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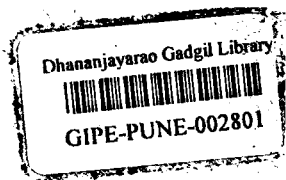
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THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR, 1618-1648

S. R. GARDINER

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AND PARLIAMENT STREET

Epochs of Modern History

THE

THIRTY YEARS' WAR

1618-1648

BY

SAMUEL RAWSON GARDINER

Late Student of Christ Church

*Author of 'History of England from the Accession of James I. to the
Disgrace of Chief Justice Coke' and 'Prince Charles
and the Spanish Marriage'*

WITH A MAP

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PREFACE.

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

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

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

But the present book is a mere collection of words. If I have often adopted without comment the narrative or opinions of German writers, I have never said anything which I have not

made my own, by passing it through my own mind. To reproduce with mere paste and scissors passages from the writings of men so opposed to one another as Ranke, Gindely, Ritter, Opel, Hurter, Droysen, Gfrörer, Klopp, Förster, Villermont, Uetterodt, Koch, and others, would be to bewilder, not to instruct. And in forming my own opinions I have had the advantage not merely of being in the habit of writing from original documents, but of having studied at least some of the letters and State papers of the time. I have thus, for example, been able, from my knowledge of the despatches of Sir Robert Anstruther, to neglect Droysen's elaborate argument that Christian IV. took part in the war through jealousy of Gustavus Adolphus; and to speak, in opposition to Onno Klopp, of the persistence of the Dukes of Mecklenburg in the support which they gave to the King of Denmark.

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

My teachers in Germany from whom I have borrowed so freely, and according to the ^{the ambiguous} series, without acknowledgment in foot-note ^{Protestants in} hope, accept this little book, not as an a that

which they are so much better qualified to execute, but as an expression of the sympathy which an Englishman cannot but feel for the misfortunes as well as the achievements of his kindred on the Continent, and as an effort to tell something of the bygone fortunes of their race to those amongst his own countrymen to whom, from youth or from circumstances of education, German literature is a sealed book.

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

U. W. Parsons

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