

WILLIAM III AND THE NORTHERN CROWNS
DURING THE NINE YEARS WAR 1689 - 97.

by

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Volume I.

Text.

ABSTRACT.

The present thesis, 'William III and the Northern Crowns during the Nine Years War 1689-97', examines the policy of the stadtholder-king towards Sweden and Denmark-Norway in the years immediately following the English Revolution. His attempts to secure their active assistance against France were thwarted by the Swedish king's fears of risking the neutrality he needed to complete his domestic reforms and to fulfil his ambitions of mediating in the European conflict and by Denmark's hopes of French subsidies and support for her territorial ambitions in North Germany; while 6,000 Danish troops were secured for the Allies in 1689, a favourable alliance with Christian V could not be concluded until November 1696. Both northern kingdoms feared the effects of the union of the two Maritime Powers on their plans for commercial expansion, which were further threatened by the Ango-Dutch convention of September 1689 barring all neutral trade with France. This led them to form a League of Armed Neutrality in 1691 which helped to persuade William to abandon the aims of the convention and agree to compensation

August 1689

for seizures of their merchant ships. Negotiations in Stockholm and the Hague in the latter years of the war to persuade Sweden, a guarantor of Westphalia and Nijmijgen, to extract favourable peace terms from France continued until and even beyond the acceptance of her mediation at the beginning of 1697. William was also active in preventing the diversion of a Northern war such as was threatened by the disputes between Denmark and the duke of Holstein-Gottorp in 1689 and 1696-7 and by the disputed succession to Saxe-Lauenburg.

The study builds on manuscript material in the Public Record Office, the British Museum, the Berkshire Record Office, Nottingham University Library, at Plas-Newydd, Anglesey and in archives in the Hague, Copenhagen and Stockholm as well as on published collections of documents and secondary works.

NOTE ABOUT DATES AND CURRENCY

All dates in the text are old style, which was employed in England, Scandinavia and North Germany during this period. The year is assumed to begin on January 1st. In the Notes and References dates are quoted as they appear on the documents cited. Those on letters etc. originating in the United Provinces, France or the Habsburg dominions, even when written by representatives of countries employing the old style, are generally new style unless otherwise stated.

The money of account normally quoted in transactions with the Northern Crowns was the Hamburg reichsthaler banco (abbreviated Rd.), of 24 marks, approximately equivalent to the English crown and, even more approximately, to half an écu and $1\frac{1}{2}$ gulden (fl.).

Contents

	Page
INTRODUCTION .	10
(i) <u>Scope and Purpose.</u>	10
(ii) <u>The Machinery of Diplomacy.</u>	15
a) <u>The Maritime Powers.</u>	15
b) <u>The Northern Crowns.</u>	19
c) <u>Irregular Representation and Special Missions.</u>	22
d) <u>Bribery and Espionage.</u>	24
Chapter	
1 <u>NORTHERN EUROPE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NINE YEARS WAR.</u>	28
(i) <u>Sweden and Europe 1680-8.</u>	28
(ii) <u>Danish Policy after 1679.</u>	33
(iii) <u>The Northern Crowns, the War and the English Revolution.</u>	36
a) <u>Swedish Reactions.</u>	36
b) <u>Denmark in the Crisis.</u>	41
c) <u>The North German Princes.</u>	44
(iv) <u>The Place of the North in William III's War Policy.</u>	46
2 <u>WILLIAM III AND HOLSTEIN-GOTTORP IN 1689.</u>	51
(i) <u>The Background.</u>	51
(ii) <u>William and the Altona Negotiations.</u>	55
(iii) <u>Aftermath of Altona.</u>	69
3 <u>WILLIAM AND DENMARK AFTER ALTONA (June 1689 - Feb. 1690).</u>	76
(i) <u>Danish Policy after Altona.</u>	76
(ii) <u>The Troops Treaty of August 1689.</u>	77
a) <u>Preliminaries.</u>	77
b) <u>The Negotiations.</u>	82
c) <u>Aftermath.</u>	84
(iii) <u>Alliance Negotiations.</u>	88
a) <u>Beginnings.</u>	88
b) <u>The United Provinces.</u>	90
c) <u>Molesworth's Talks.</u>	93
d) <u>The End of the First Stage.</u>	97

Chapter	Page	
4	THE QUEST FOR SWEDISH HELP (Jan. 1689 - June 1690).	100
	(i) <u>Swedish Treaty Aid.</u>	100
	a) Negotiations in 1689.	100
	b) Bidal's Mission to Stockholm.	105
	c) Last Attempts to Secure Swedish Ships.	108
	(ii) <u>Negotiations for Further Swedish Help.</u>	111
	a) Early Attitudes.	111
	b) English Alliance Negotiations.	113
	c) The Invitation to the Grand Alliance, and the Hague Congress.	116
5	THE OPENING OF THE WAR ON FRENCH TRADE (August 1689 - June 1690).	121
	(i) <u>Introductory.</u>	121
	a) Seventeenth Century Attitudes to Neutral Trade.	121
	b) The Formation of William's Policy and the Anglo-Dutch Convention of August 1689.	124
	(ii) <u>Early Scandinavian Reactions.</u>	130
	(iii) <u>First Attempts to Reach a Settlement.</u>	137
	a) With Denmark.	137
	b) With Sweden.	139
6	NEW DISAPPOINTMENTS (June 1690 - March 1691).	146
	(i) <u>Embassy to the North.</u>	146
	a) Haren's Mission.	147
	b) Swedish Mediation.	148
	c) Denmark and the Defensive Alliance of November 1690.	153
	(ii) <u>French Trade and Armed Neutrality.</u>	158
	a) The Hague Negotiations.	158
	b) Danish Reprisals.	162
	c) The League of Armed Neutrality.	164
7	STALEMATE (1691 - 2).	168
	(i) <u>The Results of Armed Neutrality and the Temporary Settlement of French Trade.</u>	168
	a) The 1691 Conventions with Denmark.	168
	b) Haren's Compensation Agreement with Sweden.	173

- c) Trade Negotiations in 1691. 175
- (ii) Sweden and the War 1691-2. 179
 - a) The Second Mediation Offer and the Collapse of the Hanoverian Third Party. 179
 - b) Swedish Policy in 1692. 183
- (iii) Denmark, Hanover and the New Third Party. 188
 - a) Danish Policy in 1691 and Troop Negotiations. 188
 - b) The Revival of Alliance Hopes: the Missions of Skeel, Württemberg and Plessen in 1692. 192

- 8 THE SECOND LEAGUE OF ARMED NEUTRALITY AND THE RATZEBURG CRISIS (Nov.1692 - Sept.1693). 196
 - (i) Hop's Mission to Denmark. 196
 - (ii) The Renewal of Armed Neutrality. 200
 - a) Juel's Mission. 200
 - b) The Reactions of the Maritime Powers. 202
 - (iii) Heekeren's Mission to Sweden. 205
 - (iv) The Saxe-Lauenburg Crisis. 207
 - a) Origin. 207
 - b) Saxe-Lauenburg in 1693. 209
 - c) Mediation and Settlement. 211

- 9 DENMARK AND THE ALLIES 1693 - 5.
 - (i) Reprisal and Counter-Reprisal. 215
 - (ii) Alliance Negotiations. 219
 - (iii) Barfod and the Channel Salute. 221
 - (iv) Further Attempts to Reach a General Settlement with Denmark. 225
 - (v) Molesworth and the 'Account of Denmark'. 231

- 10 THE ROAD TO PEACE (Jan.1693 - Nov.1695).
 - (i) Sweden and Mediation in 1693. 234
 - a) D'Avaux' Offer of Terms. 234
 - b) Denmark and Mediation. 239
 - c) Heekeren's Mission. 241
 - (ii) Mediation and Treaty Aid 1694 - 5. 243
 - a) 1694. 243
 - b) 1695. 248
 - c) Sweden and the Channel Salute. 253

11	FAILURE IN SWEDEN (Nov. 1695 - Jan 1697)	256
	(i) <u>The Revival of the Holstein-Gottorp Problem and its Consequences.</u>	256
	a) Denmark, Sweden and Holstein-Gottorp 1690-5.	256
	b) The Stockholm Negotiation.	258
	(ii) <u>The Foreign Merchants Dispute.</u>	263
	a) Robinson's Compensation Negotiations.	263
	b) Execution of the Law.	266
	(iii) <u>Mediation.</u>	270
12	THE DANISH ALLIANCE AND HOLSTEIN-GOTTORP IN 1696.	276
	(i) <u>Goes' Compensation Talks, 1694-6.</u>	276
	(ii) <u>Plessen's New Attempt and the Alliance of November 1696.</u>	279
	(iii) <u>Aftermath of the Alliance.</u>	284
	(iv) <u>Holstein-Gottorp.</u>	286
	a) Prelude to Pinneberg.	286
	b) The Opening of the Pinneberg Negotiations.	289
13	THE FINAL YEAR.	291
	(i) <u>Preliminaries to Rijswijk.</u>	291
	(ii) <u>Sweden under the Regents.</u>	292
	a) The Change of Government.	292
	b) Mecklenburg-Güstrow.	295
	c) Denmark's Attack on Holstein-Gottorp.	297
	d) The End of the War on French Trade.	301
	(iii) <u>Rijswijk.</u>	302
	a) Denmark's Final Bid.	302
	b) The Path of the Mediator.	304
	c) Crisis.	306
	d) The Final Act.	309
14	CONCLUSION	311
	(i) Old Problems, Old Friends, and New.	311
	(ii) <u>William III's Northern Policy: an Assessment.</u>	316

Volume II

APPENDIX:	DUNCOMBE'S ALLIANCE NEGOTIATIONS IN 1689.	336
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	Page
NOTES AND REFERENCES	348
BIBLIOGRAPHY	479
A. Bibliographies and Guides to Material.	480
B. Biographical Aids.	480
C. Original Documents.	481
D. Contemporary and Near- Contemporary Accounts.	494
E. Later Works.	495
 MAPS	 502
Schleswig-Holstein in the Seventeenth Century.	503
North-West Europe during the Nine Years War.	504

Introduction

(i) Scope and Purpose

The aim of this study is to examine William III's policy towards and diplomatic relations with the courts of Denmark-Norway and Sweden during the conflict known variously as the War of the League of Augsburg, the War of the Grand Alliance, of the Palatinate and - least misleadingly, if most non-committally, and mainly by Dutch historians - as the Nine Years' War. The emphasis has been placed, as far as the surviving materials allow, on the stadtholder-king's own attitude to the Scandinavian kingdoms in the context of his general war aims, and an attempt thus made to contribute to a deeper understanding of the foreign policy of a ruler, who, in view of the importance usually attributed to the Revolution in English diplomatic history, has been curiously neglected. But it is impossible to understand the reasons for his success and failure without consideration of both the policies and reactions of the Northern Crowns themselves and of the direction of Louis XIV's plans for the Baltic region during this period. The extent to which William, who suddenly found himself in effective control of the foreign policy of two countries whose interests had for long periods been not only independent but antagonistic, was influenced by distinct Dutch and English traditions has also had to be considered.

Denmark and Sweden are worthy of special attention in these years, for they were the most important powers to remain

neutral when the greater part of Europe was engaged in the struggle either with France in the West or with the Ottoman Turks in the East or, as was the case with the Emperor, with both at the same time. Both countries had considerable armed might at their disposal,¹ were strategically placed and were principal sources of naval supplies for all three great maritime protagonists.² They were therefore the subject of considerable diplomatic activity by both sides for most of the war.

In spite of this, their part in the conflict has been neglected by historians of the belligerent powers. Anglo-Danish relations between 1689 and 1697 have been surveyed briefly in an article by M. Lane³ and by J.F. Chance in his introduction to the third volume of British Diplomatic Instructions.⁴ The latter's article on England and Sweden from 1689 to 1714⁵ is concerned largely with Anne's reign and intended to form an introduction to his more detailed study of the reign of George I,⁶ while his contribution to the first volume of British Diplomatic Instructions⁷ provides little additional information. All these essays, while important as pioneering works, have been based wholly on materials from English archives, of which they are largely summaries. Sir George Clark exploited also the resources of the Rijksarchief in the Hague for the chapter on 'Neutral Commerce' in his extremely valuable 'The Dutch Alliance and the War against French Trade'⁸, but he was concerned with a single, if important, aspect of the subject and used no Danish or Swedish sources. In Dutch N.J. den Tex' account of Jacob Hop's mission to Denmark in 1692-3 in his

biography of the Amsterdam diplomat⁹ is an able summary based on his subject's despatches, instructions and final reports in the Hague, but it stands alone.

