interest from Saint-Germain.

It is characteristic of Macpherson that, while he printed all the other Nairne Papers relating to Marlborough, he omitted this one. Yet this paper more than any other reveals what we believe to have been the only method of communication with Saint-Germains practised by Marlborough and the English Ministers: namely, interviews subsequently written out from memory by the Jacobite agents. This would explain the absence of any holograph letters in King James's archives. It explains much else besides.

There is, lastly, in the long story of Marlborough's relations with Saint-Germains a phase, possibly the least insincere of all, when he endeavoured to establish some kind of amicable relationship with the Old Pretender, "James III." And there are always great civilities and protestations of devotion to the exiled Queen. All baffling; all mystifying; truth and falsehood, pity and deception, intermingled; dual loyalties deliberately exploited. Was it not important for Saint-Germains to be able to tell Louis XIV that they were in close, secret, constant relationship with the Commander-in-Chief of the enemy's army? They would be grateful for that. It was a real service. It cost nothing. It did not hamper business. It all tended to create uncertainty. The French Government, keenly interested in Berwick's peace negotiations, might have their mind diverted from the defence of Lille and its citadel. This was all part of Marlborough's war-making; and also part of his system. And so, a month or perhaps a week later—a swift march, a sudden assault, thrusting out of a cloud of honeyed words and equivocation, changed fortunes in the field. Webs of intrigue, crossings, double-crossings, stratagems, contrivances, deceit; with smiles, compliments, nods, bows, and whispers—then *crash!* sudden reversion to a violent and decisive military event. The cannon intervene.

There is no disputing the validity of the Jacobite complaint, that they never got anything out of Marlborough except promises which were not made good, and information which arrived only when it was stale. Yet there was no moment at which they could say, "He is only fooling us. He is only feeding us with trifles and smooth words." For there never was a moment when they could not nurse the hope that, if the Exile returned, the Captain-General would put him on the throne; or when they could dismiss the fear that in the teeth of his resistance all hope of return was ended. In the upshot they were disappointed. As things turned out, they got less than nothing at all. They were mocked with false hopes; placated with counterfeit coin; smothered with empty salutations. They were as much confused, perplexed, and kept continually uncertain as Tallard on the eve of Blenheim, or Villeroy on the morning of Ramillies, or as Villars before his lines were forced. A vast system of genuine shams, a prolonged relationship of deceits that were effective because they never excluded the possibility of being real: the

whole of this prevailing over twenty-five years and expressed in terms of perfervid loyalty, with promises made, as they declare, of the highest service and of the darkest treachery. But nothing to show for it! Not a corporal's guard turned over! Not a picket conceded in the field; not a scrap of information that they did not know, or that was not public property already; but always hope and always delay, always disappointment—and then more hope. Marlborough betrayed nothing, but to the end no Jacobite agent, courtier, or Minister could ever feel sure he would not some day betray *everything* into their hands. Nor can we at this stage pursue the hypothesis of what he would have done if this or that had happened. If, for instance, upon the demise of Anne, James III had landed after declaring himself Protestant and being acclaimed by England, as William III had been after Torbay, would Marlborough have felt bound to die for the house of Hanover? The Jacobites could not tell at the time, and we certainly cannot to-day.

We must confine ourselves to what actually happened. Every account, every record, summed up, shows that the Jacobite Court were for a quarter of a century flattered, duped, baffled, and in the event ruined by an inscrutable and profound personality. They certainly had every reason to blacken the memory of the calm, deep, patient man who threaded his way almost unerringly through the labyrinth of dynastic, political, and military intrigues in five reigns, and who emerged at every decisive moment the successful champion of British interests, of Protestant interests, and of his own interests.

Let us, however, see what the final conclusions of the Court of Saint-Germains were. Here are some extracts from Dicconson.

It is hard, considering what had happened, to make a right judgment of their [King William's Ministers and Marlborough] intentions and whether they had any other aim in what they did than to secure themselves against a just resentment of an offended prince should he fortune to return by other means. . . .

Lord Dartmouth's proffer of service which he sent by Mr Lloyd, though it was probably more sincere, proved of as little use as the rest. . . .

For the Prince of Orange looking never the worse upon Lord Godolphin and Admiral Russell (an argument he had been no stranger to their practices) but it was a check on others who perhaps meant *better*; of which number whether my Lord Churchill was to be counted on or no is still a mystery and the vail is like to remain upon it.

Again:

Nevertheless the King found no effects of these mighty promises, for his Majesty insisting upon his [Churchill's] offer of bringing over the English troops in Flanders, as the greatest service he could doe him, he excused himself under pretence there was some mistake in the message, that it would ruin all to make the troops come over by parcells, that his business was to gain an absolute power over them, then to doe all the business at once. . . .

Again:

My Lord Churchil himself in his letter the 13 of december^[55] . . . tells the King, that he must not depend upon any other advantage by his Declaration, than to dispose the people to receive him when he came with a sutable force, and therefore begs of his Majesty not to venter with less than Five and Twenty thousand men, besides arms &c. for Seven thousand more. These were the putts off the King met with from these pretended friends, who never did him any essential good or themselves any harme, for if they were out of imployment, it passed for aversion to the government, and they made a merit of it; and if they found means of being readmitted, then it was represented as a mighty advantage to the King, their being in a better capacity of serveing him. . . .

Again:

Accordingly the next letter^[56] which My Lord Churchil writ, he tells the King that My Lord [Shrewsbury] was so press'd to accept of his former imployment of Secretary of State, that he fear'd he could not resist, but that tho' he alter'd his condition he assured him he would never alter his inclinations; whereas in reality one of my Lord [Shrewsbury]'s principal advisers to this, was My Lord Churchil himself, that he might do him the like good turn, and procure his readmission into favour too. . . .

We are also told how Admiral Russell and other naval officers tricked the King. If the British fleet missed the French fleet, they declared it was their loyalty to James. If they met it and beat it, they stood well with William. This picture is in the main true.

And again of Churchill:

. . . however he continued his correspondence with the King, if not by letters at least by messages as long as his Majesty lived, but the Prince of Orange dying soon after, a new scene was open'd to him, in which he amazed the world with his conduct, and fortune; however, he still pretended a good will to make some reparation to the Son, for the former infidelities to the Father.^[57]

We do not wish to press our advantage too far. We seek truth, not triumph. We affirm independently that the Revolution leaders all had the relations we have described and shall describe with the Court of Saint-Germains, and none so prolonged as those of Marlborough. But at this stage we challenge, as based on no evidence worth the name, all the details and descriptions of conversations reported through several hands, all abject or foolish expressions, and all shameful proposals or betrayals in so far as they rest upon Dicconson's so-called *Life* or the Memoirs of James II, "writ of his own hand."

The long succession of historians who follow each other like sheep through the gates of error are all agreed about Marlborough's profound sagacity and that self-interest was his motive power. Let us, then, try the case by these standards. What conceivable interest could he have had in bringing back James? At the best a contemptuous pardon and a justly ineradicable distrust. Of all the notables of England he had the least to hope and the most to fear from such a restoration. How eagerly would triumphant Jacobites, proud Tories, and infuriated Whigs have combined in such an event to drive into obscurity the double-dyed arch-traitor who had presumed to be the maker and un-maker of kings! What succour from his old master could he look for against such a storm? Exile, disgrace, or at best some pittance, some sinecure, was the most that magnanimity or indifference could bestow; and James was not the most magnanimous or forgiving of men. What chance had Marlborough but the Princess Anne? There, in the narrow circle of the Cockpit, where long friendship and companionship reigned, where the bonds of union were only forged more tensely by external persecution or danger, lay the only hope. And that a great one! Why should he bring back James and his lusty son, in his own right or under a regency—under a jealous Council of State as a Catholic, or still more as a Protestant—and exclude for ever Anne from the succession? Why should he "abandon wife, children and country" for that? Never for one moment could he have entertained such inanities. We can hear him make his customary comment, "Silly! Silly!" The more sagacious, the more self-seeking he, the less harbourage such devastating contingencies could have found. From the closing years of Charles II, through the unceasing convulsions and

confusions of this time, John and Sarah held on to Anne and staked their public existence upon her fortunes and her favour.

- [45] *History of England*, ii, 485.
- [46] In the Jacobite correspondence English notables are always referred to only by the titles which they bore under King James, as William's creations were not recognized.
- [47] It may be read in Clarke's (Dicconson's) *Life of James II*, which Macaulay states (ii, 55) is "The chief authority for this part of my history, . . . particularly the highly important and interesting passage which begins at page 444 and ends at page 450 of the second volume."
- [48] *Correspondance politique, Angleterre*, t. 172, f. 13.
- [49] The italics are ours.
- [50] This passage in Dicconson is said to be underlined by the Old Pretender, though the value of his evidence must be discounted by the fact that he was at the time of these events but four years old.
- [51] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, ii, 391.
- [52] Afterwards Earl of Peterborough.
- [53] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 52-54.
- [54] Carte MSS., 209, f. 430 (translated from the French), a letter from London, written by Hooke and dated April 22, 1704, in the copy in the French archives. This, the original in the Nairne Papers, has no date.
- [55] Non-existent.
- [56] Non-existent.
- [57] Clarke, *Life of James II*, pp. 444 *sqq.*

CHAPTER V

THE FAMILY QUARREL

(1691-92)

At the end of October 1691 William landed at Margate from the wars, and all the way to London he was warmly welcomed by the people. They did not realize the failure of the Continental campaign, and the good news from Ireland roused their enthusiasm. Ginkel had defeated the Irish with an immense slaughter at Aughrim. Limerick had surrendered. The Irish hero Sarsfield had made terms which allowed him to carry eighteen thousand of the best Irish troops out of the country into the French service. It seemed that the Irish troubles were at an end; at least, all resistance was crushed. But the national rejoicing at the local victory was inspired by the hope of an early general peace. Of this there was no prospect. The most costly years of the first part of the world war still lay ahead.

The King brought with him in his coach Bentinck and Marlborough; apparently all were on cordial terms. At Shooter's Hill the coach overturned. Bentinck and Marlborough were hurt. Marlborough, indeed, seems to have been dazed, for he declared that his neck was broken. William, who was only shaken, reassured him that this could not be so, "since he could still speak." The party, somewhat battered, were able to make their entry into London amid cheering crowds.^[58]

Nevertheless the realities of the situation might well cause the King anxiety. The injustice done to English officers and the implied insult to the Army aroused strong feelings throughout English society. These vexations were shared by the English Ministers, through whom and with whom William was forced to govern, and especially by that central group to which he naturally inclined. They saw that the sovereign who had invited them to serve him secured himself against his new subjects by foreign troops and foreign commanders of English troops. They saw themselves threatened in their own position. Both Houses of Parliament, the rank and fashion of London, the officers and the troops themselves, all felt that their country was not being treated fairly or honourably by the Dutch Prince whose aid they had invoked. As long as the Irish war continued, or whenever a French invasion threatened, these natural sentiments were perforce repressed; but at all other times they broke forth with pent-up anger. Although Parliament steadily voted heavy supplies for war against France by sea and land, the use of British troops on the Continent became unpopular; and the pressure upon

the King to dismiss his Dutch guards and Dutch favourites was unceasing. Indeed, at the end of 1691 the position of William and his Dutch clique seemed superficially as precarious as had been that of James and his Catholic camarilla three years before.

Marlborough, already offended by what he regarded as ill-usage, convinced that it was William's policy to keep him in the shade, and more excusably vexed by the futile conduct of the campaign in Flanders, did not hesitate to show his hostility. To all this movement which flared up in Parliament and the higher circles of London that winter he lent an influence which was soon found to be potent. He criticized the King openly. He welcomed the tale-bearing which carried his caustic comments to the royal ear. He said at Lord Wharton's before a company that in the previous reign James had been so eager to fill the army with Irishmen that the only question asked was, "Do you speak English?" Now all that had happened was that the word "Dutchman" was changed for "Irishman." He spoke of Bentinck as "a wooden fellow." He remonstrated with William to his face upon his gifts of Crown property to Bentinck and Zulestein. "With great grief of heart many of his faithful servants," he said,

among whom he requested the honour to be included, saw the royal munificence confined to one or two lords and these foreigners. . . . As far as he was concerned he had no cause to complain; he was amply provided for in the post he held under his Majesty; but in duty bound he felt obliged to lay before him what he ought to know, because he could not otherwise be apprized of means to remedy the disasters that might be the result of such unpopular conduct.^[59]

Perhaps he did not express himself so elegantly; but this was the gist of it. He may, indeed, have said more. The King indignantly turned his back upon him.

William was accustomed, as the records show, to tolerate very plain speaking from the English notables. They wrote him long lectures on his political mistakes. The Whigs clamoured incessantly for all the offices because they had never abandoned their principles, and the Tories because they had abandoned them all and much regretted it. William's relations with Marlborough, though strained, were not broken by mere words. When the commands for the next year's campaign were being decided, he designed to take him to Flanders as Lieutenant-General attached to his own person. Marlborough demurred to this undefined position. He did not wish to be carried round Flanders as a mere adviser, offering counsel that was not

taken, and bearing responsibility for the failures that ensued. He craved leave to remain at home, unless he was required at least to command the British troops, as in the past year. But the King had offered them to Ginkel, and afterwards bestowed them, with lamentable results, upon Count Solms.

Meanwhile Marlborough began indirectly to stir the House of Commons for an address to the Crown on the subject of the Employment of Foreigners, and he proposed himself to move a similar motion in the House of Lords. Widespread support was forthcoming. It even appeared likely that the motion would be carried by majorities in both Houses. The King saw himself about to be requested to dismiss his Dutch followers and favourites from all English offices, and to send back to Holland the five thousand Dutch guards upon whom he relied as his ultimate security. This was unmistakably a hostile proceeding. It was perfectly lawful; it might be thought even healthy; and nowadays, when happily the sovereign reigns but does not govern, would be fought out as an ordinary matter of domestic controversy. But at the end of the seventeenth century all opposition wore the guise of faction, and was readily regarded by the Crown as disloyalty or even treason. Moreover, Marlborough's activities did not end with Parliament. He was the leading British general. "His courage, his abilities, his noble and winning manner, the splendid success which had attended him on every occasion on which he had been in command, had made him," says Macaulay, "in spite of his sordid vices, a favourite with his brethren in arms." Undoubtedly many officers of various ranks resorted to him and loudly expressed their resentment at the favour shown to the Dutch. The "sordid vices" showed themselves, we are told, in the fact that he never entertained them with meat or drink.^[60] His influence was exerted on their minds, and not, as was expected in those days, upon their stomachs. In spite of this characteristic omission, he had a great public and personal following in both Parliament and the Army at the beginning of 1692.

The general unrest among the high personnel of the Court and Government could not remain secret from the King. He certainly became aware that during 1691 most of those who surrounded him, to whom he owed much and without whom he could not govern England, were in some sort of communication with the rival he had ousted, and who sought in turn to dethrone him. But he had a far better comprehension of the forces at work than any of his posthumous literary champions. He knew that he was driving England very hard, and forcing upon its Parliamentary system and society treatment to which his own Dutch oligarchy would never have submitted. He could imagine the attitude of "Their High Mightinesses" if purely Dutch offices, Dutch estates, and Dutch commands had been lavished upon

Englishmen. He did not therefore resent as strongly as his later admirers have done the double-dealing by which he was encompassed. He accepted it as a necessary element in a situation of unexampled perplexity. He tolerated perforce the fact that all his principal English counsellors were reinsuring themselves against a break-up of his government or his death on the battlefield. He continued to employ all these men in great offices of State and confidence about his person. He calculated with shrewd wisdom that, though they might turn against him as they had turned against James, yet they would not compromise the two main issues which had made them all his reluctant bedfellows; and he saw almost insuperable difficulties in their being able to dissociate the cause of James from the causes of Popery and France.

He did not, therefore, unduly trouble himself when Godolphin told him of the presents and tokens of affection which he was sending to Mary of Modena. He listened coolly when his Ministers described to him questions put to them by Jacobite agents and the answers they had given. It is a well-known practice of counter-espionage to give not only false or stale information to an enemy agent, but within certain limits true information to gain his confidence, with the intent thereafter to mislead the more. Many of the spying go-betweens of war or politics, then as now, imparted secrets, besides searching for them. William knew, or at least suspected, that Shrewsbury was in touch with Saint-Germains through his notorious mother; yet, as we shall see, again and again he implored Shrewsbury to take or retain the highest offices. He knew that Russell had made his peace with James; yet he kept him in command of the fleet, and was to find his confidence vindicated at the battle of Cape La Hogue. He knew that Marlborough preserved the family contacts with his nephew the Duke of Berwick, and that his wife corresponded with her sister, the Duchess of Tyrconnel. He probably knew that Marlborough had obtained his pardon from James by persuading the Princess Anne to send a dutiful message to her father. None the less he thought that the magnet of the Protestant cause and resistance to France would hold these men and others in the essentials to their duty, and that in the end it would be James, and not himself, who would be deceived. He proved right; and it may well be that his wise tolerance and prudent blind eye were the perfection of his statecraft. Meanwhile he relied on his Dutch Guards, and saw to it that no Englishman gained the control of the Army. After all, he was getting a lot out of England for his Continental schemes, of which these ignorant islanders, as he deemed them, only dimly saw the importance.

Up to this point, according to their own accounts, the Jacobites had been extremely well pleased to see all this discontent gathering against the

Government. It was already whispered in their secret circles that Marlborough also had made his peace with James. They nursed the hope that this powerful man was working for a restoration. The Houses of Parliament would make demands upon the King which he could not accept, and the Army under Marlborough would see that no violence was done to the Houses of Parliament. They looked forward to a crisis as the result of which, without the accursed aid of French bayonets, the rightful King might be restored by British votes and British arms, and remount his throne under the sword and shield of "the deserter of Salisbury." We have already shown the absurdity of this illusion. It did not dawn upon the Jacobites until the New Year. Then they suddenly remembered the Princess Anne and the small, devoted group at the Cockpit. So, then, all this movement and focus of discontent from which they had expected so much, to which they had contributed what weight their party had, was not to be for their benefit! On the contrary, if it succeeded it would exclude James for ever from the throne and would ensure the Protestant succession under Anne, with Marlborough, whose stature and force were already beginning to be understood, as her Captain-General. Their fury knew no bounds. Without consulting King James, who was dreaming that his former skilful servant of so many years would regain him his crown, they went to Bentinck with tales of a vast and imminent conspiracy.

There is no evidence worthy of the name that Marlborough ever plotted the substitution of Anne for William and Mary. The obstacles were enormous. The risks, if not beyond his daring, were condemned by his practical good sense. It is probable that he had in view nothing more than the placing of the Princess Anne at the head of a combination of all parties, and the consequent assertion of his own power in the State for its great advantage. But though nothing so definite as a *coup d'état* had emerged in Marlborough's mind, he certainly sought to assemble and combine all forces hostile to the Government of the day, which in those days was indistinguishable from the King himself. It was for this reason above all others that he wished at this time to stand well with the Jacobites, and carry them with him as far as they would go. Like other Leaders of Opposition in later days, he would not willingly discard any factor that would add weight to his movement. Thus he no doubt allowed the eager Jacobite agents to lead James to believe that he was working in his interests. For the rest he certainly marched forward along roads which led into country where constitutional battles might have to be fought, which at every stage would have opened a wider prospect and raised graver issues. From these hazards, if the events had progressively favoured his advance, he would by no means have shrunk. He was a most audacious man, and not one to assign limits to

success. When there has been one revolution there may well be another. He thought and felt about politics as he did about war, in terms of combinations, and of forces moving up to this point or that, and then a trial of strength and skill, and a new view of the situation thereafter.

When William heard from Bentinck what the Jacobites had disclosed, he was seriously alarmed and angered, but not for the reason which is usually assigned. He may have noticed for himself that Shrewsbury, Russell, and Godolphin had begun to be less attentive to the Queen than to the Princess Anne. The Cockpit had become a meeting-place for many important personages. William had good information of much that passed there; for Lady Fitzharding, Anne's second lady-in-waiting, was in the closest touch with Elizabeth Villiers, his reputed mistress and intimate friend. He therefore had some confirmation from another angle of the lurid exaggerations of the Jacobites.

A movement in favour of the Princess Anne seemed to William far more dangerous than any that concerned James. He saw the blunt facts to which so many eminent writers have been purblind. He was never afraid of Marlborough trying to bring back James. He understood only too well where Marlborough's interests lay. He was content that James should be fooled. Of all his perils the Jacobite invasion, the most paraded in the history books, gave him the least anxiety. Quite a different mood stole over him when he saw or imagined Parliament, the Army, and the Princess Anne—a fatal trident—in the hand of Marlborough, pointed at his heart. Macaulay says, “William was not prone to fear, but if there was anyone on earth that he feared, it was Marlborough.” He had discerned at first sight the qualities, military and political, of this ambitious, aggrieved, outspoken, calculating, bland, and redoubtable personality. He was conscious of the fire that burned within that bold heart. He knew that his own policy obliged him to deny his great subject fair scope for his genius. He expected reprisals. There is a double-edged significance in the remark which the King made in the presence of a group of nobles at Court, that “he had been treated so infamously by Marlborough that had he not been a king, he would have felt it necessary to demand personal satisfaction.”^[61] There are mutual injuries which efface differences of rank and station, and arouse in generous spirits the desire for an equal combat. We are to find a happier sequel for William's cause and Marlborough's fame.

These griefs on both sides—in all conscience serious enough—between the men were now to receive feminine aggravation. King William was profoundly disturbed at the suggestions of intrigue, or even plot, to transfer the crown to Princess Anne. But his indignation was surpassed by that of the

Queen. That her own sister should be made the instrument to thrust her from the throne and usurp it herself was indeed intolerable, and what step was more urgent than to preserve that sister from the influence—nay, possession—that dominated her and made her the battering-ram of such fell designs? Upon Sarah, therefore, fell the anger of the Queen.

The feeling about the royal grants had rankled for three years. In its sequel William had treated Marlborough ill, and Marlborough had felt resentment against William. The King, new-made and but lately an armed usurper, was the fountain not only of honours, which are minor, but of opportunity. He had measureless means of repaying what he considered family insubordination. The Princess Anne loved her husband dearly. They lived the closest married life together. She believed that he was a warrior capable of leading fleets and armies. He was in fact a good, brave, soldierly simpleton. His heart was with the Protestant princes in their war against “the overweening power of France.” He sought to serve, if he could not command. He went uninvited with the King to Ireland in 1690. William treated him with unwarrantable contempt. He excluded him from his coach, to which his rank as husband to Anne, the heiress-presumptive to the throne, entitled him. Although the round-shot which grazed and wounded the King during the reconnaissance on the eve of the Boyne had passed almost as near to his brother-in-law, William left him ignored to trundle along with the armies.^[62] In 1691 the poor Prince, not wishing to expose himself to more of such treatment, volunteered for service at sea without command. In those days soldiers and civilian landsmen went afloat without hesitation, and were even entrusted with important duties—sometimes without misadventure. Prince George made his request to the King on the latter’s departure for Flanders. William embraced him, but said nothing. “Silence in such cases,” says Sarah,

being generally taken for consent, the Prince prepared his equipage and sent everything on board. But the King, it afterwards appeared, had left orders with the Queen that she should neither suffer the Prince to go to sea nor yet forbid him to go, if she could so contrive matters as to make his staying at home his own choice.

^[63]

Sarah was again invited to implement this delicate policy. Of course she refused point-blank. It was certainly asking too much of the Prince who had charged so bravely and rescued his brother in the battle with the Swedes to

withdraw from the naval campaign without any explanation but his own change of mind. A direct order must be given. It was given.

By these petty incivilities playing upon the strongest sentiments of important personages King William added needlessly to his many difficulties. Anne was a very real person. She was by no means the catspaw she has so often been depicted. She moved on broad, homely lines. She was devoted to her religion, to her husband, and to friends whose fidelity she had proved. It cannot be doubted at all that she would have faced poverty, exile, imprisonment, or even death with placid, unconquerable resolution for the sake of any of them. Once she got set, it took years to alter her. She was not very wise nor clever, but she was very like England. Now she was, as she conceived it, assailed by her sister and by her sister's husband, whose title to the throne she had willingly completed. She saw clearly what the Marlboroughs had risked and sacrificed for her. Her heart flowed out in love for Sarah and in admiration for John. All those slow, simple qualities which afterwards made her reign as glorious in the history of the British Empire as those of Queen Elizabeth and Queen Victoria now displayed themselves.

Therefore when, early in January 1692, the Queen, hot upon the news of the alleged conspiracy and the wicked intrigues of Lord Marlborough in Parliament and the Army—nay, and with Saint-Germains too, if the truth were known—summoned Anne to her presence and ordered her to dismiss Sarah, she found herself confronted with inexpugnable resistance. The Queen opened upon the enormity of Anne's giving Sarah—that mischief-maker, that breeder of dissension in the royal family, the wife of a dangerous man harassing or betraying the King—an annuity of £1000 a year from her Parliamentary grant. It was the crowning abuse. Was it for this that Parliamentary grants were made? Now we can see why the King should have been trusted to provide what was right for his relations. Sarah must be dismissed forthwith. Anne, who was expecting another baby, met the assault with silent fortitude. From time to time she uttered a few words of phlegmatic negation. In the presence of invincible refusal Mary lost her temper, raised her voice, threatened to deprive her of half her Parliamentary grant—which was certainly not in her power. The talk became an altercation, both sides having a self-convincing case. The courtiers drew back in shocked agitation. The two sisters parted in the anger of what proved to be a mortal estrangement.^[64]

The next morning at nine o'clock Marlborough, discharging his functions as Gentleman of the Bedchamber, handed the King his shirt, and William preserved his usual impassivity. Two hours later Nottingham delivered to Marlborough a written order to sell at once all the offices he

held, civil and military, and consider himself as from that date dismissed from the Army and all public employment, and forbidden the Court. No reasons were given officially for this important stroke. The Court and Parliament were left to speculate whether it had been impelled by the dispute observed between the two Princesses on the night before, or whether it arose out of Marlborough's House of Commons activities, or whether some graver cause lay behind. The topic for some weeks excited all minds, and, as may be imagined, there was no lack of explanations. Surmise was acid but not entirely ill-informed. Count Stratemann, the Minister of the Empire, wrote to Vienna on February 8:

As Marlborough did not become Quartermaster-General after the taking of Kinsale, he first attempted to stir up the English people against the Government by complaints that all the higher Army commands were only for foreigners, since the command in England and Scotland was in the hands of the Duke of Leinster, Count Schomberg; that in Ireland under Ginkel, that of the English forces in Flanders under Count Salm [Solms], and according to Churchill the British had nothing to console themselves with. Secondly, in public assemblies he had accused the King of ingratitude, and said that he could neither punish nor reward. Thirdly, Marlborough had tried, by means of his wife, who is chief lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Denmark, to cause discord between the Queen and the Princess. Finally, what is still more important, despite the fact that he had betrayed King James, he had endeavoured to conciliate that monarch again.^[65]

Another explanation has lived because of a telling story attached to it. The King is said to have made Marlborough privy with only Danby and Shrewsbury to a plan for the attack upon Dunkirk. News of this intention, we are told, had reached the enemy through the Duchess of Tyrconnel, and the project had to be abandoned on account of the French counter-preparations. William, much incensed at this breach of faith, asked the three lords to whom alone he had confided the secret whether they had told anyone of it. Marlborough's answer was, "Upon my honour, Sire, I told it to nobody but my wife." "I did not tell it to mine," was the King's rejoinder. It was commonly supposed, says Wolseley, that Sarah had informed her sister, by whom it was communicated to James and through him to the French Court.

Wolseley cites various authorities for this allegation,^[66] his chief being Horace Walpole, gossiping years after Marlborough's death. He offers in confirmation Burnet, who does not mention Dunkirk; Lord Dartmouth, who likewise does not name Dunkirk; and Carleton, who tells the same tale in his *Memoirs*, but in reference to a projected attack the same year upon Brest! Despite this complete absence of trustworthy sources, a long string of writers have adopted the story. If it was true, certainly it was not a case of indiscretion. Sarah knew how to keep secrets. If anything leaked out through her it was intentional and at Marlborough's instigation; altogether an odious act. But be patient.

The design against Dunkirk was not formed till August 1692, nor that against Brest till 1694. Marlborough's exclusion from the Council and the Court was in January 1692. William did not speak to him again till 1695. It is therefore rather difficult to fix a date for the King's pungent rebuke. There was, in fact, no moment when such a conversation could have taken place. The dialogue itself is as old as the hills. It is one of those anecdotes which travel down from generation to generation and, if they seem to fit, are fastened by gossips to the names of prominent people who are under the frown of power.



PRINCESS ANNE AND THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

After Michael Dahl

National Portrait Gallery

Marlborough took his dismissal, and the abuse, deserved and undeserved, let loose upon him in the highest circles, with unconcern. He had deliberately courted a breach with the King. He may have been surprised that his influence, connexions, services, and ability had not counted for more: evidently he had overrated their value. But he was not the man to take a course of action without counting the cost: there is no record of any complaints, or even comments, uttered by him. His political position

was not immediately affected. Parliamentary and public opinion as a whole considered that he had been ill-used, and that he had suffered for standing up for the rights of Englishmen against the Dutch and foreign favourites. His chief associates—the greatest men of the day—were offended. Shrewsbury let his disapproval be known; Godolphin threatened to retire from the Government. Admiral Russell, now Commander-in-Chief of the Navy, went so far as to reproach King William to his face with having shown ingratitude to the man who had “set the crown upon his head.” William, who with some reason only trusted Russell more than Marlborough because he feared him less, preserved an obdurate silence.

Anne’s distress was acute. She was convinced that the husband of her friend and guide had suffered on her account. She did not attend the Court at Kensington for three weeks, and when at length she did so, she went accompanied by Sarah. This was indeed a step of hardihood on the part of both women. The courtiers were aghast. The Queen, not unreasonably, saw herself affronted. She wrote her sister a long and vehement letter of remonstrance, appeal, and command.

. . . Never anybody was suffered to live at Court in my Lord Marlborough’s circumstances. I need not repeat the cause he has given the King to do what he has done, nor his [the King’s] unwillingness at all times to come to such extremities, though people do deserve it. . . .

. . . It is very unfit that Lady Marlborough should stay with you, since that gives her husband so just a pretence of being where he ought not.

I think I might have expected you should have spoke to me of it. And the King and I both believing it, made us stay [forbear] thus long. But seeing you was so far from it, that you brought Lady Marlborough hither last night, makes us resolve to put it off no longer, but tell you she must not stay, and that I have all the reason imaginable to look upon your bringing her as the strangest thing that ever was done. Nor could all my kindness for you, which is ever ready to turn all you do the best way at any other time, have hindered my showing you so that moment, but I considered your condition, and that made me master myself so far as not to take notice of it then.

But now I must tell you it was very unkind in a sister, would have been very uncivil in an equal, and I need not say I have more to claim. Which though my kindness would make me never exact, yet when I see the use you would make of it, I must tell you I

know what is due to me, and expect to have it from you. 'Tis upon that account I tell you plainly Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances [in which] her Lord is.

. . . I will end this with once more desiring you to consider the matter impartially and take time for it. I do not desire an answer presently [at once], because I would not have you give a rash one. I shall come to your drawing-room to-morrow before you play, because you know I cannot make one [of the party]. At some other time we shall reason the business calmly, which I will willingly do, or anything else that may show it shall never be my fault if we do not live kindly together. Nor will I ever be other by choice, but your truly loving and affectionate sister.

Anne replied firmly the next day, saying among other things:

Your care of my present condition is extremely obliging. And if you would be pleased to add to it so far as on my account to recall your severe comment [about Sarah] (as I must beg leave to call it in a matter so tender to me and so little reasonable as I think to be imposed upon me that you would scarce require it from the meanest of your subjects), I should ever regard it as a very agreeable mark of your kindness to me. And I must as freely own that as I think that this proceeding can be for no other intent than to give me a very sensible mortification, so there is no misery that I cannot readily resolve to suffer rather than the thoughts of parting with her.^[67]

The Princess had hoped that her uncle Rochester would take this letter, but he had no intention of prejudicing his future by mingling in this dispute loaded with danger for all but the principals. By way of answer the Lord Chamberlain was directed to forbid Sarah to continue at the Cockpit. This was decisive, but in a manner different from that in which Queen Mary had expected. Anne resolved to share the banishment of her friend. Although she was every day expecting her confinement, she borrowed Sion House from the Duke of Somerset and transported herself and her household there with the utmost expedition.

The King and Queen now vented their disapproval in a series of very small actions. They endeavoured to persuade the Duke of Somerset to reclaim his house; he regretted that as a gentleman he was unable to do so. They withdrew her guards from the Princess, and deprived her of all salutes and ceremonies. Later on, when she went to Bath, they even went so far as

to make the Secretary of State write to the local mayor—a tallow-chandler, Sarah calls him—that he was not to accompany her officially to church. These puerilities humiliated only their authors. Anne gained a wide measure of public sympathy, and the Queen was wounded to learn that it was commonly said that she had no natural feeling for her own kin, neither for her father nor for her only sister.

We cannot wonder that Anne, pursued in so many petty ways and seeing her cherished friends ruined, as she thought, for her sake by the malice of her sister and the King, should have used in her intimate letters to Sarah bitter expressions about William. Macaulay says that she “called her brother-in-law sometimes the abortion, sometimes the monster, sometimes Caliban,” and describes this as “the style of a fishwoman.” The remark is mainly interesting as contemporary evidence of the high standard of erudition among the early Victorian fishwomen. The two sisters met only once again. After Anne had been delivered of a child which almost immediately died, the Queen visited her at Sion House; but this was only to renew her command that Sarah should be dismissed. Anne, who was still weak and quivering from her labour and grieving for her dead baby, refused as resolutely as ever. These, except for some cold and formal letters, were the last words which passed between them.

Sarah was deeply concerned by the formidable hostilities which centred upon her personality. Her own letters do not survive, but we can guess their purport from Anne’s replies. Again and again in these months of common disgrace and calamity (as it appeared to them) the Princess wrote to her friend, exhorting, commanding, imploring her on no account to suggest that she should relieve the situation by her departure.

The last time he [the Bishop of Worcester] was here I told him that you had several times desired that you might go from me, and I repeated the same thing again to him. For you may easily imagine I would not neglect doing you right on all occasions. But I beg it again for Christ Jesus’ sake that you would never name it any more to me. For be assured, if you should ever do so cruel a thing as to leave me, from that moment I shall never enjoy one quiet hour. And should you do it without asking my consent (which if I ever give you may I never see the face of Heaven), I will shut myself up and never see the world more, but live where I may be forgot by human kind.

And again, at the end of a long letter:

Dear Mrs Freeman, farewell: I hope in Christ that you will never think more of leaving me for I would be sacrificed to do you the least service and nothing but death could ever make me part with you. For if it be possible I am every day more and more yours.^[68]

Did some protecting genius of England inspire Anne's generous, faithful heart? For surely it was in these fires of adversity, and almost persecution, that the links were forged by which the smallest and the strongest executive our country has ever known in the modern age was one day to be gripped together. The Cockpit friendships were the crucible from which the power and glory of England were soon to rise gleaming among the nations.

[58] *C.S.P. (Dom.)*, 1690-91, 547; Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 477.

[59] *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*, p. 31.

[60] "Il ne donnoit jamais à manger (ce qui n'étoit pas le moyen de gagner les officiers Anglais)." (News-letter in Denbigh Papers, *H.M.C.*, vii, 220.)

[61] Reported by Bonnet, the Brandenburg envoy, and quoted by Ranke, *History of England*, vi, 177. Cf. Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, iii, 489.

[62] "The King never took more notice of him than if he had been a page of the Backstairs nor he was never once named in any Gazette, tho I am apt to think the bullet that so kindly kissed the King's shoulder was as near to his Royal Highness." (*An Account of King William and Queen Mary's Undeserv'd ill Treatment of her Sister, the Princess of Denmark*, by Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough.) This manuscript, of which copies exist at Blenheim and Althorp, is an account written by Sarah for the benefit of Mrs Burnet, who "had such a violent Passion for Queen Mary." It can be dated *circa* 1702-4. As it is a slightly amplified version of the account of William III's reign given in the *Conduct*, it proves that for this period the *Conduct* is almost a contemporary document.

[63] *Conduct*, p. 39.

[64] *Conduct*, pp. 83-84.

[65] Translated from the reports to Vienna in the appendix to Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, vi, 375.

Mr Atkinson considers that “the most satisfactory explanation is that which represents the King as telling Nottingham that he had disgraced Marlborough for fomenting discord and disaffection in the Army and for his correspondence with Saint-Germains. He added ‘he has rendered such valuable service that I have no wish to press him too hard.’ ” There is nothing to object to in this. But Mr Atkinson cites Wolseley (ii, 263) as his authority. Wolseley bases himself upon Vol. XI, No. 11, of “Tracts in the Athenæum Library.” Students of history will be surprised to learn what this tract is. It is one of the lampoons published against Marlborough in 1711 under the title *Oliver’s Pocket Looking Glass*. It is anonymous; but the style is similar to Mrs Manley’s productions already noticed in an earlier chapter, and evidently comes from the same factory of party propaganda. That such a piece of trash issued nineteen years after the event should be described by one friendly historian on the authority of another as “the most satisfactory explanation” illustrates the flimsiness of the foundations upon which the most conscientious writers are content to rely.

[66] Wolseley, ii, 265. His reference is to the 1734 edition of Burnet.

[67] *Conduct*, pp. 43 *seq.*, letters dated February 5 and 6, 1692.

[68] *Conduct*, pp. 75, 81.

CHAPTER VI

THE TOWER

(1692-93)

Meanwhile the march of events was unfavourable both to the national and personal interests of Marlborough and to the vast Continental combinations of William. No sooner had the King set out upon the wars than the imminent menace of invasion fell upon the island he had left denuded of troops. Louvois had always been sceptical, and even scornful of a Jacobite restoration; but Louvois was dead, and Louis was freed from the trammels of his famous War Minister. Although his best opportunities had passed with the end of the Irish war and the Scottish revolts, he now planned a descent upon England. The French Channel and Mediterranean fleets, together with a multitude of transports and store-ships, were concentrated in the Norman and Breton ports. An expeditionary army of ten thousand desperate Irishmen from Limerick and ten thousand French regulars was assembled around Cherbourg. James was to be given his chance. Saint-Germains had for two years oppressed the French War Office with their assertions that England was ripe and ready for a restoration. Russell would betray or divert the English fleet; Marlborough would answer for such parts of the Army as remained at home; the Princess Anne would reassure the Church of England. The Jacobites of the northern counties were under arms; the merchants of the City were favourable; the temper of the English people was rancorously hostile to the Dutch. William was now in Flanders, and once the true King landed—with an adequate force—he would drive in his coach to Whitehall. Now was the time when all these assertions so confidently reiterated by the unhappy exiles, so buoyed up by fond hopes, so backed by distortion, fabrication, and forgery, would be put to the test. James's opportunity had come.

It was not until the middle of April, from important papers captured on a small vessel, that the French designs became known to the English Government. Feverish but vigorous preparations were made for defence by land and sea. Some regiments were brought from Ireland, others recalled from Flanders, and the English dockyards resounded with the preparation of the fleets. Despite stubborn adverse Jacobite currents, the nation had but one idea—to repel the French papist invaders and above all the despised and hated Irish. James's declaration, framed by Melfort, "the evil genius of the house of Stuart," as he has been well called, apprised the nation of its peril.

All the old arrogance, religious and political, and a new vindictiveness to pay off recent scores, were reflected in this wanton document. Large numbers of persons, ranging from the greatest nobles to the rough, ignorant fishermen who had manhandled their sovereign upon his flight to Faversham, were specifically excluded from the amnesty. Marlborough's name figured among the proscribed; but this, we are assured by the Jacobites, was only from a desire not to compromise the delicacy of his position. As upon the approach of the Spanish Armada, all England was alert. But everything turned upon the Admiral. Russell, like Marlborough, had talked with the Jacobite agents: William and Mary feared, and James fervently believed, that he would play the traitor to his country and his profession. James was sure that the fleet was on his side, and had furnished Versailles with lists of the admirals and captains on whom he counted. Now would be proved what substance there was in all these tales. Would that every Jacobite pretension could be brought to an equally conclusive trial!

According to the Jacobites, Russell bluntly told their agent, Floyd, that, much as he loved James and loathed William's Government, if he met the French fleet at sea he would do his best to destroy it, "even though King James himself were on board." He kept his word. "If your officers play you false," he said to the fleetmen on the day of battle, "overboard with them, and myself the first." We have no doubt that Marlborough, his friend and fellow-intriguer, would have done the same with the soldiers had he had them in command. But his lot was hard. An age of revolutions and conspiracies, when all foundations quaked, had produced a tribe of professional plot-denouncers. Titus Oates, living in retirement upon his Government pension, held a veritable school for the making of bogus plots from the exposure of which much wealth and celebrity might be gained. Moreover, there was no lack of material. A rascal named Fuller had already this year from his debtors' prison offered blood-curdling revelations to Parliament, and had been exposed and convicted only by the exceptional diligence of the House of Commons. Now, at this grievous moment, came forth a disciple of Oates and Fuller named Young, also a rogue and a criminal, also in gaol, who devised a scheme to win himself riches and consideration by accusing well-known and likely men of murderous conspiracy.^[69]

Young was by his own confession an expert forger. He had obtained a specimen of Marlborough's signature by writing to him about the character of a servant. He drew up a document purporting to be a bond of association between certain persons to take the Prince of Orange, dead or alive, and to restore King James. He forged the names of Marlborough, Cornbury,

Archbishop Sancroft, and the harmless Bishop of Rochester, Sprat, with some others, as signatories. His confederate, Blackhead, hid this poisonous evidence in a flowerpot in the house of the unwitting Bishop of Rochester. Young then warned the Cabinet of their peril and where the proof could be found. Above all things, he said, they must search the Bishop's flowerpots. Under the threat of invasion, on the eve of fateful battle with the fleet commanded by a suspected admiral, a panic-fierce mood ruled at the council-board. Marlborough and one or two leading Jacobites were arrested out of hand and sent to the Tower. Three members of the Council, Lords Devonshire, Bradford, and Montagu, kept their heads; they declined to sign the warrant upon the evidence of a single witness of whose credibility the most that could be said was that "he had not yet had his ears cropped." But Marlborough slept the night of May 4 a prisoner of State upon a charge of high treason.

Stringent search was now made of the Bishop's palace, and almost every flowerpot was examined. But there was one which, because it stood near the servants' quarters, was overlooked. In this lay the paper which, if discovered at that moment, might have cost not only the Bishop but our hero his life. The officers of the Crown returned to Whitehall with the Bishop in custody, but no evidence. Young then procured from his prison cell the recovery of the document, and sent it with another legend to the Council.

