

**LETTERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS
ILLUSTRATING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN
ENGLAND AND GERMANY AT THE
COMMENCEMENT OF THE THIRTY YEARS'
WAR; SECOND SERIES, FROM THE ELECTION
OF THE EMPEROR FERDINAND II. TO THE CLOSE
OF THE CONFERENCES AT MUHLHAUSEN**

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Letters and Other Documents Illustrating the Relations between England and Germany at the Commencement of the Thirty Years' War; Second Series, from the Election of the Emperor Ferdinand II. to the Close of the Conferences at Muhlhausen by Samuel Rawson Gardiner

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SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER

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EDITED BY
SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER.



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PREFACE.

THE present series of documents extends over a period of nearly seven months of pre-eminent importance in the history of Europe. It was then that the weak and shallow Frederick placed on his head the Crown of Bohemia only to discover that neither in himself nor in the people over which he hoped to reign were the elements of strength to be found. It was then that the politic Maximilian wove the political and military web in which the feet of his rival were entangled. When the Diet met for the election of Ferdinand the cause of the Catholic States, if not so hopeless as it had appeared a year before, scarcely hung evenly in the balance. When the meeting of the Electors and Princes broke up at Mühlhausen, the Duke of Bavaria was virtually the chief of Catholic Europe, and had secured the neutrality of the great majority of the Protestant States in Germany. Yet of all this scarcely a trace is to be found in the communications between English diplomatists and statesmen. Whilst the fortunes of Europe were being decided in the cabinets of Munich and Madrid, James practically withdrew from the scene of action. For the great issues which were involved in the quarrel he had no adequate sense. In one respect indeed his views were larger than those entertained by the majority of his subjects. He saw, as fully as it will one day be seen whenever the legend of the Thirty Years' War gives way to its true history, that the danger of anarchy in Germany was as great as the danger of religious persecution. But he had no clear idea of the way in which the double object of his aversion was to be met; and,

as his manner was, he turned aside from the contemplation of realities to the disentanglement of the hopeless puzzle of constitutional law; and found in his lengthy examination of the dry arguments presented to him by Dohna or Sanchez an excuse for the inaction which he loved.

These papers therefore are chiefly valuable as affording materials for a study of James's character, under a great variety of lights. Englishmen, Germans, Dutchmen, Spaniards, and Italians appear by turns, to give account of the result of their intercourse with him; whilst the reports of English ambassadors abroad become comparatively meagre. Doncaster's embassy, which had begun as a political mission, is suddenly converted into a complimentary visit, whilst the interesting letters of Nethersole and of Conway and Weston, which throw such light upon the scenes of war and diplomacy, do not commence till later in the year. Nor can any of Gondomar's despatches be included in the volume, as he only entered London on the 8th of March. On the other hand I have been able to introduce several letters of Sir Edward Herbert, which will probably be read with interest; and the selections from the correspondence between Philip III. and the Archduke Albert, though not strictly coming within the limits indicated by my title, have been inserted as serving to remind the reader that whilst James was talking others were acting.

I regret that an undated paper, No. XXXII., has been inadvertently placed too late. It must have been written about the third week in September.

I have only to add that since the copies were taken of such of Sir Edward Herbert's letters as are contained in his letter-book (Add. MSS. 7082), the foliation of the volume has been altered, and the references are therefore to the old numbers, which are still to be found at the top of the page.

CONTENTS.

1619.

	PAGE
i. Elizabeth, Electress Palatine, to Sir Dudley Carleton Aug. $\frac{1}{4}$	1
ii. Elizabeth, Electress Palatine, to the Marquis of Buck- ingham Aug. $\frac{22}{1}$ Sept. 1	2
iii. Viscount Doncaster to Sir Robert Naunton Aug. $\frac{22}{1}$ Sept. 1	3
iv. Sir Robert Naunton to Sir Isaac Wake Aug. $\frac{27}{1}$ Sept. 6	4
v. Dr. John Donne to Sir Dudley Carleton Aug. $\frac{31}{1}$ Sept. 10	5
vi. Sir Dudley Carleton to Sir Robert Naunton [extract] Sept. $\frac{1}{3}$	6
vii. James I. to Philip III. Sept. $\frac{1}{3}$	8
viii. Baron Christopher Dohna to the Marquis of Buckingham Sept. $\frac{1}{7}$	9
ix. Viscount Doncaster to Sir George Calvert Sept. $\frac{1}{8}$	10
x. Mr. William Trumbull to Sir Dudley Carleton [extract] Sept. $\frac{1}{8}$	12
xi. Sir Edward Herbert to Sir Robert Naunton Sept. $\frac{2}{9}$	12
xii. Notes of the Declaration made at the Council Table by Sir Robert Naunton Sept. $\frac{4}{9}$	13
xiii. Sir Dudley Carleton to Sir Robert Naunton [extract] Sept. $\frac{1}{9}$	13
xiv. The States General to James I. Sept. $\frac{1}{1}$	19
xv. Mr. William Trumbull to Sir Dudley Carleton [extract] Sept. $\frac{1}{2}$	21