Scandinavian, and especially Swedish, historians have naturally paid somewhat more attention to their country's relations with the Maritime Powers; even a general survey of the period cannot wholly exclude them. Here again, however, the field is limited. The summaries of diplomatic papers in the Rigsarkiv, Copenhagen, by Laursen and Christiansen, which are to be found in the three volumes of the Danmark-Norges Traktater which cover the years in question,¹⁰ are models of their kind and have proved invaluable for my purpose, but they do not attempt an analysis of Christian V's foreign policy, far less an examination of his relations with one country or group of countries. Perhaps the most interesting account of Danish policy is contained in Christiansen's 'Bidrag til Dansk Statshusholdnings Historie'.¹¹ This forms only a small part of a work devoted to financial administration, but Christian V's outlook throughout the Nine Years' War was strongly influenced by the need to achieve and maintain financial stability.¹² Much of Franz von Jessen's narrative of Danish relations with William III in the life of his distinguished relative¹³ is based on the account of Molesworth's embassy and its aftermath in Christian Brasch's 'Om Robert Molesworths Skrift' "An account of Denmark as it was in the year 1692,"¹⁴ and is biased in favour of its subject.¹⁵

In Swedish Carlson's history of the Palatinate kings¹⁶

contains a good deal concerning Charles XI's relations with the Maritime Powers, and T. Thyren deals, in two long articles, devoted to the evolution of the first armed neutrality in the Baltic together with an introduction outlining the Scandinavian scene at the beginning of the Nine Years' War,¹⁷ at greater length and in a wider context, with many of the problems tackled by Clark, but both he and Carlson relied solely on Scandinavian archives. Theses by Hallendorff,¹⁸ Wahrenberg¹⁹ and Bratt,²⁰ and more recently by Stille²¹ and Jonasson²² treat, in detail and basing their work on a wide selection of original sources, of Swedish foreign policy as a whole during a number of years within the period, while the latter part of Landberg's volume in the general history of Sweden's external policy now appearing²³ offers the best summary of this aspect of the war as a whole.

Our direct knowledge of William's opinions and intentions can be derived from his correspondence with Antonie Heinsius,²⁴ with Portland²⁵ and with a number of his envoys.²⁶ The grand pensionary's own letters,²⁷ in view of the intimacy of the two men, the instructions sent by the impersonal Blathwayt,²⁸ the secretary attendant on William in the field from 1692, and by the secretaries of state for the Northern department,²⁹ when the king was in England, may, however, be regarded as reliable reflections of the latter's thoughts. The reports of foreign envoys must always, of course, be treated with reserve, but, bearing this in mind, much useful information can be gleaned from the reports of Scandinavian diplomats in the Hague and London to their governments. The long despatches of Nils

Lillieroot, Swedish representative with the States-General from 1692,³⁰ which often contain detailed accounts of his conversations with William and members of his immediate circle, are particularly illuminating.

The archival material bearing on the subject of study is considerable in bulk but somewhat uneven in distribution. Thus, while the despatches from and orders to Swedish and Danish envoys have been preserved with few breaks, the minutes of the Swedish council for the early years of the war were destroyed in the fire which burnt down the Royal Palace in Stockholm in 1697,³¹ and only the final resolutions of the Danish council, not the debates which preceded them, were recorded.³² By no means all William's correspondence with Heinsius has survived, and many of the folders containing the latter's exchanges with Dutch envoys are tantalizingly thin. In England the secretary's letter books often reveal considerable gaps, and many despatches are missing, possibly because of the secretary's treatment of state papers as private property.³³ It is frequently possible however, to make good the deficiency from another source. Danish council records are, for example, illuminated by Christian V's diaries,³⁴ and Swedish chancery minutes and memorials³⁵ give some guide to arguments in the council itself. Some lacunae are moreover not as serious as may at first appear. In view of William's absences from England the instructions from and despatches to English secretaries of state during the campaigning season are much less important than those addressed to Blathwayt.³⁶ Finally

it must always be remembered that many important decisions were taken after oral discussions, which left no permanent record behind but which can sometimes be pieced together from informal reports and casual remarks in correspondence.

(ii) The Machinery of Diplomacy

(a) The Maritime Powers

From 1689 to 1702 the vital decisions on the foreign policy of both England and the United Provinces were generally taken by one man after consultation with a very small group of Dutch advisers,³⁷ with occasional reference, when deemed necessary, to Imperial and English representatives,³⁸ but the machinery through which such decisions had been relayed and interpreted before the union of the two countries remained.

In England formal instructions to envoys in Northern Europe continued to be sent by the secretary of state for the Northern department, an office filled by five different men in the course of the war,³⁹ while more routine matters were discussed in correspondence between an under secretary and the secretary to the envoy.⁴⁰ Matters affecting foreign policy still came before the privy council or lords justices, although the records are too scanty to enable an adequate assessment of their roles to be made.⁴¹ Parliament expressed on occasion a desire to know what commitments had been entered into⁴² and, through its control of the purse-strings, could determine how much money was available, for example, for subsidies or compensation for wrongful arrest of neutral ships, but few even of the king's ministers, let alone members of the

house of commons were qualified to pass judgement on foreign affairs and challenge the royal prerogative in this field.⁴³ The importance of council and secretaries, none of whom were deeply in William's confidence, was reduced almost to nil when he was himself absent, and he spent from May to October every year of the war except the first overseas. From 1692 William Blathwayt became during these periods the main channel of communication with both English representatives abroad and the secretary in London, to whom the former often sent mere duplicates of their despatches to the secretary at war with a covering letter.⁴⁴

The body especially entrusted with the foreign relations of the States-General was the committee of deputies for foreign affairs. This consisted of one deputy, elected annually, from each of the seven provinces, the grand pensionary of Holland, chosen every five years, and the griffier or secretary to the States-General, who served for life. This council read the secret despatches from envoys and took cognizance of such matters as were referred to it by the States-General, but it often acted in the name of the larger assembly without prior reference to it. It was dominated by the grand pensionary.⁴⁵ Antonie Heinsius, who held this office from March 1689 and was re-elected for a further term in 1695, was an able and conscientious worker, yet to reveal the qualities of leadership he was to display after William's death but trusted by the stadtholder as none of his contemporaries was trusted.⁴⁶ It was through Heinsius that William made his wishes known both

to the foreign affairs deputies and the States of Holland and West Friesland, by whom, as the most important of the regional assemblies and the one conveniently assembled in the Hague, subjects were usually discussed and decided upon before being brought before the States-General itself.⁴⁷ Resolutions taken by the foreign affairs' deputies were communicated to the appropriate envoy by the griffier, who also decided whether a despatch was suitable to be read before the full meeting of the States, but a Dutch diplomat had also to attend to a regular and more intimate correspondence with the grand pensionary and sometimes, as did Amerongen when in Copenhagen, with William himself.⁴⁸

The necessity for each deputy in the States-General to refer back to his province on such matters as the ratifications of agreements with foreign powers led often to considerable delays, especially when money matters were involved, which were misunderstood and resented by the countries concerned⁴⁹ but against which the stadtholder could do little more than protest; he was far from being master in his own house when his countrymen's or his subjects' pockets or honour were involved.⁵⁰ Delays were also inevitable in the winter months, when William was in England and a knowledge of his views was considered necessary before the taking of any important step.⁵¹

Neither England nor the United Provinces favoured the use of the expensive ambassador as their principal diplomatic agent; he might so easily become involved in ceremonial disputes.⁵² But even envoys extraordinary met with procedural difficulties

aggravated by the need to establish William's position firmly among his fellow monarchs, and neither Molesworth nor Duncombe, his first representatives in Copenhagen and Stockholm respectively, were able for this reason to take part in formal public audiences to present their credentials.⁵³ They both returned to England in 1692 and were not replaced; reliable men with diplomatic experience were difficult to find in England immediately after the Revolution, especially if required to exile themselves in the Swedish capital and face its rigorous winters.⁵⁴ Reports continued to be sent by the secretaries they had left behind them, and one of these, John Robinson, had risen to the rank of minister by the end of the war. This weakening of English representation in the North was not so serious at a time when William was attempting to concentrate all negotiations in the Hague⁵⁵ and when the larger pool of experienced diplomats in the United Provinces could also be tapped for missions when considered necessary. These appointments were generally made by the States-General on the recommendation of the States of Holland and West Friesland after the stadtholder's approval had been secured, and the representatives chosen were expected to supply the griffier with a full written report (verbaal) of their embassies on their return.⁵⁶

Posts to and from the North usually passed by way of Hamburg,⁵⁷ which was also the centre for financial transactions involving the Scandinavian kingdoms, and the reports of sir Paul Rycout, the English resident in this city,⁵⁸ are therefore

of considerable interest, although rumour flowed thither as freely as reliable news.⁵⁹ The greater speed of communication between the Northern capitals and the Hague compared with London alone decreased the diplomatic importance of the latter, but even between Stockholm and the Hague a letter might be a fortnight or more on the road, an important consideration when in the latter half of the war William was debating the desirability of using Sweden as the channel for peace projects and counter-projects. News usually reached Copenhagen nearly a week earlier than Stockholm.⁶⁰

(b) The Northern Crowns

The day to day administration of Sweden's foreign policy lay in the hands of the chancery, and all instructions were drawn up and countersigned either by the secretary of state, the secretary for German affairs, the secretary for Finnish, Livonian and Ingrian affairs or sometimes by the secretary for internal affairs, acting on orders from a committee headed by the chancellor (kanslipresident) Bengt Oxenstierna⁶¹ with Nils Gyldenstolpe⁶² as his deputy. But the ultimate authority was always the king, in whose presence all despatches were, whenever possible, opened and in whose name all orders were sent. He it was who determined whether or not a particular matter should be discussed in the council (Riksråd). If it were decided to raise it there the chancery was expected to prepare a memorial as a basis for the debate, and at the conclusion of the latter the royal will was made known. But the råd was a large body unsuitable for discussion of the most

secret business, which was dealt with in smaller informal gatherings or even by the king and his chancellor alone. The precise importance of the råð during the early years of the Nine Years' War is difficult to estimate owing to the loss of its minutes already referred to, but it was here, as will be seen, that the king could hear the opinions of all his ministers on the most important issues and where conflicting views were brought to light. About the significance of the Estates (riksdag) there is no such doubt. They met for only a few weeks in 1689 and 1693 and were allowed an even smaller say in foreign affairs than the English parliament.⁶³

Just as long delays were caused in the United Provinces by the need for the States-General to seek authorization from provincial estates and by William's absence in England during the winter, so in Sweden Charles XI's absences at his country residences or on tours of different parts of his kingdom and the fact that the great majority of his councillors left Stockholm for a large part of each summer was the despair of many a foreign diplomat who required a speedy answer to a request or protest. It was often necessary to beard Oxenstierna on his estate at Rosersborg, twenty miles north-west of the capital, and wait until letters had passed between him and his master and until members of the råð within easy reach had been consulted.⁶⁴

Christian V of Denmark took a far greater and more direct interest in foreign policy than did Charles XI, who, while anxious to maintain his realm's power and prestige in Europe

and her neutrality as a prerequisite for the completion of internal reform, was not particularly interested in the details of diplomatic negotiation, and, while the handsome Holsteiner Conrad Reventlow was commonly regarded as first minister and was created chancellor when the office was revived after fifteen years in 1694,⁶⁵ his position cannot be compared with that of Bengt Oxenstierna. He was not even the minister with the greatest influence on Denmark's external relations.