But meanwhile a fortnight had passed and great events had happened. On May 19/29 the English and Dutch fleets, which had effected their junction before the French were ready, encountered Tourville with the main French naval power off Cape La Hogue. The forces were impressive in their number, but Russell's armada, which carried forty thousand men and seven thousand guns, was the stronger by ninety-nine ships to forty-four. Both sides fought hard, and Tourville was beaten. His flagship, *Le Soleil Royal*, named in honour of Louis XIV, was first battered and then burned to the water's edge. The French fleet was scattered and driven into its ports. But this was not the end. Russell and his admirals, three of the most daring of whom were counted on the Jacobite lists as pledged and faithful adherents of King James, followed the beaten navy into its harbours. For five successive days the fighting continued. The fugitive war-ships were cut out under the shore batteries by flotillas of hardy English row-boats; the store-ships and many of the transports were burned; and the whole apparatus of invasion was destroyed under the very eyes of the King it was to have borne to his native shore.

The battle of Cape La Hogue, with its consequential actions, effaced the memories of Beachy Head. More than that, it broke decisively for the whole of the wars of William and Anne all French pretensions to supremacy at sea.

It was the Trafalgar of the seventeenth century. We invite the reader to judge whether fact is not stronger than fiction; whether substance is not more solid than shadow. Because Russell had flirted with the Jacobite agents; because these agents had vapourized to the Court at Saint-Germains; because James had wanted to believe all his agents told him, and made the most of it to Louis; and because the Jacobite writers have invented and written whatever they pleased about him, Russell stands convicted before history as a “villain” and a “traitor.” This shattering victory and noble feat of arms counts for nothing in his favour. Macpherson, Dalrymple, Macaulay, and the docile flock of scrap-nibblers who have browsed upon their pastures, have managed hitherto to twist history and reality to his condemnation. We submit to modern judgment two propositions about him: that he was wrong and foolish to have trafficked with the Jacobite agents, but that he was quite right to beat the French and ruin King James’s cause, which was on the whole rather more important.

The fears of the Council and the excitement of the public were calmed by the victory. Lords Huntingdon and Scarsdale, who had been arrested on other grounds at the same time as Marlborough, were set at liberty. William, who had been perturbed by the irregularity of these arrests, wrote to the Council expressing his doubts about such serious steps.^[70] Nevertheless, so strong were the feelings of the Queen that Marlborough was still kept a close prisoner in the Tower. Sarah came from Brentford to London in order to be near him, to help in his defence, and to agitate for his release. No one was allowed to visit him except upon the authority of the Secretary of State, and we have consequently a series of orders signed by Nottingham giving Sarah and some others access to him. Among the few who faced the displeasure of the Queen, Lord Bradford was conspicuous. As is usual with people in such a position, the Marlboroughs found few friends. Other nearer trouble fell upon them. On May 22 their younger son Charles died.

Anne’s letters are touching in their fidelity and tender solicitude.

I hear Lord Marlborough is sent to the Tower; and though I am certain they have nothing against him, and expected by your letter it would be so, yet I was struck when I was told it; for methinks it is a dismal thing to have one’s friends sent to that place. I have a thousand melancholy thoughts, and cannot help fearing they should hinder you from coming to me; though how they can do that without making you a prisoner I cannot imagine.

I am just told by pretty good hands, that as soon as the wind turns westerly,^[71] there will be a guard set upon the Prince and me.

If you hear there is any such thing designed, and that 'tis easy to you, pray let me see you before the wind changes; for afterwards one does not know whether they will let one have opportunities of speaking to one another. But let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the satisfaction of seeing dear Mrs Freeman; and I swear I would live on bread and water, between four walls, with her, without repining; for as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness, in this world or the next, if ever she proves false to you.^[72]

And:

I give dear Mrs Freeman a thousand thanks for her kind letter, which gives me an account of her concerns, and that is what I desire to know more than any other news. I shall reckon the days and hours, and think the time very long till the term is out, for both your sake and my Lord Marlborough's, that he may be at liberty and your mind at ease. You do not say anything of your health which makes me hope you are well, at least not worse than when you were here.

And again, with asperity:

I am sorry with all my heart dear Mrs Freeman meets with so many delays; but it is a comfort they cannot keep Lord Marlborough in the Tower longer than the end of the [legal] term; and I hope, when Parliament sits, care will be taken that people may not be clapped up for nothing, or else there will be no living in quiet for anybody but insolent Dutch and sneaking mercenary Englishmen.

In a further letter:

. . . And there is no misery I cannot readily resolve to suffer, rather than the thought of parting from you. And I do swear I would rather be torn to pieces than alter this my resolution.

And again:

My dear Mrs Freeman was in so dismal a way when she went from hence, that I cannot forbear asking how she does, and if she has yet any hopes of Lord Marlborough's being soon at liberty. For God's sake have a care of your dear self, and give as little way to melancholy thoughts as you can. . . . I fancy asses' milk would do you good, and that is what you might take morning or afternoon, as it is most convenient. . . . I will not fail of being with my dear Mrs Freeman about five or six o'clock unless you are to go to the Tower.

With a view no doubt to helping her friends, Anne also wrote the Queen a respectful letter:

SYON
May 20

I have now, God be thanked, recovered my strength well enough to go abroad. And though my duty and inclination would both lead me to wait upon your Majesty as soon as I am able to do it, yet I have of late had the misfortune of being so much under your Majesty's displeasure as to apprehend there may be hard constructions made upon anything I either do or not do with the most respectful intentions. And I am now in doubt whether the same arguments, that have prevailed with your Majesty to forbid people from showing their usual respects to me, may not be carried so much farther as not to permit me to pay my duty to you. That, I acknowledge, would be a great increase of affliction to me, and nothing but your Majesty's own command shall ever willingly make me submit to it. For whatever reason I may think in my own mind I have to complain of being hardly used, yet I will strive to hide it as much as possible. And though I will not pretend to live at the Cockpit, unless you would be so kind as to make it easy to me, yet wherever I am, I will endeavour always to give the constant marks of duty and respect, which I have in my heart for your Majesty, as becomes Your Majesty's very affectionate sister and servant,

ANNE

The answer was chilling:

I have received yours by the Bishop of Worcester and have very little to say to it, since you cannot but know that as I never used compliments, so now they will not serve.

'Tis none of my fault we live at this distance, and I have endeavoured to show my willingness to do otherwise. And I will do no more. Don't give yourself any unnecessary trouble, for be assured it is not words can make us live together as we ought. You know what I required of you. And I now tell you, if you doubted it before, that I cannot change my mind but expect to be complied with, or you must not wonder if I doubt of your kindness. You can give me no other marks that will satisfy me. Nor can I put any other construction upon your actions than what all the world must do that sees them. These things don't hinder me being very glad to hear you are so well and wishing you may continue so, and that you may yet, while 'tis in your power, oblige me to be your affectionate sister,

MARIE R.

There is little doubt that the King and Queen, heating each other in their anger, explored the question of curtailing Anne's Parliamentary grant. They encountered a steady resistance from Godolphin at the Treasury. Moreover, the House of Commons would have resented any such proposal. Rumours, however, of the project reached Sarah through a sure channel. She continued to suggest that she should relieve the tension by departing—at any rate, for a time. The Princess's attitude was magnificent:

I really long to know how my dear Mrs Freeman got home; and now I have this opportunity of writing, she must give me leave to tell her, if she should ever be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs Morley, she will rob her of all the joy and quiet of her life; for if that day should come, I could never enjoy a happy minute, and I swear to you I would shut myself up and never see a creature. You may easily see all this would have come upon me, if you had not been. If you do but remember what the Q. said to me the night before your Lord was turned out of all; then she begun to pick quarrels; and if they should take off twenty or thirty thousand pound, have I not lived upon as little before? When I was first married we had but twenty (it is true indeed the King [Charles] was so kind to pay my debts), and if it should come to that again, what retrenchment is there in my family I would not willingly

make and be glad of that pretence to do it? Never fancy, dear Mrs Freeman, if what you fear should happen, that you are the occasion . . . ; therefore rest satisfied you are no ways the cause; and let me beg once more, for God's sake, that you would never mention parting more, no nor so much as think of it; and if you should ever leave me, be assured it would break your faithful Mrs Morley's heart.

Sarah having requested that Prince George should know the position, Anne wrote:

In obedience to dear Mrs Freeman I have told the Prince all she desired me, and he is so far from being of another opinion, if there had been occasion he would have strengthened me in my resolutions, and we both beg you would never mention so cruel a thing any more. Can you think either of us so wretched that for the sake of twenty thousand pound, and to be tormented from morning to night with flattering knaves and fools, we should forsake those we have such obligations to, and that we are so certain we are the occasion of all their misfortunes? . . . And which is much more, how would my conscience reproach me for having sacrificed my honour, reputation and all the substantial comforts of this life for transitory interest, which, even to those who make it their idol, can never afford any real satisfaction, much less to a virtuous mind? No, my dear Mrs Freeman, never believe your faithful Mrs Morley will ever submit. She can wait with patience for a sunshine day, and if she does not live to see it, yet she hopes England will flourish again.

Meanwhile Marlborough had recourse to the Council. To Danby, the Lord President, he wrote:^[73]

Having been informed that it is now publicly discoursed in Westminster Hall to-day that a letter under my hand was to be produced to the grand jury, to induce them to find a bail against me, I beg leave to assure your Lordship, upon my honour and credit, that if any such letter be pretended, it must and will, upon examination, appear so plainly to have been forged, that as it can be of no credit or advantage to the Government, so I doubt not but your Lordship's justice will be ready to protect me from so injurious a proceeding, who am, etc.

And to Devonshire, the Lord High Steward:

I am so confident of my innocence, and so convinced, if there be any such letter, that it must appear to be forged, and made use of only to keep me in prison, that I cannot doubt but your Lordship will be so kind as to let me find your protection against such a proceeding, which will be a reproach to the Government as well as an injury to

Yours, etc.

He also used his rights under the law, invoked the Habeas Corpus Act, and demanded admission to bail. To Halifax he wrote:

My Counsel being to move the Court of King's Bench for my Habeas Corpus the beginning of next term, and [I] being very certain of my own innocence, and that no instance can be shewn why I should not be bailed, I desire the favour of your Lordship to be there and be one of my Sureties for my appearance, not knowing yet how many they may require to be found for me; I shall be unwilling to give your Lordship this trouble without a necessity, and in that case I shall always own it as the greatest obligation to your Lordship's most obedient

MARLBOROUGH

On June 11 Young and his accomplice, Blackhead, were brought before the Privy Council. The Bishop has left us the following clear and well-documented account. It is an intimate and invaluable picture of the methods of those days. We see the care and zeal in which the Cabinet Ministers did their duty, Nottingham's long and untiring examination of the witnesses, the search for the truth, the ceremonious treatment of the accused prelate. The event was dramatic. Confronted with Bishop Sprat and under the stern eyes of the Council, Blackhead, who had already weakened, broke down completely, and confessed his crime. We have the following dialogue:

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Blackhead, last time you confessed you brought the Bishop of Rochester a letter from Robert Young, under the false name of Dr. Hookes.

BLACKHEAD: Yes, I did.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Can you know that letter when you see it?

BLACKHEAD: I cannot tell, I doubt I cannot know it.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Here it is (*and it was given into his hand*); is that the same letter you delivered the Bishop?

BLACKHEAD: I am not sure it is.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Consider it well; look on the superscription, you cannot but remember that. You began to be somewhat ingenuous last Friday; if you relapse it will fare the worse with you.

BLACKHEAD: Yes, this may be the letter; this is the very same letter.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: But what made you, when you were at Bromley the second time, so earnestly desire of the Bishop's butler, and his other servants, that you might see the rooms in the house, especially his study?

BLACKHEAD: No, I do not remember that I desired to see the study. The house I might out of curiosity.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: But here are some of the Bishop's servants without, who are ready to swear, that you pressed very often to get a sight of his study. . . .

BLACKHEAD: I cannot deny that I did desire to see the Bishop's study.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What reason had you to be so importunate to see that or any of the other rooms? Had you any paper about you that you designed to drop or leave in any part of the Bishop's house?

Here Blackhead stopped as very loth to out with it; till divers of the lords urged him to tell the truth. At last he went on, though with much hesitancy.

BLACKHEAD: Yes, I must confess I had a paper in my pocket which I designed to put somewhere in the house.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What did you with it?

BLACKHEAD: I did leave it in the parlour next the kitchen.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: In what part of the parlour?

BLACKHEAD: In the flowerpot in the chimney.

At this the Bishop broke in. "Good Lord bless me!" he cried. "I seriously protest. I never heard that any paper was found there by my servants. To be sure they would have brought it me." And he offered to send his servants in quest.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Nay, my lord, there is no need of that testimony now. For this fellow has said already more than they know. He has confessed not only that he desired to see your house, and particularly your study, but that he did leave a paper somewhere in it; and that he did leave one in your parlour and in the flowerpot of the chimney. . . . Blackhead, what paper was it you left in the Bishop's chimney?

BLACKHEAD: It was the association.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Was it this paper here (*showing the association that lay upon the table*)?

BLACKHEAD: Yes, it was.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: How came you by it? and who advised you to lodge it there?

BLACKHEAD: I had it from Mr Young and he advised me to leave it in the Bishop's house, as I did.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: Did Young direct you to put it in the flowerpot in the parlour?

BLACKHEAD: Yes he did, and I put it there accordingly. . . .

The forged document was now produced and handed round. As we have to deal in Marlborough's life with other charges equally elaborately presented, we give it here as Sprat recollected it.

That we, whose names were subscribed, should solemnly promise, in the presence of God, to contribute our utmost assistance towards King James's recovery of his kingdoms; that to this end, we would have ready to meet him, at his landing, thirty thousand men well armed; that we would seize upon the person of the Princess of Orange, dead or alive; and take care, that some strong garrison should be forthwith delivered into his hands; and furnish him with a considerable sum of money, for the support of his army.

March 20, 1691

MARLEBOROUGH SALISBURY

BASIL FIREBRACE

W. CANT.

THO. ROFFEN.^[74]

CORNBURY

JOHN WILCOXE

The Bishop was startled at the perfection of the forgery. "I am very much amazed," he said, "to see my hand so well counterfeited; all the difference is they have done me the favour to write it finer than I can: otherwise I acknowledge it is so like that I verily believe I myself, had I seen it in another place, should have been apt to doubt whether it were of my writing or no. I am confident it might, upon the first blush, deceive the best friends I have."

Here Godolphin intervened, and his friendly purpose is easily discernible. "My Lords," he said, "I am very well acquainted with Archbishop Sancroft's hand, and here it is almost exactly counterfeited." He added that the Earl of Marlborough's hand had been so well feigned in a letter that had been written by Young himself that it was very difficult for his most intimate friends to observe any distinction.

Young was now brought before the Council.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM (*taking up the association and showing it to Young*): Did you not give this paper to Blackhead and order him to put it in a chimney in the Bishop of Rochester's house, and into a flowerpot, if there were any?

YOUNG: No, I never desired him to carry it thither, or to put it into a flowerpot.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM: What say you, Blackhead?

BLACKHEAD: Mr Young did give me that paper, and directed me to leave it in the Bishop's house; and if I could, to put it in a flowerpot in some room; which I did, in the parlour.

YOUNG: There is no such matter. I absolutely deny it.

EARL OF NOTTINGHAM, LORD SYDNEY, AND OTHERS OF THE COUNCILLORS: Why, then, did you give us such express directions to send and search the flowerpots among other places in the Bishop's house?

YOUNG: I said nothing of flowerpots. I bid you take care that the Bishop's person should be exactly searched; because when he went abroad he carried the association about him; when he was at home, he put it in some private place, for fear of surprise. Perhaps I might say, in the chimney.

THE COUNCILLORS: Nay, we all well remember, you particularly mentioned the flowerpots.

YOUNG: This is a combination between the Bishop of Rochester and Blackhead to baffle the whole discovery of the plot.

EARL OF DANBY: Young, thou art the strangest creature that ever I heard of. Dost thou think we could imagine that the Bishop

of Rochester would combine with this thy confederate to have an association written with his own hand to it and then laid it in his own house in a flowerpot there? which, if it had been found must have endangered his life; and we see it was the most remarkable good fortune to him that almost ever happened to any man, that it was not found there.

During this whole examination, says the Bishop, though Young's forgery was so evidently proved by the confession of his own companion and instrument, yet "he behaved himself with a daring, unconcerned confidence, with a bold and erect countenance, though it had naturally very much of a villain in it." Thus was the whole of this pack of lies blown to pieces, and the Bishop, overflowing with gratitude to God and to the Council, returned to his diocese.

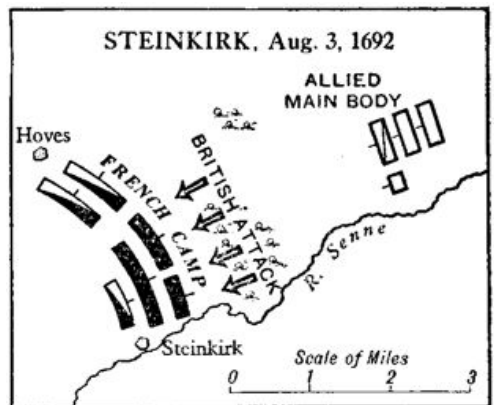
There was now no case of any kind against Marlborough. Not even one of the two witnesses necessary to sustain a charge of treason was available; and the document which incriminated him was a proved and exposed forgery. On June 15, after an imprisonment of six weeks, he succeeded in bringing his case before the Court of the King's Bench on a writ of Habeas Corpus. The Government demanded sureties and bail for £6000. Halifax did not fail him, neither did Shrewsbury. Both these lords, with two other persons, became his sureties. Their action was resented by the Queen. These two famous builders of our constitutional history were forthwith struck off the Privy Council. Marlborough's name was found still, apparently by oversight, upon the roll. The oversight was repaired.

Marlborough was now free, and the Cockpit group reunited at Berkeley House in a companionship of wrath and misfortune. The ordeal had been severe, and the escape narrow. The forgeries of Young had been so perfect that Marlborough admitted himself when shown the document that he could have hardly believed that it was not his own autograph. Such a plot, had it not miscarried, might well have sent him during the invasion panic to the scaffold. Moreover, he might expect that at any moment some one or other of the Jacobite agents with whom he had consorted and through whom he had communicated with Saint-Germains might come forward with confirmatory revelations. However, his nerves were steel, and neither imminent peril nor prolonged strain affected his poise and serenity. Nor did he in any respect alter his course. He continued through various secret channels to preserve exactly the same shadowy relations with King James—neither less nor more—as before his disgrace. He persisted in his opposition to the King by every means open to him. Parliament had been prorogued and was not to meet till November. "The interval," says the hostile Dalrymple,^[75]

gave time for Lord Marlborough, who was enraged at what he called the King's ingratitude, to the Whigs and to himself, and whose favour with the next heir to the throne, high character in his profession, and above all, whose power of industry and intrigue made his influence, though he was only a soldier, and in prison [on bail], be felt in every line of life in the kingdom, to prepare a regular and concerted opposition in Parliament.

And now from the war came news which must have gnawed his soul. As in 1691, the campaign had opened with a brilliant French success. Louis XIV had laid siege to the hitherto inviolate fortress of Namur before William, through the tardiness of his allies, could be ready. Vauban, under Louis, conducted the siege, while Luxembourg with an army of eighty thousand men stood between William and its relief. Once again the unlucky head of the Grand Alliance and his army watched impotently the fall of one of their most important fortresses. But worse was to come. In August William marched by night with his whole army to attack Luxembourg, whose forces were somewhat divided. The French were surprised near Steinkirk in the early morning. Their advanced troops were overwhelmed and routed, and for an hour confusion reigned in their camp. But Luxembourg was equal to the emergency, and managed to draw out an ordered line of battle. The British infantry formed the forefront of the allied attack. Eight splendid regiments under General Mackay charged and broke the Swiss in fighting as fierce as had been seen in Europe in living memory. Luxembourg launched the Household troops of France upon the British division, already strained by its exertions, and after a furious struggle fought mostly with sword and bayonet beat them back.

Meanwhile from all sides the French advanced, and their reinforcements began to reach the field. Count Solms, the Dutch officer and William's relation, who had replaced Marlborough in command of the British contingent, had already earned the cordial dislike of its officers and men. He knew their feelings and returned them with interest. Now, with a callous remark, he refused to send Mackay the help for which he begged. A Dutch general on the



opposite flank whom we now meet for the first time, the valiant Overkirk, brought two battalions to their aid with remarkable effect. But for this, that British force of which Marlborough had been so proud the year before would have been cut to pieces. As it was they escaped with a loss of their two best generals, Mackay and Lanier, and of half their number, more than three thousand being killed or wounded. William seemed unable to control the battle. Witness of this cruel disaster, we are assured that he shed bitter tears as he watched the slaughter and exclaimed, "Oh, my poor English!" But what was the good of that? By noon the whole of the allied army was in retreat, and although the losses of seven or eight thousand men on either side were equal, the French proclaimed their victory throughout Europe.

No record exists of the feelings with which Marlborough received this news: no letter of his is extant, no conversation has been reported. But it may well have been the hardest of all the blows that befell him in this period of his life. Here were his own men, the very troops whom he had paraded with pardonable enthusiasm before Count Dohna, and called "invincible." All the qualities which regimental soldiers can show in war they had proved to Europe. Their conduct was glorified by their enemies no less than in the camps of the allies. It was not, therefore, any fault of theirs that they had not proved invincible. The fault lay elsewhere. It lay with the prince who, although he was an illustrious sovereign and statesman, would not do justice to his own discernment, and who, although he himself lacked the qualities of a great commander, would not gather around him the men who could do the work, but allowed every kind of irrelevant prejudice or bias to stand between him and the faithful care of his English troops in the field.

The wheel of fortune spins with infinite caprice, and no one can tell whether it was Marlborough's good luck or bad that tied him in England unemployed and a prisoner of State while Count Solms cast the English away at Steinkirk. Had William treated him a little better, had he placed him in his old command, Marlborough would have held Solms' authority in the battle. Could he have altered the stroke of the field, could he within the limits of his sphere have imposed a harmony upon the whole intense event? Might he not have been involved in the insoluble riddles of half-policies and half-controls, and been found unable to free himself from the stifling cloak of circumstance? Might he not have flashed away in the accidents of battle and died with Mackay or instead of him? But of this last no one can complain; it is in the soldier's contract. Or might he have gained for William the one thing that the head of the Grand Alliance lacked, and added laurels of victory to those brows upon which some said he had already set the crown of England?

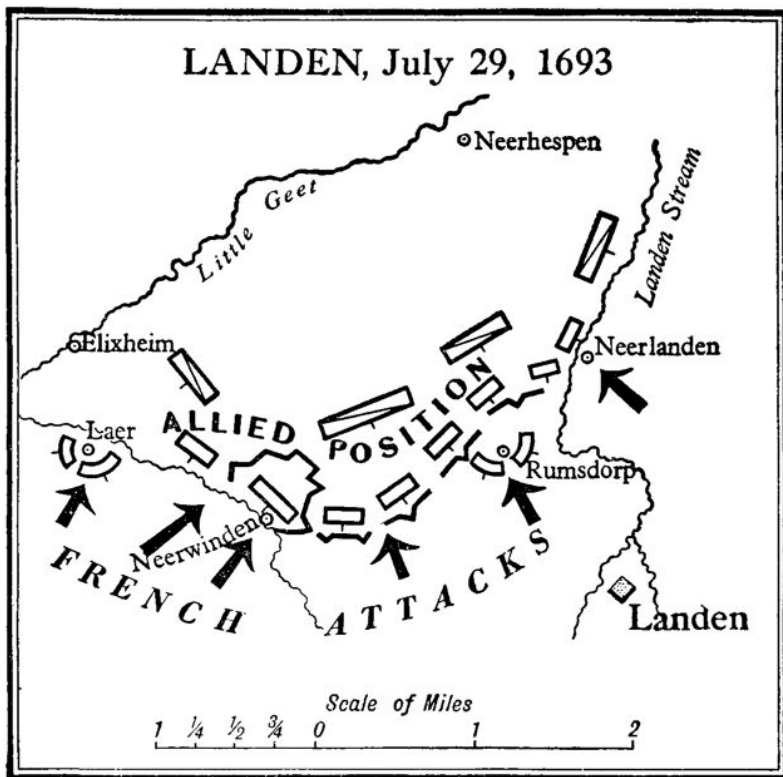
He had sunk now to the minor and unpleasant position of being a critic of mishandled affairs with whose main intention he agreed. This condition was to rule him for a long time, as our short lives go. The Court guerrilla against Anne continued, and she was subjected to many petty impertinences and something very like what we should now call a society boycott. Marlborough presented his general case to Parliament when it met in November. He found support which in modern times might be decisive. The House of Lords ignored the Royal Speech and proceeded to examine the causes why certain of their members had been unlawfully imprisoned. It was argued that once the charges were dropped the retention of bail and the refusal to discharge recognizances were infringements of privilege. Acrimonious debates ensued. The Constable of the Tower, the Treasury Solicitor, even the judges of the High Court, were summoned. William found himself in the presence of one of those tensely wrought, sternly measured constitutional movements towards which he had been taught in the days of Charles II that English kings should not be unbending. He used the royal prerogative to discharge Marlborough from his recognizances. This grievance removed, both Houses turned to the war.

The most savage debates took place upon the conduct of Count Solms. The hatred felt against him is indescribable. His airs, his prejudice, his incompetence, his brutal levity in the crisis of battle, were all arraigned. He had sent, it was asserted, the English to a butchery, had left them in the lurch, and had even mocked at their sacrifice. "Now we shall see," he had exclaimed when Mackay was almost cut off, "how the bulldogs will come off!" The British Army nourishes a generous tradition, and all is forgiven to a soldier who dies bravely in the field. Yet when, a year later, in the carnage of Landen, Count Solms fell mortally wounded, English officers and English camps accused him of want of fortitude in the agonies of death. Bitter reproaches arising from undoubted wrongs!

The Lords carried an address praying that no English general should be subordinated to a Dutchman, whatever his rank. In the Commons the Court, or, as we should now say, Ministerial, orators inculcated precepts of humility. Seymour, whose famous independence had at this time been soothed by a place at council, descanted at large upon the inferiority of British generals. Unhappily we had no generals. We might have good captains and majors or even colonels, but no officers fit by their experience or qualities to rank with the high professionals of the Continent. Other speakers chanted this dirge of national self-contempt. The Commons were not convinced. One Member had the temerity to declare that there were ten English officers who would be marshals of France if they were Frenchmen. This was certainly an exaggeration. In the end the Commons pressed less

strongly upon the King than the Lords. The conspiracy of Grandval, a Jacobite enthusiast set on by Saint-Germains to murder the King, had rallied strong English sympathies in his behalf; and the power of the Crown proved overwhelming. If William's government could bear the odium of Solms at Steinkirk, it could bear anything. The King returned brief answers to the addresses, and supplies were voted for another mismanaged and disastrous year of war.

In July 1693 was fought the great battle of Landen, unmatched in its slaughter except by Malplaquet and Borodino for two hundred years. The French were in greatly superior strength, having 96 battalions and 210 squadrons to William's 65 battalions and 150 squadrons. Nevertheless the King determined to withstand their attack, and constructed almost overnight a system of strong entrenchments and palisades in the enclosed country along the Landen stream, within the windings of the Geet. The battle resolved itself into an intense struggle for the village of Neerwinden, thrice captured, twice retaken. After an heroic resistance the allies were driven from their position by the French with a loss of nearly twenty thousand men, the attackers losing less than half this total. Nevertheless William rallied the remnants of his army, gathered reinforcements, and, since Luxembourg neglected to pursue his victory, was able surprisingly to maintain himself in the field.



There was an episode in the battle which is of interest to this account. The Duke of Berwick was now a General of rising distinction in the French Army. Six French brigades marched abreast to the first assault of Neerwinden. Berwick, who commanded the two centre brigades, carried the village and drove the enemy to its farther end. But the heavy fire in the open ground on either side of the village led the four brigades on the right and left to crowd into it, and the whole force, taken at this disadvantage, was counter-attacked on both flanks by the allies and driven out, leaving Berwick and the survivors of his command to their fate. "I found myself at last," writes Berwick,^[76] "completely cut off. Seeing this, I resolved to escape, if possible, by the plain, and having taken out my white cockade, passed for an officer of the enemy." This he was well qualified to do, for his uniform was not dissimilar, and he was an Englishman.

Unfortunately, Brigadier Churchill,^[77] brother to Lord Churchill, now Duke of Marlborough, and my uncle, came up, and recollecting [recognizing] the only Aid-de-camp I had with me,

suspected immediately that I might be there, and advancing to me, made me his prisoner. After mutual salutations he told me, he must conduct me to the Prince of Orange. We galloped a considerable time without meeting with him; at last we found him at a great distance from the place of action, in a bottom, where neither friends nor enemies were to be seen. The Prince made me a very polite compliment, to which I only replied by a low bow: after looking steadfastly at me for an instant, he put on his hat, and I mine; then he ordered me to be carried to Lewe.^[78]

Berwick's description of William's posture when he was brought before him is no reproach to the proved courage of the King, who as the battle deepened fought desperately in person to retrieve the day. His subsequent treatment of Berwick seems, however, to show that he was angered at Berwick's repulse of his courteous address. "After the battle," writes Berwick,

M de Luxemburg had demanded, agreeable to the terms of the cartel, that I should be sent back at the end of a fortnight; on his side he had released all the General Officers of the enemy, that were prisoners on their parole; but notwithstanding this, they detained me at Antwerp. It happening, however, that the Duke of Ormond could not, on account of his wounds, avail himself of the leave which was granted to the rest; M de Luxemburg informed the enemy, that he should not part with the Duke, till they had released me. He also summoned Lieutenant-General Scravemore, and the other officers to return to Namur. This produced the intended effect, and I joined our army at the camp of Nivelles. The Prince of Orange certainly had a design of sending me prisoner to England, where I should have been closely confined in the Tower of London, though that would have been contrary to all the rules of war; for, though he pretended that I was his subject, and consequently a rebel, yet he had no right to treat me as such, since I was not taken prisoner in a territory that belonged to him. We were in the country of the King of Spain, and I had the honour to serve as Lieutenant-General in the army of the Most Christian King; so that the Prince of Orange could be considered in no other light on that ground than as an auxiliary.^[79]

Of all these stirring events, which at so many points touched him intimately, Marlborough continued to be a mere spectator.

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- [69] Cf. “A Relation of the Late Wicked Contrivance of Stephen Blackhead and Robert Young,” by the Bishop of Rochester, in *Harleian Miscellany*, x, i.
- [70] *Correspondence of William III and Portland*, i, 171; “une chose bien délicate.”
- [71] This wind liberated the French fleets from Brest.
- [72] *Conduct*, pp. 42 *seq.*
- [73] These three letters are in Wolseley, ii, 273-274, 283.
- [74] This is Sprat’s signature, as Bishop of Rochester.
- [75] iii, Part II, 20.
- [76] *Memoirs*, p. 113.
- [77] George Churchill.
- [78] *Memoirs*, pp. 113-114.
- [79] *Memoirs*, p. 116.

CHAPTER VII
THE CAMARET BAY LETTER
(1694)

Early in 1694 King William and his Council planned a descent on Brest.

The difficulty of forcing the French to general actions in the open sea, the impossibility of blocking up their fleets for any considerable time at Brest in the stormy sea of the Bay of Biscay, or at Toulon in the swelling sea of the Gulph of Lyons, had satisfied the King, that the only way to conquer the fleets of France was in their own harbours.^[80]

It was also a definite part of the allied war policy to keep the northern coast of France in apprehension of attack, and to draw troops and munitions thither from the main front in Flanders.

The secret was ill-kept or perhaps deliberately bruited about, and became the common talk of London.^[81] The information reached Paris. Already at the beginning of April King Louis had received news “from several sources that an attack on Brest is intended by 7000 British troops and the combined navies of Britain and Holland.”^[82] This information, howsoever obtained, was accurate even to the number of the troops. On April 4/14 he moved two regiments of horse and six battalions of coastguards to the place, and instructed Vauban, then inspecting the fortresses of Normandy, to look to the defences. Vauban executed his orders on an elaborate scale but in a leisurely manner, and the reinforcements came in gradually. Nevertheless by the end of May Brest was in the highest condition of preparedness, and ten or twelve thousand additional regular troops were on the spot in pursuance of orders issued nearly two months before. These steps were taken by the French upon the reports of their own intelligence service and agents; and that they had been taken was known on both sides of the Channel. The Jacobites at Saint-Germains knew it;^[83] William himself and his Council knew it.^[84] The secrets of both attack and defence had leaked out; the counter-measures had been or were being taken; and the English Government were aware of both facts. Such was the position in the last week in April.

For what followed we must refer to the Nairne Papers, the origin of which an earlier chapter has described. These can all now be seen in the

Carte Collection in the Bodleian. Those containing the charges against the Revolution leaders are eight in number.

- (1) The James Memorial.
- (2) The Melfort Instructions.
- (3) The Landen Memorial.
- (4) The Berkeley Report.
- (5) The Sunderland Memorial.
- (6) The Arran Letter.
- (7) The Floyd Report.
- (8) The Camaret Bay Letter.^[85]

With these last two, which alone concern Marlborough, we must now deal.

Saint-Germains were naturally anxious to maintain credit with their French hosts for knowledge of England and all that passed there. Floyd, Groom of the Bedchamber to James II, had been again in London since March. He sought interviews with the leading personages to whom he had access. According to his account, which is the seventh of the eight Nairne Papers, he was received in the third week of April 1694 by Shrewsbury, Godolphin, Russell, and Marlborough with all proper expressions of loyalty to the exiled sovereign. Marlborough and Shrewsbury, he states, told him nothing. Russell, the Admiral, was affable, voluble, and vague. “What would *you* do [to help James],” he asked Floyd, who was an ex-naval officer, “if you were in my place?” Floyd replied that obviously in the case of an invasion he could “avoid the French fleet and allow it to pass.” The Admiral said he would not do that, although it was once his intention. Floyd thereupon himself—as he says—raised the question of Brest.

I proposed to him that since *some descent would be attempted infallibly upon the coast of France this summer; which would naturally draw down the troops to Brest* or to other places on the coast according to the designs upon them, he might send your Majesty [King James] information of this, and [also^[86]] give you time to *prepare transports this summer: and that towards autumn when it was necessary to disarm the large ships and send convoys to America, etc.*, he would be a judge of those which it would be proper to keep in the channel, and accordingly might retain those which he had gained [over] in the summer, and either send the rest into the harbours or employ them as convoys; and being by these means master of those that remained, he might join the French to

transport the troops which would be *necessary for accompanying your Majesty into England.*

Thus the Jacobite agent, feeling his way, tested the Admiral, mixing up the question of Brest inconsequently with general talk about invasion or restoration, but conveying with clear intention to the naval Commander-in-Chief the fact that he already knew the project he had in hand; and seeking by this means to extract from him additional information. Russell fell back warily into a cloud of assurances of love and fidelity. Lord Shrewsbury and Lord Churchill, he declared, “should be judges of his actions,” and, says Floyd, “I could not draw anything more positive from him.”

Floyd next waited upon Godolphin, who “explained to me his sentiments towards your Majesty in the most affectionate manner imaginable.” After mentioning that there was “too much room to fear a peace would be concluded this summer and that the terms would be prejudicial to your Majesty since infallibly the Prince would endeavour thereby to pledge the Most Christian king to send your Majesty out of his dominions,” Godolphin, according to Floyd’s report, repeated to him almost the actual words which Floyd had used to Russell. The resemblance can be judged from the italicized portions of the two statements. Godolphin is reported to have said that

Russell would infallibly appear before Brest, the land officers believing that the place may be insulted though the sea officers were of a different opinion; that these would give just pretext to His Most Christian Majesty to send troops to that place, and that the necessary transports might be prepared this summer [for the return of James^[87]]; that the large vessels would return about the middle of autumn; that the smaller would be dispersed, the convoys sent to different places of commerce, and that England would have a difficulty in finding thirty vessels of tolerable force and that Your Majesty embracing the proper time might come over. . . .

The similarity of the passages, the order in which the different matters are dealt with, the coupling in a single sentence of the totally different projects of the attack on Brest and of getting transports for James’s return late in the year, the repetition of the word ‘infallibly,’ apparently a favourite one with Floyd, have suggested to various commentators that the Floyd Report is a concoction; “that it was quietly composed at Saint-Germains by Melfort and Floyd in concert, and was transmitted to Versailles as the latest

bona fide account of English politics.”^[88] But it is not necessary to assume this in order to clear Godolphin from the shameful charge which has so long rested upon him. We may accept the fact that Floyd had conversations with all those he mentions in his report; and that he recorded faithfully the impressions these conversations had left in his mind. We may even accept his account of his interview with Godolphin as accurate, without impugning the Minister’s loyalty to his country, to the King he served, or to the Government of which he was a leading member. Odd as it may seem, Ministers and military leaders engaged in common enterprises, bound by a common duty, having much to gain by its successful discharge and all to lose by failure or misconduct, often consult together and talk things over in all the intimacy of a small circle of Cabinet confederates. In fact, this close and constant contact, of which there is rarely any record, is often the main part of what happens. It is obvious from Floyd’s text that these four men, three of whom were in the highest executive positions and the fourth, Churchill, though out of office and out of favour, linked to them by the most confidential or friendly ties, pursued a common policy towards the envoy of their exiled king. According to Floyd’s tale, they all took much the same line and said the same sort of things about each other. For instance, Russell said “Shrewsbury and Churchill should be judges of his actions.” When pressed by Floyd for more definite undertakings he replied that “he thought he had said a great deal.” These phrases are repeated by Floyd in his account of his interviews with Churchill and Major-General Sackville, one of the principal agent-spies. They were “all of the opinion that he had said a great deal.” Godolphin, on the same authority, endorsed this. “Russell”, he said, “in his opinion had said all that could be expected of him.”



THE EARL OF GODOLPHIN

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

Even more remarkable is the fact that Godolphin repeated back almost textually to Floyd the statements which Floyd had volunteered to Russell.

These resemblances cannot be set down to coincidence. A simpler explanation suggests itself. It is reasonable to suppose that before Godolphin received Floyd, Russell had told him what Floyd knew, and Godolphin knew exactly how far he could go without injuring the interests of the State. It is evident that the Ministers consulted upon the matter with each other. It is even possible that they imparted a portion of their conversations to King William.

Certainly William's attitude after the fiasco and tragedy of Brest was, as will be seen, compatible with this view. After all, events still lay within the control of the English executive. They knew that their plan was known. They knew it before Floyd had visited Russell. If one port was prepared, others might be neglected. Alarm and even advertisement were definite elements in all this coastal threat. Alternately their very candour if reported in France might disarm French suspicion at this particular point. At any moment William could stop the fleet sailing or send it to a different destination.^[89] These men were not simpletons. On the contrary, they were statesmen who with small resources, in the teeth of unusual difficulties, solved some of the most perplexing problems of peace and war, and carried their country successfully through a period of enormous peril. The final decision to send the fleet was clearly taken with full knowledge that the French had heard that it was going to Brest, and might be ready for it there.

The eighth of the Nairne Papers is the foundation for the charge against Marlborough. It purports to be the translation into French of a letter from Major-General Sackville forwarding a letter from Marlborough to King James. We print it in facsimile.^[90] The English retranslation is as follows:

3rd May, 1694. I have just received the enclosed letter for the King. It is from Lord Churchill; but no person but the Queen and you must know from whom it comes. Therefore, for the love of God, let it be kept a close secret, even from Lord Middleton. I send it by an express, judging it to be of the utmost consequence for the service of the King, my master; and consequently for the service of His Most Christian Majesty. You see by the contents of this letter that I am not deceived in the judgment I formed of Admiral Russell; for that man has not acted with good faith, and I fear he never will act otherwise.

Translation of Lord Churchill's letter of the same date to the King of England

It is only to-day that I have just learned the news I now write to you; which is, that the bomb-ketches and the twelve regiments

encamped at Portsmouth, with the two regiments of marines, all commanded by Talmash,^[91] are destined for burning the port of Brest, and destroying all the men-of-war that are there. This will be a great advantage to England. But no consideration can prevent, or ever shall prevent me from informing you of all that I believe can be for your service. Therefore you may make your own use of this intelligence, which you may rely upon as exactly true. But I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know it but the Queen and the bearer of this letter. Russell will set sail tomorrow with forty ships, the rest being not yet paid; but it is said that in ten days the rest of the fleet will follow; and at the same time, the land forces. I attempted to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell. But he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions. I shall be very well pleased to learn that this letter has come safely to your hands.

Here is the damning piece. It is upon this document that the pinnacle of Macaulay's libels upon Marlborough has been erected. Macaulay assumes its authenticity with unquestioning glee, and proceeds to use it in the most sensational and malicious manner. He suppresses all the other channels by which information had reached the French King, though these were, of course, known to him. He suppresses all the previous preparations made by the French. By Marlborough, and Marlborough alone, was the secret betrayed. Upon his information, and upon that alone, were the French precautions begun. Upon his head alone descends the guilt and infamy of the disaster which followed. Besides his habitual treason to King William and to his country, the arch-villain had in this case a special private incentive to treachery.

Yet never had Marlborough been less a Jacobite than at the moment when he rendered this wicked and shameful service to the Jacobite cause. It may be confidently affirmed that to serve the banished family was not his object, and that to ingratiate himself with the banished family was only his secondary object. His primary object was to force himself into the service of the existing Government, and to gain possession of those important and lucrative places from which he had been dismissed more than two years before. He knew that the country and Parliament would not patiently bear to see the English army commanded by foreign generals. Two Englishmen only had shown themselves fit for high

military posts, himself and Talmash. If Talmash were defeated and disgraced, William would scarcely have a choice. In fact, as soon as it was known that the expedition had failed, and that Talmash was no more, the general cry was that the King ought to receive into his favour the accomplished captain who had done such good service at Walcourt, at Cork, and at Kinsale.^[92]

Marlborough's defenders and apologists have been concerned to expose the many untruths in Macaulay's account and to throw the blame on others. "Modern criticism," it has been said,^[93] "has passed by the meanness of Godolphin to assail the glory of Marlborough." The charge that Marlborough's main incentive was to compass the ruin or the death of Tollemache and thus make himself indispensable assumes that Marlborough could know occultly beforehand that Tollemache would attack in spite of finding the place prepared, that he would land himself at the head of his troops, and that he would fail or be killed or mortally wounded. Paget, Wolseley, and Colonel Lloyd^[94] have occupied themselves in proving that Marlborough's letter was not the means by which the French learned the news; that their preparations had begun at least a month before; that Marlborough knew from Godolphin that the French were aware of the plan; that he only sought to ingratiate himself with James II by revealing what was already known; and that he delayed sending the news until he was sure it would arrive too late to influence events. This view has been generally accepted by later writers and commentators.^[95]

But this defence, though valid against Macaulay's libels and embroideries, involves the admission of Marlborough's shame in intention, if not in act. His alleged letter contains precise details. Although the fleet sailed the next day but one, it might have been delayed, and was in fact seriously delayed, and more than a month elapsed before the attack was made. Although the letter did not influence events, it might have done so. If it were ever written it must leave upon the character of John Churchill an ineffaceable and fatal stain. Standards of conduct and morals—public or private—change with the ages, and men are largely the creatures of their environment. Custom and convention play their parts. Desperate need issues its imperious commands. Dark deeds sow their crop of dragon's teeth. Many allowances should be made where a different "climate of opinion" prevails. But in every age the loyalty of a general to his comrades in the army, to the troops he has led and may lead again, is an inflexible obligation. Soldierly honour was as well understood under Queen Anne as under Queen Victoria. Marlborough was a soldier born and bred. He had served from a youth in

rank after rank at home and abroad, in peace and war. He was a trained professional, instinct with the spirit of camps and regiments. His courage and humanity have never been assailed. Even his bitterest detractors acclaim them. His care for the lives of his troops was indefatigable even to his last campaign. At sixty-two—Duke, Prince, Generalissimo, and millionaire—he would tramp the trenches and lines and go in person to any dangerous point of attack in order to make sure with his own eyes that men were not thrown away, or set tasks impossible to perform. He was ever proud to share their perils and avaricious of their love and trust.

Is it possible that a single human being could combine the finest military virtues, the strictest sense of military duty, with the vilest military crimes? Could he—and for a purpose almost paltry and gains uncertain and mediocre—foully betray his comrades by hundreds to their death? Such strange contrarieties may writhe together in the brain of a maniac or a monster. They are not easily to be reconciled in a single sane, well-balanced being. Moreover, the political facts of 1693-94 make it improbable in the last degree that Marlborough would have desired to act against the reigning dynasty in England. All his closest friends were in power or gradually returning to it. In August 1693 he had taken part in a secret conference at Althorp at which Sunderland, Shrewsbury, and other leaders of the future Whig Junto were present. He had already attempted to bring about a reconciliation between the Queen and Princess Anne, and to effect at this very time a formal meeting of the two sisters. Lastly, with Shrewsbury and Godolphin he was a large subscriber to the Bank of England, thus engaging his dearly loved “lucre” in support of the new régime.^[96] Military honour, political associations, financial interest—all alike forbade the outrage and folly of which he is accused. Before accepting such unreasonable conclusions, let us examine the letter with attention.

We had always supposed, from reading both the assailants and the defenders of Marlborough, that the original of this letter existed, and that either the archives of the house of Stuart or the Carte Collection at the Bodleian contained the infamous document, written in Marlborough’s characteristic painstaking handwriting. Dalrymple, however, says:

The originals of the two last letters [Sackville’s and Marlborough’s] are not in existence in the Scots College at Paris where the other two papers are, but copies were found among the other official papers of Nairne, Under Secretary of State to Lord Melfort, and one of them has an interlineation in Lord Melfort’s handwriting. In King James’s Memoirs I have seen a memorandum in his own handwriting that Lord Churchill had on

the 4th May given him information of the design upon Brest. I was told by Principal Gordon of the Scots College at Paris that during the hostilities between the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Oxford near the end of the Queen's reign, Lord Oxford who had got intelligence of the Duke's letter and pretended at that time to be in the interests of the exiled family, applied for and got an order for the original; and that his making the Duke know that his life was in his hands, was the cause of the Duke's going into a voluntary exile at Brussels in the year 1712; and indeed so extraordinary a step as that exile must have had an extraordinary cause. It is known too from the history of the times that there was a private meeting between the Duke and Lord Oxford at Mr Thomas Harley's house to which the Duke came by the back door, immediately after which he left England. I have also heard from the late Archbishop of York, grandson to the Earl of Oxford, that he had been informed that the Duchess of Marlborough after the death of these two persons, had contrived to get the letter from Lord Oxford's papers and destroyed it.^[97]

Thus we see how the very fact that no original of this letter is in existence can be made to blacken the guilt of the man who is accused of writing it. If the proof exists, he is guilty of treason; as it does not exist, he or his wife must be guilty of destroying it. Thus Dalrymple, whose tale had a good run for several generations.

A different though similar story occurs in Shelburne's autobiography printed in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Shelburne*:^[98]

When Lord Oxford was sent to the Tower, the Duke of Berwick, who had owed him some obligations, sent to know whether he could do anything to serve him, and in the meantime sent him an original letter from the Duke of Marlborough to the Pretender for him to make any use of he thought proper. Lord Oxford asked his counsel, Sergeant Cummins, whether it could be of any: he said "A great deal; I would advise your Lordship to send your son, Lord Harley, with it to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, but as I have known such things sometimes snatched and torn up, I would keep the original and send only an exact copy." Lord Harley waited accordingly on the Duke of Marlborough, saying that he waited on his Grace by his father's directions with it, and nothing more. The Duke read it attentively,

and said: “My Lord, this is not my hand.” Lord Harley said, “My father has the original”: upon which civil bows passed without a word more, but the prosecution in a few weeks after was dropped.

A contradictory variant of this story is found in Seward.^[99]

Here we have, therefore, the same tale of some deadly letter by which the Duke of Marlborough, after all his glories, the greatest living figure in the world, was liable to be blackmailed. In the first instance we are told by Dalrymple that the fear of this letter held over him by Lord Oxford induced him to retreat to Brussels in 1712. In the second instance, in 1715, it is Lord Oxford’s son who is sent to threaten, as the result of which his father’s prosecution is dropped. Obviously if in 1712 Oxford, then Prime Minister, had possessed the damning document the authenticity of which Marlborough had immediately recognized and in dread of which he had quitted the country forthwith, it would not have been necessary for Oxford in 1715, still possessed of the document, to send a copy of it by his son. Marlborough would have been aware in 1715 of the hold which Oxford had established over him in 1712. Therefore we must conclude that this is the same scandalous narrative by two different writers, each agreeing in malice and libel, but completely at variance in time and circumstance.

The Shelburne and Seward versions can be proved false in various essentials with the greatest ease. We are told:

Lord Oxford came to a full resolution to petition the House of Lords in March [1716] to be tried, in which he principally advised with Lord Trevor. As soon as this was known the Duke of Marlborough talked of nothing but a Bill of Attainder or a Bill of Banishment.^[100]

In May 1716 after the Whigs had been in some measure satiated with the blood of the Preston prisoners, the Duke of Marlborough began to solicit and to forward as much as in him lay a Bill of Attainder against the Earl of Oxford. Mr Walpole and Lord Townsend assumed to themselves the merit of opposing it and by that stopping it. The Duke was in a great rage and anger upon their not complying with him, and went out of town to St Albans, whereupon he was struck with that illness which he never recovered, it was a great while before he recovered his speech, his senses he never fully recovered.^[101]

This is a good example of the fertility of the calumnies against Marlborough. The reader may choose between the spectacle of his being blackmailed into tame inactivity by the threatened exposure, and persisting so violently in his quest for vengeance that his passions brought on an apoplectic stroke. Any tale is good enough to smirch his character. But if this latter unpleasant account is accepted, it flatly contradicts the story of the Shelburne memoirs. The two charges are mutually destructive. As a matter of fact, neither version is true. The reasons why the prosecution of Lord Oxford was dropped are undisputed history. All the facts of the quarrel between the two Houses of Parliament which resulted first in a prolonged deadlock and conflict between them and thereafter in the acquittal of Oxford by the Lords are set forth plainly in every standard work upon the period. Marlborough after 1715 was already fast declining in mental and physical strength. Although restored to the office of Captain-General, he was no longer in the inner circle. He had neither the power nor means to influence the intricate and varying course of the dispute between the two Houses. At that date the publication of such a letter would not have menaced him in property, liberty, or life. Twenty years had passed, and his fidelity to the Protestant cause and to the Revolution of 1688 had been written with the sword upon the battlefields of Europe.

The whole of this story is a tissue of fraud and lies, of gossip and calumny, such as gather around the footsteps of the great, the powerful, and the envied. Few are the public men in any modern state who have reached exceptional eminence without there being passed from foul lips to pricked-up ears some tale of shamefulness. "This one was corrupt"; or "that one was immoral"; or "the other perverted." In the clubs, messes, and pothouses of every country such atrocious stories are the inseparable shadow of worldly success. Historians come along and in default of better material pick up this scandalous chatter, that "so and so heard from Mr Nonsuch that his grandfather had told the Bishop of Q. that his wife once had a letter which if it had not unhappily been mislaid, or destroyed, purloined, or corruptly purchased, would have, etc., etc., etc."

However, it is certain that no such letter in Marlborough's handwriting ever reached Saint-Germain. All that exists or has ever existed is the document shown in facsimile opposite [p. 135](#). It is headed as follows: "Translation [*i.e.*, recasting in French] of a letter *in cipher* from Mr Sackfield [Sackville], Marechal des Camps of His Britannic Majesty, to the Earl of Milford [Melfort]."

The paper is in the handwriting of Nairne. It has not been folded for transmission. It is the translation into French of the decode of an alleged cipher message in English which had been conveyed from Sackville to

France, probably in a tiny roll concealed in hat, boot, vesture, or even perhaps in the wad of a pistol. How then, is it suggested, was this communication, if it ever existed, prepared? It seems unlikely that so profound and crafty a conspirator as Marlborough is depicted to be, a man steeped in treachery, his head at stake, or a master of strategy and manœuvre, as we know he was, would, when easier and safer alternatives were open, write such a letter to Sackville, send it by ordinary messenger, and leave it in his hands. It was the sort of letter any man would have been careful about; quite ordinary criminals would be more circumspect.

So we must suppose that the two men were together in England when the deed, if done at all, was done; that they composed both letters in concert, that Sackville, who had the cipher, encoded them, and that all traces of the original draft were carefully destroyed on the night of May 3, 1694. Upon this common-sense assumption there would have been no need for Marlborough to leave the destruction of this letter to the belated exertions of his Duchess half a century later. We must therefore conclude that there never was any holograph letter of Marlborough's of this kind in existence; or, at the very least, that there never was a moment when such a document was in the power or possession of any other human being.

If this is settled we have taken a considerable step forward in clarifying this matter. The evidence against Marlborough rests upon a lengthy chain, every link of which was admittedly forged by his Jacobite enemies. Sackville, Melfort, Nairne, Dicconson, all, according to the historians, had his life and honour in their hands at their leisure and discretion. Whatever they chose to write they could leave behind them, and as nothing else has survived, that has become decisive for the historians. But unluckily they had no letter from Marlborough. They had to do all the pen-work themselves. Dalrymple, Macpherson, Macaulay have built their fabric of accusation upon the foundation of this letter; but it does not exist; it has never existed. All that exists is a document in Nairne's handwriting purporting to be the copy of a message in cipher from Sackville to Melfort in which Sackville reports the text of a letter or possibly of a verbal message, which he alleges he received from Marlborough. Such evidence would not hang a dog.

But it is said there is a second witness. It is James himself. Macpherson says, "In King James's Memoirs there is the following memorandum written *upon the receipt* of the letter in his own hand, 'May 4 Lord Churchill informed the King of the design on Brest.' " (Macpherson even gives the page—521.) Macpherson says he saw this in the Memoirs which Mr Fox was told in 1802 were never shown him. Dalrymple, however, in the passage already quoted offers partial confirmation. "In King James's Memoirs I have

seen a memorandum in his own handwriting that Lord Churchill had on 4th May given him information of the design upon Brest.”

Now King James’s Memoirs stopped in 1660, and Dicconson did not begin the *Life* till several years after King James’s death in 1702. There were no memoirs covering the period of William’s reign, and there was no *Life* of James at all in existence upon which in 1694 or at any other time James could have written the alleged accusation, or anything else. What, then, did Macpherson and Dalrymple see? No doubt they saw Dicconson’s *Life*, written perhaps fifteen years later, into the text of which a note purporting to be by James, and in an imitation of his handwriting, had been interpolated after his death by some Jacobite-Jesuit scribe for the sake of fortifying the charges against the Duke of Marlborough. What they saw was, in fact, what Macaulay has called “one of the thousand fictions invented at Saint-Germains for the purpose of blackening a character which was black enough without such daubing.” They may also have looked at the “3 vols. in 4^o” of the Memoirs, fair-copied and bound up by Louis Inesse from Dryden’s transcript of the year 1686 of James’s original Memoirs, “almost illegible,” which had “puzzled Mr Carte,” and not have noticed, or been given the opportunity to notice, that these carried the story no further than 1660. However it may be, it is clear that they were deceived, or deceived themselves, into proclaiming an untruth which has helped to mislead the writers of five or six generations, and has served as a whetstone for the weapons of calumny.

Traduction d'une lettre en Cyffre du S.
 Sachfrieds Marishal des camps de la M.B. Ce 3 May 1674
 au Comte de Milford

Je viens de recevoir la lettre cy jointe pour le Roy, C'est de Milford
 Churchill, mais il ne faut point que personne que la Reine et vous
 sache de qui elle vient, ainsi pour l'amour de Dieu que la chose soit
 bien secrette, Je l'envoy par un expres jugeant qu'elle est de la
 derniere consequence pour le service du Roy mon m^r et par consequent
 pour Celuy de sa Ma: tres Reine. Vous verriez par le contenu de cette
 lettre que je ne me suis pas trompe' dans le jugement que j'ai fait
 de L'Admiral Russell - car cet homme n'a pas agi de bonne
 loy, et j'ai peur qu'il n'agisse jamais autrement

Traduction de la Lettre de Milford Churchill
 au Roy d'Angleterre de meme date

Ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui que je viens de sçavoir ce que je vous
 mande ici qui est que les galliottes a bombes, et les douze regiments
 qui sont campés a Portsmouth avec les deux regiments de marine sous
 commandés par Patmashe, sont destinés pour bruler le port de Brest

THE CAMARET BAY LETTER

Carte MSS.

et de détruire tous les vaisseaux de guerre qui y sont. Ceci sera un grand avantage pour l'Angleterre. Mais aucune considération ne peut m'empêcher ni ne m'empêchera jamais de vous informer de tout ce que je crois pouvoir être pour votre service. Ainsi vous pouvez faire votre usage de cet avis, et compter qu'il est très véritable. Mais il faut que je vous conjure pour votre propre intérêt que personne n'en sache rien que La Reine, et celui qui vous donnera la lettre.

Mr. Russell mettra demain à la voile avec 40 vaisseaux, le reste n'étant pas encore payé. Mais on dit que dans dix jours le reste de la flotte suivra et en même temps les troupes de terre. J'ai tâché de savoir ce qu'il y a quelque temps de l'Amiral Russell — mais il met à toujours de côté quoique je sois très assuré qu'il sauroit ce dessein il y a plus de six semaines. Ce qui me donne un méchant augure des intentions de cet homme là. Je serai bien aise de savoir que cette lettre vous soit venue heureusement entre les mains.

After this exposure it is scarcely necessary to pursue the point further. But since it illustrates the nature of all frauds to fall to pieces of themselves, the reader should note the difference in the respective statements of Macpherson and Dalrymple. Macpherson in his eagerness to traduce Marlborough says that James's memorandum was written "upon the receipt of the letter," whereas the more cautious Dalrymple only says that "Churchill had on the 4th May given him information," etc., without specifying when the entry was made. The Camaret Bay Letter could not, of course, have been received by James on May 4. Sackville dated it "the 3rd May." This is certainly the Old Style dating, because Marlborough's alleged letter says, "Russell sails to-morrow," and we know that the fleet did in fact

sail on the 5th (Old Style), the day after that to-morrow. Of course, it would have been impossible in those days for any missive sent from London on May 3 by other than State couriers to have reached Saint-Germains before the 7th or 8th, and even by them it could not have been delivered before the 6th. This would assume the couriers on both sides and the ship running in connexion, and favourable weather. The 8th of May (Old Style) is the 18th of May (New Style). James, Nairne, Dicconson, and the rest during their residence at Saint-Germains invariably used the New Style in vogue in France. There could, therefore, be no question of James having made this entry in Dicconson's *Life*, even if it had been written, or on any other document, *upon receipt* of the letter. If James ever made such an entry it must have been upon some other occasion. Of this there is no evidence or suggestion of evidence. And in any case the entry would be wrong. May 4 was neither the date on which the letter was said to have been written nor that on which it could possibly have been received.

On the basis, therefore, (a) that no original of the Camaret Bay Letter exists and (b) that the charge against Marlborough rests solely upon Sackville decoded by Melfort, transcribed by Nairne, let us address ourselves to the text of the letter itself.

The first point to notice is the interlineation after the third line that the letter must be kept a secret "*even from Lord Middleton [meme du Comte de Middleton].*" This is not in Nairne's handwriting, but in that of Melfort. The fact is significant. This was above all others the moment when it was vital for Lord Melfort to prove himself invaluable and indispensable. A schism had arisen in the Jacobite councils. They were divided into "Compounders" and "Non-compounders"; the former being willing to subscribe to the requirements of Protestant and constitutional government in the event of a restoration, the latter holding firmly to the extreme Catholic view. The Protestant Lord Middleton represented and was the head of the Compounders; Melfort of the Non-compounders. For more than a year Melfort's credit with James had been waning. Middleton had arrived at Saint-Germains in the autumn of 1693 as joint Secretary of State with Melfort. His appointment as sole Secretary of State in place of Melfort was now imminent. Melfort was politically *in extremis*. At the beginning of this same month of May, and within three days of the date when he claims to have received the Camaret Bay Letter, he was dismissed from his office and appointed to the much humbler post of Secretary to the Queen. Mary of Modena, always a devout and fanatical Catholic, was since her exile immersed in politics and a centre of Jacobite intrigue. In fact, she seems to have concerned herself with secret service matters more closely than did her husband. Melfort felt his dismissal acutely. His justification of his

Ministerial conduct written on May 7/17—this same May—shows his state of mind. He had long lived at the centre of a spider’s web of secret service and conspiracy. To be divorced from this was a bitter pang. That he should be supplanted by the head of the Protestant Jacobites was an additional twinge to him and a sorrow to the Queen, who in his distress had offered him shelter.

The gravest reasons of policy had induced James to part with Melfort, to whom he was attached, and to install the Protestant Secretary of State in his stead. These reasons are obvious to us to-day. No restoration was possible except through the support of the Protestant Jacobites of England. Middleton, a man of high integrity, commanded the respect and confidence of a very large number of Whigs and Anti-Catholic Tories. Had a restoration taken place it was to him that all the Protestants who loathed Dutch William and the leaders of the Revolution, whether in or out of King William’s councils, looked as guarantee that the follies which James had committed in his short reign would not be renewed, should he regain the crown. It was with Middleton that the English Ministers had such relations as existed. So Melfort must go, and zeal for Rome, even in the Queen’s despite, must yield for a time at least to practical politics. The bitter feelings with which Melfort viewed his rival and supplanter were cordially reciprocated, for on October 3 this same year we find Middleton writing to another Compounder, “I wish [hope] Lord Melfort does not come to spit in our potage, for if the Ministers believe that he will be acquainted with what has been proposed, we need think no more about it.”^[102]

Why, may we ask, should Marlborough be so anxious to correspond only with Melfort, and not with Middleton? In so far as he involved himself with the Jacobites he is always represented by them as a Compounder. Indeed, it was to his advice that James’s biographer Dicconson attributes James’s Declaration in favour of maintaining the rights of Parliament and the interests of the Church of England. Why, then, should he in this—the only document which pretends to be even a copy of a letter—in this, the most deadly of all documents, stipulate that it should not be shown to Lord Middleton, the head of the Compounders? No answer admissible to the human intellect can be given. On all Jacobite showing Middleton was his link, and Middleton was coming into power. Melfort was not his link, was, in fact, the chief opponent of what is alleged to be his view; and Melfort was going out of power. Why indeed should he have tied himself to Melfort on this occasion only, on this occasion above all others? On the other hand, the reasons why Melfort should pretend he had done so are obvious.

The fact that Melfort tampered with the letter for the purpose of enhancing his own importance at the expense of Middleton stands forth beyond dispute. It is fair to ask, was this the only tampering? Curiously enough, seven years later, as we shall see, Melfort got into trouble for a treacherous trick with another letter. Later, in 1708, Marlborough is said to have been informed by one of Melfort's household of the proposed French operations in Scotland. Saint-Simon, who knew Melfort well, always suspected him of playing fast and loose. Such was the man under whose supervision Nairne wrote the Camaret Bay Letter.

The next mark of fabrication is the cross-heading "Translation of Lord Churchill's letter of the same date *to the King of England*."^[103] Obviously Marlborough would not have used this unceremonious style to the King. He would never have addressed the King as "you," or written "you may make your own use of this intelligence," or "I must conjure you for your own interest." Sackville, writing only to a Secretary of State on this very occasion and in the same urgency, observed all the forms and laboriously ciphered out "the service of the King, my master" and "the service of His Most Christian Majesty." Why, then, should Marlborough write to the King as to an equal?

And what sense can there be in Marlborough's reference to "the bearer of this letter"? Only the Queen and "the bearer" are to know. The King is conjured ("for his own interest") to observe this injunction. Who was the bearer? The context forbids that it could be Sackville, for he writes his own separate and introductory letter. Who then—a messenger? But the message was in cipher. Was it, then, Melfort himself? But how could Marlborough, writing in England, know that it would be Melfort who would be "the bearer"; and why should he refer to the Secretary of State by this peculiar term? No rational explanation exists.

If the reader will finally look back to the Sackville-Churchill letters,^[104] he will be struck by their strange harmony both in sense and in its contradiction. Says Sackville, "No person *but the Queen* and you must know from whom it comes. Therefore, for the love of God, let it be kept a close secret. . . ." Says Churchill, "But I must conjure you for your own interest to let no one know it *but the Queen* and the bearer of this letter." Says Sackville of Admiral Russell, "That man *has not acted with good faith, and I fear he never will act otherwise*." Says Churchill, "I attempted to learn this some time ago from Admiral Russell. But he always denied it to me, though I am very sure that he knew the design for more than six weeks. *This gives me a bad sign of this man's intentions*." And, again, Sackville, inconsistently disregarding the secrecy which he had just enjoined, says, "I send it by an

express, judging it to be of the utmost consequence for the service of the King, my master; and consequently *for the service of His Most Christian Majesty.*” Says Churchill, with similar inconsequence, “Therefore *you may make your own use* of this intelligence, which you may rely upon as exactly true.” Thus they marched both in step and out of step together.

It is difficult to believe that these two letters were written independently. Whether we adopt the theory that Churchill and Sackville composed them together in London or that Nairne and Melfort concocted them together in Paris, evidence favours their simultaneous birth. But on which side of the Channel did this take place? There was certainly no reason why it should not have been at Saint-Germains. Melfort had known of the Brest plan for weeks. His agent Floyd on his visit to England volunteered the information to Admiral Russell. Floyd’s report of his interviews with Russell and Godolphin was already in Melfort’s possession. It is probable that he also knew the measures which the French had taken to strengthen and reinforce the place. The details which Churchill is said to have supplied were such as might easily have been obtained by an ordinary spy. A stroll through the camps on Portsdown Hills or through Portsmouth Dockyard would have revealed to any competent agent in the early days of May the embarkation of the troops and the impending departure of the fleet. The French War Office had known the exact numbers of the expeditionary force—seven thousand—since April. Such a report may well have reached Saint-Germains. The destination of the fleet was the only secret, and that had long ago already been penetrated, betrayed, or divulged; but could at any time be changed. There is therefore nothing in this letter which could not have been set down by Nairne and Melfort and presented by them to Mary of Modena, James, and Louis. What was needed was not information but authority, something that would associate this information with an eminent Englishman, something that would carry it safely to the highest quarters, rivet the attention of Ministers and sovereigns, and show to all how vigilant and irreplaceable were Melfort and Nairne, and how exclusive were the connexions they had established across the Channel.

We cannot convict Nairne and Melfort of inventing and fabricating the Camaret Bay Letter. We cannot expose them as the Privy Council exposed Young and his confederate Blackhead, with their equally elaborate and circumstantial charge. We cannot rank them with the celebrated political forgers of our own time—with Esterhazy of the Dreyfus Case, with Piggott of the Parnell Commission. All we know is that they were capable of such conduct. Men who do not stop at murder for a cause will not stop at forgery. Melfort had every opportunity and all the necessary materials; he had an urgent interest at this moment in presenting something sensational to

improve his own position with the French Government at the expense of Middleton, and to strengthen himself with the Queen. With this end in view he certainly fastened on Sackville with wrongful intent at least one phrase which we know that Sackville never wrote.

Here, then, is the evidence and here is the witness, the sole witness upon which this frightful charge against John, Duke of Marlborough, has been founded. In groping among these shadows of the past and stirring the dust of long-dead generations, we can do no more than reveal discrepancies and untruths, and contrast and balance probabilities. Even after exposing the tissue of falsehood in the accusation, we cannot prove a negative for the defence. But if history hesitates to frame an indictment against Melfort and Nairne or any of the cluster of exiled Jacobites and priests who formed the phantom Court of Saint-Germains, justice forbids her to pronounce on no evidence but theirs a sentence of eternal infamy upon the first of English soldiers and a chief architect of Britain's Imperial power.

[80] Dalrymple, iii, Part III, 59.

[81] See Paget's references to Boyer, Ralph, Kennet, Oldmixon, etc., in *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 27. Luttrell, *Relation*, iii, 328. *Per contra*, Macaulay, iv, 510, quoting L'Hermitage.

[82] Louis XIV to Vauban, *cit.* Wolseley, ii, 314.

[83] Floyd Report, Macpherson, i, 480.

[84] King William's letter of June 18 to Shrewsbury, Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 457.

[85] A detailed and searching analysis of each of these documents was published in *The English Historical Review* of April 1897 by Lieut.-Colonel the Hon. Arthur Parnell, R.E. He arrived at the conclusion that they were not only thoroughly untrustworthy, but in most cases, especially the Camaret Bay Letter, actual fabrications. His argument was countered in the same review, in July 1920, by Professor G. Davis. The two articles read together give a comprehensive view of the controversy.

[86] Author's insertion, as the transports have nothing to do with the Brest plan, but with the return of James.

[87] Author's insertion.

- [88] This is Colonel Parnell's view.
- [89] The following imaginary conversation is probably more true to life and reality than the monstrous assumptions which historians have adopted:
- GODOLPHIN. Floyd has been to see us again, sire.
- KING WILLIAM. Did you get anything out of him?
- GODOLPHIN. They know all about our Brest plan. He told the whole story to the Admiral.
- KING WILLIAM. I don't mind that so much if it draws troops from Flanders. But how did you deal with him?
- GODOLPHIN. We left him where he was. In fact, I served him back exactly what he had told Russell.
- KING WILLIAM. It may deceive them: but we shall have to be careful, when the time comes, to go somewhere else if we find them ready at Brest. There is no need to make up our minds yet. The fleet is still fitting out. The dockyards are full of spies, but it rests with us where it shall go. By the way, my lord, how does exile suit the charming Queen?
- GODOLPHIN (*bowing*). Sire, I am sending her some sweetmeats.
- [90] Facing [p. 134](#).
- [91] The Tollemache already mentioned.
- [92] *History*, iv, 514.
- [93] *Cambridge Modern History*, v, 461.
- [94] "Marlborough and the Brest Expedition," in *The English Historical Review*, 1894.
- [95] A notable exception is Professor Basil Williams, who in his *Stanhope* (1932), apparently oblivious of forty years of accepted opinion and research, inertly or docilely reproduces the crude, exploded slander that "the gallant General Talmash" fell "as victim to Marlborough's treachery in the ill-fated Brest expedition" (p. 15).
- [96] Feiling, pp. 295-296, 306. According to L'Hermitage (Add. MSS., 17677 O.O., f. 279 *verso*), Marlborough and Shrewsbury subscribed £10,000 each and Godolphin £7000.

- [97] iii, Part III, 65-66.
- [98] i, 22.
- [99] “During the preparations for the trial of Harley Earl of Oxford, a relation of his went to the Duchess of Marlborough, with a copy of a letter which the Duke had written to the Pretender. She taking the letter from him, and reading it, tore it to pieces. He then shewed her the original. The trial soon after was stopped, on a supposed misunderstanding between the Houses of Lords and Commons.” (Seward, *Anecdotes*, p. 268.)
- [100] Portland Papers, *H.M.C.*, v, 667-668.
- [101] Stowe MSS., 825, f. 120.
- [102] Macpherson, i, 497.
- [103] Author’s italics.
- [104] [P. 125](#).

CHAPTER VIII
CAMARET BAY
(1694)

It remains to recount what befell the Brest expedition. According to Dalrymple, King William

intended that the attempt should have been made in the spring, but Admiral Russell, by private orders from King James, having accepted the command of the fleet, which had been taken from him the year before, and King James having given private instructions, through the hands of the Countess of Shrewsbury, to him, the Duke of Leeds [Danby], the Lords Shrewsbury, Godolphin and Marlborough, and others, to create delays in the fitting out of the fleet,^[105] Lord Berkley, who commanded it, was not ready to sail till the first week of June.

This outrageous charge does not affect Marlborough, who, having no official employment of any kind, had no power to delay the sailing of the fleet. It is, however, flagrant against Admiral Russell, whose patriotism and inherent loyalty to the Protestant succession had been proved at Cape La Hogue, and were now about to be proved again in the Mediterranean, to which he was proceeding, in pursuit of Tourville, with the English main fleet. Before sailing the Admiral wrote to the Secretary of the Admiralty, Trenchard, a letter which shows his care for the public interests, and ill consorts with the libel that he had been betraying them under the orders of James II:

Now we are going, give me leave to offer to you my opinion. I shall not speak upon the business of the Straits; in that I assure you what service I am able to perform there, I will not be wanting. But those ships designed to Brest with the landmen, how successful they may be nobody can make a judgment; but 'tis to be feared that since the delay has been so much greater than could be expected or imagined, it has given the enemy time, upon the alarm, to make preparations to oppose them. Therefore may it not be convenient that the General [Tollemache] should not be tied up too strictly by his orders, that in case he has the good fortune to do service there, he may also have liberty, if approved of by a council

of war of general officers, both of land and sea, to attempt any other place that by good information they may hope for success upon? Or, in case the opposition they meet with at Brest be so great that they can hope for little success, why may they not run to Port Louis, where I am told it is feasible to destroy, if not their ships, their magazines of stores?^[106]

This warning by the Commander-in-Chief to the Admiralty emphasized the Queen's instructions to Tollemache of May 11, which were in the most general terms.

. . . And when you shall come to the Rendezvous appointed, or shall otherwise join the Admiral of our Fleet, you are to advise with our said Admiral, how our said Forces may best be employed for our service, and for annoying the Enemy; and what shall be agreed upon between You and Our said Admiral; or in his absence between You and the Commander in Chief of such ships as our said Admiral shall send with You, You are to put in execution accordingly.^[107]

In the first week of June Russell sailed with the whole fleet for the Mediterranean. He dropped Berkeley, with a squadron of transports containing seven thousand men, off Brest. On June 7 this squadron stood into Camaret Bay. The heavy fire of mortars from the shore batteries showed at once that the place was in the fullest state of defence and preparedness. At the council of war Lord Cutts, already an officer of proved daring, afterwards Marlborough's famous "Salamander," urged caution. He volunteered himself to go ashore with fifty grenadiers and test the severity of the fire. But Tollemache seemed strangely set upon the attempt. He recognized the danger; "the die, however," he said, "is cast; we cannot in honour retreat." Such a mood was, having regard to his orders, as unreasonable as stout-hearted. The Admirals would not be cold when the General was thus ardent. Accordingly the next morning, June 8, the squadron engaged the forts and batteries at close quarters, and Tollemache, at the head of fifteen hundred infantry, landed from boats on the sandy shore in the teeth of heavy and increasing firing. They were forthwith, while in the confusion of landing, attacked by superior numbers of French infantry, and charged by cavalry and driven back on their boats. Tollemache was wounded in the thigh. By a singular error the landing had been made upon an ebb-tide. Few of the heavy boats could be got afloat. The majority of those who had landed were killed or captured. The wounded General was carried aboard his

ship, and the squadron, which had suffered severely in its duel with the forts and batteries, withdrew out of range. So serious had been the losses, amounting to nearly two thousand men, that all plans for attacking other points upon the coast were abandoned, and the expedition sailed back to Portsmouth, which was reached on the 12th. On the melancholy homeward voyage further councils of war were held. Tollemache, whose wound had become grievously inflamed, attended, and is said to have declared “that Brest was the only place he had authority to attack.” He died a few days later of what was no doubt blood-poisoning from an injury with which modern war-surgery could probably easily have coped. In his last hours this brave officer mingled with expressions of his contentment to die for his country the reproach that he had been betrayed by his fellow-countrymen.

From the earliest moment a fast ship had borne the news of the repulse to England, and the Secretary of the Admiralty wrote to Lord Berkeley from Whitehall, June 13, 1694:

I have your Lordships of the 9th instant from Camaret Bay, which I have laid before the Queen who commands me to signify to you, that she did not intend by her Order to restrain [restrict] the Lieutenant-General Tollemache to the attempting any one particular place on the Coast of France, as you will see by the enclosed Copy of the Order, and of my letter to Lieutenant General Tollemache of the 29th past, which letter I sent under cover of Colonel Gibson. . . . Her Majesty thereupon thinks fit that Your Lordship and the flag and general officers should consider further attacks on the French coast sending the result of the council of war to be laid before Her Majesty for her further pleasure.^[108]

That the orders for the attack upon Brest were discretionary and depended upon the decisions of a council of senior officers in view of what they found on the spot, and that the English Government knew that the enemy had had ample warning, are all proved by William’s intimate correspondence with the Duke of Shrewsbury, his principal Secretary of State. “I own to you,” wrote the King from Flanders on June 18/28,

that I did not suppose they would have made the attempt without having well reconnoitred the situation of the enemy to receive them; since they [the enemy] were well apprised of our intended attack, and made active preparations for defence; for what was practicable two months ago, was no longer so at present.^[109]

And on June 21/July 1:

I am affected with the loss of poor Tollemache, for although I do not approve of his conduct, yet I am of opinion that his too ardent zeal to distinguish himself, induced him to attempt what was impracticable.

To the first of these letters Shrewsbury replied on June 22:

I never was so entirely satisfied with the design upon Brest as to be much surprised at its miscarrying, especially since the enemy had so much warning to prepare for their defence. But I always concluded it was not to be attempted in case their preparations had made it so impracticable as it is related now to appear to those who viewed it from the ships, but that they had full power to try what could be done on any other part of the coast they should find more feasible.

Shrewsbury then refers to Marlborough in terms which appear honourable and straightforward.

Writing upon this subject it is impossible to forget what has here become a very general discourse, the probability and conveniency of Your Majesty receiving my lord Marlborough into your favour. He has been with me since this news to offer his services, with all the expressions of duty and fidelity imaginable. What I can say by way of persuasion upon this subject will signify but little, since I very well remember when Your Majesty discoursed with me upon it in the spring, you were fully convinced of his usefulness; *but some points remained of a nature too tender for me to pretend to advise upon,*^[110] and of which Your Majesty is the only and best judge; who if those could be committed to Your Majesty's satisfaction I can but think he is capable of being very serviceable. It is so unquestionably his interest to be faithful, that single argument makes me not doubt it.

Now if it be true that Shrewsbury while standing in this close, friendly, confidential relation to the King was all the time betraying him, was taking his orders from James, had in pursuance of those orders already delayed the sailing of the fleet in order to give the French time to make their preparations, his conduct is wicked and repulsive beyond description. Even

Marlborough's alleged villainy pales before that of a trusted Minister using the executive power to ruin an attack upon which he was sending his countrymen and friends, and of caressing with Judas kisses the King who had loaded him with honours and kindness. But is it true? The Jacobite records say it is true. Those who believe those records must say it is true. Those who believe that the Jacobite records are one of the mare's-nests of history are entitled to weigh the opposite probabilities.

Consider the position and character of Shrewsbury. He was a magnifico. He dwelt upon the mountain-tops of ceremony and virtue. Although he lived till nearly sixty, he was always much concerned with the state of his health. All that he did was done in a dignified and leisurely manner. He was capable none the less, as we have seen from his conduct in 1688, of vigorous decisions. He was greatly liked. His nickname was the 'King of Hearts.' He was enormously wealthy. He loved fox-hunting; he loathed office and always longed to lay it down. His public work was disinterested. He had nothing to gain by a Jacobite restoration. He hated Catholicism with the hate of one who had quitted it. To the end of his life such part in public affairs as was extorted from him was always cast against the return of the Stuarts. It was into his hands that the dying Queen Anne gave the white staff in 1714 and thus determined the succession of the house of Hanover. Yet because he had conversed with Jacobite agents and exchanged friendly messages through his mother or through Lord Middleton with King James and thus "made his peace with Saint-Germains," we are told we must believe he was a public traitor to his country and to his cause, and a personal cheat to King William. We are sure he was neither.

There was only one man who had less incentive, less reason than Shrewsbury to play the traitor to King William and to reveal the war-secrets of the Government. That man was Danby. He was Prime Minister. He had been created by William at brief intervals Marquis of Caermarthen and now Duke of Leeds. Like Shrewsbury, he had nothing to gain by treason. He had nothing to hope for from King James that had not already been given him by King William. He was the lifelong enemy of France. He had played a leading part in making both the marriage and the Revolution which had brought King William to the throne. Whether we judge according to his self-interest or to his political convictions, it is incredible that he should have been disloyal to the Government of which he was himself the head. But the success or failure of the Brest expedition struck him not only as a Minister, but as a father. His eldest son, who now that his father was Duke, had become Marquis of Caermarthen, according to Dalrymple, "covered the landing with equal courage, bravely fighting for that country which his father was betraying." We are invited to believe that the Prime Minister was

all the time acting under the orders of James II; that he was concerned in betraying the Brest expedition to the French; that he too conspired to delay the sailings of the English fleet until such time as the French could have made the best preparations to receive it. All this, contrary alike to nature and reason, we must accept because of a Jacobite document, purporting to emanate from James II, of October 16, 1693, headed "Instructions by the Countess of Shrewsbury to the Earl of Shrewsbury and Lords Churchill and Russell," and of a second document of the same date headed "Instructions to the Earl of Danby and Lords Godolphin and Churchill by the Countess of Shrewsbury," in which after various generalities the exiled monarch imagined himself in a position to write by an intriguing woman

That His Majesty expects, upon this conjuncture, that the earl of Danby will do him what service he can, and most particularly, by giving him time how to act against the prince of Orange, and by letting him know, as near as he can, what the said prince's designs may be, and his opinion how to prevent them. . . .

Earls Shrewsbury, Danby, Godolphin, Churchill, Russell, &c. that they do, what in prudence they can, to hinder money or retard it, and hinder the going out of the fleet, so soon as it might do otherwise.

Nothing could, of course, prevent James, deceived, self-deluded, and cruelly mocked, from issuing airy orders to the void, or Jacobite partisans from preserving those orders as proofs of an authority he never possessed, and as the means of aspersing the Englishmen they had good reason to hate. What astonishes is that this rubbish should have been swallowed, in default of better nourishment, by a long succession of historians and presented to posterity in its present form.

But there is one other document impugning Danby, equally with the others, which must be mentioned. It is the third of the Nairne Papers, the Landen Memorial. This is an undated, anonymous paper in an unknown hand, evidently prepared for the benefit of the French Government. It begins by enumerating James's leading supporters in England at that time:

The earl of Danby, prime minister to the Prince of Orange, lord Godolphin, a lord of the treasury and a member of the privy council, the earl of Shrewsbury, who has been his first secretary of state, Russell, who is of the cabinet council and has been an admiral, Churchill, who is the first lieutenant-general, the son of the duke of Beaufort and the son of the duke of Bolton. All these

have served the prince of Orange with zeal, as long as they believed he could maintain himself in England, and have despised all sort of correspondence with the King.

Macaulay did not like this document, especially no doubt the last sentence quoted above. Moreover, he wished to clear Danby of all connexion with James. The Landen Memorial did not therefore fit in with his view. He sweeps it away with magnificent disdain:

This letter is altogether undeserving of consideration. The writer was evidently a silly hotheaded Jacobite, who knew nothing about the situation or character of any of the public men whom he mentioned. . . . Indeed the whole composition is a tissue of absurdities.^[111]

We need not quarrel with him in his estimate. But why limit this scornful distrust to one particular document among the Nairne Papers? None rests on higher authority. All were equally included in the Carte Manuscripts. All have been equally printed by Macpherson. The criticism which Macaulay applies to this one applies equally to all these documents. If their evidence is conclusive when applied to Marlborough, it is equally valid against Danby and the others. Prejudice, bias, and deliberate malice can alone pick and choose. Good sense will equally reject them all.

To sum up, we assert as the basis for the future that: (1) the *Life of James II* after 1660 contained no scrap of his own handwriting, was never written by him nor seen by him, but was written by Dicconson after his death; (2) that the Nairne Papers are without exception untrustworthy or mendacious documents fabricated out of the secret service reports to Saint-Germains, of gossip which their agents had heard in England or their versions of interviews which they had obtained with leading men; (3) that it was the interest of the agents and possibly their instructions to bring as many well-known names as possible into their reports, and that it was the interest of the Court of Saint-Germains to make the most of these reports in order to influence the French Government; (4) that no holograph or autograph letter of any kind was ever written by any of the incriminated statesmen to Saint-Germains; (5) that there is no possible check upon the truth or accuracy either of the statements of the Jacobite agents or of the use made of those statements by Saint-Germains; (6) that the Camaret Bay Letter, the only one of these documents purporting to be even the copy of a letter, is more likely from the circumstances in which it was written and from internal evidence to be a fabrication than any of the other Nairne Papers; (7) that there is no

evidence worthy of the name that Marlborough was ever in act or intention false to the cause for the sake of which he abandoned King James at Salisbury, and that it was never his interest or wish at any moment to aid or bring about a Jacobite restoration; that, on the contrary, his interests were always opposed to it.

We assert further (8) that although there were compromising and irregular relations between King William's Ministers and the exiled King, no military or naval secret of any kind was wilfully betrayed; (9) that no advantage was reaped by the Jacobites or by the French in consequence of any wrongful or wicked action by English Ministers, admirals, or generals; and (10) that, on the contrary, all measures were taken throughout by them in loyalty, fidelity, earnestness, and industry, according to the primitive methods of those days, to prosper the fortunes of the British arms.

[105] See a copy of these instructions in Macpherson's *Original Papers*, i, 456.

[106] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 71.

[107] *S.P. (Dom.)*, Admiralty Entry Book, 205.

[108] *S.P. (Dom.)*, Admiralty Entry Book. For further details of the expedition, see Finch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, and House of Lords Papers, 1694-95, *H.M.C.*, pp. 484 *seq.*

[109] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 44-47.

[110] Author's italics.

[111] *History*, iv, 426 *n.*

CHAPTER IX
THE FENWICK TRIAL
(1694-1697)

We now reach one of the turning points of this story. At the end of 1694 the Queen was stricken with smallpox. Anne wrote a sisterly letter and asked to be allowed to come to her bedside. A civil answer was returned by Lady Derby, then Lady-in-Waiting, declining the visit for the moment on the very natural ground that it was "so necessary to keep the Queen as quiet as possible." The postscript was added, "Pray madam present my humble duty to the Princess." Sarah's shrewd eye read into this "that the disease was mortal," and so in a few days it proved to be. On December 28 Queen Mary died, beloved and mourned by her subjects and bitterly missed by her husband.