Membership of the royal council (Geheimkonseil) was severely restricted to five or six, which made it much more suitable for its purpose than the råd,⁶⁶ but, like Charles, Christian felt himself quite free to seek advice from whoever he chose, whether from inside or outside the council. Of the two chanceries in Copenhagen, neither of which were organized as colleges,⁶⁷ the Danish, which had originally concerned itself with correspondence with Sweden and Eastern Europe as well as internal matters, was now confined to the latter while the German (it should be noted that all official records in Copenhagen, not only those of this department, were written in German at this time) dealt with all external affairs. The latter was headed from 1688 by Thomas Balthazar von Jessen as chief secretary (Oversekretarie), who, although not a member of the council, was often present at its meetings and possessed of considerable influence.⁶⁸

The diplomatic service in both Scandinavian monarchies was organized on a similar pattern to the English but one or two unusual features are of interest. The Swedes attempted

in the 1680s to ensure a continuity of service and a regular supply of trained young diplomats by appointing 'commission-secretaries' in the more important capitals; unlike the English secretaries these were not chosen and paid by the envoy but by his principals.⁶⁹ In 1687 Christoffer Leijoncrona was assigned to London, where he took charge on the death of the envoy Leijonberg in 1691,⁷⁰ and Carl Gustav Friesendorff to the Hague, where, in view of the presence of an accredited envoy for most of his stay, he was entrusted with full responsibility for only brief periods.⁷¹ In Copenhagen the appointment of an envoy to England gave rise on three separate occasions to a trial of strength between the rival factions in the Danish court. In 1689 Plessen, the leader of the pro-allied party, twice put forward the name of his protégé Skeel and was twice defeated but in 1692 managed to win the king over to his point of view and secure his appointment.⁷² The difficulties caused by the vagueness of the duties ascribed to the commissary-resident Pauli, sent to England in 1693, will be discussed later.⁷³

(c) Irregular Representation and Special Missions

Diplomatic work was not always carried out by regular agents. Bengt Oxenstierna's eldest son, serving as a brigadier with the allied armies in the Low Countries with many opportunities for meeting king William in the field, was

used by the Swedish government to plead for favour to be shown to Swedish ships and to gain support against Denmark's treatment of the duke of Holstein-Gottorp in the closing stages of the war.⁷⁴ The duke of Württemberg-Neustadt, the commander of the Danish auxiliary forces in Flanders, was involved in alliance negotiations in 1692⁷⁵, and Christian hoped for assistance from his brother prince George in London to ensure the success of early missions to William.⁷⁶ The residence in Stockholm during the early months of 1690 of the French lieutenant-colonel, Benoît Bidal, sent to Sweden with instructions from Louis XIV to woo Sweden to France's cause, gave the Allies legitimate cause for alarm.⁷⁷ In a rather different category a certain Petkum, probably the son of a former Danish diplomat who had settled in the United Provinces, was employed without official character, apparently by Heinsius and the city of Amsterdam, in talks with Danish ministers in Copenhagen in 1694.⁷⁸

Sometimes important or delicate tasks were taken out of the hands of an envoy extraordinary and entrusted to one of higher rank, one in whom greater trust was placed or simply a special messenger. Christian V sent the able and experienced advocate of Scandinavian co-operation Jens Juel to Sweden in 1693 to conduct negotiations of particular significance⁷⁹, and in the same year lord Lexington and Jacob Hop were despatched by William to try and effect a settlement in the Ratzeburg dispute between Denmark and Brunswick-Lüneburg.⁸⁰ The earl of Selkirk travelled to Copenhagen in March 1691 to

return Christian V's compliments conveyed by the younger Christian Reventlow earlier in the year, and count Christian Ditlev Rantzau was entrusted in 1695 with condolences on queen Mary's death.⁸¹

(d) Bribery⁸² and Espionage

'Bribery' in all its many forms was a recognized weapon of diplomacy in the late seventeenth century. The Northern Crowns were usually in the position of the wooed and were therefore less concerned with the giving than with the receiving of presents; the state of Denmark's finances would have hardly allowed her to spend large sums on attempting to influence foreign ministers, and Swedish government departments had to suffer considerable economies in the 1690s.⁸³ As far as it is possible to judge from the available evidence, all the great belligerents seem to have spent a certain amount purely in quest of information, to learn the secrets of the council meeting or the text of treaties by payments to minor government officials.⁸⁴ At the other end of the scale lay the granting of regular pensions to ministers. Nils Bielke, the governor of Swedish Pomerania, was already in receipt of such from France when war broke out and was promised in 1691 compensation for two of his regiments serving with the Allies, though payment was very irregular.⁸⁵ William agreed in 1690 to contribute his share to a pension for Bengt Oxenstierna of 2,000 Rd. annually and severally from the Emperor, England, the United Provinces and Spain and he at least appears to have fulfilled his obligations in this.⁸⁶ The Swedish ministers

Gyldenstolpe, Wrede and Hastfer had an income from France for part of the war,⁸⁷ but Louis desired adequate returns and became more and more sparing with his gold.⁸⁸ Lump sums were offered to convert influential men to the views of the giver, and Oxenstierna, it was rumoured, had been offered 100,000 Rd. in 1689 to adopt a pro-French policy.⁸⁹ William on several occasions, when he had become exasperated with the Swedish attitude, declared that she could be gained only by bribery of her ministers and in 1697 proposed offering a large sum to Lillieroot, who was then acting as Swedish mediator at Rijswijk, to ensure the return of Strasburg to the Empire.⁹⁰ Haren and Heekeren especially among his diplomats urged the need for a greater expenditure in this field.⁹¹ But the funds available to the Maritime Powers for such purposes were severely limited and, with the exception of Oxenstierna's pension, bribery seems to have played a very small part in allied diplomacy. The presents usually promised and made on the conclusion of a successful agreement such as the troops treaty with Denmark in 1689 can hardly be considered in this category; they were generally acknowledged and expected.⁹² They may be more aptly compared with the valuable gift given to a diplomat on his departure from the court to which he had been accredited.⁹³

The effect of bribery on policy is always difficult to determine, but - and it is largely the effect of French gold which concerns us - it does not seem that any important decision in either Copenhagen or Stockholm during this period was influenced by the hope of monetary reward or by such a

reward granted optimistically in advance. Louis' reluctance to empower d'Avaux to make further payments, even when the ambassador was claiming that the irregularity in transmission of the sums promised was losing France valuable friends, indicates that he was reaching the same conclusion.⁹⁴ It has still to be proved that even the views and actions of Bielke were affected.⁹⁵ The power of the French king's purse became a myth in allied circles to explain much that was otherwise inexplicable or simply unpalatable.⁹⁶

Espionage took the form largely of the interception of correspondence between enemy and neutral envoys and their principals.⁹⁷ Heekeren, Dutch envoy in Stockholm, managed to see the despatches of the Swedish envoy in the Hague until suspicions were aroused.⁹⁸ There are copies in the Public Record Office of despatches from Martangis and d'Avaux, the French ambassadors in Copenhagen and Stockholm respectively, which had been opened by Klippe, a Dutch agent in Celle, copied, resealed and allowed to pass on their way,⁹⁹ and in the Heinsius' Archief in the Hague lies a volume containing copies of letters written in 1695 by French representatives in Saxony, Münster, Denmark and Sweden, by Danish diplomats in Paris and Dresden and by Louis XIV and Christian V.¹⁰⁰ The fact that mail from the North to Paris had normally to pass through Hamburg in the same way as that destined for London or the Hague made it particularly vulnerable. A change of cipher does not seem to have been very effective as a counter-measure.¹⁰¹ The extent to which the latter, which usually took the form of a number

code and was normally reserved for matters relating to bribery, espionage, secret negotiations and intimate relations with or judgements upon members of the foreign court, was used varied from envoy to envoy. Duncombe, William III's first envoy to Sweden, employed it lavishly in his early reports,¹⁰² and English envoys appear to have used it more freely than others, who generally found it sufficient to conceal proper names.¹⁰³ In view of the rarity of cipher keys for this period¹⁰⁴ it is fortunate that the cipher clerk in the secretary of state's office would as a rule decipher the code on the despatch itself or on a sheet of paper preserved with it. Not so helpful to the researcher is the practice of recording instructions in the secretary's letter book already coded.¹⁰⁵

Chapter 1

Northern Europe at the Beginning of the Nine Years' War

(i) Sweden and Europe 1680-8

Sweden was, on the eve of the English Revolution, still the dominant power in the Baltic which she had become under Gustavus Adolphus. At the peace of Nijmijgen in 1679 she had paid for her alliance with France by the cession of some territory to Brandenburg, Brunswick and Münster¹, but she continued to control the mouth of the Oder in Western Pomerania and of the Elbe in Bremen-Verden, to hold the important trading city of Wismar and to bar Russia from the Baltic by her occupation of Finland, Ingria, Estonia and Livonia. Her position was, however, seriously threatened by her jealous neighbours, above all by Brandenburg-Prussia, with eyes on Western Pomerania and especially the port of Stettin, and by Denmark, who hoped to recover the lost provinces in South Sweden, which had previous to 1658 given her complete control of the Sound, and who wanted also to eliminate Swedish influence from North-West Germany. Russia also lurked ominously in the background.² It had become, therefore, one of the prime aims of Swedish foreign policy to secure guarantees of her possessions by alliances and agreements with powers lying beyond the confines of the Baltic. Some Swedes still dreamt, in spite of the recent disasters, of a return to the more ambitious aims of the period which had ended with the death of Charles X in 1660, and even the more cautious backed minor territorial claims

such as that to the enclave of Hadeln in the duchy of Bremen-Verden, but there was a general feeling that war should be resorted to only in face of a threat to Sweden's most vital interests.³

After the death of Johan Gyllenstierna in 1680 Swedish foreign policy was directed by Bengt Oxenstierna, a grandson of one of Gustavus Adolphus' great minister's uncles.⁴ He was not a man of outstanding gifts and was timid in the face of opposition, but he enjoyed the all-important support of the shy Charles XI, who took little interest in the details of relations with other powers and was generally content to entrust these to a man who promised the peace necessary for the execution of the king's great internal reforms and the recovery of his kingdom's strength⁵. Under Oxenstierna Sweden drew away from France and associated herself more and more closely with the victims of Louis XIV's aggression, whom William III was welding slowly into a league to curb permanently the ambitions of the French king. The superior attitude of the latter to his erstwhile comrade-in-arms at Nijmegen, where he disposed so freely of her territories, and the involvement in the reunions of the duchy of Zweibrücken, to which Charles had the right of succession after the death of duke Friedrich Ludwig in April 1681, gave the Swedish king personal reasons for resentment which reinforced his minister's more comprehensive European aims of placing Sweden's weight in the balance against France's territorial ambitions, which Sweden could no longer control as her ally and which merely placed her empire in

jeopardy by uniting the Continent against her.⁶

The first fruit of Oxenstierna's policy was the ratification in 1680 of a trade treaty with the United Provinces, previously rejected by Gyllenstierna, which gave Dutch merchant ships trading in the Baltic almost equal rights with those of Sweden and conferred on the United Provinces the status of 'most favoured nation'.⁷ In the following year a further treaty with the States General, joined later by the Hapsburg powers, guaranteed for twenty years the settlements made at Westphalia for the Empire and at Nijmijgen for Spain.⁸ Oxenstierna received only lukewarm support from his fellow councillors for such a definite reversal of alliances, but he was backed by the king and had his hand strengthened by new royal appointments made in 1682.⁹ In this year the new French ambassador Bazin de Bandeville had to return to Paris after a stay of only three months in Stockholm as the result of a ceremonial dispute, which Oxenstierna made little attempt to smooth over, and Louis had no official representative in the Swedish capital for the next ten years.¹⁰ This was followed in October by a defensive alliance with the Emperor by which Sweden pledged herself to lend 3,000 troops in the event of an attack on the Empire in exchange for a guarantee not only of her southern provinces but also of her ally the duke of Holstein-Gottorp,¹¹ who was seriously threatened by Denmark, firmly allied to France by a subsidy treaty in March and planning an attack on Sweden in cooperation with the elector of Brandenburg.¹²

Early in 1683 the guarantee treaty of 1681 was completed by a convention by which the United Provinces, Sweden and the Emperor each pledged 6,000 troops and, with the exception of the Emperor, twelve ships.¹³ In the crisis which preceded the Twenty Year Truce of Ratisbon in 1684 Sweden played a passive role, such as might have warned her allies not to expect too much of her in the event of a large-scale conflict and which demonstrated also the limits of Oxenstierna's power against a king less willing than he to enter into commitments which might lead to war and the destruction of all the work of reconstruction.¹⁴ A further warning sign came in 1686 when Sweden refused to promise more than the 2,000 troops thought commensurate with her German possessions to the League of Augsburg. She was, however, one of the few states to ratify the latter,¹⁵ and in the same year she renewed her former alliances with the United Provinces and engaged herself to give them the same military aid as laid down in the 1683 convention if not required under other agreements.¹⁶ This complex series of treaty obligations was to give rise to lengthy disputes in the succeeding decade.