This unforeseen event produced profound changes in the prospects and relations of those with whom this story is concerned. Hitherto the natural expectation had been that Mary would long survive her husband, upon whose frail, fiery life so many assaults of disease, war, and conspiracy converged. An English Protestant Queen would then reign in her own right. Instead of this, the crown, thanks in part to the surrender which Anne had made of her rights, devolved on William alone for life. Thereafter it must come to Anne. Any day, any month, certainly as it seemed in a few years, the Princess to whom the sentinels had been ordered to deny their salutes, whom the Mayor of Bath had been forbidden to attend to church, who dwelt quietly with her family and intimate friends in the unfashionable chambers of Berkeley House, would be Queen of the three kingdoms. And at her side, linked by ties which the whole power of the dual reign had been unable to break, would stand the redoubtable couple without whom even in their darkest fortunes it had been impossible to reckon. No wonder Berkeley House, lately so deserted, was thronged with "people of all sorts flocking," in spite of Sarah's ironical smiles, "to pay their respects to the Prince and Princess."

The King had sense enough to know that it would be impossible to continue any longer an open difference with the Princess, without exposing himself to daily slights and a manifest disregard for his sovereign pleasure, for he could not hope that the nobility of England would be hindered, now the Queen was dead,

from paying respect to a Princess who was next heir to him by Act of Parliament and who, if title by blood had taken place, would have had the crown before him; and he was well aware that everybody who had a mind to show they did not care for him would certainly do it by making their court to her.^[112]

But it was no longer Marlborough's part to raise an opposition to the King. From the moment that the Queen had breathed her last his interests were the same as William's. He shared William's resolve to break the power of France. He agreed with the whole character and purpose of his foreign policy. His patience enabled him to wait with contentment for that "sunshine day" of which Anne had written. By the mediation of Sunderland and Somers a formal reconciliation was effected between William and Anne. She was received with her proper ceremony when she waited upon the King at Kensington, and St James's Palace was prepared for her use. Thither in due course she carried Sarah. But the wounds of the quarrel still rankled. The relations between the sovereign and the heiress-presumptive, if correct, were also frigid, and Marlborough remained excluded for four more years from all employment, military or civil, at the front or at home. This, however, did not sway his course of action. Although William treated him with such prolonged and marked personal hostility, he became his steady supporter, and used his graceful arts to prevent anything like a rivalry or open breach between St James's and Whitehall. He continued from time to time to receive the Jacobite agents and preserve his connexion with King James. This was an easy task, since his imprisonment and continuing disgrace at the hands of William pleaded for themselves at Saint-Germains.

Europe believed that the death of Queen Mary would greatly weaken William, and the Jacobites at home and in France looked forward to his speedy downfall. But in fact, owing largely to the concord re-established in the royal circle, he appeared at first even to be strengthened by his loss. His principal Ministers and advisers had long been Marlborough's friends and were united with him by many open and some secret ties. The death of the Queen only consolidated the general accord of this strong and powerful group. Well was it so, for a new danger was already approaching.

The campaign of 1695 brought William his one success in the European war. He besieged and retook Namur in the teeth of the French armies, which now that Luxembourg was dead could find no better leader than a certain Marshal de Villeroy, destined afterwards to a more serious reverse. Some of Anne's friends and advisers urged her to make this happy event an occasion for establishing more agreeable relations with the King, and the Princess was eventually persuaded to send him her respectful but cordial

congratulations. Sarah had been against this letter, expecting that it would only be treated with disdain. Her instinct was well founded. Since nothing happened, Marlborough a fortnight later wrote to Bentinck:

17 September 1695

This trouble is occasioned to your Lordship by a report we have that the packetboat is lost which went from Harwich with the letters of the 3rd instant; the Princess having written one of that date to the King to congratulate His Majesty's good success in the taking of Namur, and being apprehensive her letter may have been lost with the packet, and that the King may not have received the marks of her concern and satisfaction for that great honour and advantage to His Majesty, has commanded me to enclose to Your Lordship a duplicate of her letter of the 3rd, desiring the favour of you to give it to the King, in case the former has been lost, and in case you find he has had it already, to spare His Majesty that trouble.^[113]



THE DUKE OF BERWICK

Niccolo Cassana

By permission of Earl Spencer

Whether this was veiled sarcasm or not, the King took no notice, and no answer seems ever to have been received.

The year 1695 was filled with activities of the Jacobites. The connexions of their party spread throughout the country. In their political clubs, in elegant society, in lonely halls and manor-houses, in the taverns and on the village greens, they held their heads high and exchanged confident

salutations. They could not believe that William, deprived of his English Queen, could stand alone. Beneath all their froth upon the surface there grew at a hundred points preparation for armed rebellion, if and when the hour should strike; and beneath this again, as so often happens in movements of this character, at the root of all, there festered a murder plot. King James was privy to both designs, though it cannot be said he directly or specifically commissioned the assassins. In the autumn he sent Berwick into England to concert the insurrection. For several months this daring young man moved about the country in disguise or lay hidden in London. He saw all the leading Jacobites, and endeavoured to bring their plans coherently to a head and fix the occasion.

Those who believe the Dicconson and Nairne allegations, set forth and embellished by Dalrymple and Macpherson, should find it curious that Berwick saw none of those leading politicians who we are assured were in such deep and guilty relationship with James. Above all, it must seem to them odd that he did not form contact with Marlborough, his uncle, who was out of office and under the displeasure of the Crown. One would have thought that the last man he would miss seeing was the General who only the year before had given so convincing a pledge and safeguard of his renewed loyalty to James as the betrayal of the Brest expedition in his Camaret Bay Letter. If Berwick had seen Marlborough he would certainly have recorded it in his *Memoirs*, not written until the events of his mission possessed only historical interest. No such idea ever seems to have occurred to him. Yet his father would surely not have sent him on so mortally perilous a mission without letting him know the full extent of his English connexions. The truth is that James in his inmost heart only placed limited reliance upon the friendly assurances that reached him from the Revolution leaders. They might serve to impress Louis XIV with the strength of the Jacobite movement, or as a basis for history; but James would not risk the life of a well-loved son, nor Berwick his own life upon them.

Berwick found the resources of the conspiracy were by no means inconsiderable. As many as two thousand horse, "well appointed and even regimented," were ready to take the field on the first notice, and "several people of the highest distinction were also engaged in the business." But here came the deadlock. The English Jacobites were "unanimously agreed not to throw off the mask before a body of troops was actually landed in the island." Louis XIV was willing to supply these troops, but only on one condition. After his experiences in 1692 he was determined not to launch an expedition until after a rising had actually begun. Thus on both sides of the channel the potential rebels and the contingent invaders were in suspense, and waited each on the other.

Meanwhile, independently of Berwick, James had sent over a Sir George Barclay with instructions, written throughout in his own hand, authorizing him in comprehensive terms to commit such acts of hostility against William as he might think right and practicable. At the same time by various routes about twenty resolute members of James's bodyguard at Saint-Germains made their way into England, and by secret signals got into touch with Barclay in London. The most deadly and resolute plot since the Gunpowder Treason was now hatched. Every Saturday King William was wont to go a-hunting, and it was designed on his return from one of these excursions to fall upon him, overpower his guards, and kill him. Turnham Green, where on his homeward journey he recrossed the river by boat and was taken up by a new coach with a new escort, was chosen for the ambushade. For this desperate deed forty men were needed. Twenty had come from Saint-Germains. Twenty more must be found in England. In this delicate recruitment Barclay and his confederates next engaged themselves.

Berwick had now completed his dangerous mission, and could only report the seemingly insuperable obstacle which impeded either revolt or invasion. He now learned of the murder plot. His own statement upon it is remarkable:

. . . Having moreover received information, during my stay in London, that a conspiracy was carrying on against the person of the Prince of Orange, I thought, my principal commission being at an end, I ought to lose no time to return to France that I might not be confounded with the conspirators, whose design appeared to me difficult to execute.^[114]

Such an attitude in a man whose whole life was regarded in Europe as a model of soldierly uprightness reveals the cold-blooded ferocity of the times. Berwick would not himself act in the murder of William, but neither would he hamper those who did. He thought their enterprise forlorn; but that was their affair. Accordingly he made his secret way back to France at the end of the year. He found the French ports full of troops ready for a descent the moment a Jacobite rising should begin. On the road to Paris he met his father hastening to the coast. He returned with King James to Calais, and both waited there week after week for the lightning flash which would cause the explosion.

The conspirators had fixed the afternoon of Saturday, February 15, 1696, as the moment for their onslaught, and forty determined men, mounted and armed to the teeth, were gathered hard by the landing-stage at Turnham Green. The Rye House Plot of the Whigs had got no farther than tavern talk:

the Jacobite desperadoes had come to the very verge of well-concerted action. A fire was even prepared on the Dover cliffs to carry the news to the anxious party at Calais. But two of the forty, one from fear, the other from scruple, had given warning to Bentinck, and at the last moment William was with difficulty persuaded not to hunt that day.

The Government, having got some threads in their hands, speedily drew out the rest. Many of the conspirators were seized, the alarm was given, and the plot in all its gruesome reality and imminence was exposed. The nation was roused to fury. All classes rallied round the King. Parliament suspended the Habeas Corpus Act, and the vast majority of its Members swore themselves into an association to defend the King's person and revenge his death. It was also resolved that Parliament should not be automatically dissolved upon a demise of the Crown from any cause, and that the succession should be instantly ensured in accordance with the Declaration of Right. Thus the confusion following the death of the King, on which James's party counted, would be effectually prevented. The trials and executions of the conspirators were speedy and not too numerous. Never had William enjoyed such popularity since the first days of his reign.

Even if the plot had not miscarried, James had no chance of regaining his lost crown across the murdered corpse of William. The leading Ministers were in the closest contact with Marlborough, and long forethought had taught them to link their future with Anne. No panic or disorder would have followed the bloody deed. Within the compass of a single day, swept upward by a wave of national indignation, Anne would have mounted the throne and Marlborough would have gripped the Army. Not a shot would have been fired. Not a dog would have barked. The new organism of government would have presented itself far stronger than the former combination. No doubt after a few months Marlborough would have again been found sending soothing messages to Saint-Germains explaining that in the temper of the nation it had been impossible for him to act otherwise, that his love for His Majesty and the debt he owed him, of which he would ever be sensible, made it his duty to preserve his Sacred Person from the certain destruction which would have awaited him on English soil; but that in other circumstances a day might come when he would be able to prove in a manner which none could doubt his unchanging devotion to the royal cause. He might well have added a few words of caution upon the importance of the Jacobites making no movement in England when the atmosphere was so unfavourable, and against a Government under the sovereignty of King James's loving daughter and so strongly supported by his ever—at heart—faithful servant. And it is very likely James would have passed the news on to Louis to show him that hope was not even yet extinct; and history would

have quoted it as proof of Marlborough's treachery to Anne. This is but a speculative epitome of the realities.

The murder plot brought in its trail a great Parliamentary drama. Sir John Fenwick was no assassin, but he was deeply involved in the preparations for rebellion. Warrants were issued for his arrest, and after some time by chance he was caught. Well born himself, he was through his wife Lady Mary, daughter of the Earl of Carlisle, connected with several of the greatest families. To save himself from swift condemnation and to gain time for powerful influences to come to his aid, he wrote a confession in which he charged Marlborough, Russell, Godolphin, and Shrewsbury with treasonable correspondence with Saint-Germains. The accusation against Marlborough was that he had sent a message by Floyd to King James asking for his pardon. "The answer to my Lord Marlborough" wrote Fenwick "was, that he was the greatest of criminals where he had the greatest obligations, but if he did him extraordinary service, he might hope for pardon; and a little after he did a considerable piece of service, of which we had an account by one sent on purpose by King James."^[115] It was also alleged that King James relied on Marlborough to bring over the Army to his cause. Fenwick betrayed none of his confederates, the real Jacobites who had been waiting with arms and horses for the signal of revolt. He selected only those "false Jacobites"^[116] who were or had been employed in the greatest stations round King William, and who had mocked the royal exile with vain promises and deceitful homage. William was in Holland. His action when he received this confession casts a revealing light upon the politics of his reign. The King saw through Fenwick's manœuvre at a glance. He learned from it nothing that he had not known for years and discounted at its proper value. He had no intention of destroying the system upon which he ruled or of deranging the structure of his Government by tearing the heads off both great parties. He therefore sent the paper home to his Council with assurances to its incriminated members that his confidence in them was utterly unaffected by such nonsense. This for the moment sufficed.

But when Parliament was apprised of the confession a graver situation supervened. Nobody would have been surprised at the intrigues of Tories with the Jacobites. It was in their blood. But here were the immaculate Whigs aspersed. The House of Commons was determined to test the truth of Fenwick's accusations. Brought to the bar, he refused to amplify or prove what he had written. One Member, Colonel Godfrey, the husband of Arabella, no doubt at Marlborough's desire, specifically invited him across the chamber to state fully all he alleged against Marlborough. But Fenwick excused himself. Brought at the request of Parliament before the King, he

persisted in his refusal. We must presume that, like the historians, he had no proofs, and, like them, was merely repeating the secret talk of the inner Jacobite circles. He was sent back to prison. The charge under which he lay was in any case grievous. Still, since it was not concerned with the actual murder plot, it might not have entailed the forfeit of life. But now he had drawn upon himself the wrath of both great parties, and particularly of the Whigs, who saw two of their most famous leaders impugned without proof or reason. He had also aroused the enmity alike of the powerful men he had accused, and of others whom he might have accused. He had deeply angered the King by what to William was an obvious attempt to rupture his Government. Meanwhile one of the two witnesses indispensable to the treason charge had been bribed or terrorized out of the country, and it seemed that the law stood dumb before him. It was at this stage that the Commons fell back upon the last reserve weapon of the State—an Act of Attainder.

There is no need here to describe the many vehement debates, narrow and exciting divisions, and Parliamentary situations which marked the two months' passage of the Bill through both Houses. They have been so often brilliantly told. We are not concerned with the fate of Sir John Fenwick, but only with the effects of his charges upon Marlborough and the other aspersed statesmen. None of them had been in any way concerned either in the assassination plot or in the projected rebellion. All of them had at some time or other conversed or trafficked with Jacobite agents and thus easily, in King William's phrase, "made their peace with Saint-Germains." Their prolonged ordeal was most severe. When, in a moment of intense public feeling and widespread suspicion, men have to defend themselves from terrible charges, the fact that they have been guilty of comparatively venial conduct of the same kind, compromising in essence and still more in appearance, may shake the strongest nerve and wear down the boldest spirit.

"Every one of the accused persons," says Macaulay,

behaved himself in a manner singularly characteristic. Marlborough, the most culpable of all, preserved a serenity, mild, majestic, and slightly contemptuous. Russell, scarcely less criminal than Marlborough, went into a towering passion, and breathed nothing but vengeance against the villainous informer. Godolphin, uneasy, but wary, reserved, and self-possessed, prepared himself to stand on the defensive. But Shrewsbury, who of all the four was the least to blame, was utterly overwhelmed.^[117]

It is true that Shrewsbury crumpled under the strain. On September 8, 1696, he wrote to the King a letter which is most instructive, both in itself and for the answer it received:

. . . After your Majesty was pleased to allow me to lay down my employment, it was more than a year before I once saw my lord Middleton; then he came, and staid in town awhile, and returned to the country; but a little before the La Hogue business, he came up again, and upon that alarm, being put in the Tower, when people were permitted to see him, I visited him as often as I thought decent, for the nearness of our alliance. [They were relations.] Upon his enlargement, one night at supper, when he was pretty well in drink, he told me he intended to go beyond seas, and asked if I would command him no service. I then told him, by the course he was taking, it would never be in his power to do himself or his friends service; and if the time should come that he expected, I looked upon myself as an offender not to be forgiven, and therefore he should never find me asking it. In the condition he was then, he seemed shocked at my answer; and it being some months after before he went, he never mentioned his own going, or any thing else, to me, but left a message with my aunt [Middleton's wife] that he thought it better to say nothing to me, but that I might depend upon his good offices upon any occasion, and in the same manner he relied upon mine here; and had left me trustee for the small concerns he had in England. I only bowed, and told her I should always be ready to serve her, or him, or their children.

Your majesty now knows the extent of my crime, and if I do not flatter myself, it is no more than a King may forgive.

I am sure when I consider with what reason, justice, and generosity your majesty has weighed this man's information I have little cause to apprehend your ill opinion upon his malice. I wish it were as easy to answer for the reasonableness of the generality of the world. When such a base invention shall be made public, they may perhaps make me incapable of serving you; but if till now I had had neither interest nor inclination, the noble and frank manner with which your majesty has used me upon this occasion, shall ever be owned with all the gratitude in my power.

This confession fell short of the facts. William knew more from the Jacobite talk of the day. But the King set himself to comfort his Minister. "In

sending you Sir John Fenwick's paper," he wrote,

I assured you, that I was persuaded his accusation was false, of which I am now fully convinced, by your answer, and perfectly satisfied with the ingenuous confession of what passed between you and Lord Middleton, which can by no means be imputed to you as a crime. And indeed you may be assured, that this business, so far from making on me any unfavourable impression, will, on the contrary, if possible, in future, strengthen my confidence in you, and my friendship can admit of no increase.^[118]



THE EARL OF AILESBUURY

F. Harrewijn

From a print in the British Museum



SIR JOHN FENWICK

Willem Wissing

From a print in the British Museum



THE DUKE OF SHREWSBURY

School of Kneller

National Portrait Gallery

But Shrewsbury was inconsolable. He buried himself in the country. He declared that a fall out hunting had rendered him unfit for public business. Certainly his health broke down completely. He repeatedly but in vain besought William to allow him to resign. Meanwhile he seems to have left Marlborough to watch over his interests, for we have one of Marlborough's very rare letters in this period to him:

December 2, 1696

Wednesday night—

Although I have not troubled your Grace with my letters I have not been wanting in inquiring constantly how you did. I did about a fortnight ago write a letter to acquaint you with what I had observed of some people, in hopes Mr Arden would have called upon me as he promised, but I did not care to send it by post, and

so it was burnt. We had yesterday Sir Jo. Fenwick at the House, and I think all went as well as you could wish. I do not send you the particulars, knowing you must have it more exactly from others; but on this occasion I should be wanting if I did not let you know that Lord Rochester has behaved himself on all this occasion like a friend; and in a conversation he had with me he expressed himself as a real servant of yours, and I think it would not be amiss if you took notice of it to him. . . .^[119]

Wharton also wrote to Shrewsbury describing what happened when Fenwick came before the Lords:

. . . after the reading of the paper, my lord Marlborough first stood up and spoke to this purpose: “that he did not wonder to find a man in danger, willing to throw his guilt upon any other body; that he had some satisfaction to be owned in such good company; but that he assured their lordships that he had [had] no sort of conversation with him, upon any account whatsoever, since this Government, which he said upon his word and honour.” . . . After which my lord Godolphin said, “that he found himself named in two places, first, as having been looked upon as being in King James’s interest, from the beginning, and afterwards, as having entered into a negotiation, as was expressed in the paper. As to the first, he confessed he was one of those that had, to the last, continued in King James’s service, and he did not know, but from that, King James and his friends might imagine him to continue in that interest, but as to the latter part, there was nothing in the world so false.”^[120]

In the course of these proceedings a peculiar complication had arisen. Mordaunt, already mentioned as Monmouth, and afterwards Earl of Peterborough, although himself an alleged Jacobite, impelled by his mischievous instincts and the hope of throwing the Government into disorder, endeavoured secretly to persuade Fenwick through his wife to point and elaborate his charges, especially against Marlborough, assuring him that this was the path to safety. Fenwick pondered anxiously upon this suggestion. Ailesbury was a fellow-prisoner in the Tower. Though never a serious rebel, he was an avowed Jacobite and had been drawn unwitting into dangerous company on more than one occasion. Fenwick endeavoured to persuade Ailesbury to join with him in pressing his charges.^[121] Ailesbury

probably knew as much as Fenwick of all that had been whispered for some time past in the ranks of the English Jacobites. His appearance beside Fenwick at the bar with corroborative allegations would, in the then temper of both Houses, and still more of the public, have created an ugly situation for Marlborough and the impugned Ministers. Ailesbury, however, was, as we have noted, a friend of Marlborough's. They had been thrown together at Court in the days of Charles II. He therefore sought Marlborough's advice through channels which were open. The counsel he received was to have nothing to do with Fenwick and to remain quiet till after the execution, when he would soon be released and all would be well.^[122] He had the wisdom to act accordingly, and ever afterwards believed that he had rendered Marlborough an important personal service. Fenwick, unsupported by Ailesbury, rejected Monmouth's suggestions. Monmouth, angered at this, turned against him with extreme bitterness. Lady Mary Fenwick then in revenge exposed Monmouth's conduct to the Lords. There was general indignation at this mischief-mongering. He was stripped of his offices and sent to the Tower, from which he was released only upon abject apologies. But this was not the end of him.

The process of attainder crawled remorselessly forward stage by stage. Marlborough, entirely unaffected by the strain which had broken Shrewsbury and intimidated Godolphin, comported himself with the confidence and vigour of a man conscious of his own innocence. He actively pressed forward the Bill, and voted for it in the important divisions.^[123] Calmly and inexorably he threw his whole influence against Fenwick, and it was publicly remarked that he was zealous for his condemnation. His brother George Churchill, who had commanded a ship at the battle of La Hogue with credit and was a member of the House of Commons, observed less decorum. "Damn him!" he exclaimed, with brutal frankness, in the Lobby; "thrust a billet down his throat. Dead men tell no tales."^[124] But in truth Fenwick had no tales to tell. He had founded his charges on nothing but hearsay; he had no proof of any kind.

The Court of Saint-Germains and the Jacobite world watched his ordeal with intense emotion. They saw him a martyr for their cause. Was there, then, no means by which they could save him? Was this faithful, heroic man to be hounded to his death by that very "deserter of Salisbury" who had eighteen months before betrayed, as we are assured they knew, the secret of the Brest expedition? Where was the Camaret Bay Letter? Now was the time to use it. It was not even necessary to publish it. The mere threat privately conveyed to Marlborough that it would be sent to King William, unless he quitted his pursuit of Fenwick, would surely have sufficed. When we realize

the passion which is excited by the shedding of blood for political crimes, it is incredible that James, Melfort, and Nairne, if they had had this hold over Marlborough, did not use it; or that in the presence of such a threat he would have dared to persevere against Fenwick. We are told that there was a letter at Saint-Germains of such a character that the mere sight of it twenty years after frightened the Duke of Marlborough out of England.^[125] Surely they owed it to Fenwick to use their weapon now in his defence? Why did they not do it? The answer is, because it did not exist. Thus Marlborough sternly pursued his course as if his conscience were clear of any shameful or deadly deed. Perhaps it was. Sir John Fenwick was beheaded on Tower Hill on January 28, 1697.

[112] *Conduct*, pp. 109-110.

[113] *Correspondence of William and Portland*, ii, 67-68.

[114] *Memoirs*, i, 132. C. T. Wilson, Berwick's English biographer, defends his hero by saying that Sir George Barclay only intended to "seize" the King, and "no doubt" persuaded Berwick that "the job could be done without bodily hurt to the sovereign prize." He is able to quote another passage in the *Memoirs* in support of his argument. (*James II and the Duke of Berwick* (1876), p. 401.) This can be taken for what it is worth.

[115] Fenwick's confession is printed in Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 393-396, and elsewhere.

[116] The expression is Macaulay's.

[117] *History*, iv, 723-724.

[118] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 147-148, 151. William's reply is dated September 10/20.

[119] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 427.

[120] December 1, 1696; Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, pp. 438-439. According to the Dutch envoy, L'Hermitage, Marlborough also said in the course of this speech "que depuis son départ [from King James in 1688] on ne sauroit l'accuser de la moindre chose." Add. MSS., 17677, Q.Q., f. 626.

[121] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 414.

[122] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, pp. 413-415.

[123] Cf. Vernon to Shrewsbury, November 24, 1696: “He [Marlborough] seems very hearty in this matter [Fenwick’s attainder] and as if he would push it.” (*The Vernon Letters*, i, 72.)

[124] Ailesbury, *Memoirs*, p. 412.

[125] See above, pp. 129-131.

CHAPTER X

AVARICE AND CHARM

There is no virtue so universally unpopular as frugality. Every one likes the handsome spender who offers lavish hospitality and eases his path through life by a shower of money. Every one dislikes the parsimonious man who is gathering rather than dispersing wealth. Censure is particularly turned upon those who are careful about small sums. In the days of which we are writing all who held high public appointments were accustomed and expected to live in fine style and at a profuse expense. The habit of the medieval knight flinging his purse to the landlord, or a piece of gold to a lackey, was unconsciously adopted as a guide for a gentleman. Public opinion was more critical about how important people spent their money than about how they acquired it. Graft, pilfering, and corruption, unless too flagrant, were leniently judged in the governing circle; stinting and saving were resented as peculiar. It does not, however, follow that those who are the most extravagant and easy with their money are the most unselfish, nor that those who are the most niggardly are the most mean. There is a happy medium which can only be defined for each individual by the general opinion of the society in which he lives.

Judged by this standard, Marlborough lay under reproach. He was at once highly acquisitive in the gaining of money and extremely careful in the spending of it. In those days, when almost the only other form of wealth was landed property, public appointments all had a recognized money value. Every step in the commissioned ranks of the Army, whether gained by seniority or good service, had to be purchased. A captaincy, a majority, a colonelcy, the command of a regiment, of a troop of Life Guards; a high post in the Quartermaster-General's department, a seat upon the Board of Admiralty, even the offices of the Court and around the Royal Person, all passed to new recipients of the royal favour at a market price which varied with supply and demand like the membership of the New York Stock Exchange. An officer without means could not take his promotion. An officer who had reached high rank was a substantial proprietor, carrying with him in his own person and his appointments the cumulative and reinvested savings of his career. In all but extreme cases these vested interests were respected. There was nothing secret or corrupt about them. They were the system and the custom, and it is only within living memory that the principle of purchase was abolished in the British Army. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries those who had no money had no

standing. All who held offices of authority were men of property whose relative worldly wealth could be appraised almost as accurately by the positions they filled as by the acres they owned. The Crown and the Executive found in this system guarantees of fidelity and good conduct, and no one troubled himself about the obstacles placed in the path of unpropertied ability. Instances there were to the contrary; but in the main it was not until the French Revolution that the glorious principle of *la carrière ouverte aux talents* was proclaimed or even comprehended.

Marlborough's childhood had been lived in penury. Food and clothing in Ashe House for Sir Winston Churchill's lusty brood were inferior in quantity and quality, and above all in variety, to the standard of a well-to-do modern English artisan or strong, industrious navvy. While old silver appeared upon the tables, while the living-rooms contained pieces of furniture which persons of taste would now value and admire, while the family escutcheon boasted the achievements of many generations, the physical conditions were primitive and narrow. But to Marlborough's early years there was an added sting. He learned almost as soon as he could walk and speak that he and his father and mother were dependants upon the charity and goodwill of his grandmother. As he grew older he saw the straits to which the impoverishments of a Cavalier had reduced his father. He heard the talk of the exactions of the Roundheads and of the frequent litigation for quite small sums in which all the grown-ups of the household were engaged with the Government or with the other members of their family. When, for his father's services and his own good looks, he was taken as a page at Court, he was penniless. He might be finely dressed and well fed, but he was penniless among those who monopolized a large proportion of the entire wealth of the kingdom. On every side his seeming equals were youths of noble fortune, heirs to vast estates and splendid titles. He was the earthenware pot among the iron ones. This was his second strong impression of life.

Before he was eighteen he realized that, unless he could make and save money, he could neither have a career, nor a bride nor a home, nor even a modest independence. It is therefore not at all surprising, however unromantic, that his first preoccupation was the gathering of money. In his twenties and thirties his temper was very similar to that which we have attributed to the French nation—always more generous of life than treasure, ready to encounter every personal hazard, prodigal of blood, but deeply concerned about money. His thrift was not without a certain grandeur, a habit of self-denial differing altogether from a miser's sordidness. We have seen how when, after heartbreaking postponements, he married a girl almost as poor as himself he could offer her no home. We have seen him at twenty-eight marrying for love, and at the same time helping his father out of debt

by resigning his own reversionary interest in the small family estate. In all supreme matters his actions were those of a generous spirit. His need and desire to possess a competence and not to be crippled in his career did not outweigh—nay, were cast aside by—true love and family duty.

But these great decisions only made thrift and circumspection more imperative. He could not afford to gamble and carouse with his equals. He could not indulge in the slightest personal extravagance. He ate sparingly, drank little, always more readily at the expense of others than his own, and eschewed all kind of display in dress. He was always strict and punctilious in money matters. He paid his bills with the utmost promptitude. He condescended to keep careful accounts in his own handwriting about quite small household affairs, and generally behaved more like a tradesman whose livelihood depends upon his honesty and solvency than like a gay and gallant courtier and fine gentleman. Even now, fifteen years later, after having held several lucrative posts, he was by far the poorest man in the high circle in which he had taken his natural place. He was an Earl, but the most impecunious in England. He was the first Lieutenant-General, but unemployed. He had braved the displeasure of the Crown. It might well be that his career was closed for many years. The slightest financial imprudence would be fatal to his future. Thus he continued those habits of strict and austere personal economy which had been ingrained in childhood and youth, and without which he would certainly have been submerged.

All this was very deplorable, and no doubt the historians are right to mock and sneer at him. But their taunts are only an echo of the gibes and jokes of his contemporaries. Probably many stories of meanness were fastened on him, once he had that reputation, which are not true. But, true or false or merely exaggerated, they must be accepted by his biographer as representing the impression of the society in which he lived. He had, we are told, in 1692 but three coats (“depuis trois ans il n’a fait que trois habits modestes”), one of which he wore only on the greatest State occasions. “He was,” wrote Sarah, “naturally genteel, without the least affectation, and handsome as an angel, tho’ ever so carelessly drest.” He would walk home from the Palace through the muddy streets to save the hire of a sedan chair. He entertained very few. Even when he wished to gain officers of the Army to his faction, he spent nothing on their meat and drink. Macaulay is no doubt right in stating gleefully that when he was robbed of five hundred guineas by a highwayman it was a bitter blow.^[126]

The tales of his great period are more fanciful; but in him, if true, less excusable. “Of the wonderful avarice of this very great man,” wrote Seward in his *Anecdotes*, published in 1795,

the late Lord Bath used to tell the following story: Himself and his brother, General Pulteney (who had been Aid-du-Camp to the Duke in Flanders), were playing at cards at a house in Bath, at that time known by the name of Westgate House, and which then happened to be the lodgings of Lord Bath. The Duke had lost some money, and on going away desired General Pulteney to lend him sixpence [*i.e.*, about half a crown] to pay his chair-hire. This he of course did, and when the Duke had left the room, Lord Bath said to his brother, “I would venture any sum, now, that the Duke goes home on foot. Do pray follow him out.” The General followed him and to his astonishment saw him walk home to his lodgings.^[127]

Seward tells another tale which seems to show the Duke kept accounts, even with his beloved Sarah, but which certainly does not show him so niggardly in large as in petty sums of money.

The Duke had noticed the behaviour of a young officer in an engagement in Flanders, and sent him over to England with some despatches, and with a letter to the Duchess, recommending him to her to procure a superior Commission for him in the army. The Duchess read the letter, and approved of it, but asked the young man where the thousand pounds were for his increase of rank [*i.e.*, the purchase money he had to pay on promotion to the officer whose vacancy he filled]. The young man blushed, and said that he was really master of no such sum. “Well, then,” said she, “you may return to the Duke.” This he did very soon afterwards, and told him how he had been received by the Duchess. The Duke laughingly said, “Well, I thought that it would be so; you shall, however, do better another time,” and presenting him with a thousand pounds, sent him over to England. The last expedition proved a successful one.^[128]

There is the story on which Swift founded the scathing insult “that he had risked his life for a pair of stockings.” When as Commander-in-Chief the gaiters he wore were so drenched that they had to be cut off him, he gave meticulous instructions to his orderly, before a number of officers, apparently without any proper sense of shame, to rip them up the seams, so that they could be resewn.^[129] There is the story that Prince Eugene

gave a concise characteristic of him upon receiving a letter from him that he could not read, therefore gave it to another person to try if he could read it to him. He said one difficulty was that he never put a tittle upon an *i*, to which the Prince answered, “That saved ink.”^[130]

His handwriting, as the reader may see for himself, disproves this tale: and Eugene might only have been amusing himself by emphasizing a foible in a friend and comrade he ever admired. But let that pass.

There is the story of the officer who brought a message at night to his tent. The Duke, roused from slumber, asked him whether it was in writing or by word of mouth, and on learning that it was not written said, “Then put out the lantern.”^[131] Possibly he did not wish the way he took the news to be noticed. But never mind: he may well have been saving tallow.^[132] It seems undeniable that when he planned the celebrated march to the Danube he also scheduled which brigades and divisions of his army he would dine with at the different dates, without, of course, disclosing the places where the camps would lie. The splendid silver wine-flasks, or pilgrim bottles—as big as small barrels—which have been so much admired travelled with him in his campaigns; but they and other luxurious trappings were used only on State occasions when it was his duty to entertain the princes and generals of the Grand Alliance, or for some special rejoicing. “Though no epicure himself,” says Seward,

the Duke had, in common with Louis XIV, a pleasure in seeing others eat, and when he was particularly pleased exercised this pleasure, though it cost him something. Lord Cadogan used to say that he remembered seeing the Duke completely out of humour one day, a thing very unusual with him, and much agitated; in the evening, however, a messenger arrived who brought him some news which he liked. He immediately ordered the messenger to be placed in a situation where no one could speak to him, and ordered his coach to be opened, and some cantines to be taken out, containing hams and other good things, and spread before some of the principal officers, he looking on and tasting nothing.^[133]

This incident was perhaps typical. Ordinarily, instead of keeping, as was the custom of generals in the field of those days, a sumptuous open table to which a fine company sat down every night when war permitted, Marlborough lived very simply with his immediate personal staff. This,

again, was a grievous fault in a General at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Brigadiers and even Colonels were attended by sumpter-horses and wagons suitable to their dignity. Although hard fare was recognized to be the lot of the private men and subordinate officers, and such as their station required, it was most inappropriate that the Commander-in-Chief of the main army of a European coalition with princely revenues at his disposal should not travel and dine in the luxury of his august position. What a pitiful contrast to the style in which the Great Monarch took the field! No mistresses; no actors, no poets, no painters, not even a historian—except the chaplain, Dr Hare; no proper following of toadies and hangers-on; no roads blocked with convoys of cooks and comforts—just coarse, squalid simplicity—and simplicity basely interested in saving sixpence! Simplicity swayed by that shabby thought! Where, then, is the glory of war? How could any man who fell so far short of the spirit of war in those days hope to win glory? But battles are imperious, contrary things, and one has to reckon with battles.

Marlborough seems to have regarded war merely as a serious business in which he was interested to the exclusion of pleasures and personal indulgences. All this puts his admirers to shame. One feels that virtues, valour, and victories alike are tarnished by such traits. We blush; but we must not conceal these shocking facts or legends. The truth is that from his upbringing and the pressures of his life he had acquired a hatred of waste of money in all its forms, and especially of frittering away comparatively small sums. He resembled a certain type of modern millionaires, who accumulate wealth unceasingly, spend hardly anything upon themselves, and use their fortunes for the well-being of their families and the endowment of their children, or apply them to great buildings or public objects.

He was like them in other ways. He had that curious mixture of business capacity and Imperial vision which in our own day excited the admirers and the critics of Cecil Rhodes. In 1666 two French-Canadian Protestants who had opened up the fur trade around Hudson Bay, but had found no support from their own Government either in Quebec or Paris, came to England and obtained an audience of King Charles II. After a successful voyage a permanent company was formed. In 1670 the King granted a charter “to the Governor and Company of adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay.” Prince Rupert, twelve times re-elected till his death, was the first Governor. In 1683 James, Duke of York, was elected to succeed him. On James’s accession John Churchill was chosen. He thus became the third^[134] Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company. “The new governor,” we are told, “threw himself heartily into the work of the Company.”^[135] In 1688 it

declared a dividend of 50 per cent.; in 1689 a dividend of 25 per cent. was paid; in 1690 of 75 per cent.; and in that year it was decided to triple by a share-splitting operation the value of its original stock. Nor was the expansion of the original £10,500 capital unjustified. The stocks in the warehouse were alone worth that sum; the trapping of the year was expected to bring in £20,000 worth of beaver; and a claim for damages against the French for £100,000 was to be made. The Company then decided to increase its trade and widen the scale of its operations. The river running into the west side of the bay far to the north was named, in honour of the new Governor, Churchill River, and at its mouth in 1686 a new port and trading centre for the north and west of Canada was founded. This project is alive to-day. Many instances are given by the historians of the Hudson's Bay Company of the energy and helpfulness of Lord Churchill.

Churchill's part in the Revolution gave the company a good position in the new reign. In June 1689 he sent out instructions for William and Mary to be proclaimed in the posts on the shores of the bay. "He was able shortly after to report to his Company that a hundred marines had been detailed to protect the Company's ships." The enthusiasm of the directors and shareholders at this mark of consideration obtained through the influence of Lord Churchill was very great, and we learn from the minutes that profuse thanks were given to the Governor, and a piece of plate of solid gold worth a hundred guineas was presented to him for his distinguished services. His arrest and imprisonment in 1692 cut through these happy proceedings. It was indispensable to the Company that its monopoly and its charter should have a Governor with great influence at Court. Churchill's dismissal from the Army and all official employments, which we have already described, carried with it this private loss as well. In November 1692 Sir Stephen Evance was elected Governor in his place.

His habit of personal economy extended to the whole control of Marlborough's armies. He was always worrying about the cost of things in a manner that seemed most petty and unbecoming. It was remarkable, indeed, that he was so popular with the troops; but, then, of course, he always took care that they got their rations and pay punctually, and the country people were always paid promptly for their supplies, so that the rank and file did not feel his cheeseparing at all, and only saw the victories. This naturally prevented their making a true judgment of his meanness. These simple common soldiers only noticed that they were well looked after and never once led to failure of any kind. Little did they know about the candle story or the gaiters story. Little would they have cared if they had—so defective was their sense of proportion. Indeed, they might only have made jokes about it, and loved him all the more. But history cannot be thus easily

satisfied; and we must record the truth. Both Frederick the Great and Napoleon were remarkable for the economy with which they managed their armies. But Marlborough made money go farther in the field than either, or, indeed, than any commander then or since, except perhaps Sir Herbert Kitchener, who kept the accounts of his reconquest of the Sudan as if he had been the manager of an emporium.

We have tried, however painful it may be, to set this out with naked candour. There are, on the other hand, a few mitigating features which may also be mentioned. Paget says:

His declining, when in poverty and disgrace, to accept the generosity of the Princess Anne; his repeated refusal of the government of the Netherlands, with its princely income of £60,000 a year; his generosity to young and deserving officers; his application of all the money at his private disposal amongst the wounded officers of the enemy after the battle of Malplaquet; his liberal provision during his own lifetime for his children . . . ^[136]

are all to be counted in his favour. When to these are added his early imprudences of marrying for love and paying his father's debts at the expense of his inheritance, it may perhaps be recognized that he was not wholly base and sordid. We do not venture to press the point too far.

Sarah's testimony must, of course, be viewed with extreme suspicion as that of a wife hopelessly prejudiced—indeed, shamefully biased—in her husband's favour. You can do nothing with such people. Still, a wife has exceptional opportunities of seeing the seamy side of a husband's character. Moreover, Sarah does not conceal what is unworthy. "From the very beginning of his life," she wrote,

he never spent a shilling beyond what his income was. . . . The Duke of Marlborough had never any vanity, and therefore living so many years with great employments, he left a great estate: which was no wonder he should do, since he lived long and never threw any money away. And money was for many years at six per cent. And I have heard him solemnly swear, when it was of no significance to do it to me, that he never in the whole reign of Queen Anne sold one commission, title, or anything to anybody when he had so much favour from Queen Anne. He had a great deal of compassion in his nature, and to those that he had been long acquainted with he gave money out of his pocket to those that were poor, tho' they were not of his opinion. I am living witness

of this: for I was directed by him to pay some pensions when he was abroad, and have letters that prove the truth of it from the persons.^[137]

Apparently Marlborough's economies only fell upon himself and did not extend to his home and family. "Soon after my marriage," Sarah says again,

when our affairs were so narrow that a good degree of frugality was necessary, Lord Marlborough, *tho his Inclination lay enough that way*,^[138] yet by reason of an indulgent gentleness that is natural to him he could not manage matters so as was convenient for our circumstances, this obliged me to enter into the management of my family.^[139]

It is said that, though Marlborough was stingy in small matters—tips and the like—which may well be taken as proved against him, he was uncommonly courteous and considerate to his subordinates and inferiors in the social scale, and a most kind-hearted man. "For his natural good temper," says Ailesbury, "he never had his equal. He could not chide a servant and was the worst served possible, and in command he could not give a harsh word, no not to the meanest Sergeant, Corporal, or soldier."^[140] We have found a new confirmation of Ailesbury's testimony that Marlborough, for all his sagacity in large matters, and ridiculous small personal economies, was gentle to the point of laxity with his servants.^[141]

There is also the story of his cloak and the rainstorm in 1709 which shows that his natural gentleness was unchanged by years of war and triumph:

Riding out one day with Commissary Marriot, it began to rain, and the duke called for his cloak; Marriot having had his put on by his servant in an instant. The duke's attendant not bringing the cloak, he called again; but the man still continued puzzling about the straps and buckles. At last the rain increased very much, and the duke repeated his call, adding, what was he about that he did not bring the cloak? "You must stay," grumbled the man, "if it rains cats and dogs, till I can get at it." The duke only turned to Marriot, and said, very coolly, "Now I would not be of that man's temper for all the world."^[142]

These qualities also played their part in European history. “Of all the men I ever knew,” wrote Lord Chesterfield,

the late Duke of Marlborough possessed the graces in the highest degree, not to say engrossed them. Indeed, he got the most by them; and contrary to the custom of profound historians who always assign deep causes for great events, I ascribe the better half of the Duke of Marlborough’s greatness to those graces. He had no brightness—nothing shining in his genius. He had most undoubtedly an excellent plain understanding and sound judgment; but these qualities would probably have never raised him higher than they found him, which was page to James II’s Queen. But then the graces protected and promoted him. His figure was beautiful; but his manner was irresistible either by man or woman. It was by this engaging graceful manner that he was enabled, during all the war, to connect the various and jarring Powers of the Grand Alliance, and to carry them on to the main object of the war, notwithstanding their private and separate views, jealousies and wrongheadedness. Whatever Court he went to (and he was often obliged to go to restive and refractory ones) he brought them into his measures. The Pensionary Heinsius, who had governed the United Provinces for forty years, was absolutely governed by him. He was always cool, and nobody ever observed the least variation in his countenance; he could refuse more easily than others could grant; and those who went from him the most dissatisfied as to the substance of their business, were yet charmed by his manner, and, as it were, comforted by it.^[143]

The Dutch Deputy Sicco van Goslinga, whose hostile opinions we shall encounter later on, has left on record what is on the whole the best word-picture of him as he was a few years later.^[144]

Here is his Portrait, drawn to the best of my insight. He is a man of birth: about the middle height, and the best figure in the world: his features without fault, fine, sparkling eyes, good teeth, and his complexion such a mixture of white and red as the fairer sex might envy: in brief, except for his legs, which are too thin, one of the handsomest men ever seen. His mind is keen and subtle [*il a beaucoup d’esprit, et délicate*], his judgment very clear and sound, his insight both quick and deep, with a consummate knowledge of men which no false show of merit can deceive. He

expresses himself well, and even his very bad French is agreeable: his voice is harmonious, and as a speaker in his own language he is reckoned among the best. His address is most courteous, and while his handsome and well-graced countenance engages every one in his favour at first sight, his perfect manners and his gentleness win over even those who start with a prejudice or grudge against him. He has courage, as he has shown in more than one conjuncture: he is an experienced soldier, and plans a campaign to admiration. So far his good qualities. Now for the weak points which if I am not mistaken I have found in him. The Duke is a profound dissembler, all the more dangerous that his manner and his words give the impression of frankness itself. His ambition knows no bounds, and an avarice which I can only call sordid, guides his entire conduct. If he has courage—and of this there is no question, whatever may be said by those who envy or hate him—he certainly wants that firmness of soul which makes the true Hero. Sometimes, on the eve of an action, he is irresolute, or worse; he will not face difficulties, and occasionally lets reverses cast him down: of this I could adduce more than one instance as an eye-witness. Yet I saw nothing of the kind either at Ramillies or Malplaquet,^[145] so it may be that some constitutional weakness, unfitting him to support fatigue, has something to do with it. He does not know much of discipline, and gives too much rein to his men, who have now and then indulged in frightful excesses.^[146] Moreover he lacks the precise knowledge of military detail which a Commander-in-Chief should possess. But these defects are light in the scale against the rare gifts of this truly great man.