The chancellor, as Oxenstierna became in 1685, was by no means unopposed in Sweden in committing his country in this manner.

The alliance with the United Provinces strengthened the Dutch commercial hegemony in the Baltic,¹⁷ which Swedish mercantile interests, led by Fabian Wrede,¹⁸ who took charge

of the colleges of commerce and finance in 1687, hoped to break. These were joined by others like Nils Bielke,¹⁹ ambassador in Paris between 1679 and 1682 and appointed governor-general of Swedish Pomerania in 1687, a great admirer of all things French and capable of pursuing an independent and ambitious foreign policy when the opportunity offered, but admired by the king for his personal bravery and a dangerous opponent, the hard-working and influential Erik Lindsköld,²⁰ the crown prince's governor, and Johan Larrson Olivecrants,²¹ mistrusted and out of office since 1685 but one-time governor of queen Christina's estates and extremely gifted. These men favoured the maintenance of the traditional links with France as a counterpoise to the power of the Emperor,²² which grew with the successes of the Holy League against the Turks in the later 1680s²³ and the place he took in the European coalition against Louis XIV. Such sentiments were fostered assiduously by the French agent La Picquetière, who arrived in Stockholm in the autumn of 1685.²⁴ But while Denmark, whom Charles XI always regarded on the prime concern of Swedish foreign policy,²⁵ was encouraged by her French alliance to threaten action in the Lower Saxon Circle contrary to Sweden's interests and the attitude of the England of James II remained enigmatic, this group did not possess a strong enough case to risk the displeasure of the king by protesting openly against Oxenstierna's line of action.

(ii) Danish Policy after 1679

After the breakdown of Gyllenstierna's attempts, immediately after peace had been re-established between Sweden and Denmark at Lund in 1679, to bring about a Scandinavian union,²⁶ Denmark reverted to a policy aimed at dominating the Lower Saxon Circle with the assertion of sovereignty over the lands of the duke of Holstein-Gottorp and the independent Imperial cities of Hamburg and Lübeck and, ultimately, at destroying the Swedish empire and recovering Scania. With this end in view Christian V concluded on March 15th 1682 an alliance with France, who eagerly courted Denmark as she watched Sweden slip from her grasp. By this he was to receive a subsidy of 200,000 Rd. annually for eight years, in order to support the armament necessary to fulfil his ambitions. United with Brandenburg, already in Louis' pay, he planned to launch an attack on their Northern neighbour²⁷, but France was not anxious to provoke a Baltic conflict at this stage and declined to lend the necessary support to the project.²⁸ Brandenburg swung once more away from France, and Denmark wavered. For the time being she confined herself to the prosecution of her quarrel with the duke of Holstein-Gottorp, whose lands in 1684 Christian declared forfeit.²⁹ In 1686 the death of the moderate chancellor, Frederick Ahlfeldt, left the field open to the 'cabal', a group of middle-class bureaucrats which favoured the 'forward policy' which appealed to Christian V.³⁰

Conrad Bierman von Ehrenschild,³¹ the Alsatian head of the German chancery, 'esteemed', according to Molesworth, 'a cunning Man but has no great Reputation for Integrity',³² his son-in-law and immediate subordinate Thomas Balthazar von Jessen,³³ Peter Brandt,³⁴ in charge of Danish finances since 1680, Michael Wibe³⁵ and Conrad Reventlow.³⁶ But the tide was turning against them. An attack on Hamburg in 1686 received no support from France, Brandenburg hurried to the defence of the city, and Brunswick-Lüneberg drew nearer to Sweden. Christian had to submit his case against Gottorp to a group of mediators meeting at Altona, near Hamburg.³⁷

Opposition to the 'cabal's' policy was led by Christian Siegfried von Plessen,³⁸ a Mecklenburger and manager of prince George's estates, whose 'inclinations', Molesworth, who was quite close to him, rightly divined were 'rather English than French',³⁹ but for the time being this party was forced to wait on events, especially on the outcome of the struggle between James II and his subjects.

Relations between Denmark and the United Provinces were particularly strained throughout the 80s, not only on account of the latter's premier position in the anti-French camp and close association with Sweden, but also because of the Dutch failure to pay the subsidies still owing to Denmark from the alliances of 1666 and 1674 together with a sum due after the French arbitration in 1671 - debts amounting, so

the Danes claimed, to 1,500,000 Rd. and countered by claims from Holland and Amsterdam for the repayment of loans to Frederick III. Negotiations in the Hague in 1684 for a new trade alliance to replace the Christianopel treaty, which expired in 1685, revealed wide differences on visitation, definition of contraband and measurement of ships in Norway for customs purposes. An agreement was signed in September, but Amsterdam, led by the pensionary Jacob Hop⁴⁰ and the burgomaster Kristian van Beuningen, refused to ratify it. Hop himself took part in new talks in Berlin under Brandenburg mediation in 1687, while the States-General banned all trade with Norway. Particular difficulties arose over the customs privileges accorded by the Danes to their defence ships - merchant ships liable to serve as naval auxiliaries in time of war, but the international situation continued to worsen for Denmark and she gave way sufficiently for Hop to sign in Berlin a preliminary agreement, valid for two years, with the Danish envoy to Brandenburg, J.H. Lente, on June 26th 1688. According to this trade between the United Provinces and Denmark - Norway was to be regulated by the previous treaties made in 1645, 1647, 1666 and 1669, and all impositions and prohibitions on goods not in accordance with these were to be lifted. The Danish defence ships retained their privileges and the Dutch ban on trade with Norway was withdrawn but the new Danish toll roll of 1686 was suspended, and Dutch ships were allowed once more to participate in Dano-Norse coasting trade.⁴¹

Negotiations for a definitive treaty were to continue throughout the Nine Years War and Dutch debts to Denmark to constitute a serious barrier to the conclusion of any pact William hoped to make with the Danes.⁴²

(iii) The Northern Crowns, the War and the English Revolution

(a) Swedish Reactions

In September 1688 French armies were set in motion towards the middle Rhine and the Nine Years War had begun. From a narrow Baltic viewpoint a European conflict might well be regarded as to Sweden's advantage, since, with the great maritime powers engaged, it was a golden opportunity to seize commercial advantages which might well be maintained into the peace, and Denmark would be isolated when France was fully engaged in the West. It might on the other hand result in a shift in the balance of power against Sweden's wider interests, cause a breach in the Westphalian settlement, in the maintenance of which she had such a keen interest, and even draw her with unforeseeable consequences into the vortex.

The Emperor asked Sweden to appeal to Louis to withdraw his troops. Charles, always attracted by an opportunity to assume the distinction of mediator, agreed to do so and sent the requisite instructions to his envoy in Paris.⁴³ Nils Lillieroot,⁴⁴ one of Sweden's most experienced and able diplomats, had been recalled in 1686 as a protest against an inscription on a French victory monument, which portrayed Sweden gratefully receiving back her lost possessions at the hand of the Sun King, but had returned the following year in

an attempt to secure the latter's support against Denmark for the exiled duke of Holstein-Gottorp.⁴⁵ He received no response to his efforts at peace-making, but Louis was anxious to win back Sweden to his side and offered an alliance with the proposal that Charles should take Eastern Pomerania as payment.⁴⁶ Charles replied that there could be no question of an alliance until Louis had demonstrated his sympathy for the duke.⁴⁷ This would mean desertion of Denmark, and, however unsatisfactory the French king might be finding Christian's conduct at this time, he was not prepared to take such a risk. His ideal was always a reconciliation of the two Northern Crowns under French aegis, and his diplomacy was always directed ultimately to this end. Sweden could gain no further satisfaction, and in January Lillieroot was instructed to return home. He was to explain that there was no intention to break off relations with France,⁴⁸ and his commission secretary Johan Palmquist⁴⁹ was left behind as chargé d'affaires. Palmquist remained alone throughout the war.

Charles XI, especially anxious for Imperial support in the quarrel with Denmark over Holstein-Gottorp which was approaching a new crisis, declared to Leopold's envoy, Anton Nostitz, in November 1688 'Last time we were the last to stand by France and it is well known what we had to suffer on that account. God has now led us on to the right path... where we shall remain faithfully and act in such a way as His Majesty the Emperor will be pleased with us.'⁵⁰ Before

the riksdag called in February 1689 he launched a vigorous attack on French aggression.⁵¹ He promised to fulfil all Sweden's treaty obligations.⁵² William had thus good reason to hope for considerable assistance from this quarter, but he had also more material evidence of Swedish sympathy for his crusade.

In July 1688 Christian Contantijn Rumpf, the Dutch resident in Stockholm, approached Oxenstierna in great secrecy with a request for 6,000 troops to enter the service of the States-General; it was intended that they should replace the contingent to accompany the stadtholder to England. Mauritz Vellingk, commandant of Stade, Swedish observer at the negotiations in Altona and expert on the affairs of the Lower Saxon Circle, had already been sent by Charles to secure William's support in the Holstein-Gottorp dispute and was at this very time engaged in talks with the stadtholder at Loo. With his attention on these negotiations, the Swedish king, in spite of opposition in his council, consented to Rumpf's request on condition that the bulk of the troops were taken from his German possessions, thus avoiding a dangerous denudation of the defences of the Swedish mainland and a large-scale trans-Baltic transport, which might alarm the North German princes. An agreement was signed on September 12th by which 1,000 men were to be ready at Gothenburg fifteen days, 2,000 in Bremen a month and the remaining 3,000 in Pomerania six weeks after ratification. A total of 108,864 Rd. was to be paid for

them by the United Provinces.⁵³ Ratifications were exchanged in October, and the Gothenburg troops under colonel Lewenhaupt had been assembled by the end of the month, but they were not collected by the Dutch until mid-December.⁵⁴ Bielke was given the task of selecting the German contingents and expressed his concern lest their departure should expose Pomerania and Bremen to Danish attack. His fears were shared by the duke of Celle, who appealed to prince Georg Friedrich of Waldeck, commander-in-chief of the allied forces, to delay calling for the troops.⁵⁵ By the second week in November, however, recruiting had filled the gaps in the ranks of the Swedish garrisons,⁵⁶ and the treaty's time-table was able to be fulfilled. Eckhardt, the Dutch commissioner, did not, however, arrive home with the Pomeranian detachment until mid-January 1689, and the Bremen regiments appeared at the end of February.⁵⁷ This was presumably in accordance with Celle's request, and, in any case, little blame seems to attach to Sweden for the tardy implementation of her agreement, but Dijkvelt complained nevertheless to the Swedish envoy in London.⁵⁸

No Swedish troops had therefore arrived in the Netherlands when William sailed, but there may be some truth in Rumpf's claim, made in his despatch of December 29th 1688, that Charles XI's speedy granting of William's request had prevented Louis from attacking the United Provinces for fear that even greater aid might be forthcoming

from Sweden,⁵⁹ as indeed the Dutch were entitled to expect under the terms of their defensive alliance.

All this does not mean that the far-reaching consequences of the English Revolution were watched by Swedes with equanimity. The unexpected rapidity and extent of the stadholder's success and there is no evidence to suggest that Charles enjoyed any special foreknowledge of William's plans - paradoxically strengthened the hand of Oxenstierna's critics. The strengthening of the Protestant camp by the downfall of James II, which was certainly more welcome to the Swedish than to the Danish king, was offset by the fact that two great naval and maritime powers, which Sweden had previously been able to play off one against the other, were now united, and how far their integration would go was for long uncertain. Sweden's share of Baltic trade, already threatened seriously enough by the Dutch, might disappear altogether. Further the alliance of what might become a new Anglo-Netherlands state with the Empire caused a shift in the balance of power which compelled a revaluation of Sweden's place in the European system of states.⁶⁰ Gabriel Oxenstierna,⁶¹ a cousin of the chancellor and Swedish envoy in the Hague, summed up the dilemma to the Imperial ambassador in 1691. 'The King of Sweden', he claimed, 'can never admit that these two great sea powers shall be led by one will. It was possible before at least to have one of them with us.'⁶² Even the chancellor himself, always more closely linked in any case with Vienna than with the Hague and London, seems to have had his doubts

as the coalition grew in strength.⁶³

(b) Denmark in the Crisis

There was far less uncertainty of attitude to the war and the Revolution in Copenhagen than in Stockholm. Although Denmark might hope to benefit commercially in much the same way as Sweden, the engagement of France, her sole remaining ally, in a general conflict meant the abandonment of her forward policy and even a retreat before Swedish and Brunswick threats. At first there was hope that William might be persuaded or bribed to turn against the duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and as early as September 1688 an offer of a closer alliance was forwarded through Brandenburg.⁶⁴ Louis' failure to keep his ally informed of his intended attack on the Rhine and apparent lack of interest in Denmark's wishes⁶⁵ pushed Christian further in the same direction, but he carried out this reorientation, hesitantly, incompletely and with a bad grace.

When Hyacinthe Guillaume Foullé de Martangis,⁶⁶ the newly arrived French ambassador, approached the Danish king with a proposal for a new alliance in November, Ehrenschild, who had resigned his posts in August to retire, ostensibly for the sake of his health, to Hamburg but who continued to exert a powerful influence on foreign policy through his son-in-law and successor Jessen,⁶⁷ advised against any fresh commitment for fear of the bad effect such might have in Altona on the Holstein-Gottorp dispute and in the

conviction that no aid could now be expected from France.⁶⁸ In pursuance of the French ambition to unite both Northern Crowns to herself she persuaded Denmark to make approaches to Sweden at this time, but Martangis was told that his offer came too late.⁶⁹

This did not mean that Christian had taken any final decision; much more time was needed to work out new policies and watch the course of events. These were merely the early stages in that hesitant investigation of the possibilities of new alliances, which often involved negotiations with both belligerent parties at the same time, which is the main characteristic of his foreign policy for most of the war. A rebuff to France might bring to an end the subsidies being drawn under the treaty of 1682, which, - such was Denmark's financial state - he could not afford to lose without a sure and adequate compensation. He thought twice on the other hand before ranging himself too obviously on the side of a power against which more and more European states were allying or offending an Emperor whose influence was growing.

Thus, while a new attempt was made to bring about a reconciliation with William through Brandenburg, the latter's appeal for troops under the terms of her defensive alliance with Denmark was rejected on the excuse that Louis had offered to treat, and offers were even made to reconcile the elector with France. Mediation was offered both to France and through Ehrenschild and Haro-von Gødens, the chief Imperial mediator at Altona, to Leopold. This may well have been as much a

sincere attempt to prevent a war, which promised Denmark little good, as one merely to gain time, but Sweden seized upon the opportunity to represent it to the Allies as a French artifice.⁷⁰

The dangers of such a policy on Christian's part soon became apparent. France grew suspicious and stopped her subsidies. When news of James' flight to France raised hopes that he might be speedily restored by French arms and England forced into a French alliance, Christian tried to regain Louis' favour by having plans drawn up for an armed mediation or third party, for which an annual grant of 600,000 Rd. was expected. The terms offered by Martangis for an alliance and diversionary attack on Brunswick-Lüneberg-Celle were, however, found unsatisfactory by the Danish king, as was a new project presented to him at the end of February.⁷¹

Already an invitation had been extended to the States-General to despatch an envoy to Copenhagen and to discuss renewal of the 1674 alliance with such changes as were necessary in the conditions of 1689.⁷² In February Plessen was prepared for a visit to London, officially on prince George's affairs but with instructions to propose a closer alliance with George's help and to point out that the 1682 treaty was, contrary to report, the only engagement Christian had with the French king and that even this was due to expire in 1690.⁷³

It was impossible to use the existing envoy to England, Frederick Gersdorff,⁷⁴ who had reflected too openly his

government's sympathies for James II. He, an ardent legitimist, had appealed to prince George not to desert his father-in-law, and Christian had betrayed great displeasure when these appeals were disregarded. In fact Denmark's dislike of the Revolution and her welcome of the early news of William's failure were common knowledge, of which Sweden made full use.⁷⁵

(c) The North German Princes

It would be rash to attempt to review William's Scandinavian policy without constant reference to the situation in North Germany, where both Denmark and Sweden had not only extensive territorial possessions, for which they owed allegiance to the Emperor, but also close ties with other rulers. Of these the most important were the elector of Brandenburg and the dukes of Brunswick.

The Great Elector had, it is true, found his way into the Dutch-Imperial camp since 1683, and his son renewed his alliance with William in 1688 and lent him both his general Schomberg and a large body of troops. Frederick III, after his accession in May 1688, also continued his father's policy, however, in maintaining close ties with Denmark and in siding with her against Sweden, relations with whom were also complicated by frontier disputes in Pomerania, in the Holstein-Gottorp quarrel. His attitude even during the first campaign was far less cooperative than might have been expected and he did not join the Grand Alliance until March 1691. Altogether he did not prove to be the most amenable of allies.⁷⁶

Of the four dukes of Brunswick, Anton Ulrich and Rudolph Augustus of Wolfenbüttel shared Denmark's fear of the rising power of Hanover and were ready to listen to any project aimed at curbing it. Their sympathies were generally pro-French.⁷⁷ George William of Brunswick-Lüneberg-Celle was, in spite of a French wife, a particular friend of the stadholder and throughout the war a firm ally of Sweden, but his younger brother and probable heir, Ernst August of Brunswick-Lüneberg-Calenberg, father-in-law of Frederick III of Brandenburg and usually referred to simply as the duke of Hanover, was always an uncertain factor. His driving ambition was the securing from the Emperor of an electoral hat, an award opposed not only by his jealous neighbours but also by the Catholic princes in the Imperial Diet. He was willing to use all means at his disposal to attain his goal including alliance with France to frighten the Allies into making the necessary concessions.⁷⁸ In 1689 he showed particular reluctance to relinquish his ties with the Sun King, and his wife Sofia resisted the bait of the English succession which William held out to her and openly expressed sympathy for James II.⁷⁹ The duke feared any access of power by either of the Northern Crowns.

Northern Germany was thus far from solidly behind William III; its princes had to be constantly wooed or cajoled. Their reactions depended to a very great extent on the attitudes of both Denmark and Sweden, William's relations with whom thus acquired a double significance.

(iv) The Place of the North in William III's War Policy

It is not within the scope of this study to disentangle the causes which led to the outbreak of the Nine Years War, to argue if and when an armed conflict became inevitable, or to debate how far William welcomed an opportunity to set in motion a European coalition and settle finally the problems left unsolved at Nijmijgen and Ratisbon and how far he entered with reluctance into a struggle for which - especially with his principal ally engaged already in the East - he was not prepared. What seems indisputable, however, is his belief in the rightness of his cause and his determination to employ all means available to win through.

It was with these convictions that he approached the Northern Crowns - the most important of the uncommitted powers. It was they who could provide most help as allies and do most harm as enemies, and in this way his policy towards them separates naturally into its positive and negative aspects. Positively both Denmark-Norway and Sweden could provide much needed man power for the allied armies in the form either of national bodies operating semi-independently and on an equal footing with those of the Empire, the United Provinces and England or of hired auxiliary detachments.

Sweden had at the beginning of the war about 64,000 men under arms.⁸⁰ She had already lent 6,000 to the United Provinces, was bound to lend a further 6,000 under the Imperial Alliance of 1682, guarantee convention of 1683 and Dutch Alliance of 1686,⁸¹ and as a belligerent her contribution

might be very considerable. In 1687 and 1688 Denmark was able to maintain an army of 45 to 50,000.⁸² Only a small proportion of these were Danes, and a force of such a size could not have been supported without French subsidies. But when these ceased Christian was anxious to sell a large number of the troops to the highest bidder. Both Northern Crowns owed small contingents to the Emperor for their possessions within the Empire, Sweden for Bremen-Verden and Pomerania, Denmark for Schleswig-Holstein and Oldenburg-Delmenhorst. Naval support was for William, with the combined forces of two great maritime powers at his command, not such an urgent problem, but Sweden had forty-four ships of the line in service,⁸³ of which twelve were liable to be called upon by the Dutch in accordance with the agreements of 1683 and 1686, and Denmark could commission thirty-five.⁸⁴ Even without a declaration of war the giving of military aid would loosen any ties the Scandinavian kingdom had with France.

No less vital aid might be rendered by their blocking of all Baltic supplies to France, who relied almost wholly on them for her naval repairs and construction.⁸⁵ At the end of the seventeenth century Sweden-Finland had a virtual world monopoly of tar, and Norway's prosperity rested on her timber exports.⁸⁶ William, however little he may have been interested in economic affairs as such, realized, as his new English subjects had long done, that the sinews of war comprised a far wider range of goods than those commonly recognized as contraband when there was not even agreement on the inclusion

under this of shipbuilding materials.⁸⁷ An import of grain from the Southern or Eastern Baltic lands might enable France, in the event of a bad harvest, to sustain herself for a further campaign.⁸⁸ Should the Northern Crowns join the Allies as belligerents the problem would solve itself automatically, but, even without the taking of this step, they might be persuaded or compelled to desist from supplying France for the good of the 'common cause' or for compensation; this might in its turn lead to belligerency in the same way as the lending of troops. Denmark might help further by refusing shelter to French warships and privateers in Norwegian harbours, from which they could operate against English and Dutch convoys.⁸⁹

Negatively the help which William desired for himself must not be allowed to be given to France. The geographical position of Sweden and Denmark made them in many ways more dangerous as enemies than useful as friends. Their entry into the war on the French side would not only take the Allies in the rear and fully engage the armed forces of Brandenburg and other North German princes but might even persuade the latter to seek their fortunes against the Emperor rather than in his company. It had long been a maxim of English foreign policy that the Sound must be kept open, and its closure against the merchant ships of the Maritime Powers, which would follow the entry of the Northern Crowns into the French camp, would have disastrous results. The Baltic trade was unpopular with English mercantilist economists,

because of the quantity of bullion it demanded, but England nevertheless took nearly half of Sweden's exports, being her most important all-round customer, and in the middle of the war England and the United Provinces imported over 70% of the iron which itself constituted over half the value of Swedish exports.⁹⁰ It was perhaps some comfort to consider that Sweden would hesitate before breaking such links. As for Denmark, Molesworth wrote that 'the Danes are of the opinion that neither the English nor the Dutch can possibly want the Norway Trade for their Naval Stores' and had regretfully to agree that, until the potentialities of North America⁹¹ were exploited, they could not.

Even if the Northern Crowns did not join France, either or both of them might be persuaded by Louis to head a 'third party' of neutral princes with the object of imposing on France's enemies an unfavourable peace by threats or overt military action⁹² or to form a league to oppose any aspect of allied policy considered by them to be harmful to Scandinavian interests.⁹³

Such, however, was Dano-Swedish antagonism that united action by the two nations was less likely than open conflict between them, and William had always to face the possibility that the establishment of close ties with one would drive the other into the opposing camp.⁹⁴ Any disturbance in the North not only threatened to bring about the withholding of help but also provided an excuse for the withdrawal of any already given, not only on the part of Denmark and Sweden but

also of those of their neighbours who felt, or could claim that they felt, that they themselves were threatened.⁹⁵ It was just such a threat which faced William at the very beginning of his reign. Sweden and the duke of Celle stood poised ready to restore at the point of the sword the duke of Holstein-Gottorp, whom Christian V had driven into exile, and until this quarrel was settled peacefully the new king's more far-reaching and positive aims in the North would remain unfulfilled.