SARAH AT HER TOILET

Sir Godfrey Kneller

This portrait shows the Duchess when she had cut off her hair in a temper.

By permission of Earl Spencer

We may supplement this by the picture which is the frontispiece of this biography. Of the many contemporary portraits of the Duke it is the most attractive. It is difficult to believe that he could have been more than forty when it was painted. Yet he did not receive the Garter or wield the baton of a Commander-in-Chief till he was fifty. Certainly there are disarming qualities in this beautiful countenance—strangely feminine, for so virile a nature, in its delicacy and charm. We cannot look into what Macaulay has called his

“cold, sad eyes,” which were actually a grey-green, but the comprehending, appraising, slightly mocking expression of the lips and nostrils—indeed, of the whole face—the symmetry of the features, and the sense of Olympian calm, linger with us, and offer their own explanation of the influence he exerted upon all with whom he came in contact.

The picture of Sarah on the preceding page has a well-known story attached to it. One day in passionate disagreement with her husband she determined to cut off the long hair which he so much admired.

Instantly the deed was done. She cropped them short and laid them in an antechamber he must pass through to enter her apartments. To her cruel disappointment, he passed, entered, and repassed cool enough to provoke a saint; neither angry or sorrowful: seemingly quite unconscious of his crime and his punishment. Concluding he must have overlooked the hair she ran to secure it. Lo! it had vanished. And she remained in great perplexity the rest of the day. The next as he continued silent, and her looking glass spoke the change a rueful one, she began for once to think she had done a foolish thing. . . .

It was only after his death that she discovered them in the secret cabinet where he kept his greatest personal treasures.

We owe this record to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,^[147] who was a young friend of the Duchess in her old age. When Sarah reached the end of her story, which she was accustomed to tell to her intimates, she broke down and wept. Kneller’s portrait shows her still in her heyday, but with a very rueful countenance, and her severed hair hanging over her shoulder.^[148]

It will be observed that Goslinga contradicts Seward’s assertion that Marlborough had “a very squeaking voice.” This appears to be founded only upon some lines which Pope composed about him at the time of the death of his only surviving son, Lord Churchill, “in which,” says Seward, “malignantly enough he makes him ‘in accents of a whining ghost . . . lament the son he lost.’” The fragment incidentally illuminates the bitter malice of the politics of those days. A poet who mocks the grief of a father bewailing the death of his son places himself at once and for all time in a certain category definitely recognizable.

Sarah’s remarks about her husband’s probity raise a question on which we feel on more confident ground. There is no doubt that Marlborough took from the various offices which he held everything to which he was entitled either by warrant or recognized custom. But no one has ever been able to

prove that he took more. The House of Commons was vigilant in those days, and charges of corruption and peculation were constant features of its debates. Danby's second and final disgrace in 1695 is a remarkable instance of the zeal and fearlessness with which Parliament discharged its duties. Both Churchill's brothers, George and Charles, were in a single year sent for a while to the Tower for financial irregularities and abuses, and there are numerous other cases on record. No one was more jealously watched than Marlborough. He had numerous enemies. As he was never a strong party man, he had not the protection which others enjoyed. Yet, although allegations, gossip, and slander pursued him, as they did most prominent people, no charge was ever brought against him till the famous charges of 1712, and these were, as will be seen in due course, completely exploded. It might be supposed that a man who was known to be poor and fond of money, and who was for a long period viewed with extreme hostility by the King and by powerful people at Court, would, if his misconduct was flagrant, as is alleged, have certainly been called to account. In that ruthless age he was the last man to receive exceptional licence.

But the scrutiny of history has proved equally sterile. When we remember all the masterly and malevolent pens that have scratched among the records of the past in search of every scrap of information which could render him odious to posterity, it is impressive that nothing but contemporary gossip and rumour should have rewarded so much diligence.

His assailants have had to make the best of what slanders they could extract from the most disreputable sources. "The applauses which were justly due," says Macaulay,

to his conduct at Walcourt could not altogether drown the voices of those who muttered that, wherever a broad piece was to be saved or got, this hero was a mere Euclio, a mere Harpagon; that, though he drew a large allowance under pretence of keeping a public table, he never asked an officer to dinner; that his muster-rolls were fraudulently made up; that he pocketed pay in the names of men who had long been dead, of men *who had been killed in his own sight* four years before at Sedgemoor; that there were twenty such names in one troop; that there were thirty-six in another.

To this the sprightly Paget has rejoined:

As *L'Avare* was first acted in 1667, it is certainly possible that the Jacobites may have applied to the great object of their hatred

the name of Harpagon; but as Pope was not born until 1688, the voices “muttering that Marlborough was a mere Euclio” which had to be drowned in 1689, must have been confined to the readers of the *Aulularia* of Plautus. . . .^[149]

Macaulay admits that the only authority for this poisonous paragraph is *The Dear Bargain*, a Jacobite pamphlet clandestinely printed in 1690.^[150] He copied from *The Dear Bargain* almost word for word the passage quoted above and paused only to add a few picturesque and unwarranted flourishes of his own.^[151] *The Dear Bargain* is a long tirade of virulent abuse primarily directed against William and Mary in which Marlborough is only incidentally insulted. We know Macaulay’s opinion of Jacobite pamphlets and pamphleteers in so far as they attack the characters whose virtues he had determined to extol. Nothing can exceed the vehemence of the scorn which he poured upon these “habitual liars.” Yet he does not hesitate to found his charges against Marlborough upon the very same evidence which he throws aside disdainfully when it accuses William of “abominations as foul as those which lie buried under the waters of the Dead Sea.”^[152] His principle is simple and convenient; Jacobite pamphleteers are worthy of credence only when they attack Marlborough.

It is certainly odd that Macaulay in the passage quoted above should censure Marlborough because, “though he drew a large allowance under pretence of keeping a public table, he never asked an officer to dinner.” We have little doubt that Marlborough economized on all his public allowances; but the criticism comes ill from Macaulay. He has confessed that he accepted a seat on the Supreme Council of India in 1843 mainly in order to accumulate a fortune, and he managed to save annually the greater part of his salary of £10,000 by living below the style expected in the East from officers of the highest rank. We do not blame Macaulay for his thrift. It was indeed important to our country that his closing years should have been freed from financial embarrassment. But that he of all men should feel able to cast this particular reproach at Marlborough shows some obliquity of vision.

It is probably a just conclusion that Marlborough’s conduct was above and not below the standards of his time; that though he took all the emoluments, perquisites, and commissions which belonged to his offices and appointments, he never took bribes or any money that was not his by usage or



BUST OF MARLBOROUGH

J. M. Rysbrack

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

law. Although he always recognized the claims of natural love and affection, as in choosing his wife, in helping his father, or providing for his children, and set these far above riches, his own deep-rooted habits of personal thrift and self-denial were carried to a point which drew upon him the mockery of his envious contemporaries and of malicious historians. Yet these same habits, unpleasing though they may seem, were an essential part of his character as a gatherer, as a builder and a founder. They were mitigated or often baffled by the pervasive kindness of his nature. They arose from the same methodical, patient, matter-of-fact spade-work which characterizes all his conduct of war, and formed the only basis upon which the great actions for which he is renowned could have sprung. His handling of his private affairs was as grave, as strongly marked by common sense, and as free from indulgence or unwisdom as his conduct of politics and war. His private fortune was amassed upon the same principles as marked the staff-work of his campaigns, and was a part of the same design. It was only in love or on the battlefield that he took all risks. In these supreme exaltations he was swept from his system and rule of living, and blazed resplendent with the heroic virtues. In his marriage and in his victories the

worldly prudence, the calculation, the reinsurance, which regulated his ordinary life and sustained his strategy fell from him like a too heavily embroidered cloak, and the genius within sprang forth in sure and triumphant command.

[126] Denbigh Papers, *H.M.C.*, vii, 220; the Duchess of Marlborough to David Mallet, October 4, 1744 (Spencer MSS.); Luttrell's *Diary*, ii, 550; Macaulay, iv, 296.

[127] P. 257.

[128] P. 258.

[129] Lansdowne MSS., 825, f. 121. G. M. Trevelyan, *Ramillies and the Union with Scotland*, p. 7.

[130] Dartmouth, note to Burnet, iii, 267. For an example of Marlborough's clear handwriting see plate facing p. 272, Vol. I. Eugene's own writing is very much less legible than Marlborough's. The same story was told at the same time of a Professor of History at Basel (*The Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach* (edition 1928), p. 66).

[131] Cf. Acton, *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 258.

[132] The great Moltke, brought up in the sparse austerity of Old Prussia, was always noticeably particular about snuffing the candles.

[133] Seward, *Anecdotes*, p. 257.

[134] Not, as Lord Wolseley says, the second.

[135] G. Bryce, *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company* (1900), p. 30.

[136] *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 12, quoting Alison, *Marlborough*, i, 283; ii, 394-395.

[137] Appendix, II.

[138] Sarah's italics.

[139] Appendix, I.

[140] *Memoirs*, p. 521.

"HAGUE,

"April 7, 1711

* "I have had the pleasure of yours of the 21 by Sr. R[ichard] T[emple] but none by the post. As to my opinion about the selling of Montague House, if the young people could get forty thousand pounds, and be so wise as to pay off so much of their debt, I should be of opinion it were a prudent action, but then they must not think of building, but be contented with such a house as might be bought or hired.

"I desire you will send for Will Lovegrove, and shew him this enclosed paper so that I may know where to find my wine, for it is not in my cellar; if it be possible, I should be glad to know where this wine is before I leave this place, which will be about the end of next week.

"encloses [in the Duke's own hand]

a list of the remainder of stores given me by Will: Lovegrove when I went last for England, and I expected to have found in my cellar, but find no more than what is mentioned on the other side.

- 2 Pieces of old Mossell
- 5 Pieces of New Mossell
- 17 dossen of old Sack
- 9 dossen pints of Sack
- 3 dossen } Sr. Hen: furnis
quarts
- 4 dossen }
pints
- 9 dossen quarts of Barbados Water
- 14 quartes of Usqu bath
- 12 bottles of Italian Wine
- 39 bottles of King Augustus Tuckay
- 80 bottles of Pr. Royalles old Tuckay
- 17 bottles of what came last from Pr. Royall the rest
put into the Caske
- 2 Caskes with that which is fild upp

[On the other side]

An Acct of what Wine was found in His Graces Cellar att
the Hague—

Pieces of Rhenish	4
Pieces of Tockay	2
Quart bottles of Tockay	13
Pints ditto	12
Quart bottles of Barbadoes Water	6
Quart bottles of Sack	10
Pints ditto	21

[Endorsed by Sarah]

this Will Lovegrove cheated & sold the Duke's wine, &
most of his servants were of the same sort."

[142] Seward, *Anecdotes*, ii, 259-260.

[143] *Letters* (ed. Mahon), i, 221, 222.

[144] Sicco van Goslinga, *Mémoires*, pp. 42-44, *sub* 1707.

[145] Goslinga was at Oudenarde, but not at Blenheim.

[146] This is contrary to all the evidence, it being usually
accepted that Marlborough's camps were the best
governed in Europe.

[147] Montagu, *Letters and Works*, i, 78.

[148] It is apparent from the picture that the hair has been
actually cut through. There is also a sketch by Kneller
which shows her with her hair cropped.

[149] Macaulay, iii, 438. Paget, *Paradoxes and Puzzles*, p. 12.

[150] *Somers Tracts*, x, 349.

[151] See author's italics in the passage quoted above from
Macaulay.

[152] *History*, iv, 559.

CHAPTER XI

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

(1696-1698)

In its eighth year the so-called War of the League of Augsburg came to an inconclusive end. The Maritime Powers and Germany had defended themselves successfully, but were weary of the barren struggle. Spain was bellicose, but useless. After the withdrawal of the English fleet from the Mediterranean the Duke of Savoy made peace with France, and the Emperor and the King of Spain were constrained to accept the neutralization of Italy. Only the Emperor, with his eyes fixed on the ever-impending vacancy of the Spanish throne, was earnest to keep the anti-French confederacy in being. But this same reason dictated an opposite policy to France. Louis had no mind to see the Spanish empires in the Old and New World become the prize which should inspire all the banded enemies of France with renewed comradeship and ardour. He understood the numerous strains which were rending the Grand Alliance. He saw that it was falling to pieces under the pressure of so many fruitless campaigns. Once resolved into its component parts, the reconstitution of so ponderous and complicated an engine might well be impossible. He believed that no hand but William's could reassemble it; and how long would William last? Peace would dissolve the hostile coalition. Many of its members would lay aside their panoply and go their several ways disarmed. But the great central Power which had hitherto withstood them all, albeit narrowly, would under his absolute sovereignty refit her armies, revive her strength, and pursue her aims better at the moment by peace than by war. Moreover, the long struggle against all Europe had seriously affected the strength of the French nation. Louis therefore at the end of 1696 made overtures of peace to William. It gradually became clear that France would restore all her conquests in the Low Countries and on the Rhine made since the Peace of Nimwegen except only Strasburg; and for Strasburg she would give an ample substitute.

William, with his lifelong knowledge of Europe, comprehended perfectly the meaning of these proposals. But the pressure for peace, especially in England, convinced him that he had not the power to reject them. The negotiations, opened under Swedish mediation, at Ryswick, were protracted. The French, who had been able to draw fifty thousand of their troops from the Italian theatre for the northern front, were in no hurry to close the campaign. The differences between the allies, an elaborate

ceremonial, and the necessary adjustments of points of dignity and honour occupied the rest of 1697. The Emperor, who wanted Strasburg, protested strongly. Considering, however, that he had himself made a separate agreement neutralizing the Italian front and liberating the French army operating there, his position was not morally strong. The Spaniards were tamed by disasters at Barcelona and at Cartagena, in the Indies. The English Parliament clamoured for a settlement.

It was not till October 1697 that the group of treaties bringing back peace to the whole world was completed. Apart from the territorial arrangements, Louis agreed tacitly and under curious reserves to recognize William as King of the three kingdoms. He refused to abandon James II by name, but he contracted not to support any enemies of England, adding the words “without any exception,” which, since they covered the Prince of Wales as well as the exiled King, were by no means unacceptable. He also withdrew his demand that the mass of the Jacobite refugees apart from the Royal Family should return under an amnesty to their native land. He restored the principality of Orange to its redoubtable owner, stipulating only that no French Huguenots should reside there. William on his part abated his claim that James and his Court should leave French soil, and by a provision which casts a revealing light upon the cool mood of the times undertook to pay to Mary of Modena a jointure ultimately fixed at £50,000 a year. Thus all the polite society of Europe bowed and scraped amicably to one another, and all its harassed peoples rested from their painful strife.

The five-year interlude between the first nine and the last ten years of this world war is commonly viewed as a mere truce. In fact, however, the situation after the Treaty of Ryswick contained many elements of peace. Certainly all its signatories sincerely hoped to accomplish their aims without further resort to arms. All were weary of costly and desultory strife. The great antagonisms of Europe remained; the perils of the Spanish succession impended; but there was an earnest resolve, shared in various degrees by sovereigns, Governments, and peoples, to exhaust every method of diplomacy and bargaining before again drawing the sword. The Peace of Ryswick left in Europe two great figures instead of one. Louis XIV recognized in William III almost an equal. The Great Monarch, for all his splendid armies and centralized despotic power, could not disdain the royal statesman and soldier who stood at the head of the Maritime Powers, and spoke on many issues in the name of the larger part of Europe. Nicely chosen terms of honour were interchanged between them. William expressed his “veneration and admiration” for Louis, and Louis his “high respect” for William. “He [William] may nevertheless rest assured,” the French King had written at the outset of the peace negotiations,

that I could not see him at the head of so powerful a League as that which has been formed against me, without having that esteem for him which the deference that the principal Powers of Europe have for his opinion seems to demand; and that even his perseverance in the alliances contrary to my interests, gives me reason to believe that those which the good of Europe now requires me to contract with him will be equally durable.^[153]

Both potentates yielded themselves for a space to the sensation that together with goodwill they could settle the problems of Europe and give repose to Christendom. Splendid embassages made their reciprocal entries with pomp and glitter into the two capitals. The style and magnificence of Portland's arrival in Paris was matched by that of the French Ambassador, the Comte de Tallard, at the Court of St James's. Tallard commands a special interest in our story. He, like Villars, was one of those soldier-diplomatists whom France has several times used in her great periods of power. His military reputation stood high. Saint-Simon thought him a contemptible diplomatist; but he certainly possessed a keen intelligence and an exceptional knowledge of affairs. His letters and reports to the French Government, like those of Courtin and Barillon under Charles II and James II, now open again to us that window upon the past which William's wars had closed.

Three great international settlements were sought by William in harmony with Louis. The first of these was the Treaty of Carlowitz, negotiated in 1699 by English mediation and impulsion between the Holy Roman Empire and the Sublime Porte. Here for the first time the plenipotentiaries of many European states held united parley with the Turk. The removal, at least for a time, of the deadly menace to Vienna revived the strength of the Empire and notably restored the balance of Europe. In the north a dangerous dispute between Denmark and Holstein, threatening to involve the greatest Powers, was laid to rest in 1700 by the Treaty of Travendahl. In this again William, using, with French acquiescence, the Dutch fleet to carry Charles XII of Sweden into Denmark, played a decisive part. Both these instruments augmented the fame and authority of King William, and placed him in a position of advantage to negotiate in the deepest secrecy with Louis upon the gravest matter of all—the destiny of the Spanish Empire when its monarch, whose death was always likely or imminent, should expire. It will be more convenient to the reader if we reserve the discussion of this First Partition Treaty for the next chapter.

Although the Peace of Ryswick had left the power of France intact, it marked the most solid check that Louis had yet sustained. William was now at the height of his glory. He seemed about to outshine even the Sun King

himself. In the east, in the north, and now in the south and west of Europe he seemed about to lay, after generations of religious, dynastic, and territorial wars, the foundations of a lasting peace for the whole world. But at this very moment when all that the hearts of men desired was coming within their reach through his exertions, he was woefully and even fatally weakened by the action of the House of Commons. To deal with Louis XIV as an equal—the only key to safety—it was imperative that he should be strong. Not only must he marshal all his influence in Europe, not only must he wield the overwhelming sea-power of England and Holland, but he must have at his back a considerable British Army.

Very different were the mood and outlook of the Tory country gentlemen and Whig doctrinaires who assembled at Westminster. The wars were over; their repressions were at an end. They rejoiced in peace and clamoured for freedom. The dangers were past; why should they ever return? Groaning under taxation, impatient of every restraint, the Commons plunged into a career of economy, disarmament, and constitutional assertiveness which was speedily followed by the greatest of the wars England had ever waged and the heaviest expenditures she had ever borne. This phase has often recurred in our history. In fact, it has been an invariable rule that England, so steadfast in war, so indomitable in peril, should at the moment when the dire pressures are relaxed and victory has been won cast away its fruits. Having made every sacrifice, having performed prodigies of strength and valour, our countrymen under every franchise or party have always fallen upon the ground in weakness and futility when a very little more perseverance would have made them supreme, or at least secure. Now after Ryswick, as at Utrecht, as at Paris in 1763, as after the Napoleonic wars and Waterloo, and as after Armageddon, the island mainspring of the life and peace of Europe broke; and England, amid a babel of voices, dissolved in faction, disbanded her armies, and sought to repay the spites and hardships of war-time upon the men who had carried her through.

She was, indeed, though she could not know it, in an interval between two deadly wars. The conflict of Tories and Whigs raged at a furious height; and to this bitter feud was added the burning constitutional issue in which both parties co-operated, and from which the modern polity of England was to emerge. Beyond all was the national danger by which, late but surely, all other passions would be overridden. There were therefore three separate tensions, each simultaneously reacting upon the other.

England came out of the war with an army of eighty-seven thousand regular soldiers. The King considered that thirty thousand men and a large additional number of officers was the least that would guarantee the public

safety and interest. His Ministers, in contact with Parliament, did not dare propose more than ten thousand, and the House of Commons would only vote seven thousand. Sunderland, with his record, felt himself in no condition to face such a storm. He had ventured to emerge into open power as Lord Chamberlain. He deemed it expedient to retire again behind the scenes; and the King could not persuade him to remain. He understood the forces at work better than his master. The Navy underwent a less severe compression. The picture is complicated by a considerable garrison which all admitted must be kept in Ireland, by two thousand men in the West Indies, and by three thousand marines borne as sailors, though actually infantry. A new Parliament only reiterated more stridently the demands of its predecessor. Its Members had vowed on the hustings that they would cut the expenses to the bone and break up the standing army. They ingeminated economy. The reductions were carried out in the most brutal manner, the war-bitten veterans and the Huguenot refugees who had fought so well being summarily flung on the streets and treated as rogues and vagabonds on the first provocation. The process was only tempered by the half-pay granted to the officers as a retaining fee, and delayed by the inability of Parliament to pay the arrears due to the men before discharge. An orgy of insult and abuse in which all classes of the civil population heartily joined began around all uniformed men, the half-pay officers, and especially those who had already been disarmed and turned adrift and had no means of support. The roads and countryside became infested with desperate, starving footpads who had lately grappled with the French Guard and shed their blood for King and country. The days of Robin Hood returned, and what was left of the English cavalry was largely occupied in hunting down their old comrades-in-arms now driven into outlawry. The gibbet and the lash were meted out with ruthless vigour on all who fell into the clutches of the law. Such was the process of demobilization in the seventeenth century.

A new and in many ways a singularly modern figure whom every one nowadays can understand had appeared in the House of Commons.^[154] Robert Harley was born and bred in a Puritan family and atmosphere a Whig and a Dissenter. He was educated for the Bar, though never called to it. Elected for the borough of New Radnor in 1690, he speedily became a master of Parliamentary tactics and procedure. He understood, we are assured, the art of 'lengthening out' the debates, of 'perplexing' the issues, and of taking up and exploiting popular cries. In the process of opposing the Court he gradually transformed himself from Whig to Tory and from Dissenter to High Churchman, so that eventually he became the chief of the Tories both in Church and State. Already in 1698 he had become virtually

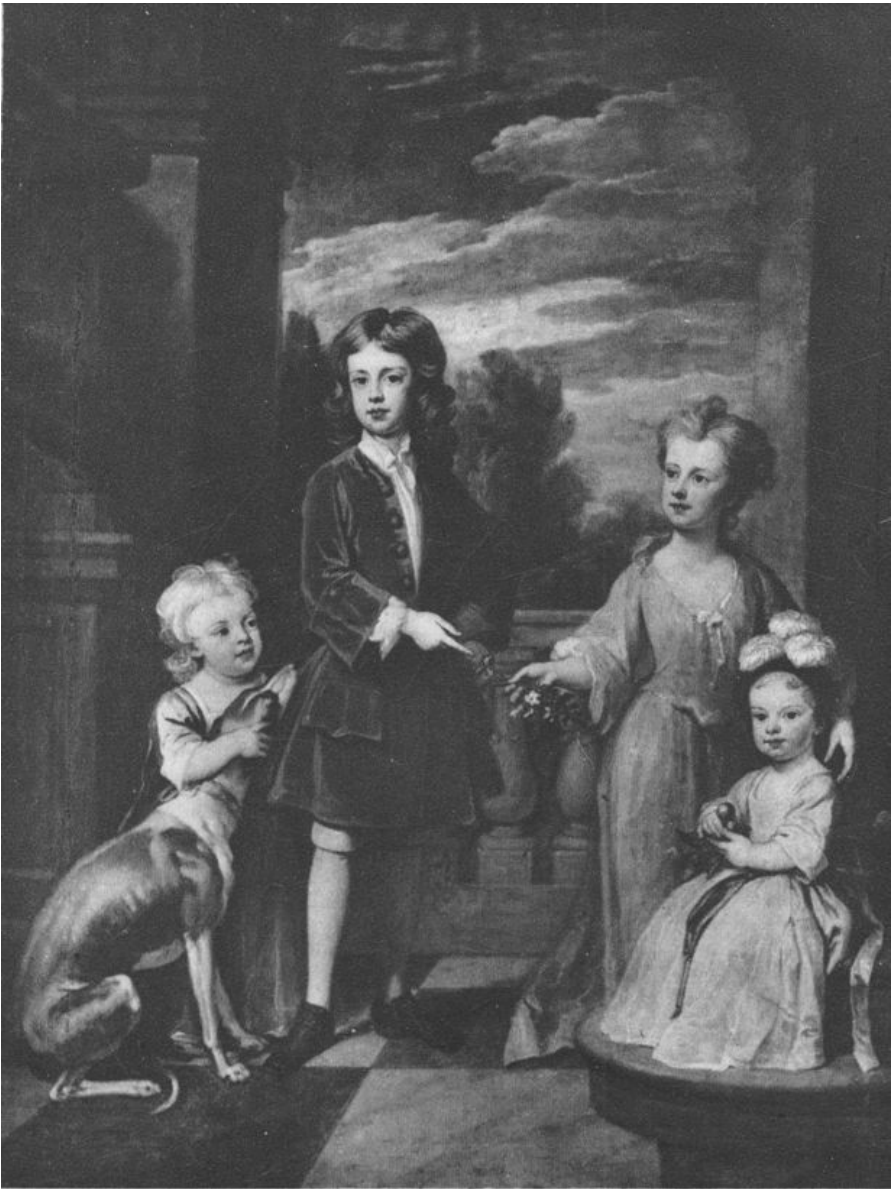
their leader in the House of Commons. He it was who conducted the reckless movement for the reduction of the armed forces. He it was who sought to rival the Bank of England with the Land Bank. But although his speeches gave entire satisfaction to the vain crowd he led, he himself took longer views and dreamed of a day when he would play the game of politics on a stage more brightly lit than Westminster. He appealed to moderate opinion even when heading the attack. He kept in touch with the Whigs, while delighting the Tories. He made the Court feel that, though he was their most serious enemy, he might also some day, perhaps, become their best friend.

Behind Harley, Seymour, the pre-eminent 'sham good-fellow' of the age, cheered on his West Country pack with all the zest of a huntsman on a good scenting day. The Tory squires roared about the expense of useless and insolent popinjays; and the Whigs joined them in descanting upon the menace to freedom inherent in a standing army. The King was aghast at these furious manifestations. His heart bled for the officers and men with whom he had marched and fought during the long, sombre campaigns. Every fibre in his nature revolted at the baseness, cruelty, and ingratitude with which his faithful troops were treated, and at the same time he felt his whole European position undermined by the blotting out of England as a military factor. But he was powerless. Moreover, it was resolved that such troops as must perforce be retained should not comprise a single foreigner. The Dutch Guards must forthwith quit the island. Accordingly this well-trained, devoted brigade began its march to the coast. The Commons rejected the King's final appeal for their retention, though he wrote his message throughout in his own hand. When in his Speeches from the Throne he suggested that the country was being endangered, haughty demands were made in the Commons for the names of the Ministers who had dared to counsel him to address them in such terms.

Can we wonder that the unhappy prince, insulted in the hour of his greatest triumph, hamstrung in the full stride of his most beneficent activity, outraged in his honour and comradeship as a soldier, wished to quit the insensate and ungrateful people whose religion, whose institutions he had preserved, and whose fame he had lifted so high? He would abandon the odious and intractable race. He would retort their hatred of foreigners with a gesture of inexpressible scorn. Europe might clatter again into confusion so that insular ignorance should reap its harvest. That he mastered these emotions is a measure of his quality. It was the hardest of his victories, and without it his life's work must have perished. Yet if we reflect on his many faults in tact, in conduct, and in fairness in the earlier days of his reign, the unwarrantable favours he had lavished on his Dutchmen, the injustices done

to English commanders, Count Solms' maltreatment of the English troops at Steinkirk, his uncomprehending distaste for the people of his new realm, their relegation to be mere pawns on his Continental chess-board—anyone can feel that all the blame was not on one side. His present anguish paid his debts of former years. As for the English, they were only too soon to redeem their follies in blood and toil.

Few features in Marlborough's long life are more remarkable than the manner in which he steadily grew in weight and influence through the whole of the six years when he was banished from favour and office. The Whigs were jealous of Shrewsbury's honour, and the Tories felt a strong interest in Godolphin. But Marlborough had no party to take care of him, and he alone bore the weight of the royal displeasure. He took a regular share in the business of the House of Lords. Apart from the attainting of Fenwick, he preserved a conciliatory attitude towards the Jacobites. He remained the trusted friend of the Princess Anne. For the rest he lived in tranquil retirement, seeming not to fret at the great war-opportunities which were slipping away, or at the years of his prime which were being consumed. He was happy with Sarah and his children, and his equanimity was perfect. He rarely wrote letters, except to Sarah when he was parted from her, or on public business when he was employed. We have, therefore, only the scantiest records of his daily life during these years or of his public actions. Still he grew, and at the end of this lengthy period of eclipse was felt by every one around the summit of affairs to be one of the greatest Englishmen of the day.



CHILDREN OF JOHN, EARL OF MARLBOROUGH

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

William was very slow resuming relations with him. After the death of Queen Mary in 1694 he had been readmitted to the Court, but to no employment. At last, however, the barrier fell to pieces. Anne's eldest son,

the Duke of Gloucester, was now nine years old. It was thought fitting to provide the future heir-apparent to the Crown with a governor of high consequence and an establishment of his own. Parliament in voting the King a Civil List of £700,000 a year had foreseen such an arrangement. William's first thoughts turned to Shrewsbury, who was still brooding in the country and constantly asking to be relieved of his office. He had, as we have seen, more than once pressed Marlborough's claims upon the King. He now declined the appointment for which his friend seemed the obvious choice. Nothing could be more agreeable to the young Prince's parents. Still the King hesitated, and a current of Tory opinion brought Rochester's name forward. Sunderland seems to have exerted his still potent influence in Marlborough's favour.

It may well have been, however, that a new associate of Marlborough's carried the greatest weight. William had become deeply attached to the young Dutch courtier Keppel. He had advanced him in a few years from being a page to a commanding position in the State. He had newly created him Earl of Albemarle. There was an affinity between them—honourable, but subtle and unusual. The lonely, childless monarch treated Keppel as if he were a well-beloved adopted son. The King's old faithful intimate, Portland, had long been Marlborough's enemy. He had not perhaps forgotten a description of him as "a wooden fellow." But Portland was now on his embassy in Paris, and Keppel had supplanted him in the King's heart. The rivalry between these two Dutchmen was hot. In fact, Portland was soon to cast off all his offices for a ludicrous cause. Keppel in his absence abroad had installed himself at Newmarket in the rooms next to the royal apartments which Portland had long occupied; and William would not eject him. It sufficed that Portland was Marlborough's enemy for Keppel to become his advocate. Thus those obstacles against which merit and policy had so long pressed in vain were smoothly removed by the deft and tactful addresses of a youthful counsellor.

In the summer of 1698 William invited Marlborough to be governor of the boy Prince. When he kissed hands upon his appointment William uttered the gracious but discriminating words, "My lord, teach him but to know [? be] what you are, and my nephew cannot want for accomplishments."^[155] At the same time Marlborough was restored to his rank in the Army and to the Privy Council. The King announced his decision in remarkable terms in the *Gazette* of June 16, 1698:

His Majesty has been pleased to appoint the Right Honourable the Earl of Marlborough to be Governor of His Highness the Duke of Gloucester, as a mark of the good opinion His Majesty has of

his lordship's zeal for his service and his qualifications for the employment of so great a trust. . . .

The miniature Court of the Duke of Gloucester was formed with expedition in the summer of 1698.^[156] His parents and the Marlboroughs had their own ideas about its composition. The King shied at their clear-cut plans. "The Princess Anne," he exclaimed petulantly, on the eve of sailing to The Hague, "should not be Queen before her time." Marlborough made no difficulties. He sought only to know the royal pleasure; and Keppel, who was inseparable from his master, promised to guide it into proper channels. In the end the list was accepted very much as it had been planned. William had chosen Bishop Burnet to be the young Prince's spiritual guide, and in addition to educate him in history, politics, and the lesser arts. A Tory governor must be balanced by a Whig preceptor. William may also have been glad to get Burnet, "the blabbing Bishop," of whom he was tired, out of his way. However, Marlborough and Burnet became close friends. The Bishop yielded himself to the charm and courtesy of his chief. He fell so much under his attraction that he even rewrote the passages in his history dealing with Churchill's desertion of James. Improvidently he forgot to destroy the original version, which has been unearthed to his posthumous mockery. Lord Churchill, Marlborough's only surviving son, aged twelve, was appointed Master of the Horse and no doubt 'playmate in chief.' A son of Bishop Burnet became a page, and an impoverished gentlewoman named Hill was put in charge of the laundry.

Among fleeting shadows the name of Hill is significant. In 1689, shortly after the Revolution, Sarah discovered that she had poor relations. Her grandfather, Sir John Jennings, had produced no fewer than twenty-two children. His estate, though substantial, could not bear such subdivision. One of his daughters, with hardly £500 for her dowry, had married a Levant merchant named Hill. Having prospered for some years, he was ultimately ruined by speculation, or what Sarah called "turning projector." "But as this was long before I was born," writes Sarah in a passage of perfect literary malice, all the more piquant because published in the lifetime of many of those to whom it refers,

I never knew there were such people in the world, till after the Princess Anne was married, and when she lived at the Cockpit; at which time an acquaintance of mine came to me and said, she believed I did not know that I had relations who were in want, and she gave me an account of them. When she had finished her story, I answered, that indeed I had never heard before of any such

relations, and immediately gave her out of my purse ten guineas for their present relief, saying, I would do what I could for them. Afterwards I sent Mrs Hill more money, and saw her. She told me that her husband was in the same relation to Mr Harley, as she was to me,^[157] but that he had never done any thing for her.^[158]

When Mr and Mrs Hill died they left four children, two sons and two daughters.

The elder daughter [Abigail] . . . was a grown woman. I took her to St Albans, where she lived with me and my children, and I treated her with as great kindness as if she had been my sister. . . . As for the younger daughter (who is still living) I engaged my Lord Marlborough, when the Duke of Gloucester's family was settled, to make her laundress to him, which was a good provision for her. And when the Duke of Gloucester died, I obtained for her a pension of £200 a year, which I paid her out of the Privy Purse. . . . The Queen was pleased to allow the money for that purchase [an annuity] and it is very probable that Mrs Hill has the annuity to this day, and perhaps nothing else, unless she saved money after her sister had made her Deputy to the Privy Purse, which she did as soon as she had supplanted me.

The elder son was at my request put by my Lord Godolphin into a place in the custom-house; and when, in order to his advancement to a better, it was necessary to give security for his good behaviour, I got a relation of the Duke of Marlborough's to be bound for him in two thousand pounds.

His brother (whom the bottle-men afterwards called "honest Jack Hill") was a tall boy whom I clothed (for he was all in rags) and put to school at St Albans. . . . After he had learnt what he could there, a vacancy happening of Page of Honour to the Prince of Denmark, his Highness was pleased at my request to take him. I afterwards got my Lord Marlborough to make him Groom of the Bedchamber to the Duke of Gloucester. And though my Lord always said that Jack Hill was good for nothing, yet to oblige me he made him his aide-de-camp and afterwards gave him a regiment. But it was his sister's interest that raised him to be a General and to command in that ever memorable expedition to Quebec; I had no share in doing him these honours. To finish what I have to say upon this subject:—when Mr Harley thought it useful to attack the Duke of Marlborough in Parliament, this

Quebec General, this honest Jack Hill, this once ragged boy whom I clothed, happening to be sick in bed, was nevertheless persuaded by his sister to get up, wrap himself in warmer clothes than those I had given him, and go to the House to vote against the Duke.

Here, then, is a succinct account of the Abigail Hill who afterwards, as Mrs Masham and Harley's confidante, saved France from destruction as surely, though scarcely as gloriously, as Joan of Arc. It was an annoyance of peculiar rankle to Sarah to the end of her long life that she, by indulging her most generous sentiments of compassion, should have prepared her own undoing and her husband's fall at the moment when the consummation of all his victories and toils seemed so near. In her strong, domineering, bustling life Sarah did many actions both bad and good, but her charity to the Hills was her special benevolence. She was, indeed, for many years their patron saint. Nepotism apart, her kindness to them shines brightly. Yet this was one of the traceable causes of her catastrophe.

Thus we see Marlborough picking his steps warily and with foresight through all the perplexities and hazards of the times, while at the same time his devoted wife by one of the best deeds in her life sets in train, all unwitting, the series of events which amid his glories shall lay him low.

The young disease, that must subdue at length,
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.

It is a classic instance of how far romance lags behind reality.

[153] Louis XIV to Boufflers, July 12, 1697; P. Grimblot, *Letters of William III and Louis XIV*, i, 20.

[154] Cf. E. S. Roscoe, *Robert Harley* (1902); Burnet, iv, 197.

[155] The sole authority for this remark is *The Lives of the Two Illustrious Generals*.

[156] See the "Establishment of the Duke of Gloucester's Family," August [?] 1697 [? 8], in *C.S.P. (Domestic)*, 1696-97, p. 343; also two letters of Marlborough to Burnet in the Bodleian (Add. MSS., A. 291).

[157] *I.e.*, uncle and aunt.

[158] *Conduct*, pp. 177-181.

CHAPTER XII
MARLBOROUGH IN POLITICS
(1698-1700)

Meanwhile Marlborough's family had grown up, and in the years 1698 and 1699 his two eldest daughters both married. The eldest, Henrietta, became engaged to Francis, Lord Godolphin's son. The lifelong friendship between both the Marlboroughs and Godolphin is a factor in history; but this was no marriage of political or worldly calculation. It was a love-match between very young people—Francis was only twenty and Henrietta eighteen—who were thrown together by the intimacies of their parents, to whom it gave the keenest pleasure. Godolphin's wife had died after giving birth to Francis a generation earlier. The Treasurer was too deeply attached to her memory ever to marry again. He lived for his work, his sport, and his only child, a graceful youth of more charm than force. In that corrupt age, when public office was almost the only road to riches, Godolphin was for more than thirty years and in four reigns in control of the national finances. He was, however, a man of stainless integrity in money matters. At his death in 1712 he left but £14,000, somewhat less than what he had inherited forty years before. He could therefore at this time give only the smallest competence to his son. But the fabulous avarice of John and Sarah seems to have slumbered on this occasion, as it had when they themselves plighted their penniless troth. Marlborough's notorious greed for lucre had so far left him at forty-five the poorest of his rank. Nevertheless he provided a dowry of £5000. The Princess Anne, whose enthusiasm was kindled by this cementing of friendship in her circle, wished to bestow £10,000 upon the young couple. But the Marlboroughs, no doubt from some base motive, would only accept £5000. The marriage took place on March 24, 1698. The bride was beautiful and accomplished. Her graces were the theme for the rhymesters of the day. The union was lasting.



HENRIETTA CHURCHILL

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough



ANNE CHURCHILL

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

The marriage of Marlborough's second daughter, Anne, in January 1700, was a theme of greater importance. We have seen how long and varied had been the relations of Marlborough and Sunderland and the political association that had always subsisted between them. A close friendship had grown between their wives. Indeed, there is a letter of Princess Anne's to Sarah which shows that her jealousy was playfully excited by their intimacy.

I cannot help envying Lady Sunderland to day that she should have the satisfaction of seeing you before me, for I am sure she

cannot love you half so well as I do, though I know that she has the art of saying a great deal.

Sunderland's heir, Lord Spencer, who was a widower, was a remarkable personality. He had none of the insinuating charm and genial courtesy of his incomprehensible father. He was an ultra-Whig of the strictest and most unbending type. He did not trouble to conceal his republican opinions. He was so conscious of the rights of his order and of Parliament against the Crown that he had little sympathy left for the commonalty. According to his philosophy, citizens of the worst republic were free, while subjects of the best king were slaves. He was a keen book-lover, and the Sunderland Library remained for many generations his monument. The Whig Party took a lively interest in the development of his mind. It was thought that experience would mellow his orthodox severity, and they already saluted him as the future champion of the cause for which "Hampden had died in the field and Sidney on the scaffold."

Sarah, that sturdy Whig, may have shared these hopes; but Marlborough's temperamental Toryism was repulsed by the harshness alike of Lord Spencer's doctrine and disposition. Anne was his favourite daughter, and by every account was a brilliant and fascinating creature. Intimate and subtle as were his relations with Sunderland in State affairs, important as were the reciprocal services which might be rendered, magnificent as was the inheritance, he was disinclined to mingle that wayward blood with his own, or to countenance a marriage which might not bring his daughter happiness. He was therefore very hard to persuade. However, he gradually yielded to Sarah's persuasions, and, being at length convinced of Lord Spencer's sincerity, he finally consented. Once again Princess Anne, who was the girl's godmother, matched the family dowry with a gift of £5000. Sunderland, who seems to have longed for the marriage, wrote in a remarkable letter:

If I see him so settled I shall desire nothing more in this world but to die in peace if it please God. I must add this that if he can be thus happy he will be governed in everything public and private by my lord Marlborough. I have particularly talked to him of that and he is sensible how advantageous it will be to him to be so. I need not I am sure desire that all this may be a secret to everybody but Lady Marlborough.^[159]

These expectations were not fulfilled, and Spencer's personality and conduct were to become after his father's death a cause of serious political

embarrassment. It is, however, by this marriage that the Marlborough blood, titles, and estates have descended to posterity, for his only surviving son, Lord Churchill, Master of the Horse in the Duke of Gloucester's household, had almost as short a span to live as the little Prince he served.