Chapter 2William III and Holstein-Gottorp in 1689(i) The Background

The roots of the age-long dispute between the kings of Denmark and the dukes of Holstein-Gottorp are to be found in the settlement made on the election of king Christian I in 1460 to the county of Holstein, an Imperial fief, and the duchy of Schleswig, which owed allegiance to the Danish Crown. It was then agreed that the two territories should be perpetually united, but at the same time remain independent of the Danish kingdom as such and retain their own laws and administration.¹ Fourteen years later Holstein was raised to the rank of an hereditary Imperial duchy.² In 1544 Christian III partitioned both duchies, retaining lands in each for himself and using the remainder as apanages for two of his three half-brothers. Their relations with each other and with Denmark were regulated by the 'Union', drawn up on the death of Frederick I in 1533, which anticipated such a division by making rather vague provisions for mutual defence, but the situation was complicated by the arrangements made for the joint rule of certain privileged areas, mostly in Holstein, consisting of the lands of the 'knights, prelates and towns.' Here the so-called 'communion' enjoined that taxes should be paid into a common chest, the administration of higher justice shared and the presidency of the estates (lanttag) assumed by the dukes in rotation.³ In 1579 at

Odense Schleswig was declared a Danish fief but 'francum, liberum et sine onere', and in 1581, on the death of the duke Hans the elder, a fresh division, retaining joint rule in the common lands, was made as a compromise solution between duke Adolf, who claimed the whole duchy, and his nephew king Frederick II.⁴ It was between the descendents of these two men, the dukes of Holstein-Gottorp and the kings of Denmark as dukes of Schleswig-Holstein, that developed the struggle with which we are concerned.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century the duchies consisted of a jigsaw of lands, some held by the duke of Holstein-Gottorp, some by the king of Denmark, some governed jointly, and a small proportion of the whole shared among the heirs of duke Hans the younger, founder of the Sönderborg lines. Some were legally Imperial, some Danish fiefs and all were bound together by vaguely worded and frequently contradictory agreements.⁵ Neither duke nor king had a clearly defined position in either Schleswig or Holstein, and the duke's status in Schleswig was particularly parlous. In such circumstances it was only to be expected that each should seek to improve his lot and that each should find reason and law to support his claims. The king dreamt of complete control of the duke's domains, especially in contiguous Schleswig, the duke of sovereignty without hindrance of union or communion.

It was equally natural that the latter should seek outside help and that his choice should fall on Denmark's

chief antagonist in the struggle for Baltic supremacy. Sweden had pressing strategic reasons for refusing Denmark control of the Gottorp lands, and the family quarrel rapidly became not only one of European concern but a permanent threat to peace in the North. As well as a barrier across Denmark's line of march into that part of the Empire which she aimed to make her exclusive sphere of influence and her lines of communication with her own possessions of Oldenburg and Delmenhorst, the duke's territories formed a vital link between Swedish Pomerania and Bremen-Verden, reinforcement of whose garrisons by sea always lay at the mercy of the Danish fleet. Outright control by either of the Northern Crowns would seriously jeopardize the other's position in Germany and the Baltic and, in the event of war, would prove a weapon of prime importance. But Sweden also had an interest in keeping alive the disputes between Denmark and the dukes, for not only would Denmark's attention be diverted to the south as long as they lasted but the dukes would have continued reason to maintain close ties with Sweden. This led her to oppose the various projects for exchange of territories which would have provided the best answer to the problem.⁶

Denmark failed to break Gottorp's ties with Sweden, cemented under duke Frederick III by the marriage of Charles X to his daughter Hedvig Eleonora in 1654,⁷ and in 1658 at Roskilde the duke secured full sovereignty over his Schleswig lands, although still subject to the unions and communion, in payment for his services against his overlord, a gain

confirmed at the peace of Copenhagen in 1660 under the guarantee of the Maritime Powers and France.⁸ There was a considerable lessening of tension in the 60s, symbolized by the marriage of Christian Albrekt to Princess Frederikke Amalia of Denmark in 1667, but with Christian V's accession in 1670 a new period of crisis began. The Gottorp-Swedish alliance was renewed in 1674, and finally in 1675, when he was on the verge of war with Sweden, Christian forced the duke, partly at least as a defensive measure, to submit to a state of virtual vassalage by the treaty of Rensborg.⁹ In the following year he occupied Schleswig. The status quo was restored under article xvii of the Treaty of Fontainebleau four years later, again under the guarantee of the Western Powers.¹⁰ This meant that all the old claims and counter-claims, especially those regarding the extent of the duke's independence in matters of taxation, foreign affairs and defence, his 'ius collectandi, foederum et fortaliti' under the unions of 1533 and 1623 and grant of sovereignty in Schleswig, remained and were further aggravated by rival interpretations of Fontainebleau. In 1682 Christian, confident in his French alliance, sent his troops into Gottorp after Albrekt had fled to Hamburg, and in 1684 not only did he proclaim the ducal part of Schleswig forfeit to Denmark but for a short time raised the Holstein 'contribution' or taxes in the common lands, which had formed the main ostensible bone of contention, for Danish benefit alone. Sweden encouraged her protégé, although, occupied as she was in

recovering her strength after the humiliations of the war, she had to confine herself to diplomatic representations in Copenhagen. The Emperor offered his mediation, but it was not until Denmark tried to assert her sovereignty over Hamburg by force in 1686 that other powers became keenly interested in the duke's plight. The Brunswick-Lüneburg dukes and Sweden drew closer together, and Christian V, who always claimed his disputes with Gottorp to be purely family quarrels for as long as circumstances permitted, agreed to the mediation of the Emperor, Saxony and Brandenburg. Negotiations opened in Altona at the beginning of November 1687.¹¹

No progress was made during the early months of the new year, and, with the death of the Great Elector in April, the talks came virtually to a standstill.¹² Sweden grew alarmed that the duke would give way in despair, opened negotiations with Brunswick-Lüneburg to restore him by force, and at the end of the year Charles XI decided to call a riksdag. This met in February 1689 and, while expressing its hopes for a peaceful solution, voted supplies for the support of 14,000 men.¹³ On the 12th of the same month an alliance was signed with Lüneburg by which, if the duke were not restored by May 20th, Denmark was to be attacked with 18,000 men and territorial compensation exacted from her by the victors.¹⁴

(ii) William and the Altona Negotiations

William had of course been neither blind to the approaching crisis nor kept aloof from it. The United Provinces was

a guarantor of Northern peace and the duke's rights. Nor could any action by the pro-French Denmark be ignored. He had long backed the proposals for settlement by mediation, and Jacob Hop had been present during the early abortive stages of the negotiations at Altona while he was in the North to settle the Dutch commercial differences with Christian V.¹⁵ In August 1688 Mauritz Vellingk, Swedish observer at Altona,¹⁶ had visited the stadtholder at Loo after taking part in negotiations in Hanover. Not only did he hope to enlist William's support for the cause of Christian Albrekt but also to persuade him to use his influence with the young elector of Brandenburg, whose refusal to commit himself in the dispute was causing considerable concern in Stockholm. William approved the Swedish proposals for a general concert to protect the duke's legitimate rights and promised both his help with Brandenburg and Saxony and a welcome for Gabriel Thuresson Oxenstierna, Sweden's envoy in Vienna, who was to be sent as a more permanent representative to the States-General. At the same time, however, he emphasized the dangers which faced the United Provinces, who would certainly be attacked by France if James II were successful in England.¹⁷ It was obvious that no decisive intervention was to be expected until the problems of the latter country had been settled, and the troops agreement which was signed between Sweden and the United Provinces the following month was, as has been already suggested, dictated to a considerable extent by Sweden's Baltic interests.¹⁸

While there can be little doubt that William's sympathies,

in view of the links between Denmark and France, the former's acts of aggression in the Lower Saxon Circle and Sweden's tokens of friendship, lay with Christian Albrekt and his allies his overriding concern had always to be the preservation of peace in Northern Europe as part of the larger crusade, even if this meant considerable sacrifices on the duke's part. Thus his subsequent policy aimed at restraining the belligerence of Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg without alienating their friendship while persuading Denmark by all means short of war to restore the duke and the status quo, at least for the duration of the war with France.

Gabriel Oxenstierna arrived in the Hague in October 1688 following the conclusion of the troops treaty¹⁹, but he could do little until the English scene had become clearer. Even then little could be accomplished without William's cooperation and, in reply to an invitation through Waldeck, he was sent instructions for a voyage to London in January. He was ordered to impress on William the harm done by Denmark's behaviour to the common cause and how necessary it was to remove all opportunity for her to come to France's aid and so prevent Sweden and the princes of the Lower Saxon Circle joining him with all their strength. Negotiations, he was to point out, seemed merely to give Christian time to improve his position. He was to repeat the libels perpetrated against the stadtholder in Copenhagen and win his support for a request being made to the States-General for eight to ten ships to be sent to Gothenburg and to be used to cut Danish communications with

Norway and prevent the manning of her fleet. As an additional incentive the treaty aid, for which the United Provinces had applied under the guarantee treaties of the 1680s, was to be made dependent on help from the States-General under the alliance of 1640, renewed in 1686, and the guarantee of the Peace of Copenhagen. Finally, Oxenstierna was to apply for a loan of 1,000,000 Rd. at 4 or 5% to anticipate the grants made by the riksdag, which would take some time to collect.²⁰

He sailed from Brill on March 27th in the company of two other delegates from Northern powers, Schütz from the Brunswick dukes and Wolfgang von Schmettau from the elector of Brandenburg, both of whom had been sent with the avowed purpose of congratulating the new king but who were as interested in Holstein-Gottorp as himself.²¹ He was warned from Stockholm of the pro-Danish inclinations of Schmettau while at the same time being cautioned to tread wearily in view of William's regard for the elector. From Schütz he could, however, he was told, expect support.²² The ground had already been prepared for him by Johan Leijonberg, Swedish envoy in London since 1672,²³ whose caution throughout the Revolution won him a happier fate than his Danish counterpart. He had secured an audience with the king on March 17th and handed over a copy of Charles' propositions to the estates. He had answered questions about Sweden's military strength and pleaded the duke's cause. William had promised, so Leijonberg

reported, to send someone 'to receive your Majesty's instructions how he was to act' and had claimed that he found no difficulty in supporting Sweden.²⁴

Oxenstierna landed in England on April 2nd and arrived in London two days later.²⁵ He secured a private audience, but Plessen had anticipated him.²⁶ The Dane had arrived on March 28th with orders to emphasize the generosity of his sovereign's offers to Gottorp, the necessity of discouraging Sweden's lust for power and the dangers of a transfer of troops to her German provinces when the removal of Bengt Oxenstierna was all that was needed to throw her into the arms of France.²⁷ Soon after his arrival came news of Christian's offer at Altona, where negotiations had been resumed at the end of 1688, to restore the duke, but the saving clause that this should be done without prejudice to Danish honour and security destroyed much of the effect, and William was very guarded in their first talk.²⁸ Plessen's task was little helped by his allies at the English court. Gersdorff, who was not finally recalled until April 9th, confessed he could do nothing and his reputation probably made him a liability.²⁹ Prince George, on whose behalf the visitor had ostensibly come, assured his brother constantly that no hostile action was to be feared from the Maritime Powers³⁰ and can hardly have made much impression on William. Even Schmettau does not seem to have been such a consistent supporter of the Danish line as the Swedish envoys believed.³¹ In fact neither party could find much satisfaction in either London or the Hague.