With the coming of peace, many Englishmen of quality visited Paris, and contact with the Jacobite Court was frequent and open. According to the Nairne Papers, Marlborough was still expressing to the Jacobite agents his willingness to restore James II.^[160] Nothing is more inherently improbable. Nothing was more contrary to his interests. On the other hand, the real character of his connexion with Saint-Germains at this time was far more obvious and natural. After her husband's death in 1693 the Duchess of Tyrconnel, the once radiant Frances, had secured a small pension from the French Government, and passed her time either in France or in Flanders. But her heart was turned towards her native land. We find the Marlboroughs using their influence with the English Ministers to obtain permission for her return to Ireland. James Brydges, son of Lord Chandos and later Paymaster-General of the Forces, notes in his journal in May 1701 how "Lord and Lady Marlborough came to see me and left Lady Tyrconnell's petition."^[161] They do not seem to have been successful, for it was not till 1707 or 1708 that she took up her abode in Dublin, where she founded a nunnery for "poor Clares" and lived to the verge of ninety.

There is a letter of Sarah's written to one of her uncles which discloses a minor intrigue, and also shows that feminine sentiment towards Customs regulations was much the same then as now:

I have sent you three dozen and three pairs of gloves, which I desire you will try to get the gentleman you said was going to France to carry with him. He will find no difficulty at the customs house here if his things are to be seen; but in France those sort of things are forbid, and therefore I trouble you with them, because I can't send them as one does other goods that one may have in that country for paying for, but I conclude they are not so exact, but that a gentleman may carry any thing of that nature and they won't dispute it. They must be given to Madam Dumene, without naming my sister at all, and if it be as easy to you I believe it will be best not to name me to the gentleman you give 'em to, who I conclude you know enough to ask such a favour from, but if he won't undertake it I desire you would be pleased to let the gloves

be sent again to my porter at St James's and I must try to find some other opportunity of sending them.

The ice of a long frost being broken, the King felt the comfort in his many troubles of Marlborough's serene, practical, adaptive personality, which no difficulties found without resource, which no dangers disturbed. In July 1698, when the royal departure for Holland rendered a Council of Regency necessary, Marlborough was nominated one of the nine Lords Justices to exercise the sovereign power. From this time forth William seemed to turn increasingly, if without personal friendship, towards the man of whose aid he had deprived himself during the most critical years of his reign. He used in peace the soldier he had neglected in war; and Marlborough, though his prime bent was military, though stamped from his youth with the profession of arms, became in the closing years of the reign a shrewd and powerful politician.

This new relationship of William and Marlborough requires close examination. The King seemed speedily inclined to trust him implicitly and to make common cause with him in great matters. We have Somers' letter of December 29, 1698, to prove that in his grief and wrath upon the dismissal of the Dutch Guards he confided to Marlborough, although he was not in the Cabinet, his secret resolve, withheld from some of his Ministers, to abdicate the crown. "He has spoken of it to my Lord Marlborough (which one would wonder at almost as much as at ye thing itself), to Mr Montague, and to my Lord Orford, and, I believe to divers others."^[162]



THE NINE LORDS JUSTICES OF ENGLAND, 1698

From a print in the British Museum

We have no record of what Marlborough advised; but there can be little doubt he urged the King to abandon his design. William's abdication at such a juncture might as easily have been followed by a republic as by the

accession of the Princess Anne. There was as yet no Act of Settlement. Parliament in its queer temper would have had no mind to exchange the direct rule of William for the indirect rule of Marlborough, a subject exposed to every jealousy. Only a normal succession upon a demise of the Crown could bring him power in a form worth having. He must surely have counselled upon the King the patience he practised himself. His comprehension of Europe at this time was second only to that of William. They both viewed its complex scene from the same angle. They assigned similar values to its numerous factors. They both sought the same curbing of France through a European coalition animated and headed by the Maritime Powers. Marlborough saw the rashness and peril of English disarmament at such a juncture as clearly as the King, though he had none of those recent personal ties with the disbanded regiments, threatened Dutch Guards, and ill-treated Huguenot officers which made the process so poignant to his master. Lastly, both regarded with much detachment, both viewed with a distaste which it was politic to conceal, the violent passions and prejudices of the English political parties, and both were prone to use them alternately for their own purposes, which included also the greatest purposes of the age. Thus for the next two years, if he did not wholly trust Marlborough, William leaned on him. Marlborough felt the weight, and understood and discounted the cause. He did not give himself wholly to the King. The royal confidence was only half-confidence: the rest was the need of help. Hence he preserved his independence and carefully guarded the sources of his own personal power.

Lord Wolseley has not comprehended Marlborough's conduct during the closing years of William III. He is shocked to find his hero, although employed by the King in many great matters while war drew nearer, voting on all test party issues with the Tories in their savage faction fight. He wishes that he had cut himself adrift from narrow political associations and stood forth boldly at William's side, proclaiming the oncoming peril and urging all true Englishmen to unite together. He describes his course as "inexplicable" except on grounds of partisanship, and inexcusable in one who had so clear a view of Europe. In fact, however, the forces by which Marlborough was swayed and which he used are easy to discern.

If Marlborough had cut himself adrift from the Tory Party and become a mere adherent of the Court he would soon have lost all influence upon events. His own power would have been reduced to his own personal ability, while at the same time his usefulness to the King would have vanished. William knew England almost as well as he knew Europe, but he despised the ignoble strife of its parties, and underrated the factor of party as an element in his vast problem. In his embarrassments he would turn from

Whig Ministers who could not manage and would not face the House of Commons to the turbulent Tories, only to find them ignorant of world facts and with a view of national interests which was at that time wrong-headed and utterly at variance with his own purposes. The Whigs at least saw what was coming, and would help him to meet it. Marlborough, who understood the public interest as clearly as his own, knew that the Whigs could never carry England through the approaching ordeal in the teeth of Tory opposition: he knew that the Tories were by far the strongest faction in the State. Except in the most general way he did not share their prejudices, but he knew their power and that the credit he had with them was one of the main foundations of his own position. He stood with Rochester and Godolphin midway between the King and the Tory Parliament. Of these three he alone shared William's European view; but his influence with Rochester was considerable, and with Godolphin paramount. They all toed the party line and voted the party ticket as much as was necessary to identify themselves markedly with Toryism. At the same time, animated by Marlborough, they laboured to draw their party to the King's view of the national interest and to draw the King to further reliance on the Tories, including themselves. Marlborough was in close friendly relations with Harley, and through him with the House of Commons. He wielded himself great influence in the House of Lords. Through Sunderland, now linked to him by the marriage of their children, and through Sarah, he was in contact with the Whigs. And always he stood by the Princess Anne, dominated and inspired her circle, and championed her interests, in which also the future lay.



THE EARL OF SUNDERLAND

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

These incomplete relationships were the King's own fault, and a misfortune to his reign. If in 1689 and 1690 William, with two kingdoms to govern and the diplomacy of half Europe in his hands, had treated Marlborough fairly and had not denied him his rightful opportunity upon the battlefields, he might have found that talisman of victory without which all his painstaking, adroit combinations and noble exertions could but achieve a mediocre result. He might have found across the differences of rank that same comradeship, never disturbed by doubt or jealousy, true to the supreme

tests of war and fortune, which later shone between Marlborough and Eugene.

Two questions of domestic politics arose which illustrate Marlborough's independence of the Court. In 1689 the King, no doubt with Marlborough's aid, had persuaded Prince George of Denmark to give up, as a counter in a treaty of peace between Denmark and Sweden, his small hereditary lands in Denmark for a mortgage of £85,000. The general war being over, the time had now come to redeem this mortgage. The King, who had hitherto paid Prince George 6 per cent. upon the capital, was loath to disclose the transaction to Parliament. He knew it would raise a storm in the Commons, then in full economy cry. But Prince George insisted, and his rights were indisputable. It was only after extremely disagreeable debates, in which all Marlborough's influence was exerted first to have the matter brought forward and thereafter to have the claim settled, that the money was voted. Here was another evidence as plain as the dispute about the Princess Anne's grant, eight years earlier, that the Marlboroughs would not hesitate, if forced to the choice, to champion their old patrons against the King.

The second case raised wider issues. At the end of the Irish war enormous rebel estates had been forfeited to the Crown. At intervals during his reign William had bestowed them upon his Dutch and Huguenot generals and companions. Bentinck, Ginkel, Ruvigny, Zulestein, all now ennobled, had gained an immense spoil. The King had gone farther. He had rewarded mere favourites like young Keppel and his own mistress, Elizabeth Villiers, from the same source. It was computed, or at least alleged, that after much had been restored to pardoned rebels Crown lands worth one and a half millions had been distributed to private persons.

The King asserted his right in terms revived from the Plantagenets. The Commons dwelt upon the expense of the war, the public debt, and the calamitous taxes. They reclaimed on behalf of the nation all these granted Irish lands, and particularly those held by foreigners. They had not been able fully to disband the Army because they could not find the money to pay off the men. Here in these royal grants was the means. They would achieve a purpose odious to the King by a method more odious still, and by the repudiation of his bounty furnish the funds to deprive him of his Army. The conflict between a resolute House of Commons, conscious of its ever-growing power, and William's embarrassed, half-hearted Ministers could have but one ending. It was thought prudent that the intervention of the Lords upon the side of the Prerogative should not be pressed. Sunderland, still active and emollient behind the scenes, counselled submission. The

title-deeds granted by the King were torn up, and all the captured lands were wrested from their new owners.

This controversy grievously embarrassed Marlborough. He had established dignified and self-respecting relations with the King. His influence with both Houses of Parliament was weighty. His character as a general officer seemed about to be merged in a political career. His appointment as a Minister was much rumoured. In February 1699 Vernon wrote to Shrewsbury:

Sir John Forbes tells me that he hears an exchange is negotiating, that Lord Marlborough should be Chamberlain and you Governor to the Duke of Gloucester [Shrewsbury had by now become Lord Chamberlain], but I hear nothing of it otherwise; but I observe Lord Marlborough is frequently with the King and therefore I hope they are well together.^[163]

Nothing came of this, but his posts as governor to the Duke of Gloucester and upon the Council of Regency were equal to high Court or Cabinet rank. He could almost certainly have had Ministerial office himself, and perhaps, indeed, declined it. There is a letter from him to Shrewsbury of June 3, 1699, in which he says, “You will see the little encouragement there is to meddle with anything, whilst so much jealousy reigns.”^[164]

The Bill for the resumption of the Irish lands forced him into a new antagonism with the King. Although his sister Arabella benefited by them, he had always disapproved of these grants, and no doubt his opinions were upon record. He therefore moved forward with the Tory Party. We do not know how far he went; but one rare gleam of light shows the King and Marlborough in open tug-of-war. Lord Lonsdale, Lord Privy Seal, was conducting the opposition to the Bill in the Commons. “I have just learned,” wrote William to Bentinck (April 5, 1700),

from Dr Radcliffe, whom my Lord P. Seal has sent for, that he is extremely ill, which is at this moment a terrible contretemps. I fear he has “du spleene masle” [!]. If you can see him before you go to the House, encourage him to continue with firmness what he has so well begun. I did so myself yesterday evening; but Milord Marlborough who dogs his footsteps [*qui ne le quitte pas d’un pas*] certainly intimidates him. If the Bill does not now fall in your House, I count all lost.^[165]

The unfortunate Privy Seal died of his illness later in the year.

The course Marlborough adopted gave dissatisfaction to both sides. “The feelings of the King,” writes Archdeacon Coxe,^[166] “were too much wounded to regard with indulgence anyone who had favoured the obnoxious Bill; while the victorious party stigmatized all who had not fully entered into their measures, as enemies to the country.” In January 1700 Vernon had written to Shrewsbury, “I think the cloud which has been hanging over my Lord Marlborough [about the Prince of Denmark’s mortgage] is clearing up.” But the new dispute darkened the sky again. In May we have a letter of Marlborough’s to Shrewsbury:

The King’s coldness to me still continues, so that I should have been glad to have had your friendly advice; for to have friends and acquaintance unreasonably jealous, and the King at the same time angry, is what I know not how to bear; nor do I know how to behave myself.^[167]

On the other hand, he supported the King in his efforts to prevent the undue reduction of the Army; and, in fact, led the House of Lords in this direction. Generally his relations with the King were such that William thought it right to reappoint him to the Council of Regency on his departure for Holland.

It is plain that the Tory Party, in spite of their narrowness and violence, represented the nation in their pressure for peace, retrenchment, and reform of abuses. Now that the war was over, the curious criss-cross structure of English politics defined itself. The Tories, venerating the Monarchy, accepted an alien King only to bully him. The Whigs cherished their imported sovereign because he could ill defend his Prerogative. Thus, sharply as the factions were divided, the Tories could always count upon important Whig support whenever any difference with the King on current administration rose to the height of a constitutional issue. The war had held these forces in suspension. But the first three years of peace reduced King William to a pitiful plight. The self-sufficiency of the House of Commons knew no bounds. Sagacious in all that fell within their sphere of domestic knowledge, they were ignorant or disdainful of the world issues which were shortly to invade their affairs. Although the monarchical principle still swayed the vast majority, England had never been nearer a republic since the Commonwealth. “The party leaders,” observes Ranke, “felt themselves stronger than the King.” “The Royal authority,” wrote a French agent in 1701, “is so enfeebled that England cannot but be regarded as a Republic,

and her king as an officer authorized to carry out what Parliament has ordered in the intervals between its sessions.”^[168]



THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

These conditions which now manifested themselves so powerfully were long to prevail. The natural desire of sovereigns to govern, apart from party, with those whom they thought the best men, was for more than two hundred

years to be forbidden. The party system was entering into its long supremacy. The overpowering victories of Marlborough under Queen Anne, the famous Administration of Chatham, or the supreme emergencies of the twentieth century might suspend the operation of this custom; but in general and for nine-tenths of the time the Crown would be forced to subsist upon the alternation and interplay of opposing bands struggling for office, and for the assertion of their special loyalties, doctrines, and vested interests. It is astonishing that such a system should, on the whole, have proved so serviceable.

A tragical event supervened. The little Duke of Gloucester was now eleven. We can reproduce a picture of him in some detail from a contemporary tract written by one of his attendants named Jenkin Lewis.^[169] In infancy he suffered from water on the brain: two attendants had to carry him everywhere. His mother did everything possible by doctors and changes of scene to improve his health; his father tried beating him to make him normal. Apparently this was beneficial, for he was soon reprimanded for using mild swearwords. Above all the child loved playing with toy cannon, toy ships, and toy soldiers. Beyond this he formed an army of playmates, who staged miniature wars and battles. One of his most promising lieutenants was Marlborough's son. Says Lewis:

We every night had the ceremony of beating up the Tatta-ta-too, and the Word, and the Patrole, as in *garrison*; which latter was sometimes an excellent piece of diversion. My Lord Churchill was a bold-spirited youth, and not above two or three years older than the Duke, when he was admitted by him a Lieutenant-General. Mrs Atkinson [one of the governesses] invited Lady Hariote and Lady Anne Churchill one day to dine with her, in her chamber, and spend the day. Lord Churchill came with them. Mrs. Wanley [another governess?] asked his Lordship, if he would go with the Duke? who answered briskly "Yes, I will!"—"What if you are killed?" said she. "I do not care!" which, the Duke hearing, took a secret delight in him from that moment. My Lord admired the Duke's Highland sword, which was readily bestowed on his Lordship by the Duke, although he was very fond of it, saying, he would bespeak another. Lady Anne Churchill, who was as sweet a creature as ever was seen, had a pretty case, containing a knife, fork, and spoon, which the Duke liked much, and asked what such a one would cost? She replied, with modesty, that she had won it

at a lottery, but begged, if he liked it, that he would accept of it. He thanked her, and would with pleasure accept of it, if she would permit him to present her with something in return; which he afterwards remembered to do.

King William's interest in this child casts a pleasing light on his somewhat forbidding character. He saw and petted him repeatedly. At the time of the Fenwick trial, Gloucester, when but seven years old, caused one of his boy soldiers to write out the following address which he signed: "I, your Majesty's most dutiful subject, had rather lose my life in your majesty's cause than in any man's else, and I hope it will not be long ere you conquer France." To which his juvenile army and household appended, "We, your majesty's subjects, will stand by you while we have a drop of blood." In this same year he went with his mother to Tonbridge in order to study fortification "under the care of his clerical tutor." We may readily believe that with such propensities the young Prince rejoiced to have so martial a governor. It is, however, probable that Marlborough, far from encouraging this precocious militarism, inculcated habits of courtesy, gravity, and above all a judicious care of pounds, shillings, and pence.

The hearts of Englishmen and the eyes of Europe were turned towards this child. The Whigs drew from his games the hope of a sovereign who would make valiant head against France. The Tories, on the other hand, repeated with gusto some of his alleged disrespectful interruptions to Burnet's constitutional discourses. A warrior prince, an English prince, a prince with Plantagenet blood and the necessary Parliamentary education—a good match for any warming-pan impostor, however clad with Divine Right!

These hopes were blasted; other solutions awaited the problems of the English people. On July 30, 1700, the Duke of Gloucester died of smallpox so swiftly that his governor reached his bedside only as he breathed his last. His playmate Churchill survived but three years, before he fell beneath the same fatal scourge. William wrote Marlborough a warm-hearted letter from Loo a few days later in which he expressed his surprise and grief at the little Duke's death. He added, "It is so great a loss to me, as well as to all England, that it pierces my heart with affliction." And he dispersed the household so promptly that Sarah had great difficulty in extracting their month's wages from the authorities of the Privy Purse.

Immense, far-reaching interests were opened by this new gap in the succession. Anne's health amid her repeated miscarriages and stillborn births was precarious. William's days were plainly drawing to a close. The crown of England, and with it not only all those issues of religion and

Constitution which obsessed men's minds, but also the part which the British Isles would play in the destiny of Europe, was once again adrift on a dark, tempestuous ocean. There were many alternatives and many weighty objections to all of them. No one seems to have hankered for James II; but naturally many thoughts turned to the Prince of Wales. The warming-pan myth had lost its primal power. Why should he not be brought up under William's care in Holland? A Protestant, if possible; a Catholic, if it must be, but none the less with his constitutional duties engrained in him.

Historians have debated whether William did not at this time of amity with France dwell upon this solution. He certainly played with it. Had James II died one year earlier and the rightful heir been left alone, freed from the antagonisms which centred upon his father, our affairs might have decided themselves differently. And does not this fact, that even William balanced the issue of bringing back a prince from Saint-Germain, imply some rebuke upon those crude, superficial critics who have sought to brand as villainy all correspondence with the exiled Court? Then there were the children of Victor Amadeus of Savoy, who had married the daughter of Charles II's sister, the famous 'Minette.' But the house of Savoy was under a cloud. Its Duke had so recently deserted the Grand Alliance in the face of the enemy. Thirdly there were the rights of the house of Hanover, at this time represented by the aged Electress Sophia. This solution seemed likely to renew all the difficulties which had arisen in England through the importation of a foreign King. All monarchical sentiment longed for a prince of island character and English speech. But there was another sentiment which suddenly surged up stark and logical. Why should the nation be tormented by these riddles of a disputed succession? Why should not William III be the last King in England? The expense of a Court was in those days sufficient to maintain powerful additions to the Navy or afford longed-for reliefs of taxation. The sudden advance of the republican idea made it imperative that a decision should be reached without delay. This mood dictated the Act of Settlement, and gave the crown to the house of Hanover in a statute which was virtually a reproach upon the reign of King William. The sovereign must be an Anglican—neither a Catholic nor a Calvinist. He must never leave the country without the permission of Parliament (as some had done so often). He must be advised not by any secret Cabinet or closet about his person, but by the Privy Council as a whole; and the Privy Council must be governed by the preponderating authority of an elected assembly wielding the money power. Thus the reign of Anne would be an interlude; and all would be in readiness at her death to give a dutiful and chilling reception to a Hanoverian prince.

We have no doubt where the Marlboroughs stood in these dominant matters. They must have been unswervingly hostile to any plan of the Prince of Wales intervening between Anne and her declared rights of succession. After Anne they felt themselves free to choose. It was unwise to peer too far ahead.

The untimely death of the Duke of Gloucester deprived Marlborough of his office; but he was by now so strongly established in the centre of English politics that, in spite of his recent difference with the King, his personal position was unimpaired.

These years had seen William helpless before the Tories. The Whigs, with whom he agreed on current issues, could not or would not carry the needful measures. Perhaps with responsibility and royal favour the Tories would abate their ire. The King had turned to them. The Whig Ministers dropped out one by one. Shrewsbury was at length allowed to depart for the Continent. Russell (Orford) had quitted the Admiralty. The brilliant Montagu, who had lost all his hold over the House of Commons, saw himself obliged to resign the Treasury. Somers, over-conscious of his virtues, hung on until he was dismissed. All these places were filled by Tories. Rochester re-entered the Cabinet; Godolphin resumed his long control of finance; and Marlborough, with a non-party outlook, a Whig foreign policy, and a rather faded Tory coat, was found moving sedately along the central line of impending national requirements. Yet this was due to neither oratory nor intrigue. It was not due to such backstairs influence as Sunderland so persistently and often beneficially exercised; nor to the busy agitations and wire-pullings of a rising man like Harley, now become Speaker and accepted Tory leader in the House of Commons. It was mainly a weight acquired by personal ascendancy, fortified by continual buildings up and judicious withholdings.

In October 1700 Brydges, who had called upon him, noted down in his diary, "My Lord [Marlborough] told me, he believed the Parl: would not be dissolved, and that for Secretary of State the King had not disposed of it, not denying it might be given to himself."^[170] A Dutch envoy reported home, "On dit toujours que le comte de Marlborough sera fait secrétaire d'état et le Lord Godolphin, premier commissaire de la trésorerie, mais ces deux icy ne sont pas encore declarez."^[171] These anticipations were reduced to irrelevance by wider events.

[159] Lord Sunderland to Mrs Boscawen, December 31, 1698, Blenheim MSS.

- [160] Macpherson, i, 588.
- [161] Brydges' Journal, May 12, 1701, Huntington Library MSS.
- [162] Coxe, *Shrewsbury Correspondence*, p. 573.
- [163] Wolseley (ii, 328) misreads "then" for "you" and misdates this letter 1698.
- [164] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 622.
- [165] *Correspondence of William III and Portland* (Royal Dutch Historical Society, 1920), No. 23, letter 273.
- [166] Coxe, i, 102. Coxe quotes several letters of Vernon to Shrewsbury which are as yet unpublished.
- [167] Buccleuch Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 647.
- [168] Cf. "Mémoire pour M. Poussin," April 15, 1701, in R.O. transcripts.
- [169] Miss Strickland (*Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. xi) calls the author Lewis Jenkins. Actually he was Jenkin Lewis, a Welsh equerry in attendance on the Duke of Gloucester. It may be that this error in Miss Strickland's references has concealed his tract from the vigilance of the *Dictionary of National Biography* and the standard bibliographies.
- [170] Brydges' Journal, October 31, 1700, Huntington Library MSS.
- [171] L'Hermitage to the States-General, November 1/12, 1700 (Add. MSS., 17677 U.U., f. 324).

CHAPTER XIII

THE SPANISH SUCCESSION

(1698-1701)

No great war was ever entered upon with so much reluctance on both sides as the War of the Spanish Succession.^[172] Europe was exhausted and disillusioned. The bitter aftermath of eight years' desultory conflict had turned all men's minds to peace, or at least to a change of experience, and to economic instead of military expansion. The new-found contacts which had sprung up between William and Louis expressed the heartfelt wishes of the peoples both of the Maritime Powers and of France. Over them and all the rest of Europe hung the long-delayed, long-dreaded, ever-approaching demise of the Spanish Crown. All the most sundering issues which could tear the states of Europe must be raised by that awful yet inevitable event. But here was the breathing-space, a time when passions seemed burned out, when blood was chill, when hands of friendship were cordially joined across the harsh antagonisms of strife and fear. Surely these two great princes, so uplifted by their qualities and their power above the human scene, long matched in equal combat, now united in mutual respect, could if they tried find a peaceful road which their tired, jaded subjects could tread. A renewal of the world war would not be only a catastrophe; it would be an anticlimax.

There is no doubt about the sincerity of William III in the peace effort. It did not only arise from his own nature. He could not conceive how England could be brought again into the field. She seemed to have shot her bolt for at least a generation. He saw the turbulent pacifism of the Parliament; he bowed to the irresistible pressure of disarmament; he understood, while he resented, the insularity and detachment of his acquired subjects. Holland might yet resist any menace to her frontier; but England was cloyed with the Continent, and saw in a strong navy and a strict neutrality a sure escape from a deadly labyrinth. Without the aid of England the States-General must submit to almost anything short of subjugation. War against France without the power of Britain was impossible. Therefore William was in earnest. He must keep peace at almost any price.

Historians have held lengthy disputes about the sincerity of Louis XIV. There is an extensive argument in his favour. Amid so many years of aggression, intrigue, and Olympian chicanery, it seems to an important school of writers almost incredible that the Great Monarch should not once for a brief space have lapsed into good faith. But the truth is that the

temptations to which Louis was exposed were such as to sap the virtue of almost any mortal. The sense of embodying in his own small frame the glory of the greatest nation in Christendom at the moment of its fullest efflorescence; the habit of absolute power in all things great and petty; the lure of playing the game of giant against pygmies—*Nec pluribus impar*—with so many advantages in his hand: all these were decisive. They led him to a policy in which fair dealing was so mingled with false dealing, and good nature so latticed by design, that the whole could become only one abominable deception.

More than thirty agitated years had passed since the old Partition Treaty of 1668. The feeble life-candle of the childless Spanish King, known to his country as Charles the Sufferer, flickered, smoked, guttered, but still burned. At any moment it might have gone out. Yet it kept alight for nearly a third of a century, and one by one the great statesmen of Europe who had watched for its extinction had themselves been overtaken by the darkness of night. But now the candle burned low in the socket. To the ravages of deformity and disease were added the most grievous afflictions of the mind. The royal victim believed himself to be possessed by the devil. Priestly charlatans pretended to exorcize the evil spirit, and a hideous mummery was enacted in which the wretched monarch thought he saw an apparition, and nearly died of terror. His only comfort was in the morbid contemplation of the tomb. He would totter down the stairway which led to the mausoleum where his ancestors and his wife lay buried. He opened their coffins and gazed fixedly on their remains. He lay in his own coffin shrouded in the cerements of death. Meanwhile the disorders of his body and mind grew in seemingly endless aggravation, and all the nations waited in suspense upon his failing pulses and deepening mania. Every sign and symptom of which report was carried to the Courts of Europe betokened the end. What then was to happen to half the world, and what would the other half do with it? A score of claimants, ranging from a successful usurper in Portugal to the Emperor Leopold, confident in his vague, but to his mind paramount, dynastic right, would come forward to demand a greater or lesser share of the mighty heritage. But could not William and Louis, incomparably the most skilled and experienced diplomatists in Europe, lords of the strongest armies and fleets in existence, both of whom saw and shrank from the danger of a renewal of the European conflict, devise some solution to which every candidate would be forced to bow?

The French historian Legrelle devotes a volume of five hundred pages to each of the two new Partition Treaties. We have no intention of being drawn beyond the briefest outline of what happened. England and Holland, who lived by seaborne trade and dreamed of colonies and wealth beyond the

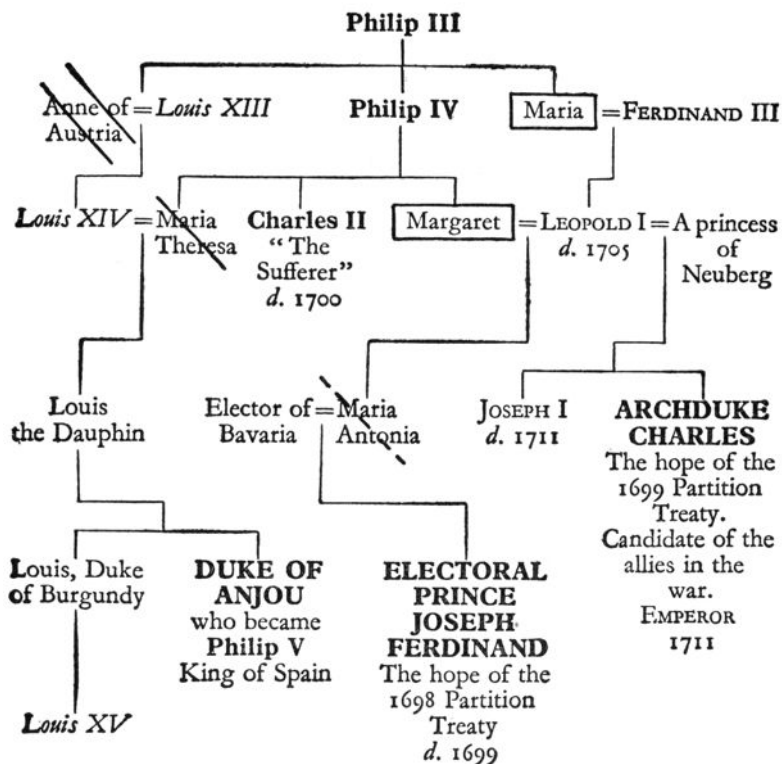
oceans, could not bear that the control of Spain, the Indies, Mexico, South America, and the Mediterranean should fall into the competent hands of France. They saw themselves shut out by prohibitive tariffs, mercantile laws, and indefinite naval expansion, alike from their daily bread and their future. The independence of Belgium from France was a vital interest which England and Holland shared in common. The Protestant states shivered at the prospect of the Government that had revoked the Edict of Nantes being united with the Government that had devised and enforced the Holy Inquisition. The Emperor, that Catholic despot without whose aid Protestantism and Parliamentary institutions would be imperilled, advanced proud and impracticable claims. Though the rights which he possessed to the Spanish Empire were legally inferior, it seemed necessary to support him at all costs against the possibility of unlimited French expansion. Unless a settlement could be reached between him and France there must be general war. The Imperial Court had long accustomed itself to a dynastic monopoly of the Spanish throne, and no settlement could be reached with France which did not injure and anger it. Still, if Louis and William could agree upon a settlement, they would together have the power to impose their will on all concerned.

The peace so earnestly desired could only take the form of a new partition of the Spanish Empire. Very secretly—breathing not a word to Spain nor to the Emperor—the two leading princes set about this task. There were three claimants, each of whom, as set forth in the table at p. 220, could advance important pretensions. The first was France, represented either by the Dauphin or, if the two crowns could not be joined, by his second son, the Duke of Anjou. These rights rested upon the marriage of Louis XIV with the eldest Spanish princess. They were barred by a solemn renunciation at the time of Louis XIV's marriage with the then Infanta of Spain. But Cardinal Mazarin had woven the question of her dowry into the act of renunciation; and certainly the dowry had not been paid by Spain. Next there was the Emperor, who, as the widower of the younger Spanish princess, claimed as much as he could, but was willing to transfer his claims to the second son of his own second wife, the Archduke Charles. Thirdly there was the Emperor's grandson by his first marriage, the Electoral Prince of Bavaria. The essence of the new Partition Treaty of September 24, 1698, was to give the bulk of the Spanish Empire to the candidate who, if not strongest in right, was at least weakest in power. Louis and William both promised to recognize the Electoral Prince as heir to Charles II: The Dauphin was to receive Sicily, Naples, Finale, and certain other Italian territories. The Archduke Charles was to have the Milanese. The Maritime Powers

represented by William had no claims at all; but they were assured of important trading rights beyond the oceans.

These distributions might be represented as an act of self-denial by France. In fact, however, her acquisitions in Italy were solid; they were to be obtained without further war, and the power of the Emperor received only a minimum augmentation. At least the balance of Europe was preserved. Moreover, when historians speak of Spain, the Indies, and the bulk of the Spanish Empire 'going to' the Electoral Prince, what they really mean is that the Electoral Prince would go to Madrid and would reign there as a Spanish sovereign. Very different would be the destination of the splendid Italian provinces. They 'went' to France, and through the Dauphin were directly incorporated in the dominions of Louis XIV. Still, we must regard this treaty as a real effort in the cause of peace. It could not long remain secret.

As soon as the Emperor learned its import he was infuriated. He refused to accede to the treaty; he declared himself basely deserted by his late allies. The repercussion upon Spain was not less decisive. Only one conviction dominated the Castilian aristocracy—the Spanish Empire must not be divided. It was intolerable to their patriotism—indeed, to their good sense—that the empire their ancestors had gathered should be parcelled out in fragments. They denounced the treachery of their allies, who had coldly carved them in pieces. If the Spanish line was extinct, if a new dynasty must rule, let it rule over the inheritance in its integrity. Who the prince might be, whence he came, what were his connexions—all these, compared to mutilation, were regarded in Madrid as trivial. Accordingly Spain plumped for the Electoral Prince. Where the trunk of their empire was, there the limbs should also go. On November 14 Charles signed and declared a will by which the whole of the Spanish domains passed intact to the Electoral Prince. This decision, for what it was worth, stripped the Emperor even of the Milanese, and it was certain he would not accept it. Nevertheless he did not seem capable of overriding the will, which even in a degree reinforced the pact which William had reached with Louis. The preponderating and most active forces in Europe seemed capable of imposing the Partition Treaty of 1698 upon the world.



KEY

MALES

Kings of France thus: *Louis XIII*.

Emperors thus: CHARLES II.

Kings of Spain thus: **Philip III**.

Candidates for the Spanish throne thus: **DUKE OF ANJOU**.

FEMALES

- \ \ indicates full renunciation of Spanish throne.
- \ " conditional renunciation of Spanish throne.
- ∴ " private and invalid renunciation of Spanish throne.
- " no renunciation of Spanish throne.

But now a startling event occurred. The Treaty of Partition had been signed at William's palace at Loo in September 1698. The will of Charles II was made public on November 14. On February 6 the little Prince of Bavaria, the heir to these prodigious domains, the child in whose chubby hands the greatest states had resolved to place the most splendid prize, suddenly died. Why did he die, how did he die? A coincidence so extraordinary could not fail to excite dark suspicions. But the fact glared grimly upon the world. All these elaborate, perilous conversations must be begun over again.

The positions of the disputants had changed somewhat by the beginning of 1699. The Treaty of Carlowitz had brought to an end the long Austro-Turkish war. The Emperor was free to concentrate his strength upon the West. Thus Louis XIV's chance of obtaining the entire Spanish heritage for his son or grandson without a serious struggle with the Empire became even smaller. But this advantage was more than balanced by the action of the House of Commons in disbanding the British Army, and by its violent opposition to all Continental entanglements. Ultimately William and Louis arranged a second Treaty of Partition on June 11, 1699. To the disgust of Harcourt, his Ambassador at Madrid, Louis consented to the Archduke Charles being heir-in-chief. To him were assigned Spain, the overseas colonies, and Belgium, on the condition that they should never be united with the Empire. The Dauphin was to have Naples and Sicily, the Milanese, which was to be exchanged for Lorraine, and certain other Italian possessions. The terms of this provisional treaty allowed the Emperor two months in which to decide whether he would or would not be a party to it. Strenuous diplomatic efforts were made by the Dutch to win his agreement to this huge gratification of his dynastic pride. But his heart was set upon Italy; and he finally refused in the words, "Status valde miserabilis si daremus Gallo quæ peteret; esset potentior!"^[173]

On March 13, 1700, therefore, the treaty was ratified only by France and the Maritime Powers.

From this point onward the guile of Louis becomes obvious. During the greater part of 1700, while he was negotiating with William, his Ambassador in Madrid was using every resource, especially money, to win the Spanish Court to the interests of a French prince.^[174] At one and the same time he was signing with William the treaty which favoured the Archduke Charles, fomenting a party in Madrid in favour of his grandson, the second son of the Dauphin, Philip, Duke of Anjou, and gradually moving a considerable army towards the Spanish frontier. Since the Emperor would not accept the Partition Treaty, and war between France and the Empire seemed certain, it was natural that, if he must fight anyhow, Louis should fight for the maximum rather than for the minimum claims of his dynasty. Moreover, the weakness of England's pacific mood and the consequent incoherence of the Maritime Powers became continually more apparent. He therefore soothed William with his treaty, and shook Madrid with his propaganda, resolving to seize what fortune should offer.

The event was decisive. Charles II was on his deathbed. Within that diseased frame, that clouded mind, that superstitious soul, trembling on the verge of eternity, there glowed one imperial thought—unity. He was determined as he lay prostrate, scarcely able to utter a word or stir a finger, with his last gasp to proclaim that his vast dominions should pass intact and entire to one prince and to one alone. But to which? His second wife, the Emperor's sister-in-law, naturally favoured the claims of the Austrian Archduke. Her wishes seemed likely to prevail. But in the nick of time the French gold in Madrid and the French bayonets beyond the Pyrenees triumphed. The influence of the Holy See under the new Pope was transferred to the side of France. A palace revolution occurred. The Archbishop of Toledo, with a few other priests, established himself in the sick-room and forbade the Queen to enter. The King was then persuaded to sign a will leaving his throne to the Duke of Anjou. The will was completed on October 7, and couriers galloped with the news from the Escorial to Paris. On November 1 Charles II expired.

Louis XIV had now reached one of the great turning-points in the history of France. Should he stand by the treaty, reject the will, and face a single war with the Empire? Should he repudiate the treaty, endorse the will, and defend his grandson's claims in the field against all comers? Apart from good faith and solemnly signed agreements upon which the ink was barely dry, the choice, like so many momentous choices, was nicely balanced. Tallard on arriving from England at Fontainebleau on November 2 learned of the will and of the Spanish King's extremity. He advised Louis to maintain the Partition Treaty. War with the Emperor was, in any case,

certain, but if the treaty were maintained, the Emperor would find few or no allies. History, he added, showed that a French King of Spain was not necessarily an advantage to France. Torcy supported Tallard. Louis, to gain time to poise and ponder upon the decision, ordered the Dutch Pensionary Heinsius to be informed that he would adhere to the treaty. But while he sought to persuade the Maritime Powers to promise their aid in enforcing it, and thus to divide them from the Emperor, he took care not to close the door in Madrid.

The news of the death of Charles II reached Paris on November 8, and no further delay was possible. According to Saint-Simon, a conference was held in Madame de Maintenon's rooms at which the King, his brother, Pontchartrain (the Chancellor), the Duc de Beauvilliers, and Torcy were present. Torcy and Beauvilliers were for the treaty. The Chancellor and the King's brother were for the will. The enemies of Madame de Maintenon have alleged, though Torcy denies it, that she swayed the decision. At any rate, the will had it. On November 12 Louis wrote to Madrid accordingly.

On November 16 a famous scene was enacted at Versailles. After the Great King's levee he brought his grandson and the Spanish Ambassador, Castel des Rios, into his cabinet. To the latter he said, indicating the Duke of Anjou, "You may salute him as your King." The Ambassador fell on his knees, kissed the Prince's hand, and made prolonged homage in Spanish. Louis said, "He does not yet understand Spanish. It is I who will answer for him." Thereupon the double doors which led into the grand gallery were opened, and the King said to the assembled courtiers, "Gentlemen, there is the King of Spain. His birth called him to this crown. The Spanish nation has wished it and has demanded it of me. I have granted their wish with joy. It was the command of heaven." Then, turning to the new King, he added, "Be a good Spaniard—that is your first duty; but remember that you are born a Frenchman, and preserve the union between the two nations. That is the way to make them happy and to preserve the peace of Europe." Castel des Rios epitomized the proceedings by his celebrated indiscretion, "Il n'y a plus de Pyrénées."

We must now return to England. William was dining at Hampton Court when the news arrived. He bent his head in vain attempt to conceal his feelings. He saw the work of his lifetime was to be shattered, yet he was powerless. He knew it would be futile to appeal to Parliament. He thought of sending Matthew Prior, the poet, to Paris to protest—of summoning the States-General to meet. But Torcy had written a *mémoire justificatif* upon his master's action. His arguments were plausible. The Maritime Powers had failed to guarantee the Partition Treaty; the Emperor would not accept it; the right of the Spanish people to choose their own King was paramount; the

separation of the two crowns was promised. Rochester and Godolphin dwelt on the difficulty of forcing upon Spain and the Empire—the two supremely interested parties—an arrangement which they were both prepared to resist in arms. King William bowed to the awful logic of circumstances. On December 22 Tallard was able to report that the English and the Dutch would recognize Philip V. They would merely demand certain safeguards. William could only trust that from the discussion of these safeguards a Grand Alliance against France would emerge.

A contemporary letter from London^[175] shows how deeply Louis's good faith was suspected.

We shall soon see how the Emperor will take such a *camouflet*^[176] if you know the word. It is when a puff of smoke is blown into a man's nose. There seems to be great silence at this Court. The Emperor and others in my opinion are dupes. The Treaty was made to amuse the world, and to turn the poor King of Spain to his Will. Monsieur Harcourt's being made a Duke confirms my view; it is his reward for managing the Spaniards so well. Tallard is once more dupe; he thought he had made his fortune by making the Treaty, and is only the tool used by his Master in his deception.

We must glance for one moment at the new wearer of the Spanish crown. He was at eighteen a perfect product of the Madame de Maintenon régime at the French Court. He was an ardent Catholic and a devout Frenchman. He was equally averse from either work or pleasure. He suffered all his life from "palpitations and hypochondria," and was very highly sexed. Since his religion allowed him no gratification outside the marriage chamber, a bride was speedily found in a princess of Savoy. At her death he married again immediately on priestly and medical advice. He no doubt wished on entering Spain at the beginning of 1701 to make himself popular. His success was partial. Unpunctuality was his rule of life. He promised to rise early each morning and attend the Council of State. Actually, however, his Ministers, who met at nine, invariably awaited him until eleven. He promised to dine occasionally in public. He ordered supper to be at eight, but rarely sat down till eleven. He could not endure Spanish cooking and speedily replaced his Spanish domestic staff with Frenchmen. He pined for France. He used to shut himself up in his room with a confidant and weep tears at the thought of the delights of Versailles and Fontainebleau. Early in 1702 the Marquis de Louville, who knew him well, prophesied

correctly, “C’est un roi qui ne règne pas et qui ne règnera jamais.”^[177] The King, in fact, was always a tool either in the hands of his grandfather, of his wife’s governess, Madame des Ursins, or of his confessors. All the important decisions of Spanish policy were taken henceforward by Louis XIV.

The House of Commons was in a mood far removed from European realities. Neither party would believe that they could be forced into war against their will—still less that their will would change. They had just compelled William to sign the Act of Settlement. They had just completed the disarmament of England. They eagerly accepted Louis XIV’s assurance, conveyed through Tallard, that, “content with his power, he would not seek to increase it at the expense of his grandson.” Lulled by this easy lie, they even deemed the will of Charles II preferable to either of the Partition Treaties. It was, indeed, upon these abortive instruments that the Tory wrath was centred. Not only were the treaties stigmatized as ill-advised in themselves, and treacherous to allies, but that they should have been negotiated and signed in secret was declared a constitutional offence. In chief they assailed Portland for having led the King astray. He replied that the whole Cabinet was responsible. Challenged in the House of Lords to name his associates, he mentioned not only his principal Cabinet colleagues, but Marlborough. Marlborough immediately rose in his place and disclaimed responsibility, adding that if he were free to speak he could prove his statement.^[178] The other impugned Ministers followed his example. The Lords demanded that permission should be sought from the King for a full disclosure. Accordingly the next day the Ministers and Marlborough in succession explained that they had been presented with the treaties only as accomplished facts.