A sincere desire for the preservation of peace in the North was evident, but the Swedes soon found that this implied an unwillingness to aggravate matters by sending the squadron, for which they and Brunswick-Lüneburg were pressing, or even by the hiring out of ships.³² The question of a loan was quietly shelved. It was made quite clear to them that no support was to be expected for the duke's claims either for compensation or for use of his Schleswig lands unrestricted by 'unions' and 'communion',³³ and it was even suggested that the whole problem might be the more speedily and satisfactorily solved if Charles turned all his forces immediately against France.³⁴ The Danes, on the other hand, found dissatisfaction with the conditions which their king attached to the restoration offer, suspicion of the nature of their relations with France and a cool reception to their offers of military aid.³⁵

In his first discussion on Holstein-Gottorp with Oxenstierna on April 21st William said he realized how difficult was the position while Denmark had France at her back and agreed to warn her of the dangers she was running if she remained stubborn. He was eager to renew the guarantee of the duke's rights but showed his displeasure when the envoy spoke of his master's patience becoming exhausted and, in answer to the request for an allied squadron, could only repeat observations already made by Portland about the weakness of his fleet.³⁶ The Swedes did, however, make full use of the unsatisfactory nature of the Danish reply to the mediator's proposals at the end of March and elicited

William's surprise when this was communicated to him.³⁷

It is not clear how detailed was William's knowledge at any stage of the treaty between Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg of February 12th. Gabriel Oxenstierna was himself informed on February 20th. In a debate in the chancery on April 1st on a letter from Bielke of March 15th informing of Schütz' mission and asking if the Lüneburger should raise the question of Holstein-Gottorp with William, Oxenstierna proposed that the latter should not be told the details of the treaty at once lest he believe there was more behind it, but that it should be revealed to him little by little. Lindsköld agreed and suggested beginning with the agreement to restore the duke and then the method proposed for his restitution. There is, however, no mention of this method of procedure in the instructions sent to Gabriel Oxenstierna on April 3rd with a summary of the alliance, of which he was to inform the English king. These did not arrive until April 28th, so no mention of the agreement could have been made in the first talk. There is no record of William's reaction to it, but it is perhaps significant that shortly afterwards, in a letter to Heinsius on May 7th, he agrees to the sending of Dutch ships to the Baltic.³⁸

Already he had begun to take more vigorous action in defence of Northern peace. Coenrad van Heemskerck, an ex-pensionery of Amsterdam and experienced diplomat³⁹, was sent with the king's full approval to Altona at the end of April with orders to further a settlement without giving

umbrage to Sweden.⁴⁰ At the beginning of May Robert Goes,⁴¹ the States-General's resident in Denmark, whom they had recalled to the Hague to report, arrived back in Copenhagen with the same task.⁴² About the same time new English envoys were appointed to the North as part of the wholesale replacement of James' servants. William Duncombe⁴³ went to replace Edmund Poley⁴⁴ in Sweden, Robert Molesworth⁴⁵ to succeed sir Gabriel Sylvius⁴⁶ in Denmark, Robert, lord Lexington to Brandenburg⁴⁷ and sir William Dutton Colt to Brunswick,⁴⁸ but none of these was destined to arrive in time⁴⁹ to affect the course of negotiations in Altona, and Dutch agents alone executed the king's policy up to the final settlement. Time was now running out. Heemskerck, who had written soon after his arrival that all hope of a settlement was past but that at the moment it was necessary only to hold a squadron in readiness, was empowered to threaten Denmark with its despatch, and the king, according to Gabriel Oxenstierna, told Schütz that, if a settlement was not reached by mid-June, it would have to be sent.⁵⁰ On June 14th Heinsuis reported to the States of Holland on replies received from the admiralty colleges concerning such a squadron and announced that the States-General was to be advised to fit out twelve ships to be victualled for four months.⁵¹

In Altona Vellingk and Görtz, the Brunswick observer, agreed to a postponement of their ultimatum until May 31st since they knew that their countries' military preparations could not be completed until mid-June. An effort by Denmark

to have the points in dispute referred to the arbitration of William and the Emperor failed, and the mediators demanded an unconditional restoration, but, when the new time limit was reached, they secured a further respite of sixteen days.⁵² A delay beyond this was hardly to be hoped for, but Denmark remained stubborn. She had been encouraged by reports of the unwillingness and the unpreparedness of the Maritime Powers to intervene by force, by James II's successful landing in Ireland, by German fears of a Swedish transfer of troops, of which even Lüneburg warned her ally,⁵³ by fading hopes of peace between the Holy League and the Turks,⁵⁴ and even by hopes of French subsidies. In April Christian promised Martangis that he would give way no further if assured of France's support, but Louis continued to demand a diversionary attack on Brunswick-Lüneburg as his price.⁵⁵ Finally on June 4th at a meeting in Celle, in a desperate bid to postpone the catastrophe and in face of a threat by Vellingk to order the Swedish fleet to sail at once, Heemskerck and Heekeren, the States-General representative with the Lüneburg dukes,⁵⁶ agreed to a request from Vellingk and Görtz to send a squadron of a dozen ships by the end of June if Christian did not accept the terms drawn up on the previous day by June 20th. A further twelve ships were to be kept in readiness to protect the agreement throughout the war with France. By a separate act the States-General were allowed fourteen days to ratify the convention.⁵⁷

William's representatives had found it necessary to bind their master on their own responsibility and felt it incumbent upon themselves to defend their action in subsequent despatches. Heemskerck declared that he would have preferred the imposition of terms more to Denmark's liking, which would also have been in the long run to the duke's advantage, but time had been pressing and the commitments entered into by Sweden and Lüneburg too precise to obtain a respite in any other way. Heekeren pointed out that the engagement involved only twelve ships while by the alliance between Sweden and the States-General all the latter's forces were committed.⁵⁸

Denmark was understandably incensed by this development. Christian ordered Lente in the Hague to protest his astonishment at the action, especially after Denmark's offer of troops to the Allies, and to hope it had been taken without orders and would be disavowed. Similar sentiments were expressed in London.⁵⁹ Here Danish representation was once more changed in the middle of May. Plessen, whose health was little fitted for the strains imposed on it⁶⁰ and whose wife and daughter had been burnt to death in the Amalienborg castle disaster on April 19th,⁶¹ asked for and obtained his recall.⁶² He and Gersdorff left together at the end of June,⁶³ but a temporary replacement had already arrived in the shape of Frédéric-Henri, marquis de la Forest-Suzannet, a Huguenot friend of Schomberg, promoted to major-general for the purpose.⁶⁴ His instructions of May 14th were to propose the reference of outstanding differences between king and

duke to arbitrators, including William, if no settlement were reached by the end of September, a solution which, as had been seen, proved unacceptable at Altona, and to back this with an offer of troops more precise than that already made by Plessen.⁶⁵

William promised La Forest an early reply but delayed until a settlement was reached in the North for fear of hardening the Danish attitude in the negotiations.⁶⁶ He continued to support the threat of sending ships to aid Sweden in the event of a rupture⁶⁷, and preparations went cautiously ahead,⁶⁸ but he would not allow himself to be bound to anything too definite⁶⁹ and betrayed a growing uneasiness at the intransigence of the duke's allies. Already some Brandenburg troops were being held back from the Rhine, and the elector was threatening to withdraw those already sent.⁷⁰ The stadtholder-king approved the demands set out in a Gottorp ultimatum on May 6th⁷¹ with the exception of a claim by the duke to levy an extraordinary tax with which to build a fortress and his pretensions to compensation, even though the sum had been reduced from 10,000,000 Rd. to a mere 500,000 Rd. William feared that Denmark would not be able to pay it and might be driven to extremities with French backing. If these points were conceded he had hopes that Christian might give way, if not the duke must, he judged, be considered guilty of war.⁷² This view formed the basis of instructions to Duncombe and Molesworth on June 6th⁷³ and to Colt on June 13th.⁷⁴ William emphasized to Heinsius

that 'we must not join in what is wrong'.⁷⁵ He told Oxenstierna in the middle of June that he was sure that, if Denmark had made the same offer she was now making four months previously, Gottorp would have accepted, and that he hoped Sweden and Lüneburg were now satisfied and would drive Denmark no further.⁷⁶ He showed great irritation when news reached London of the mediators' project drawn up on May 31st, just before the fateful visit to Celle.⁷⁷

Unfortunately no first hand evidence has survived of his reaction to Heemskerck's and Heekeren's convention of June 4th, but both Plessen and Gabriel Oxenstierna reported that he was not wholly pleased with the behaviour of his envoys, and he refused to comment on the agreement.⁷⁸ It does seem highly likely, in view of his general attitude at this time, that he was annoyed at finding himself bound by such strict engagements, which he was given little or no time to endorse or repudiate before the expiry of the ultimatum, and that he feared to alienate Denmark by being drawn so far from the middle path, especially when he had La Forest's offer before him. He had, it is true, sanctioned the sending of a squadron to the Baltic but had been careful to commit himself neither to any terms under which it should be employed nor to the party against which it should be directed. He was now committed on both counts and could not withdraw without risking a serious breach with Sweden and undermining Heemskerck's and Heekeren's authority; there was nothing left to hope for but that agreement be reached before June 20th. Leijonberg

felt a less friendly atmosphere and complained that, 'although times and even the government itself has changed, the old maxims of the English court have not.' He blamed the influence of prince George and the offer of troops, by means of which, he claimed, Denmark pretended to acquit herself of her debts to the duke. When he expatiated to William on Gottorp's wrongs he was met by the sobering assertion that the latter could not expect full justice in present circumstances and should make a virtue of necessity to avoid greater calamities.⁷⁹

William, however, obviously decided to support the terms approved by the mediators, and on June 19th these were sent after Duncombe,⁸⁰ who had set sail three days before on the 'Swan',⁸¹ to Molesworth,⁸² and were supported in orders to Colt⁸³ and sir Paul Rycout, new resident in Hamburg and the Lower Saxon Circle,⁸⁴ who was to recommend them to the duke himself.⁸⁵

One of the greatest obstacles in the way of a final settlement was the return to the duke of the island of Femern and the counties of Steinhorst and Tremsbüttel.⁸⁶ These had been mortgaged to prince George after Danish occupation as security for 300,000 Rd. owed by Christian Albrekt to king Christian, who made the sum over to his brother in settlement of a bequest in the will of their father.⁸⁷ The mediators agreed to try to persuade William and, if necessary, also the Emperor and the States-General to be responsible for George's satisfaction if the territories in question were returned immediately to the duke.⁸⁸ Heemskerck acknowledged the

irregularity of this procedure but explained that he had agreed 'because it was considered that it would facilitate a settlement, and my good offices alone were required.'⁸⁹

William refused at first to consider the proposal but, finding his hand forced by his envoy's engagement, agreed and hoped the United Provinces would shoulder their share of the burden 'because the matter is of too great importance to take risks for so small a thing.'⁹⁰

Christian V, under threat of Heemskerck's convention, faced by a financial situation which could not possibly support a war on all fronts without great subsidies, unable to get promises of aid from either France or Brandenburg, who feared the increase in Swedish power which the war might bring, aware, from Plessen's despatches, of William's displeasure with Danish stubbornness, and hankering for an understanding with Sweden, for which he had been groping since the beginning of the year, decided early in June, with the utmost reluctance and under strong pressure from his councillors to give way and returned the mediator's project of June 10th with only slight modifications on June 15th.⁹¹ Even then only pressure by Heemskerck on Celle to accept this and threats by Vellingk, who refused any extension of the time limit to save the Danes loss of face, produced signatures to the final agreement on June 20th, less than three hours before expiry of the Swedish-Lüneburg ultimatum.⁹² By it the duke was restored to full sovereignty in Schleswig but without compensation or abolition of the ancient covenants binding

him to the king of Denmark in his capacity as duke of Schleswig-Holstein.⁹³ William's attitude had been studiously correct throughout the crisis, but, by backing the mediator's demands without at the same time giving the duke and his allies unconditional support and by discreetly threatening to use force against the party he himself judged guilty of causing a resort to arms, he had certainly helped to restrain the ardour of one side and weaken the determination of the other and so make a peaceful solution possible. It was a solution which, however unsatisfactory it might prove to be in the future, was largely the one for which he had pressed from the beginning and which suited his immediate aims.