In the embryonic condition of Cabinet government which then prevailed, such a defence was not invalid. The King was the sole director of foreign policy, and Parliament only assented to it. From the reign of Anne onward the Prime Minister and the Cabinet guided foreign policy. The Commons now exhibited articles of impeachment against Portland and several of the other Ministers, but not against Marlborough, who, though secretly apprised of the transaction, held no office, and was also protected by his Toryism. These impeachments struggled slowly forward against the resistance of the House of Lords. We cannot measure the pressures which were at work, but Marlborough once again chose the Tory Party in preference to the King. He even voted for protests against the decisions of the majority of the House of Lords, although these were couched in terms so violent that they have been expunged from the records. Had he been a Secretary of State he would

perhaps have shaped the treaties differently, but, wise or unwise, he would not accept the blame for a policy to which he had not been a party, and he no doubt meant this to be plainly understood. Such were his relations with William at the end of 1700.

But now a series of ugly incidents broke from outside upon the fevered complacency of English politics. The first of these brings upon the scene that same Melfort whom we left at Saint-Germains poring with Nairne over the document which purported to be Marlborough's letter betraying the Brest expedition. In February Sir Robert Cotton, the Postmaster-General, found in the English mail-bag from Paris a letter addressed from Melfort in Paris to his elder brother, Perth, at Saint-Germains. The letter spoke of the existence of a strong Jacobite party in Scotland, and discussed, as if it were a matter actually in hand, a plan for the immediate French invasion of England in the Jacobite cause. William pounced upon this as proof of French perfidy. On February 17 he presented it to both Houses of Parliament with the utmost circumstance. There was a strong sensation. Lords and Commons alike were convinced that such a letter could only have been written in time of peace with encouragement from Versailles. The faithful Tallard, found without instructions, defended his master as best he could. Louis was justly incensed. He knew some trick had been played, and with a deeply instructed purpose. Stringent inquiries were made by the French authorities. Melfort protested that he had only written to his brother at Saint-Germains. How, then, had the letter got into the mail for London? It must, suggested Melfort, have been an accident in making up the bags in Paris. The French Government would not accept this excuse. They believed he had written the letter ostensibly to Saint-Germains, but had arranged to have it slipped into the wrong mail with the direct object of embroiling the two countries. They suspected that he had been bribed by one of King William's agents to work this mischief. Although this could not be proved, Melfort was banished to Angers. He never saw James again.

About this same time Parliament began to realize that the language and attitude of the French King about the essential separation of the crowns of France and Spain was, at the very least, ambiguous. In February 1701, indeed, Louis XIV had expressly reserved his grandson's right of succession to the French throne, an action which seemed fatally significant to the Maritime Powers. Then came the news—keenly disturbing to all the British commercial interests represented by the Whig Party as the champions of civil and religious liberty—that the Spaniards had handed over to a French company the entire right of importing negro slaves into South America. It became simultaneously apparent that the freedom of British trade in the Mediterranean was in jeopardy. But the supreme event which roused all

England to an understanding of what had actually happened in the virtual union of the crowns of France and Spain was a tremendous military operation effected under the guise of brazen legality. Philip V had been received with acclamation in Madrid. The Spanish Netherlands rejoiced in his accession. The bonfires blazed in the streets of Brussels in honour of their new sovereign. The fortresses of Belgium constituted the main barrier of the Dutch against the French invasion. After the Peace of Nimwegen the most important had been occupied by Dutch garrisons who shared with their then Spanish allies the guardianship of these vital strongholds. But now the position was reversed. The Spaniards were the allies of France, joined not by a scrap of paper, but by kindred crowns. The European states which had fought against France in the late war were still undecided. But everywhere the storm signal had been hoisted. Preparations were being made; officers and soldiers were being recalled from penury to their old formations. Louis, knowing that his enemies would fight if they could muster strength and courage, resolved to make sure of the barrier fortresses.

William foresaw with agony the approaching blow. During the month of February 1701 strong French forces arrived before all the fortresses of the barrier. The Spanish commanders welcomed them with open gates. They had come, it was contended, only to help protect the possessions of His Most Catholic Majesty. The Dutch garrisons, overawed by force, and no one daring to break the peace, were interned. Antwerp and Mons; Namur—King William's famous conquest—Léau, Venloo, and a dozen secondary strongholds like Ath, Nieuport, Ostende, Oudenarde—all passed in a few weeks, without a shot fired, by the lifting of a few cocked hats, into the hands of Louis XIV. Others, like Liège, Huy, and Ruremonde, fell under his control through the adhesion to France of the Archbishop of Liège. Citadels defended during all the years of general war, the loss or capture of any one of which would have been boasted as the fruits of a hard campaign, were swept away while a moon waxed and waned. Every one of these fortresses had to be retaken by Marlborough before he could even reach the position established at the Peace of Nimwegen. Only Maestricht, by the accident of an exceptionally strong Dutch garrison which guarded enormous supply depots, escaped the general landslide. Thus all that the Grand Alliance of 1689 had achieved in the Low Countries in eight years of war melted like snow at Easter.

Europe was roused, and at last England was staggered. Some of Louis's admirers condemn him for this violent measure. They argue that when all was going so well for his designs, when his grandson had been accepted as rightful King by every part of the Spanish Empire in the Old World and the New, when his adversaries in their lack of union seemed utterly impotent, he

should have displayed all the virtues of quiescence and restraint. But, like William, he knew that the storm was gathering. He had launched himself upon an audacious voyage; and he knew the value of the fortresses. The nations were now arming fast, and we may imagine with what a glow of hope and salvation all those poor, neglected, despised, professional soldiers saw again the certainty of employment, of pay, of food, of shelter, and the chance of fame. Once more fighting men would come into their own. Once more the drums would beat, and the regiments in their brilliant uniforms would march along the highways. Once more the smug merchants and crafty politicians would find they could not do without ‘popinjays.’ Once more they would flatter the martial class and beg—though so lately ungrateful—for its renewed protection.

In the early summer of 1701 the Whig Party, a minority in the House of Commons, mobilized its pamphleteers to convert the electorate. Daniel Defoe led the band. Their main theme was the danger to English commerce from a French King in Spain. An interesting tract, *The Duke of Anjou's Succession Considered*, devoted the whole of its second part to the trade question. “Our all is now at stake, and perhaps in as great a danger as at any time since we were a nation.” Thus the Whigs. But the Tories were slow in realizing the evolution of opinion which was already so marked. They were still hunting William III and planning retrenchment. They were still dreaming of detachment from Europe when the nation awoke beneath them. On May 8, 1701, the freeholders of Kent presented a petition to the Commons, begging the House to grant supplies to enable the King to help his allies “before it is too late.” The militant pacifists were for punishing the freeholders for their presumption. They actually imprisoned their leaders; but the ground crumbled beneath their feet. The insular structure in which they sought to dwell crashed about their ears. The mass of the Tory Parliament had already moved some distance. On June 12, when they had extorted from the King his assent to the Act of Settlement, Parliament had also authorized him to “seek allies.” Ten thousand men, at any rate, should be guaranteed to Holland. They still pushed forward with the obsolete impeachments of Portland and his colleagues; but William felt the tide had set in his favour, and on the flow he prorogued Parliament, well knowing that their hour had passed.

French writers are prone to underrate the deep feelings of resentment which grew up during 1701 in both England and Holland at the spectacle of Louis XIV actually taking over the government of the Spanish Empire. With every month that passed the appalling realities penetrated wider circles; but the manner in which William III organized and harnessed the gathering wrath for resistance to French aggression commands just admiration. At the

end of 1700 the French agents in London and at The Hague reported that there was not the least likelihood of either of the Maritime Powers declaring war upon France; but William, although he knew himself a doomed man and saw his life's work collapsing before his eyes, turned every mistake made by Louis to so much account that by the middle of 1701 the two parties in opposition to him, the Tory majority in the House of Commons and the powerful burgesses of Amsterdam, were both begging him to do everything that he "thought needful for the preservation of the peace of Europe"—that is to say, for war.

The same processes which undermined the Tory factions and all their reasonings, so weighty to modern minds, united William and Marlborough. They joined forces, nor was their partnership unequal. For while King William now saw that he could once again draw the sword of England, he felt the melancholy conviction that he himself would never more wield it. This was no time on either side for half-confidences or old griefs. Some one must carry on. In his bones the King knew there was but one man. On May 31 he proclaimed Marlborough Commander-in-Chief of the English forces assembling in Holland. On June 28—the day of the Prorogation—he appointed him Ambassador Extraordinary to the United Provinces. The instructions to Marlborough^[179] show the far-reaching character of his powers. Discretion was given him not only to frame, but to conclude treaties without reference, if need be, to King or Parliament. But the King would be at hand and would maintain the closest contact possible. On July 1 the royal yacht carried them both to Holland. Though the opportunities of the reign had been marred or missed by their quarrels and misunderstandings, the two warrior-statesmen were at last united. Though much was lost, all might be retrieved. The formation of the Grand Alliance had begun.

[172] This chapter is founded mainly on the standard works of Saint-Simon, Baudrillart, Hippeau, Legrelle, Van Noorden, Lavisse, Vast, Klopp, and on the R.O. French transcripts.

[173] "Our condition would be very wretched if we were to give France what she asks; hers would be the stronger."

[174] See the significant correspondence published by C. Hippeau in *L'Avènement des Bourbons* (1875).

[175] Michel le Vassor to Sir William Trumbull, November 15, 1700, Downshire Papers, *H.M.C.*, ii, 800.

- [176] A small countermine to break in upon the gallery of a mine. Mines are ‘sprung’; camouflets are ‘blown.’
- [177] *Mémoires de Louville*, vol. i.
- [178] “L’étonnement des gens qui se trouvèrent nommés fut sans égal, Milord Marlborough prit la parole et dit qu’il estoit vray qu’il avoit eu connoissance dudit traité, mais qu’on ne trouveroit rien à redire à sa conduite s’il pouvoit parler; or il faut scavoit pour entendre cette réponse que les Ministres prettent serment de ne rien dire de ce qui se fait dans le conseil et qu’il prétextoit son silence de cette raison.” This speech of Marlborough’s, given in Tallard’s report of March 24, has not been noticed before. For the debate in general see Klopp, *Der Fall des Hauses Stuart*, ix, 194 *seq.*
- [179] See Appendix, III.

CHAPTER XIV
THE GRAND ALLIANCE
(1701-1702)

The duties at length confided to Marlborough were of supreme importance. He was to make one last effort to avert the war. If that failed, he was to make an offensive and defensive alliance against France between the three great Powers, England, Holland, and the Empire; thereafter to draw into the confederacy by subsidiary treaties Prussia, Denmark, and as many of the German states and principalities as possible, and to make a treaty with Sweden ensuring at least her friendly neutrality. He was to settle by negotiation the *dénombrement*—*i.e.*, the quota of troops and seamen which each signatory would provide for the common cause—and to arrange the military precedence of the officers of the various allied forces. Besides this he was to receive, distribute, organize, train, and command the British army now assembling behind the Dutch frontier; and finally to provide for their munitions and food not only in 1701 for a possible autumn, but for a certain spring campaign in 1702. The King was at hand, usually at Loo, but in practice everything was left to Marlborough and settled by him. Meanwhile through Godolphin he vigilantly watched the tempestuous Parliamentary situation at home, the movement of English opinion, and the reactions which these produced upon King William. In this press of affairs he passed the next four months, and for the first time we see him extended upon a task equal to his capacity.

At this moment also two men who were to be his closest intimates and to continue at his side in unflinching loyalty through the whole period make their appearance. They were already his old friends.^[180] William Cadogan, the son of a Dublin lawyer, had won Marlborough's confidence at the taking of Cork and Kinsale. He was now serving in Ireland as a major of the Royal Irish Dragoons. Marlborough appointed him Quartermaster-General in the Low Countries, and he came to Holland with the twelve battalions transported thither from Ireland. Throughout the ten campaigns he was not only Quartermaster-General, but what we should call Chief of the Staff and Director of Intelligence. It was Marlborough's practice to send with the reconnoitring cavalry an officer of high rank who knew the Commander-in-Chief's mind and his plans and could observe the enemy through his eyes. Cadogan repeatedly played this part, and on a larger scale his advance-guard action at Oudenarde is a model of military competence, discretion, and

daring. He was in the van of all the battles and in numberless operations. Nothing disturbed his fidelity to his chief or the mutual comprehension between them. He shared Marlborough's fall, refusing to separate himself from "the great man to whom I am under such infinite obligations." "I would be a monster," he added, "if I did otherwise."

The second was his military and political secretary. Adam de Cardonnel, the son of a French Protestant, had entered the War Office at an early age, rose to be a Chief Clerk, and came in contact with Marlborough at the beginning of William's reign. From the early part of 1692 he had acted as his secretary, and was in his closest personal friendship and confidence. He too made all the campaigns with Marlborough. He conducted the whole of his correspondence with the sovereigns, princes, and commanders of the Grand Alliance and with the English political leaders, drafting the letters himself, writing from Marlborough's dictation, or copying what his chief had written, to the very great advantage of its grammar and spelling. Cardonnel also was to "pursue the triumph and partake the gale." Thus when the occasion came to Marlborough he was not only ready himself, but he had at his disposal both a military and a civilian instrument which he had long selected and prepared, and which were so perfectly adapted to his needs that they were never changed.

At this moment also appears upon our scene Marlborough's famous comrade. During the spring the Emperor, with the encouragement of King William, had gathered an army of thirty thousand men in the Southern Tyrol. At the head of this stood Prince Eugene.

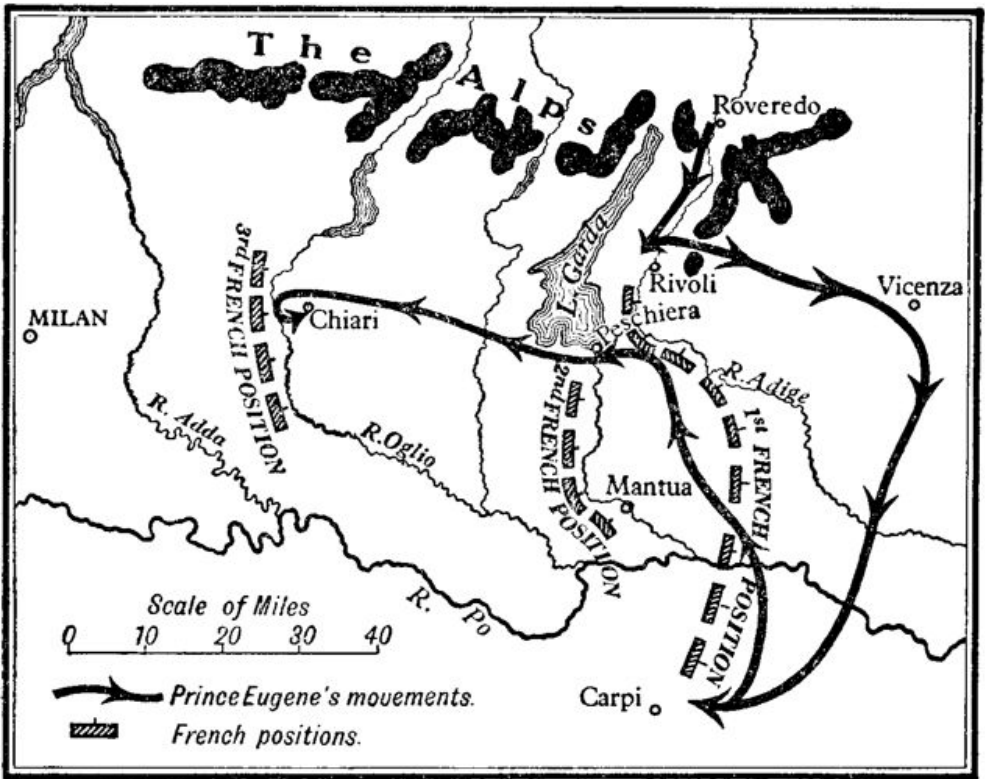
Prince François Eugene of Savoy^[181] was born at Paris in 1663, but from the age of twenty, for just over fifty years and in more than thirty campaigns, he commanded the armies and fought the battles of Austria on all the fronts of the Empire. When he was not fighting the French, he was fighting the Turks. A colonel at twenty, a major-general at twenty-one, he was made a general of cavalry at twenty-six. He was a commander-in-chief ten years before Marlborough. He was still a commander-in-chief, fighting always in the van, more than twenty years after Marlborough's work was done. At the end of his life of innumerable and almost unceasing perils, toils, checks, and triumphs, his skinny body scarred with many wounds, he could still revel in his military duties. He never married, and although he was a discerning patron of art, his only passion was warfare. His decisive victory over the Turks at Zenta in 1697 made him at this moment in our story "the most renowned commander in Europe."^[182]

Eugene was a grandson of Duke Charles Emmanuel of Savoy and son of Olympe Mancini, a niece of Cardinal Mazarin and one of the most beautiful

women at the Court of Louis XIV. As a youth, his weakly frame, turned-up nose, and short upper lip gave him, despite his fine eyes, a vacant appearance and caused him to be considered unfit for a soldier. Against his will he was forced to enter the Church, and the King nicknamed him *le petit abbé*. Intrigue at Court twice brought about his father's exile. His mother's grief at this misfortune weighed deeply upon the young mind of the Prince, and he is said to have sworn to leave France and never to return except with his sword in his hand. He became the persistent enemy of France throughout his life. After the early death of his father, Eugene, with two of his brothers, migrated to Vienna. His lack of frivolity, which had injured him at Versailles, was a positive advantage to him at the sombre Court of Leopold I. His earliest experience of war was in the fateful year of 1683, when the Turks reached the gates of Vienna. Here his eldest brother was killed. But Eugene made his mark in a strange land. The Emperor liked and admired him. He saw warfare in its most ruthless forms, and fought under the leadership of the famous Charles of Lorraine. After he had become a colonel Eugene abandoned his desire for a principality in Italy, and fixed as his sole ambition the command of the Imperial Army.

Louis, in execution of the Spanish will, had entered Lombardy, and a French army under Catinat occupied Mantua and the valley of the Po, and held the line of the Adige from the foot of Lake Garda to the territories of the Venetian Republic. Catinat also watched in force all the passes leading south-westward from the Tyrol to the plains of Lombardy and Milan. Eugene and his Austrian army, concentrated at Roveredo, had a numerous choice of difficult and dangerous advances against very superior French forces. Only the epitome of his brilliant campaign can be given here. He pretended he would strike right-handed towards Milan, but instead climbed south-eastward over the mountains and debouched into Italy by little-known, unexpected passes. He marched rapidly through Vicenza and violated the neutrality of Venice. By this "expedient not the most delicate"^[183] he reached the plains and outwitted Catinat, whose orders strictly enjoined him to respect Venetian neutrality. Catinat, instead of seeking battle with Eugene wherever he might find him, sought to defend the line of the Adige. He spread his troops along a front of sixty miles. Eugene, pouncing upon his right detachment at Carpi on July 9, pierced and turned the French front. Catinat fell back upon the Mincio. Eugene, after defeating him again at Nogara, marched against his other flank on Lake Garda at Peschiera and drove him back, threatening his communications with Milan. Catinat retreated to the Oglio, and was here superseded by Marshal Villeroy, who had arrived from Flanders. Eugene entrenched himself at Chiari, and

repulsed with heavy losses on September 1 Villeroy's attack. He thus established himself in Lombardy and settled down for the winter after a series of manœuvres and combats which in audacity and success suggest Napoleon's campaigns on the same battle-grounds a century later.



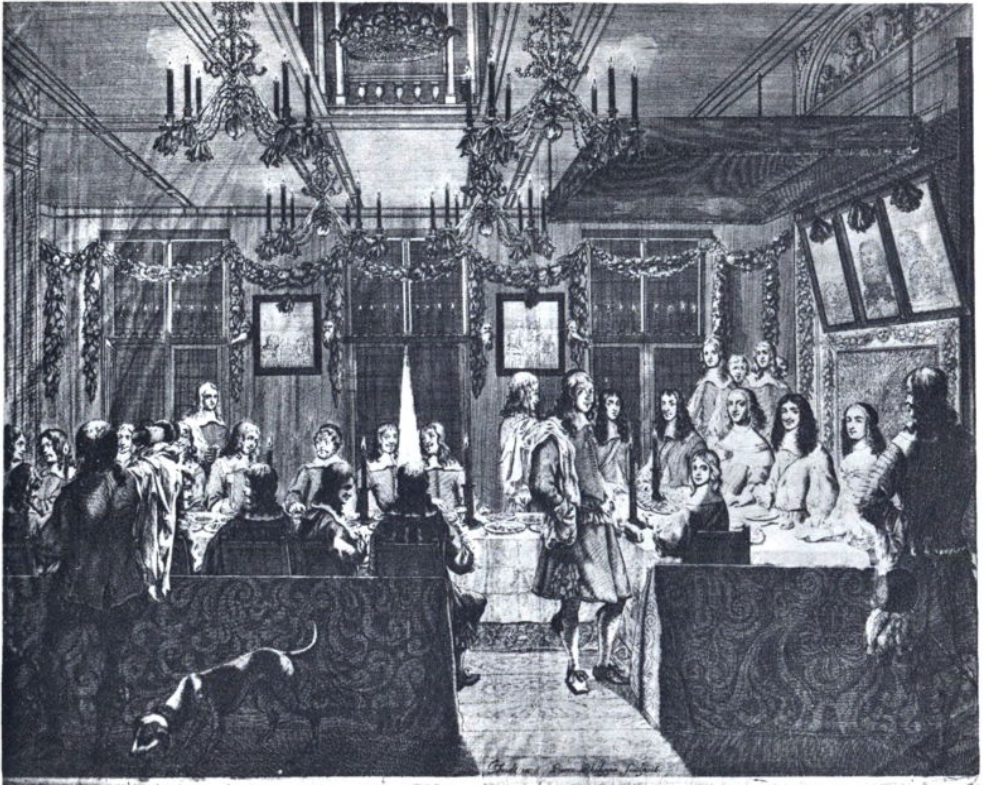
EUGENE'S CAMPAIGN IN ITALY

“The King,” Cardonnel tells us on July 4,

arrived at the Hague from Margate surprisingly quickly as the wind changed. . . . My Lord Marlborough followed very slow [*i.e.*, from the coast] and got hither last night. His lordship has taken a house in this place where I believe he will make his Chief Residence unless a War call him into Brabant.^[184]

But the States-General soon put at his disposal the house of Prince Maurice near the King's palace.^[185] In this beautiful building, to be destroyed by fire

in 1707, Charles II had feasted on the eve of the Restoration.^[186] The Mauritshuis now became the centre from which the Grand Alliance was framed. Thither resorted the envoys and plenipotentiaries of many countries. It was the scene of conclaves and negotiations and of the banquets and ceremonies then judged indispensable to high diplomacy. In all this Marlborough excelled. His charm, his tact, his unfailing sagacity, his magnificent appearance, and the fact that the King seemed to confide everything to his hands, gained him immediately a pre-eminent influence. Almost at once he won the regard of the Pensionary Heinsius, and here again began one of those long, unbreakable associations which are characteristic of the great period of his life. From The Hague he could also transact his military affairs and supervise the camps near the frontier, or attend the King at Loo. At the end of August he visited the English troops at Breda and inspected other garrisons, and a month later accompanied William upon a similar tour. At its close he entertained the King and the principal generals at a dinner at Breda in full military state. This was the last time King William was to see an armed camp.



THE MAURITSHUIS AT THE HAGUE: THE BANQUET TO CHARLES II ON THE EVE OF THE RESTORATION

On Charles's left is his sister Minette; on his right are his mother, Henrietta Maria, and his brother, James, Duke of York; in front is the young Prince of Orange. Marlborough lived in the Mauritshuis

from 1701 until its destruction by fire in 1707.

From a print in the possession of Mr Ernest Poulter

In essence the second Grand Alliance was bound to become another Partition Treaty. Hard pressure had to be put upon the Emperor to reconcile his extortionate demands with the claims of Holland, and thereafter English interests had to be sustained against both Powers. Marlborough, with the angry debates upon William's Partitions in his ears, was intent to study the susceptibilities of the House of Commons, and also to secure due prominence for the particular kind of buccaneering warfare on the sea and across the oceans which was alone acceptable to Tory hearts. In the end he presented results which reconciled the pride of the Empire, the cautious

obstinacy of the Dutch, and the commercial and colonizing appetites of the English. His letter to Godolphin of July 22 gives a clear account of the opening stage.

A great deal of time was spent in the emperor's ministers complaining of the Treaty of Partition, and when we came to the business for which we met, they would have the foundation of the treaty to be for lessening the power of France, and assisting the emperor in his just rights to the monarchy of Spain. But the Pensionary would not consent to anything further, than that the emperor ought to be satisfied with having Flanders, which would be a security to the Dutch, and Milan as a fief of the empire. After four hours' wrangling, the two envoys went away; and then I endeavoured to let the Pensionary see that no treaty of this kind would be acceptable in England, if there were not care taken of the Mediterranean and the West Indies. When I gave the King an account, he was of my mind, so that the Pensionary has promised to use his endeavours with the town of Amsterdam; for they are unwilling to consent to any thing more than Flanders and Milan.

[187]

Although French and Austrian troops were already fighting fiercely in Italy, the last hopes of a general peace were not abandoned. Marlborough had been given a separate set of instructions to enter into negotiations with the Ministers of France and Spain at The Hague. He demanded once again on behalf of the Maritime Powers the withdrawal of the French garrisons from the barrier fortresses, the surrender of "cautionary towns" by the Spaniards to Anglo-Dutch control, and the guarantee of "a reasonable satisfaction" for the Emperor out of the Spanish heritage. He seems to have thought it just possible that Eugene's victories in Italy, the process of forming the Grand Alliance at The Hague, and the evident resolve of the Allies to proceed to extremities would oblige Louis to agree in August to the terms he had rejected in March. Soon after his arrival at The Hague he informed D'Avaux of his instructions to *travailler à un accom[m]odement*.

[188] How far he expected success is difficult to decide. "You may know," he wrote to Godolphin, [189] "as much of peace and war as we do here, for the whole depends upon the French, for if they will not give a reasonable satisfaction to the Emperor, you know what the consequence of that will be." The issue was soon decided. The French King refused to consider the Emperor's demands, or even to admit to a conference the Ambassador of a

Power with whom, though not formally at war, his troops were already engaged. On August 5 d'Avaux left The Hague for Paris.

Heavy fighting might now begin in the Netherlands at any moment. Boufflers and Villeroy were known to be consulting at Namur. The utmost vigilance was required. Already on August 1 Marlborough had written to Sarah, who was eager to join him at The Hague:

DIEREN
August 1

* I came on Wednesday night to Loo, and yesterday to this place, where I found the King ill of his knee. We all hope here it's the gout, and I think it is, but not in that violent degree that others have it. He is now better, and it is to be hoped he will not continue long lame, for the King of France has recalled his ambassador from the Hague, so that now we shall quickly see if he will begin the war, which makes me with a good deal of uneasiness tell you that you must defer your kind thoughts of a journey to this country until I can let you know a little more certainly how I shall be disposed of, for our actions now must be governed by what France will think fit to do.

On the 12th he wrote to Brydges:

HAGUE
August 12, 1701

* S^R.

. . . I shall lose no opportunity of behaving myself towards you as one friend should towards another. We are here in very great expectation of the success that may be in Italy, being persuaded that the French will be reasonable, or otherwise according to what shall happen there. On this side it does not look as if there would be any action, this season, notwithstanding here is at least one hundred thousand men of a side which makes the frontier towns much crowded, although we have two camps. The English have orders to be in readiness to march, but I hope his Majesty will have the goodness not to draw them into the field, unless there should be an absolute necessity, the greatest part of the men being new raised.^[190]

When, on the 18th, he learned that Villeroy had left for Italy he felt sure that France had abandoned any thought of opening a campaign in Flanders during the autumn of 1701. Forthwith he allowed Sarah to come over for the greatest day his life had yet seen. On September 7, 1701, he signed alone for England the main treaty with the Empire and Holland by which the three Powers bound themselves to exact their terms from France by negotiations or arms. Sarah was present at his side in his hour of triumph. She was fêted by the brilliant throng assembled for that famous event. She even received a visit from “Caliban” at Loo.^[191]

Great moderation characterized the stipulations of the allies. They acquiesced in the rule of Philip V over Spain and the Spanish Indies, provided that the crowns of France and Spain should never be united. The Emperor was to secure Milan, Naples, Sicily, the Spanish Mediterranean islands, together with Belgium and Luxembourg. But these last two, under the sovereignty of Austria, were to be so organized as to serve “as a fence and rampart, commonly called a barrier, separating and keeping off France from the United provinces.” This basis being settled, the minor states were urged by subsidies provided by England and Holland and by other inducements to join the alliance, and with each a separate agreement was made. The recognition of the Elector of Brandenburg as King of Prussia was the price reluctantly paid by the Emperor in return for his adhesion.

The case of Sweden was special. The remarkable military caste which had developed in this small but virile northern kingdom had impressed itself upon Europe since the days of Gustavus Adolphus, and now found itself headed by a warrior prince who revived in dramatic guise the image of his famous grandfather. Charles XII had just extorted peace from Denmark and Poland by an audacious campaign, and had defeated Russia at surprising odds in the battle of Narva. He and his redoubtable mercenaries were amenable to flattery and gold. Marlborough used both with deftness. The impulsive, passionate character of Charles XII made the negotiations “a very ticklish business.”^[192] The natural bias of the Swedes since the time of Gustavus Adolphus was Francophile and anti-Austrian. Marlborough achieved in 1701 what he was to repeat in 1707. He kept Charles XII and his army out of Western and Central Europe. The French were also in the market with competing bribes of money; but the Englishman prevailed. On September 26 he could write to Godolphin, “I have this evening signed the Swedish Treaty. . . . I was convinced if I had not done it, the French moneys must have been accepted.” The treaty was to be ratified within six weeks. Marlborough, with his eye on the House of Commons, had deliberately withheld his signature of the main treaty, as well as of the separate treaty

between England and Holland, till after they had been submitted to the Ministry at home. In the Swedish case alone did he consider it necessary to sign promptly without reference even to the Lords Justices in England. The Swedish treaty cleared the path of Denmark. The Danes, thus freed from the peril at their gates, were able to join the Alliance upon adequate gratifications with 5000 troops at once and 20,000 in prospect. Thus while the French were gathering their forces in Belgium and Luxembourg the army which was to meet them in the spring, raised and bound together by the wealth of the Maritime Powers, came swiftly into being under the hand of its future leader.

The territorial objectives of the war having been at length agreed, the three principals proceeded to discuss the *dénombrément*. It was finally settled that the Empire should bring into the field against France 82,000 men, the Dutch 100,000, and the English 40,000, together with an equal number for the fleet. Archdeacon Coxe had the misfortune to leave out a nought from the Dutch total, which he stated at no more than 10,000 men. This obvious slip or misprint has ever since been dutifully copied by many historians and biographers.^[193] Thus easily do chains of error trail link after link through history. The following hitherto unpublished letter from Marlborough to Godolphin sent after the conclusion of the treaty makes the position clear.^[194]

HAGUE

Sept. 6/17, 1701

* We have had the wind so contrary, that I believe the treaty which I have sent is not yet arrived. The Emperor's Minister has given the number of his Master's troops, which amounts in all to one hundred, and eight thousand men, of which they will be obliged to send four score and two thousand to act against France, as we shall agree; the rest must continue in Hungary, and their garrisons. The number of Dutch troops are near one hundred thousand, besides what they send to sea, so that it will be my part now to speak for England, and though I am fully resolved not to finish this matter till the Parliament meets, yet I must say something, and I desire to know your opinion, if I should not acquaint the Lords Justices, and desire their directions. The King is very desirous to have me conclude the Treaty with the King of Prussia. I shall give all the obstructions I can to its dispatch, being persuaded it would be for the best, if it were not signed till Parliament were acquainted with it, so that I must desire your

assistance, for I am afraid it will be impossible to avoid the agreeing, so as to send it to the Lords Justices, for their approbation; but I believe that I may be so near the time of Parliament meeting, that I hope you will advise, it should not be signed till after their meeting. I wrote a very long letter to you by the last post, of my thoughts concerning the [dissolution of] Parliament. If you should be of my mind I would press that matter so, as that I hope it might prevent the confusion, I think a new Parliament might occasion.

He adds a passage coming strangely from a man upon whom the beams of fortune, long withheld, now shone so brightly.

I must own to you that I have a great many melancholy thoughts, and am very much of the opinion that nobody can be very happy that is in business. However I can't hinder being so selfish, as to wish you may not have that ease of being out, as long as I must be employed, which can't be long if you should have reason to be dissatisfied, which makes me beg in friendship you will take no resolutions till I have the happiness of seeing you.

I am afraid Lady Marlborough has stayed two days too long, for the wind that has been so very fair is now come into the East. . . .

It will be seen that Marlborough's fear of offending Parliament by finally deciding the treaties without their approval was even more acute where the quota of British troops was concerned. No more legible measure of the forces then at work in England can be found than their effect at this time upon his experienced judgment. Expressions of extravagant vehemence leap from his cool, sober, matter-of-fact mind: "I would rather be buried alive than be the fatal instrument of such misfortunes," "Before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing." Lord Wolseley sees in this an indication that he was already turning Whig. But this entirely misreads the situation. Marlborough was thinking more of his Tory friends than of the Whigs. He knew the enormous difficulty of bringing the Tories into the war, and how readily they would bridle at any constitutional breach. The Whigs, though even more constitutionally minded, wanted the war and were not inclined to be too particular.

On October 3 he writes to Godolphin:

* . . . You will excuse me that I trouble you again about the *dénombrement*. I have made use of the argument, that is very natural for England, which is that their [England's] expense at sea must be great. This argument is of more use to me when I speak to the Imperialists, than with the Pensioner; for the latter tells me, that they shall be willing to furnish at sea the same proportions as they did the last war, which was three in eight; and since their land forces are greater than they were the last war, the people here might reasonably expect that ours might not be less. I continue still of the opinion that it would be fatal to have this settled anywhere but in Parliament; but on the other hand I ought to say some thing to them, and I should be glad to know if I might not endeavour to make them not expect more than one half of what they had the last war. For aught I know, this may be more than England will care to do; but I hear no other language here, than that this war must be carried with more vigour than the last, if we ever hope to see a good end of it; and I confess it is so much my own opinion, that I hope we shall do our utmost; what that is, you and 16 [Hedges?] are much properer judges than I am. When the King speaks to you of this matter, I beg you will be positive in the opinion that it is of the last consequence [not] to do any thing in it, but in Parliament. That which makes me the more pressing in this of the *dénombrement* is that the Pensioner is inclined to have it done before the Parl meets; which I think would be destruction.^[195]

And, on the same day, to Hedges, one of the Secretaries of State:

* . . . I can't let this go without giving you some account as to my thoughts concerning the *dénombrement* and I do with all my heart wish that you and I may not differ in this matter, which I take to be of the last consequence. . . . Count Ratisloe [Wratislaw] insists that we should furnish the same number of troops we did the last war, his Master having a greater army than at any time the last war. The Dutch with a great deal more reason think it would be very hard if our numbers should be much less than they were the last war, since theirs are greater. . . .

Now that I have said this, I will let you know the method I could wish the King would be pleased to take, which is very plainly to let Parliament know what the Emperor and the Dutch are to furnish, and at the same time to give his own opinion very frankly, and that by the 24 of Nov. our style, which is the day the

two months ends mentioned in the treaty with the Emperor, he is obliged to fix this *dénombrement*. I think by this method we shall have the Parliament on our side, by which we shall gain a greater number of men than the other way. Were I with you I could say a great deal upon this subject, for I am so very fully persuaded that if the King should be prevailed upon to settle this by his own authority, that we shall never see a quiet day more in England, and consequently not only ruin our selves, but also undo the liberties of Europe; for if the King and Parliament begin with a dispute, France will give what Laws she pleases. I am sure I had much rather be buried alive than be the fatal instrument of such misfortunes. I have opened myself very freely to you, but desire nobody else may know it.

Again, on the 21st he wrote to Godolphin:

* It is very plain to me that the Pensioner continues his opinion, that I ought to finish the *dénombrement* before the meeting of Parliament. I have been so positive that he despairs of prevailing upon me; but I am afraid he hopes the King may be able, when he comes to England, to persuade yourself and the Cabinet Council to it, so that I may have orders sent me, believing that I should then make no difficulty; but I do assure you that I am so persuaded that the doing of this, by his Majesty's authority, would prove so fatal to himself and the kingdom, that I should desire to be recalled; for, before God, I will die sooner than do so fatal a thing.

While all these preparations resounded upon the anvil of Europe, both sides, though yielding nothing further, nevertheless still hoped against hope for peace. As so often happens in world affairs, and particularly in English affairs, a sense of dire necessity grows in men's minds and yet they shrink from action. The atmosphere is loaded with inflammable gas: but a flash is needed to produce the explosion.

Hague Oct: 24. 1701

Since last night the Wind is chang'd,
soe that the King has sent Directions
for the Provoyning the Port: for a Week
and soe on till he shall arrive; if the
wind should come faire he is resolv'd
to Embark to morrow, but the Seamen
think it will not be till the forenoon.

A LETTER FROM MARLBOROUGH TO GODOLPHIN

Blenheim MSS.

On September 16, 1701, James II died. Louis visited in state his deathbed at Saint-Germain. While the unhappy exile was in the stertorous breathing which often precedes the flight of the soul, the Grand Monarch announced to the shadow Court that he recognized his son as King of England and would ever sustain his rights. Chivalry, vanity, and a recklessness born of the prolonged suspense had impelled Louis to this most imprudent act. He upheld it in face of the solid opposition of his Cabinet. Its consequences surprised him beyond measure. All England was roused by the insult to her independence. The Act of Settlement had decreed the succession of the crown. The Treaty of Ryswick had bound Louis not only in formal terms, but by a gentleman's agreement, to recognize and not to molest William III as King. The domestic law of England was outraged by the arrogance, and her treaty rights violated by the perfidy, of the French despot. Whigs and Tories vied with one another in Parliament in resenting the affront. Was England, then, a vassal of France on whom a king could be imposed and despite all plighted faith? The whole nation became resolute for war. Marlborough's treaties, shaped and presented with so much Parliamentary understanding, were acclaimed; ample supplies were tendered

to the Crown. King William saw his moment had come. Forthwith upon the news he recalled his Ambassador from Paris and dismissed Tallard from St James's. Now also was the time to rid himself of the Tory Party, which had used him so ill and in their purblind folly had tied his hands till all seemed ruined. Now was the time to hale before the bar of an awakened nation those truculent, pigheaded Commoners who had so provedly misjudged the public interest. The King saw his way to a sound Whig Parliament for the vigorous waging of war. Whispers of Dissolution pervaded the high circles of Court and politics.

Marlborough watched the King attentively. He read his mind and dreaded his purpose. The expulsion of the Tories in a disastrous war-fever election would undermine all the power and credit he had acquired in these spacious months. Moreover, he judged better than the King the inherent strength of Tory England. Even taken at so great a disadvantage, the Tories would be strong enough to wreck, if they could not rule. Only the peace party could draw the sword of England. A Whig triumph at the polls threatened a divided nation in the war. He used all his arts to dissuade William from the course upon which he saw him bent. The King, though filled with admiration at the capacity of his lieutenant, discounted his advice as interested, and held to his design. Marlborough obtained a long, reasoned letter from Godolphin extolling the Tory Parliament and its alacrity for war. He read it to William:

* Yours of the 3/14 surprises me extremely. To hear that on that side of the water the king hears no discourse but of a new parliament is an amazing thing, especially if one considers the particulars of what this parliament has done and how they left the public affairs when they parted. They provided, while they were in expectation only that a War might come on, the greatest Supplies that ever were given when the Kingdom was not in actual war, and those Supplies upon the best funds that ever were given, because they were such as could not create a deficiency, and they made an Address to the king toward the end of the session, of which by the way he was very sensible at that time and thanked them very heartily for it, to desire him to enter into Alliance[s] for the good of Europe and to assure him they would stand by him & support him in such Alliances as he should think fit to make: the plain Consequence of which address was and is to make him the arbiter of war or peace, and to trust the matter entirely in his hands.^[196]

The King, so intimate, and open with Marlborough in all the rest of the great affair, became cold and unresponsive. Godolphin, feeling his position as a Tory Minister about to be destroyed, wished to resign. Marlborough exhorted him to remain. He was himself concerned to return with the King to England and not to lose touch with him for a day; but William shook him off. He did not mean to be persuaded. "I have but just time to tell you," wrote Marlborough about September 18, "that as the king went into his coach he told me that he would write to me, by which I understand that I am not to stir from hence till I hear from him. . . ."^[197] The King quitted Holland suddenly, leaving Marlborough thus chained to his post. Several weeks passed before the efforts of Godolphin and Albemarle secured him permission to come home. On the very day his letter of recall arrived Marlborough learned that Parliament was dissolved and that Godolphin had resolved to resign.



WILLIAM III: THE LAST PHASE

Godfrey Schalcken

By permission of the Duke of Marlborough

Other anxieties, apparently serious, had arisen before William's departure about the ceremonial to be observed upon King James's death.

Loo

September 16/27, 1701

* The King just took notice to me of the mourning and commanded me to write to the Princess to let her know that he should mourn for King James, but that he intended to put himself

his Coaches and Liveries in mourning but not his apartments, and that he desired the Princess would do the same, by which he meant she should not put St James's in mourning; so that if she had thoughts of it, you see it can't be. So that you will be pleased to give my humble duty to her Highness, and that I beg she will give you leave to turn this business so as that it may be well taken of the king, and consequently do her Highness good in England. For if after this she should put her house in mourning, for God's sake think what an outcry it would make in England.^[198]

The election belied King William's hopes. Although a cluster of his personal assailants and many Jacobites lost their seats in the Whig attack, the Tories were found to have, as Marlborough had predicted, a very solid core. They actually carried Harley back to the Speaker's chair in the new Parliament by a majority of four. The two parties were so even that, for all their hatred, they could scarcely maul one another. This in itself was a gain; but, on the other hand, the Tory rage against the King was mortal. They held that he had flung them to the country wrongfully within a year of their return at a time when they were giving him loyal and resolute support. He had played a party trick upon them, and the trick had failed. They never forgave him; they longed for his death. Nevertheless they joined with the Whigs in supporting his war.

The turn of affairs had brought about a sensible change in Marlborough's political position. In spite of Godolphin's demand to resign, the Tory Ministry had been kept by the King till he could see the election results. From his point of view this half-measure was a mistake, for the party in power had great influence upon the poll. After the results were known, the King felt himself strong enough to get rid of the Tories. He sent Rochester packing and released Godolphin. Marlborough's case was that of a man all of whose colleagues have been dismissed, but who has himself become detached from their fortunes by the importance of a foreign mission for which all parties judge him supremely fitted. Moreover, although he had worked consistently in the Tory interest and kept all his labels unchanged, he had become in fact the mainspring of the Whig policy in Europe. Thus both parties looked to him with regard and recognized, however grudgingly, that he was above their warfare. This was not the result of calculation on his part, for the happenings had been often contrary to his wishes and almost entirely beyond his control. Events had detached him from his party and left him, without partisan reproach, independent on the hub of affairs. Henceforward he ceased gradually to be a party man, though still of Tory hue. We shall see

him try long and hard to keep this neutral footing until he is driven through coalition to the Whigs and finally destroyed by the revengeful Tories.

Meanwhile he walked delicately. Davenant, hitherto a pro-French Tory pamphleteer, had turned with the tide, and now urged men to lay aside their party feelings for the good of the public and in face of the common enemy. Before he quitted The Hague Marlborough wrote to Brydges^[199] praising Davenant's pamphlet and hoping that he would persuade people to take the necessary measures against France. On January 27 the Dutch envoy in England mentions the strength of the Tories in the new House, and relates how Marlborough, Godolphin, and Rooke, the Admiral, were present at a party meeting in Sir Edward Seymour's house. But three days later he notes of Marlborough, "Having no longer Rochester and Godolphin to support him in the Council, he has to trim even more cleverly between both sides."^[200] In spite of the change of Government, Marlborough continued to conduct English foreign policy as the King's agent, and two of his conversations with Wratishlaw, the Austrian Ambassador, have been preserved.

Parliament on Tory initiative had asked the King to take steps to obtain the addition to the Grand Alliance of an article to the effect that no peace should be concluded with France until the King and the nation had received satisfaction for the great injury done to them by the French King in the recognition and proclamation of the pretended Prince of Wales as King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. Marlborough, at the King's desire, opened the matter to Wratishlaw.

Wratishlaw said there was no need for a special article of the kind suggested as the Emperor had already in the Alliance undertaken such an obligation generally. Marlborough replied that that was not sufficient. The separate article was necessary to bring England into the war as a principal. By acceding to the request the Emperor would put England under an obligation to him, and convince her that her well-being depended upon his. The Emperor would also put the Princess Anne under an obligation to him, and thereby compel her, should the King die during the war, to intervene with all her power in the Emperor's interest. Wratishlaw maintained that, on the contrary, French policy would make use of such an article to embroil the Emperor with the Papacy and all the Catholic Powers. Marlborough answered that the matter had nothing to do with religion. The succession in England had previously been determined by legislation; the Emperor need only

bind himself not to admit that France could break the laws of England. Care would be taken so to frame the article as not to touch the religious question.^[201]

An agreement was reached accordingly.

Wratislaw on February 19 had a lengthy conversation with William III which left him in perplexity. He asked Marlborough confidentially the next day for a more precise explanation of what was troubling the King.

Marlborough said, “The King is greatly perturbed as to the possibility of a French attack in full force on Holland. Further he wants a vigorous campaign on all sides, the sight of which may maintain the readiness of the republic to continue to bear its heavy burden. I therefore strongly advise against a detachment to Naples. But if this cannot be dropped I say to you—in the strictest confidence and without the previous knowledge of the King—that the strengthening of the army of Prince Eugene must not be neglected. For from the general point of view it would be less harmful for the King to lose some battle than for Prince Eugene to be overthrown. If this reinforcement [of Prince Eugene] is by auxiliary troops the King would have little to complain of. But he requires the actual Imperial forces to be on the Rhine, so as to be assured on the one hand that the King of the Romans (Joseph) will appear in the field, and on the other that the Emperor, and not the [German] Princes, is master in the empire.”^[202]

This advice is curious. Marlborough was himself almost certain to command in the north, and yet he recognizes that a defeat there would do less harm to the common cause than the destruction of Prince Eugene in the south, and does not hesitate to weaken the main theatre for the sake of the wisest general dispositions.

We have one more impression of him on the eve of his power. The gathering together of so many threads and resources in the hands of a single man of known abilities and ambition aroused fierce jealousies in that world of proud magnates; and all foresaw that the King’s death and the accession of Anne would make Marlborough virtual master of England. To the Tories this was not unwelcome. They thought they saw in it the ascendancy of their party. For this very reason the Whigs were alarmed. Although they realized that Marlborough held the Whig view of foreign policy, although his wife was an ardent Whig, although Sunderland probably laboured to reassure them, yet the Whigs could not regard the arrival of Marlborough at the

supreme direction of affairs as other than the triumph of a Tory chief serving a Tory Queen. Some of their leaders entertained the idea of passing over the Princess Anne and of bringing the Elector of Hanover to the throne. The Dukes of Bolton and Newcastle pressed Lord Dartmouth to join in such a plot. Marlborough, whose sources of information were extensive, heard of this. He questioned Dartmouth, the son of his old friend Legge, who replied that he knew of the proposal, but did not regard it seriously. Marlborough declared that the plot existed, and, with a fierce flash unusual in him, exclaimed, "But, by God, if ever they attempt it, we would walk over their bellies!"^[203] This unwonted violence may well have been calculated. He was so situated that he could certainly have used the Army as well as the Tory Party to resist any such design, and he no doubt wished this to be well understood. The prize long awaited was near, and he would not be balked of it.

The second Grand Alliance now formed must have seemed a desperate venture to those whose minds were seared by the ill-fortune of William's eight-years war. How vain had been that struggle! How hard to gain any advantage over the mighty central power of France! Hardly a trophy had been won from all that bitter toil. France, single-handed, had fought Europe and emerged wearied but unbeaten. In the six years of peace she had regained without a shot fired all the fortresses and territory so stubbornly disputed. But now the widest empire in the world was withdrawn from the Alliance and added to the resources of its antagonists. Spain had changed sides, and with Spain not only the Indies, South America, and the whole of Italy, but the cockpit of Europe—Belgium and Luxembourg—and even Portugal. Savoy, the deserter, still rested with France. Cologne was also now a French ally. Bavaria, constant to the end in the last war, was to be with France in the new struggle. The Maritime Powers had scarcely a friendly port beyond their coasts. The New World was almost barred against them. The Mediterranean had become in effect a French lake. South of Plymouth no fortified harbour lay open to their ships. They had their superior fleets, but no bases which would carry them to the inland sea. On land the whole Dutch barrier had passed into French hands. Instead of being the rampart of Holland, it had become the sallyport of France. Louis, occupying the Archbishoprics of Cologne and Trèves, was master of the Meuse and of the Lower Rhine. He held all the Channel ports, and had entrenched himself from Namur through Antwerp to the sea. His armies ranged through the region east of the Meuse to the Dutch frontier. His winter dispositions disclosed his intention in the spring campaign to renew the invasion of

Holland along the same routes which had led almost to its subjugation in 1672. A terrible front of fortresses, bristling with cannon, crammed with troops and supplies, betokened the approaching onslaught. The Dutch cowered behind inundations and their remaining strongholds. Lastly, the transference of Bavaria to the side of France laid the very heart of the Empire open to French invasion. The Hungarians were still in revolt, and the Turks once more afoot. In every element of strategy by sea or by land, as well as in the extent of territory and population, Louis was twice as strong at the beginning of the War of the Spanish Succession as he had been at the Peace of Ryswick. One final adverse contrast must be noticed. The Papacy had changed sides. Clement XI had abandoned the policy of Innocent XI. He espoused the cause of the Great King. He sent his congratulations to Philip V, and granted him subsidies from Spanish ecclesiastical property. He lived to repent his error. The scale of the new war was turned by the genius of one man. One single will outweighed all these fearful inequalities, and built out of the halved and defeated fragments of William's wars a structure of surpassing success under the leadership of England.

In the debates of the English Parliament, in the councils of the English Ministers, in the plenipotentiary powers of the English Ambassadors and in the daily commands of the English general is contained the sum of the political history of the War of the Spanish Succession.^[204]

“The little gentleman in black velvet,” the hero for a spell of so many enthusiastic toasts, now intervened. On February 20, the day after his conversation with Wratislaw, William was riding in the park round Hampton Court on Sorrel, a favourite horse said to have once belonged to Sir John Fenwick. Sorrel stumbled in the new workings of a mole, and the King was thrown. The broken collar-bone might well have mended, but in his failing health the accident opened the door to a troop of lurking foes. Complications set in, and after a fortnight it was evident to him and to all who saw him that death was at hand. He transacted business to the end. His interest in the world drama for which he had set the stage, on which the curtain was about to rise, lighted his mind as the shadows closed upon him. He received the reports of his gathering armies and followed the business of both his Parliaments. He grieved to quit the themes and combinations which had been the labour and the passion of his life. They were now approaching their dread climax. But he must go. Mr Valiant had his summons. “My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and

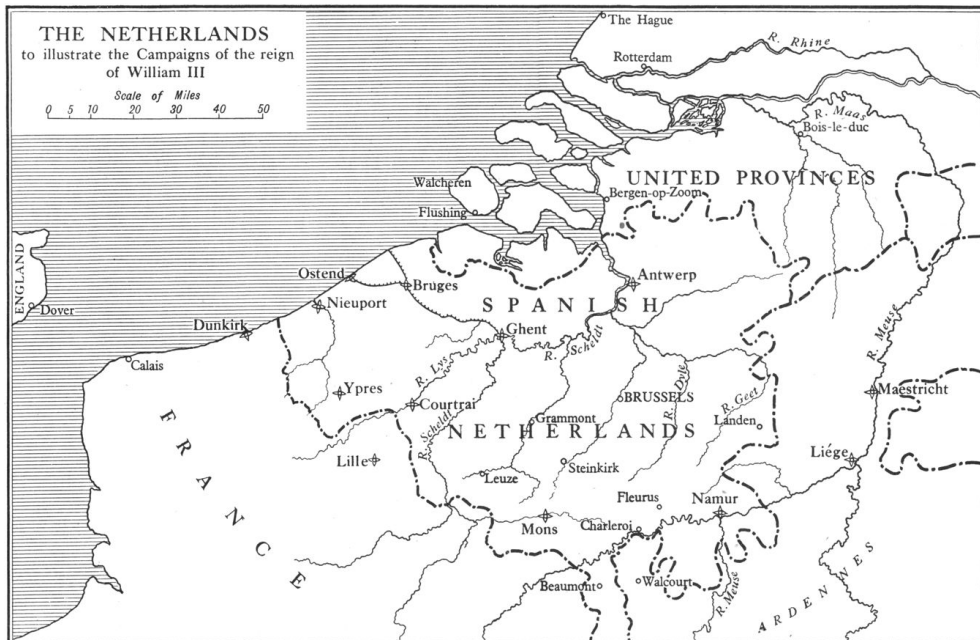
skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder.’^[205] He had his consolation. He saw with eagle eye the approach of a reign and Government in England which would maintain the cause in which his strength had been spent. He saw the only man to whom in war or policy, in the intricate convolutions of European diplomacy, in the party turmoil of England, or amid the hazards of the battlefield, he could bequeath the awful yet unescapable task. He had made his preparations deliberately to pass his leadership to a new champion of the Protestant faith and the liberties of Europe. In his last years he had woven Marlborough into the whole texture of his combinations and policy. In his last hours he commended him to his successor as the fittest man in the realm to guide her councils and lead her armies. William died at fifty-two worn out by his labours. Marlborough at the same age strode forward upon those ten years of unbroken victory with which our future chapters will be mainly concerned.

[180] See the articles on these men in *D.N.B.* There are a large number of Cadogan’s and Cardonnel’s letters in the British Museum.

[181] There is unhappily no good book in English on Prince Eugene. In German the biography by A. von Arneth (1864) has not been superseded, but no translation has appeared. There are various subsequent German monographs on aspects of Eugene’s career, but historical study is handicapped by the fact that during the anti-Napoleonic movement in Austria in 1810-11 a large number of spurious or forged volumes of letters and memoirs attributed to Eugene were produced and obtained a huge circulation. A volume of memoirs written by a Prince Charles de Ligne, concocted out of a French compilation of more or less authentic anecdotes by M. Mauvillon, was translated into English and is still widely extant. The casual reader must be warned against this agreeable forgery. Cf. the interesting discussion by Bruno Böhm in *Die Sammlung der hinterlassenen politischen Schriften des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen: Eine Fälschung des 19ten Jahrhunderts* (1900), especially the appendix.

- [182] Acton, *Lectures on Modern History* (1906), p. 259.
- [183] Charles de Ligne's expression in the spurious memoirs.
- [184] Cardonnel to Ellis, Under-Secretary of State, Whitehall (must be Hague), July 4/15, 1701 (Add. MSS., 20917, f. 309).
- [185] "The States have lent me Prince Morris's house" (Marlborough to Godolphin, July 19/30, 1701, Blenheim MSS.)
- [186] See the plate facing p. 238.
- [187] Marlborough to Godolphin, July 11/22 (Coxe). In another letter of the same date he notes that the King has had one conversation with the French Ambassador "of no great consequence" and left The Hague without speaking to him again in private (Blenheim MSS.).
- [188] D'Avauz to Louis XIV, August 4, 1701 (Legrelle, *La Diplomatie Française et la Succession de l'Espagnol*, v, 146).
- [189] July 18/29, 1701, Blenheim MSS.
- [190] Stowe MSS., 58, i, 25 (Huntington Library).
- [191] "Lady Marlborough came to Loo on Saturday evening and had the honour of a visit from the King in her apartment."—Cardonnel to Ellis, October 10/21, 1701, Add. MSS., 20917, f. 358.
- [192] Marlborough to Godolphin, August 26, Blenheim MSS.
- [193] *E.g.* Wolseley, ii, 400; Taylor, i, 45; Atkinson, 160.
- [194] The exact figures are also to be found in the C. J., XIII, 64–65. The Emperor was to provide sixty-six regiments of foot and twenty-four of horse, the Dutch eighty-two foot and twenty horse, the English thirty-three foot and seven horse. The Commons agreed to these proportions on January 10, 1702.
- [195] This and the following four letters in this chapter are printed from the originals at Blenheim.
- [196] Extract: the letter is much longer.
- [197] Marlborough to Godolphin, September 1701.

- [198] Marlborough to Godolphin.
- [199] Marlborough to Brydges, November 14/25, 1701, Huntington Library MSS.
- [200] “Ce qu’on en peut dire est que, se menageant en habile homme des deux costes, il est a croire que n’ayant plus dans le conseil le comte de Rochester et myl[ord] Godolphin pour l’appuyer, il se menagera encore davantage pour bien faire.” (Add. MSS., 17677, xx, ff. 190 verso, 198 verso.)
- [201] Wratislaw’s report from London of January 13/24, 1702; translated from Klopp, ix, 457.
- [202] Wratislaw’s report from London of Feb. 24/March 7, 1702; translated from Klopp, ix, 479.
- [203] Burnet, v, 540 n.
- [204] Carl van Noorden, *Europäische Geschichte im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, Einleitung.
- [205] *The Pilgrim’s Progress*.



APPENDIX

I

A VINDICATION OF THE CONDUCT OF THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH BY GILBERT BURNET, BISHOP OF SALISBURY (c. 1710)

[The original is at Blenheim and is endorsed by the Duchess of Marlborough:

this was put together from my papers by the Bishop of Salisbury
not well don.
to be put to the papers at the lodge.

There is a note by Archdeacon Coxe:

It was afterwards altered and enlarged by Mr St Priest who accompanied the Duke abroad, and was employed by the Duchess in arranging her papers. He was recommended by Dr Hare. Part of the original draught submitted to Mr Walpole in 1711 or 12 was drawn up or corrected by Mr Manwaring.

For some observations on these drafts see the introduction to *Memoirs of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, edited by William King (1930). St Priest's draft is at Blenheim, and a copy in the British Museum. Various other drafts are also at Blenheim. The following is the introduction only. The incidents related in the body of the text are those which figure with greater or less prominence in the published version of Sarah's *Conduct*.]

The Writting of books is looked upon, as an Imployment not fit for our Sex: and if Some have succeeded well in it, others have exposed themselves by it too much, to Encourage a woman to venture on being an Author: but it will appear more unusual for me to write so copiously, as I fear, I may be forced to doe, to tell my own Story, especially when it will seem to carry reflexions wher one owes respect; But since I am like to leave behind me a Posterity, that is already distinguished by rank, and Estate, and that may branch out into more families, I am under some obligation to let them know, by what principalls, and Measures, I governed my selfe under a most envied favour, that I seemed to Engrosse for about twenty yeares without a Rivall, and to let them know at the same time by what meanes and by what accident I lost it.

I alwaies knew that favour was held by a very uncertain tenure, and tho I confess I did not thinke my selfe in much danger of loseing it, and especially by the person, that undermined me, yet I thought, I had governed my selfe with such sincerity, and so much Caution, that when the turn of favour should come, I should fall gently, and be decently dismisst; but it has fallen out far otherwise; and as I have met with a treatment as litle looked for as deserved, so I have been pursued with so much Malice, falsehood and Calumny, and so many papers and bookes have mentioned me with as much Virulency, as Injustice, while I have with a Patience, that was both silent and respectfull, born so much that many I fancy thinke mee, as guilty, as my enimies would represent me, because of my bearing with a *becoming submission* such a vent, as has given to the inveterate Spleen of my enimies. The decencies of a Subject, *as well as the regards I owe as a Wife, and a Mother,* have had so much power over me, that I have long sate quiet under a Usage, that in another part of my life, I could not so easily have submitted to.

But as I owed it to my Selfe, so I owed it in a particular manner to all, that shall decend from me, to let them see, how little I deserved those characters, that have been bestowed on me, with as much confidence, as if those who defamed me, had full prove in their hands to vouch for them; but since I do this so late, I am resolved to doe it and to shew Vouchers for all I have to say in my own Justification, if unkind Inferences are made from it by opening things, that some may wish had remained still hid, those only are to blame, who not contented in using me Ill, have set so many mercenary scriblers upon me, to run me down with noise, and impudence, as if I had robed both the Queen and the nation, and had not only deserved very Ill, but had been deeply Engaged in very ill designs against both Church and State, the Crown and country. I writte not my own vindication only to tell my own Story with truth, and evidence to Clear my Selfe, and to Justifie my own conduct, I writte with a farther designe to Instruct others, who may learn somewhat by it, tho at my Cost. I was born with a inbred Love to my Country, I hated tyranny by nature before I had read a Line upon the Subject: I thought mankind was born free, and that Princes were ordained to make their people happy; so I had alwaies In me an Invinceable aversion to Slavery, and to flatery, I also hated Popery, before I had ever looked into a booke of divinity: I thought alwaies, that the best way of Serving Princes, was to be true, & faithfull to them, and to Speake on all occasions to them without flattery, or dissimulation: this was laid in me by nature, as it became In time rooted in me by principle and as I hated flatterers, as Persons, that were betraying the Prince, whom they studied to please, so I thought in religion, it was the same thing, with relation to Almighty God, and truth and

justice, purity, good nature, and Charity were the best characters of religion; and I looked on those, who without any regard to these things, were constant to many Prayers, and Sacraments, as the Same Sort of people in religion, that flatterers were in Courts betrayers of the Prince and reproaches to a Court. Having had a much larger Share of Experience then might seem to belong to my yeares, I thought *it would be no unacceptable entertainment to the world*, to give some account of my Selfe, which I will doe with a Sincerity, that shall not have so much as the least mixture of art or dissimulation in it; where the particular instances are such as may seem to want more prooffe, then my single word, I will mixe such proofs as shall take away even the possibility of doubting the truth of the revelation I am to give of my concerns. I doe not think the world ought to be troubled with impertinent stories I shall only insist on what was publike and fit to be known and that may be of some use and Instruction to others.

I came extream young into the Court and had the luck to be liked by many in it but by none more particularly than the Queen who took such pleasure in my Company that as she had me much about her so upon her marriage she prevailed with her Father that I should be a Lady of her Bedchamber. Her Court was so odly composed that it was no extraordinary thing for me to be before them all in her favour, and confidence, this grew upon me to as high a degree, as was possible, *to all, that was passionately fond and tender*, nothing stood in my way, nothing was hard for me. I thought my Selfe (all others thought it too) that I was as secure in a continuance of a high degree of favour, as ever any person was. I upon such an advancement considered what I ought to do in order to deserve and to maintain it. The great principle I laid down in my self was to serve Her with an absolut fidelity and a constant zeal. But by fidelity I did not only mean not to betray her, not to discover her secrets, but to be true to her in every thing she trusted me with: but to avoid everything, that looked like dissimulation, and flattery, even tho I saw it might displease her; I was convinced that Princes were ruined by flatterers: I carried this so far, as to think it was a part of flattery, not to tell her every thing that was in any sort amisse in her. I saw poor K. James ruined by this that nobody would honestly tell him of his danger until it was past recovery: and that for fear of displeasing him. I therefore resolved to say every thing, that I thought concerned her to know, whom I served, with as much *affection*, as fidelity. I once thought that this would be for ever as acceptable to her as I found it had been for many years. I know I could have found a good excuse, when I had once honestly discharged my conscience to her, to have been after that silent, since it was like to have no other effect but to lose her favour: but I had that zeal for her, and for her true Interest, that I could not temper it, nor

keep it within bounds. I confess many other considerations concurred to heighten my zeal. I could not think how measures taken and persons trusted, who were in the Interest of the Pretender, this I knew must end either in the ruin of the Nation, or in such convulsions to prevent it as might have very dreadful Consequences, which I had good reason to thinke, would be fatall to L. Marlborough and his family. I therefore studied to prevent this with a zeal that was very honest, tho perhaps at some times it might seem too hot, and earnest, and upon this foundation it was, that my Credit lessened by degrees yet it was so long before I suspected I had a secret enemy that was under trust betraying me that I was past helping before I apprehended it. For as I was not only honest but open and frank perhaps to a fault, that I could not deceive, nor dissemble with any; so I had the same good opinion of those, who were severally at work to break my Interest, and knowing I had in so eminent a degree saved, and raised the whole family out of ruin and beggary, I could not think that there was such falsehood and Ingratitude in the world, as I found to be among them. I looked long on the progress of a favour, to which I had laid the foundation with a secret satisfaction; when I found I had put one about the Queen, who was become so acceptable to her. This was the chieffe maxime I had laid down to my self in the management of the high favour, I was in, and as I resolved to maintain it in the most dangerous part of it, which has had such an effect on me, it was no hard matter for me to maintain it in every other thing. My adherence so steadily to her Interest in the matter of the act of Parliament for her, in the late reign against the opinion of many, that advised to the contrary, was the greatest Instance, that I was capable of shewing it in, this drew after it not only the Losse of the favour of a King and Queen, that were like to outlive her, but were the true occasion of L. Marlboroughs disgrace, and of all that followed upon it, during so many years. I had as good reason to think I could have insinuated my selfe into Queen Mary's favour as any body about Court and I am well assured that if I could have brought the Princesse to an Absolute dependance upon Her nothing would have been denied me that I could have asked for my selfe or my family; but I would have sacrificed my life and family rather than have advised the (now) Queen to any thing that I thought not fit for her to submit to. I say no more of that matter because I have writ a particular account of that whole transaction very fully and very impartially to which I referre the world. I have been taxed as if I had made great advantages by secret practise of the Queens favour both before her coming to the Crown and since that time, and indeed this is so common in all, who have favour at Court that I doe not wonder, that it should be soe easily believed of me but as I had nothing from the Queen when she was Princesse but one 1000£ a year, besides that she assisted me with 10000£ towards the

marrying my two Eldest daughters, so I have said it so often since the losse of her favour that it may be well believed, since nobody has been found out wicked enough to make a false story of me, yet a true one must have been discovered, that I never sold her favour, nor made any advantage by any place or pension that I promised to any, during the whole time of my favour. I am in this point in open defiance with all the world. I accepted very thankfully the places, that the Queen gave me, but tho she bid me lay by 2000£ a year out of the Privy purse for my own use, I desired to be excused and did it not. Upon the Queens coming to the Crown I formed the best scheme I could of the ladies of the Bedchamber, without any other regard, but that I thought they were the properest persons to serve Her in the Bedchamber. I had the Robes in which I took great care to save the Queen much money by making punctual payments without any discount, no not for poundage, the commonly practised of all the Offices at Court. It is tru upon this accont I gave occasion to an outcry against my selfe, in former reigns where the payment was so uncertain things were bought in that Office at double or treble the price, when they had no hope of being paied in manny years: but I thought it not reasonable, that the Queen, who paied punctually, should pay excessively. I thought the Queens great consumption and ready payments was favour enough; but I never payd my own bills at her Cost. In the Privy purse the greatest enemies I have do confess I was an extraordinary manager and tho that is an office subject to no account yet I am ready to offer my accounts of it to the strictest canvassing; for I began with a happy thought, as if I had foreseen what has happened since; I have the Queens hand for all the money that she called for so far was I from selling the Queens favour or cheating her in any sort, I did all I could to discover the cheats of others but was never so much charged with any my selfe. I have heard it much objected to me that I waited so seldome on the Queen and was so little about her and because this is so contrary to the practise of all favourites I shall give a particular account of it. Soon after my marriage when our affairs were so narrow that a good degree of frugality was necessary, *Ld Marlborough tho his Inclination lay enough that way*, yet by reason of an indulgent gentleness that is natural to him he could not manage matters so as was convenient for our Circumstances, this obliged me to enter into the management of my family. I likewise thought I owed a great deal of care to the education of my children and besides this I had some friends, who I loved very well and in whose company I was well pleased to pass away some hours. I was sure I neglected no oportunity of doing the Queen all possible service and was never out the way, when there was any occasion for me. I had so satisfied the Queen before she came to the Crown, that she left me to my own liberty in this particular. After she came to the

Crown, if I had changed my way, it would have looked as if I had been besieging or mistrusting her; I love liberty in every thing so I could not resolve to abridge my selfe of it, and since I knew I was serving the Queen with a most upright fidelity and zeal in which it was not possible for me to alter, I did not apprehend that any thing could have wrought the change I have felt in the Queen and for the putting persons of an assured Confidence, as my spies about her, as I had never any such thought so in case I should have had it, whom could I have thought more proper for that than the very person that has supplanted me. If I had brought her in with the view of having one whom I had reason to believe true to me to have watched the Queen for me, I should have been very uneasy under the disappointment, but having brought her in meerly on the account of friendship and compassion without any other views I am the less concerned in that which was all her own fault, and had no excuse from any practise of mine, upon her I have but one thing more to reflect on, that has been objected to me, both by some friends and many Enemies that I was very inaccessible, and oft denied, and that we did not live in the splendor and opennes that other favorites had done but when it is considered how many importunate suters the credit I had with the Queen must have brought on me and that I knew those who desired pensions could not succeed for the L Godolphin had laid before the Queen a measure for pensions which he hoped she would not exceed during the Warre it was no wonder if I studied to avoid giving the deniall to many sutors. And having children whom both L Marlb and I loved very tenderly it was naturall for us to desire to be easy in our house with our Children and a few friends and both L Marlb. and I agreed perfectly in that to abhorre a great open table with a promiscuous mixture of all sorts of people and the E. of Godolph. who was so united to us both in friendship and alliance that he was much with us hated the dining with such a rout about us as much as we did [~~crossed out in Duchess's copy~~]. I was very ready to serve all persons in distresse and had true merit and just pretensions, but it was impossible to hear all complaints and to serve all, but I could not bring my selfe to hear, or to promise, what I did not intend to perform. I have now touched in generall many things which will help the reader to apprehend better the relation I am to give of the use I made of the favour I had so long enjoied, the steps in which, and the persons by whose practises I lost it, will appear in the narrative I am to give. I will only conclude this sort of preface to it with some reflections on all that has happened to me. It is an unspeakable comfort to me when I consider the Sincerity, and *true affection* with which I served the Queen and the just freedome I used with her. She had often charged me to do it and had as often promised never to be offended at it but to love me the better for it. If I *had not loved her with a most tender*

concern, I would have satisfied my selfe with doing what I thought was enough to quiet my own Conscience; perhaps I was too eager and too pressing in things that went against the grain with the Queen, but in this I served no end, or designe of my own, I did it only to serve and to secure her: so that even suppose I may have carried this too farre, I have an unspeakable quiet in my own mind, when I reflect on all that is past, because I was tru to friendship, and to sacred promises whereas if I had more politically gone on enjoying my private favour with the advantages of it, I should have hated my selfe, and lived in a perpetual fret, and constraint. Perhaps some will think I went too farre in opposition to the favour that I saw was gone from me to another, I do not deny that I had a great indignation, when I discovered so blank an ingratitude as I had met with from the person in the world whom I had obliged the most and had never once offended to give a handle to the injuries she did me. Had she been content with her private fortune I could have more easily born it but I confess it raised my Indignation to a greater height when I saw her put her selfe in Mr Harleys hands who after some years of too entire a confidence that both L. Marl. and L. Godolph. put in him was under mining them as much as my Cosen was under mining me and all this in so Critcall a time that the whole affairs of Europe depending upon England it was not possible to guesse what designs men could have that were then in a combination to overturn all that had been done in a course of so many years with such vast expense both of blood and trespure. This raised my Spirits not a litle. It may perhaps seem not so prudent of me to insist so much on my lodgings at Kensington since I never made use of them, and certainly at any other time and to any other person I would not have stood so much upon it. If my friends think I was too earnest in this matter I forgive them that and every other censure, so long as they acknowledge me to have acted with an uncorrupted fidelity and a disinterested zeal in every thing that related to the Queen, and her people, to the Crown and to the Protestant Succession. If I was not cuning dextrous favourite yet I was a tru and sincere one. If of late years I was less assiduous about the Queen it was because I found her so intirely changed from what she had once been to me, that I confess I could *neither bare it*, nor so much as disguise it, *but to the praise of vertue, sincerity and good Conscience*, I must say, I have so perfect a quiet in my own mind now, that the struggle is over that I cannot expresse it. I may have committed errors in it, I may have judged of others by my selfe, knowing that I could like none the worse, who I believed loved me because they used all du freedom with me, when I had encouraged them to it. But upon the whole I have a good Conscience within me, that supports me; so that I am easy in my selfe and with relation to all other I am only sorry they have acted parts that the whole world could not

have brought me to. *I am sorry for it and I heartily pray for them.* I will still go on in a course of integrity and truth for that will preserve me tho not in a Court, yet in the sight of that God who loves truth in the inward parts to whom I own with humble confidence [I] make my appeals for to him both the purity of my heart and the cleannes of my hands are well known. I will turn myself to him being now out of the dissipation of a Court of attendance and business. I will apply my selfe more and more to true Religion and not value my selfe upon the form and show of it without the power and effect of it upon my thoughts words and actions, nothing is hid from him, no false colours can deceive him and I am sure when I serve him with the zeal and affection with which I studied to serve the Queen under him he will never cast me off, nor forsake me nor suffer my Enemies to triumph over me with this I end my Introduction.

II

SOME INSTRUCTIONS TO THE HISTORIANS FOR BEGINING THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH'S HISTORY

[By Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Printed from the original in the possession of Earl Spencer.]

I have determined to give the Materials in my Possession to the Gentlemen that are to write the Duke of Marlborough's History. (They are Mr Glover and Mr Mallet.) For it will take a great deal of time only to sort the Papers and read them over. (And these Gentlemen are to finish it as soon as they can with the approbation of my Executors, and the Earl of Chesterfield.) I remember to have read somewhere a great Author that I would have imitated in this History of the Duke of Marlborough, beginning in the same Stile: I write the History of the Duke of Marlborough. And I would have it throughout in that Manner: For it will require no Flourishes to set it off, but short plain Facts. I believe it must in the common way say he was Sr Winstan Churchill's Son, a Gentleman of Dorsetshire. I don't know whether it is proper or necessary to add what I am going to write, tho' I think it a Merit, that Sr Winstan Churchill, his Father, had about £1000 a Year from his Father, who liked his Grand-Son better than his own Son, settled it upon him, that his Father could only enjoy it for his Life. But the Duke of Marlborough, when he was but eight & twenty, joined with his Father, who was in Debt, and let him sell his Estate. From the very Beginning of his Life he never Spent a Shilling beyond what his Income was. He began with the first Commission of an Ensign in the Army, and went on regularly thro' every Step of that Profession: and in King Charles the Second's time served in France under Marshal Turenne, from whom he learnt a great deal. And I think it is more Honour to rise from the lowest Step to the greatest, than, as the Fashion is now, to be Admirals without ever having seen Water but in a Bason, or to make Generals that never saw any Action of War, & only felt from the Generosity of their Temper that they were not to pursue a flying Enemy. As to the Duke of Marlborough's Manner of proceeding, you will find a full account in the Papers I shall give you, & likewise of all the Expences of Queen Anne's War. And you will easily compare the difference of the Expences for that War which was so successful, and the present War, directed by Men of great Knowledge & Generosity: which, tho the Publick pays the whole, they cannot with any Reason complain of it. The Duke of Marlborough had never any vanity, and therefore living so many years with great Employments, he left a great Estate: which was no Wonder he should do, since he lived long and never threw any Money away. And Mony was

for many years at six per Cent. And I have heard him solemnly swear, when it was of no Signification to do it to me, that he never in the whole Reign of Queen Anne sold one Commission, Title, or anything to anybody when he had so much favour from Queen Anne. He had a great deal of Compassion in his Nature, and to those that he had been long acquainted with he gave Money out of his Pocket to those that were poor, tho' they were not of his Opinion. I am living Witness of this: for I was directed by him to pay some Pensions when he was abroad, and have letters that prove the Truth of it from the Persons. When he left King James, which was with the greatest Regret imaginable, but he saw it was plain that King James could not be prevented any other way from establishing Popery and arbitrary Power to the Ruin of England. And I really believe he then thought that the Army would force the Prince of Orange to go back to Holland, when they had found some way to secure the Prince of Orange's Interest, & to have the Laws of England continued, which King James had so solemnly promised to do when he came to the Crown. Every thing that has happened since demonstrates that no King is to be trusted, and it is plain that if the Duke of Marlborough had had the same way of thinking that our present wise Ministers have he might have been anything that an ambitious Man could desire by assisting King James to settle Popery in England. I hope this History will be writ as soon as tis possible: for while I am living, I shall be able to answer any Question that they may have occasion to ask: for I would have no thing in it but what is the real Truth.

I have several very curious things in my Power to prove concerning the Behaviour of both Parties, Whigg and Tory after the Revolution. But I imagine it would be best to let all that drop, because I really cannot say which side is most infamous. I can't see much difference between them, both sides designing nothing but their own advantage. The Whiggs had this Advantage that their pretended Principle was for Liberty and the Good of their Country. The Tories was for Jure Divino by which I suppose they imagined they should have all the Power and Places of Advantage divided amongst themselves. But every Thing they did was very short of the great Performances from the great Parts & Honesty of my Lord Carteret and his Partner my Lord Bath.

III
WILLIAM III's DIPLOMATIC INSTRUCTIONS TO
MARLBOROUGH (1701)

[S.P., 104/69, ff. 152-155. Another copy is at Blenheim.]

* WILLIAM R.

Instructions to Our Right Trusty and Rt Wellbeloved Cousin & Councell[o]r John Earl of Marlborough, whom Wee have appointed to be Our Amb[assado]r Extraord[ina]ry & Plenipotentiary at the Negotiations for the Peace of Europe, at the Hague or elsewhere.

Given at Our Court at Hampton Court the 26 Day of June 1701. In the thirteenth Year of Our Reign.

Whereas Our Loyall & Dutifull Subjects the Commons in Parliam[en]t assembled, did some time since by their humble Address, pray that Wee would be pleased to enter into such Negotiations in Concert with the States Gen[era]ll of the United Provinces, & other Potentates, as may most effectually conduce to the mutual Safety of these Kingdomes, and the States Gen[era]ll, & the Preservation of the Peace of Europe, and that Wee promised them immediately to order Our Ministers abroad to enter into such Negotiations accordingly, and did thereupon to that Purpose send Instructions to Alexander Stanhope Esqr Our Envoy Extraordin[a]ry to the said States Gen[era]ll, and our Plenipotentiary for these Negotiations, & for the more Effectuall carrying on thereof, have now appointed you to be Our Amb[assador] Extraordin[a]ry & Plenipotentiary to that Purpose. You are therefore to enter forthwith into such Negotiations with the Ministers of France & Spaine and other Potentates at the Hague, in Concert with the Ministers of the States Gen[era]ll, in Order to obtain the Conditions following, & in all other Matters which the said States shall think necessary for their further security:

1. That the Most Christian King shall order all his Troops, that now are, or shall be in garrison in any of the Spanish Towns in the Netherlands, actually to retire from thence, so as the Same may be entirely evacuated of french Troops, within such time as shall be agreed upon in the Treaty, & that he shall engage not to send any Forces into any of those Towns or Countries.

2. That no Troops but such as consist of Naturall borne Subjects of Spaine, or Germans continue in the Spanish Netherlands, except such Troops as are to be placed & remain in Cautionary Towns, mentioned in the next Article.

3. That for the better Security of Us, & the States Gen[era]ll, & quieting the Minds of Our People, there shall be delivered to Us & to the said States, Cautionary Towns, within such Time as shall be agreed by the Treaty, to be kept by Our Garrisons respectively, & none other, Viz. to Us the Towns of Newport & Ostend, & to the States Gen[era]ll the Town of Luxemburg, Namur and Mons, in the condition they now are, to be kept by Our Garrisons, and those of the said States respectively, during such time as shall be agreed upon, with a proviso that the same be done without Prejudice to the Rights and Revenues of Spaine.

4. That no Town or Countries belonging to the Spanish Netherlands, or any Ports whatever belonging to the Crown of Spaine, shall be exchanged with France, or any ways delivered up or put under the French Government.

5. That Our Subjects shall enjoy the same Liberties & Priviledges in all Parts of the Spanish Dominions as well by Sea as by Land, as they did at the time of the Death of the late King of Spaine, and in as ample Manner as the French or any other Nation does or shall do hereafter.

6. That the Emperor be invited to join in this Treaty, & that any other Princes & States who think fitt to unite for the Preservation of the Peace of Europe, may be admitted into the same.

7. And whereas the Commons in Parliament assembled, have, by their humble Address unanimously assured Us, that they will be ready on all Occasions to assist Us in supporting such Allyances as Wee shall think fitt to make, in Conjunction with the Emp[ero]r & the States Gen[era]ll for the Preservation of the Liberties of Europe, the Prosperity and Peace of England, & for reducing the Exorbitant Power of France, you are therefore to Act in the Negotiations carrying on at the Hague, in Conjunction as well with the Ministers of the Emperor, as of the States Gen[era]ll, to the Purposes aforesaid, and you are to declare upon all fitting Occasions, as well to the french Ambass[ado]r as others concerned, that Wee do insist, according to what has been proposed by Us & the States Gen[era]ll, that the Emp[ero]r should have reasonable Satisfaction in his Pretensions, & that Our Intention is, not to separate from him, But Wee do not expect that the Emp[ero]r's Minister should be admitted at the Conference with the french Ambass[ado]r, since Hostilities are actually begun in Italy.

8. It is not Our Intention to tye you up by the foregoing Instructions, as that you shall not Negotiate elsewhere then at the Hague, but you are at Liberty to enter into Negotiations for the Ends aforesaid, in any other Place that shall be thought proper for that Purpose.

9. You are to give a free Communication of these your Instructions, and such others as you shall receive from Us, and of all Proceedings on this

Subject to the Pensioner, & desire a reciprocall Communication from him as a Matter for Our Service.

10. You shall Observe such further Instructions & Directions, on this Subject, as you shall from time to time receive from Us, or one of our Principall Secretaries of State, with whom you shall constantly correspond and transmitt to him an Account of all Matters which shall happen in the Course of your Negotiation & of all Occasions of Moment that shall come to your Knowledge.

W. R.

WILLIAM R.

Instructions for our Right Trusty and Rt Wellbeloved Cousin & Councell[o]r John Earl of Marlborough, whom Wee have appointed to our Amb[assado]r Extraord[inary] & Plenipotentiary, for treating and concluding an Allyance between Us, the Emperor, the States Gen[er]all of the United Provinces, & such other Princes as are willing to enter into the Same for Secureing the Peace & Liberty of Europe. Given at Our Court at Hampton Court the 26 Day of June 1701 in the 13th year of Our Reign.

Whereas Wee have thought fit in Pursuance of the Advice of Our Parliam[en]t, to appoint You to be Amb[assado]r Extraord[inary] & Plenipotentiary for making Such Allyances in Conjunction with the Emp[er]o[r] & the States Gen[er]all, as are necessary for preserving the Liberties of Europe, the Prosperity of England, & reducing the Exorbitant Power of France, Wee think it necessary to give you the following Instructions for your Directions and Guidance therein.

You shall repair to the Hague, or such other Place as shall be thought proper, & there conferr with the Ministers of the Emperor, the States Gen[er]all, & such other Princes, as shall be sufficiently Authorized thereunto, about making such an Union & Allyance between Us, & the said Princes, as may be most conducing to the great Ends before mentioned.

In the first Place, Wee think it absolutely necessary that Consideration be had to the Security of the United Provinces, by the entire Removall of the french Forces out of the Spanish Netherlands, & by putting those Provinces into such a State that they may not disturb the Quiet of their Neighbours, nor be at the Disposall and under the Influence of France, and as may most Effectually provide for the Security of England & Holland, & the Common Interest of Christendome.

And the Emperor's Forces being entered into Italy, to procure Satisfaction in his Pretensions to the Succession of Spaine, you shall informe yourself of his Minister what are the Termes of Satisfaction he

would particularly insist on, and give Us an Acc[oun]t thereof, upon which Wee will signify Our Pleasure to you for your Proceeding therein.

And as to any other Princes that are willing to enter into this Allyance, you shall receive what Proposals they have to make in Relation to their particular Interests & communicate the same to Us, for our farther Direction.

And Whereas Wee understand by Our Minister at Lisbon, that the King of Portugal has sent Instructions to his Envoy at the Hague, to join in such measure as may conduce to the Preservation of the Publick Peace, you shall informe yourself of the said Envoy, what it is the King of Portugall doe propose, and shall at the same time represent to him, how necessary it is that the King of Portugall shuld enter into Common Measures with Us, the Emperor and the States Gen[era]ll, as well for the Security & Advantage of his Owne Dominions as for supporting the Gen[era]ll Interests of Christendome.

And in the Treaties you shall make, particular Regard must be had to the security & improvement of the Trade of Our Kingdoms, for which you shall receive more particular Instructions, as matters come to be ripe for it.

You are to give a free Communication of these your Instructions, & such others as you shall receive from Us, & of all Proceedings on this Subject to the Pensioner of Holland, & desire a reciprocall Communication from him, as a Matter for Our Service.

You shall Observe such further Instructions & Directions on this Subject, as you shall from time to time receive from Us, or one of Our Principall Secretaries of State, with whom you shall constantly correspond and transmitt to him an Account of all Matters which shall happen in the Course of your Negotiations, & of all Occasions of Moment that shall come to your Knowledge.

W. R.

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[206] Abbreviations used in the footnotes are shown within square brackets in the bibliography. The dates indicate neither the first nor the current editions of works, but the editions consulted in writing this book. Dates in the footnotes are inserted on the same principle.

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Transcriber's Notes

The footnotes have been renumbered sequentially throughout the entire book.

The original spelling and punctuation have been retained, except that a few obvious typographic errors were corrected.

[The end of *Marlborough: His Life and Times--Volume II* by Winston Spencer Churchill]