(iii) Aftermath of Altona

War in the North with all its unpredictable consequences had been very near, and even after the agreement had been signed the danger receded only slowly. On receipt of the news from Altona on June 26th the movement of Swedish troops towards the Sound was halted, but the fleet, which had set sail a mere two days before, remained at sea.⁹⁴ This prompted Danish counter-activity, and William's representatives found themselves obliged to work for an early withdrawal of both sides' ships and avoidance of a chance encounter. Heemskerck, who stayed on although the main purpose of his mission was completed, was finally promised by Reventlow that all Danish warships would return to port by August 15th if Sweden acted likewise.⁹⁵ Swedish ships were still out on this date, but no serious incident resulted.⁹⁶

By this time, however, the settlement was being threatened on a different plane. The legal position of the duke was much the same as after Fontainebleau. None of the old causes for disagreement had been removed, the rights of each side under the 'unions' and 'communion' remained as ill-defined as ever, and the Danish king had merely left his claims 'to God and time'. In July the duke agreed with Sweden and Lüneburg to take into his service a number of their troops to provide some defence for his territories until he could afford his own and to help build a garrison and fortress at Tønningen. It was particularly important for Denmark that Gottorp should remain defenceless, and Christian welcomed this opportunity to keep the dispute open and raise once more the question of Gottorp's 'ius Collectandi, Foederum et Fortalitii,' granted with the sovereignty of Schleswig. Ehrenschild, who had been mainly responsible for Danish negotiations at Altona, was sent back to Hamburg to protest against what he claimed to be a breach of the unions, demand dismissal of foreign troops and negotiate a new union with Christian Albrekt involving a joint army to be paid out of a common chest, but at the same time to avoid any preliminary discussion of the agreement of June 20th. Talks began on September 12th under the shadow of 7,000 Danish troops, which were being hired out to William and were gathered in South Jutland prior to their embarkation.⁹⁷

As soon as Christian was informed of the duke's treaty Danish envoys were ordered to protest and obtain support in

their several courts for Ehrenschild's mission.⁹⁸ William promised La Forest his help and spoke to Leijonberg. The Swede claimed that Denmark would not be satisfied until the only foreign troops in the duke's service were Danish. The king simply asked his help in removing all grounds for jealousy,⁹⁹ but once more he showed his sympathies for the duke, and on September 24th Molesworth was instructed that Christian Albrekt had a clear legal right to act as he did and that Denmark had no cause to fear the consequences of the agreement; La Foulereuse, the Danish legation secretary in London, found no inclination at the English court to remonstrate with the duke.¹⁰⁰ The death of the duke of Saxe-Lauenburg on September 30th and the prompt occupation of his disputed territories by the duke of Celle contributed to the tension in the Lower Saxon Circle and called forth new efforts to reconcile king and duke by Heemskerck and Leopold's envoys, Gødens and Reichenbach, who proposed a gradual withdrawal of foreign troops from Gottorp,¹⁰¹ but the most that Christian Albrekt would consent to was a written promise, which he sent to Heemskerck and Gødens only after Swedish consent had been obtained, to return all troops by May 1st 1690, when, Leijonberg was ordered to promise William, they would be sent to aid the Allies.¹⁰²

Sweden continued to protest at Danish efforts to impose an unfavourable alliance on Christian Albrekt and to persuade him to take Danish troops into his service. She disapproved strongly of mediation projects put forward by Heemskerck as

prejudicial to the duke's sovereignty and pressed strongly for the production of the guarantees of the Altona settlement promised by the Maritime Powers.¹⁰³

Nothing had been said about guarantees in the treaty of June 20th, since no agreement could be expected from Denmark to Gottorp's choice of guarantors, which would inevitably include Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg. It had therefore been decided to leave each party to seek its own securities. The duke then declared his intention to ask not only the mediators, Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg, but also the Maritime Powers and the directory of the Lower Saxon Circle.¹⁰⁴ William had already expressed his willingness, indeed his eagerness, to accede, but the Tønningen dispute prompted Denmark to press for a delay, on the grounds that Ehrenschild's talks would otherwise be prejudiced, and Sweden to urge with equal vigour the guarantee's speedy execution in view of the persistent danger of conflict and Danish threats.¹⁰⁵ In fact the English guarantee was held up for at least eight months and the Dutch for nearly as long. It is difficult to apportion blame. The Swedes suspected William of fearing to offend Denmark, whose troops he awaited, and of using the guarantee as a bargaining counter in his negotiations for Swedish military aid.¹⁰⁶ He certainly proposed that the matter should form part of Gabriel Oxenstierna's negotiation with the States-General concerning the contingents of troops and ships owed by Sweden to the Allies,¹⁰⁷ but, on the other hand, Denmark was given little cause for optimism, and La Foulereuse was told

that the guarantee was as much of a check on the duke as upon Christian. He found himself reduced to pressing for the inclusion of additional clauses favourable to Denmark and could obtain no greater satisfaction than a promise to consult the Danish king before the documents were sent, a promise which was soon broken.¹⁰⁸ Some at least of the technical difficulties put forward to excuse the delay were hardly convincing. Firstly, it was argued, no formal request was received from the duke, and, since Sweden appeared to act as his agent, William demanded that special powers should be sent to Leijonberg or Gabriel Oxenstierna to negotiate.¹⁰⁹ He wished also to consult with the States-General on a common model, and Lord Dursley, his new envoy in the Hague, was instructed to do so.¹¹⁰ The States-General in their turn raised points about which they sought fuller information, while sickness postponed Dursley's introduction and his negotiations with them.¹¹¹ A project was sent over by the Dutch ambassadors in England, but this, it was claimed, proved inadequate.¹¹² The impatient Swedes were next informed that no reliable copy of the Altona settlement was available in London and that Schmettau had requested one from the elector.¹¹³ The States-General finally based their guarantee on that issued by the Emperor, which had been expedited in October,¹¹⁴ and, after Gabriel Oxenstierna, who returned to the United Provinces in October,¹¹⁵ had persuaded the grand pensionary and Dursley that it was unnecessary to send it to London first, it was forwarded to Heemskerck in January.¹¹⁶ There was still,

however, delay in England. A formal request was made by the duke at the end of December, but its receipt was delayed until February.¹¹⁷ Schmettau received the desired copy early in the new year,¹¹⁸ but William, perhaps irritated by the Swedish request to include herself and the Lower Saxon Circle in the guarantee and thus make him a party to all Sweden's disputes with her neighbours, to which he could not agree,¹¹⁹ and by what seemed very like an attempt to blackmail him with a refusal of treaty aid,¹²⁰ continued to demand the sending of special powers to Leijonberg.¹²¹ No sooner was this done and the documents handed to the latter than a dispute arose over the duke's titles.¹²² At last all that remained was for La Foulereuse and Lente to protest against the favours bestowed on the duke by the Allies. The States-General promised to write to him and persuade him to come to terms with the Danish king.¹²³

Another part of the Altona settlement which affected William directly and which took even longer to settle than the guarantee was the payment of the debt to prince George. On July 9th 1689 he and the prince accepted the conditions laid down in clause 3 of the treaty, and the king agreed to shoulder half the burden.¹²⁴ The States-General finally agreed to raise a further quarter.¹²⁵ Responsibility for the remainder, agreement on the exact sum involved and the payment itself involved further extended negotiation.¹²⁶ Attempts were made to reach a settlement by Plessen when he was in the Hague in the autumn of 1690, but the Imperial

127

delegate was not empowered. Finally, after the amount claimed had been reduced from 428,000 Rd. to 340,000 Rd.

(£85,000) and William had himself accepted responsibility for the quarter he had hoped to persuade Leopold to contribute, a settlement was reached in July 1691,¹²⁸ but payment was long delayed largely, it seems, through the stubbornness of the States-General. The instructions to Mogens Skeel, new Danish envoy to London, in February 1692 contains an order to request payment, and in May 1697 lord Villiers, English envoy in the Hague, wrote to the secretary of state, lord Shrewsbury, in acknowledgement of an account of the 1691 agreement, that he had spoken to William, but 'I may be free enough with Yo^r Grace to say, that I think this is not sufficient to have anything really effected in the business.'¹²⁹

Ehrenschild's talks in Hamburg were finally broken off after the rejection of the duke's last offer on December 12th with no further result than that agreement on the Swedish and Lüneburg troops already noted. Christian had neither the financial resources nor the reliable allies to do more for the time being. He had, however, succeeded in laying a foundation for future claims and had succeeded in postponing the discussion of difficulties arising out of Altona for which Christian Albrekt had been pressing.¹³⁰ The Holstein-Gottorp problem was not to concern William again for some time, but it was always to be a factor to be reckoned with in his Northern policy and was to occupy the forefront again before peace with France was attained.¹³¹

Chapter 3William and Denmark after Altona (June 1689 - February 1690)(i) Danish Policy after Altona

The settlement of the Holstein-Gottorp crisis in June 1689 released William's energies for the pursuit of the more positive aims of his Northern policy and afforded a promise of a more exact definition of the Northern Crowns' attitude to the struggle in the West. Denmark's failure to maintain the drive against the duke, which had been supported by the 'cabal' during the 1680s, forced her to re-examine her whole attitude to European affairs. The price demanded by her one remaining ally for financial support had been too high and the possibility of Louis' helping her in any more direct way too remote to risk a head on clash with the united Maritime Powers and, as has been seen, even before the conclusion of the Swedo-Lüneburg offensive alliance in February 1689 and William's accession to the English throne, Ehrenschild had advised against a closer alliance with France, tentative moves had been made to bring about a reconciliation with William through Brandenburg, and Plessen had been sent to London to survey the scene and sound possibilities of a renewal of old and the conclusion of new alliances.¹

It has been claimed that before the Altona agreement financial were always subordinated to political considerations while after it the order of priorities was reversed.² This does help to explain many of the vagaries of Danish foreign

policy during the Nine Years' War, the turning from one side to another or to both sides at once in the search for subsidies, and the large part played by financial questions in all negotiations, for, in spite of the king's efforts, Denmark's financial situation, at least until Plessen took charge in 1692, was highly chaotic. She had been brought to the edge of bankruptcy by the cost of the Dutch war and an ambitious policy demanding larger forces than she was fitted to sustain,³ and without considerable outside help she could not hope to be able to put herself into a position from which she could pursue an independent course. But she had also to consider her security and to build up a new alliance system, in which Sweden would, so Christian hoped, play a leading part. She was unfortunately cursed, not only with financial infirmities but also with weaknesses in her central administration which have been traced by Laursen to Christian's own lack of insight and to his inability to find able ministers who would work together; he was, in any case, unwilling to give them sufficient independence.⁴

(ii) The Troops' Treaty of August 1689

(a) Preliminaries

The fortunes of Christian's hopes for William's help against the duke have been sketched; his change of heart came too late to appear very convincing, and the offers which Plessen brought with him to London were too vague and tentative.

These and Lente's assurances to Heinsius, that as soon as the Holstein-Gottorp problem was settled his master would join the Allies in exchange for guarantees of his security,⁵ looked too

much like a bribe for support to be welcomed with any enthusiasm. But William had also to look to the future, to a time when, as he hoped, the threat of war would recede from the Baltic. He could not afford to antagonize Denmark irretrievably by too brusque a rejection of her proffered help. Troops might well be had from the inflated Danish army and an alliance of some kind, of which mention was made in Molesworth's instructions,⁶ would at least draw Christian from France's side. But nothing could be expected until negotiations at Altona were completed, and the susceptibilities of the outwardly more friendly Sweden could not be offended by talks with a power with whom she seemed on the point of war. No more was promised to Plessen than that an envoy would be sent to Copenhagen, and he complained to his government that nothing was to be hoped for while the English king was under the influence of reports spread by Denmark's enemies.⁷

In May Lente made a more specific offer to Heinsius of as many as 20,000 men and 40 ships.⁸ Paul von Fuchs, the Brandenburg mediator at Altona, brought back with him to Hamburg from Copenhagen about the same time an offer of 10,000 men,⁹ and the duke of Holstein-Plön told Heemskerck that he was empowered to offer the same number.¹⁰ Heinsius entertained grave doubts about the seriousness of Danish professions,¹¹ but Goes urged his principals to negotiate for military aid as soon as Altona was concluded and warned that France would pay well for such,¹² and the pensionary himself argued before the States-General that its acceptance would bind Denmark more

closely to the Allies and enable Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg troops to march against France.¹³ Finally La Forest brought with him instructions to intimate to his friend and fellow Huguenot Schomberg Christian's willingness to hire out 8 - 10,000 men for a limited period, if a sufficient guarantee could be given against French attack, and to invite proposals.¹⁴

Thus, although the possibility of obtaining troops from both Northern Crowns had been mooted in allied circles from the beginning of the war and some proposals made to their envoys,¹⁵ the real initiative came from Denmark herself. A straightforward offer of this kind suited Christian well. It was an earnest of friendship for William without any deeper commitments. Nor would he have to give up all hope of French subsidies, for which he was still negotiating, and it might even enhance in Louis' eyes the value of Denmark's alliance or neutrality. He could still watch the fortunes of war from a safe distance and wait for any opportunity which might offer itself. A large body of men, which he could never hope to support, especially if France continued to refuse to pay subsidies under the 1682 treaty, would be maintained and, with care and luck, a profit might even be made on the deal. William on his side could certainly use reliable troops in the Irish campaign, to which he was now committed, but their political rather than their military importance seems to have weighed the more heavily with him.¹⁶ Their departure would help to ease tension in the North, and an agreement of this kind might act as a prelude to a closer

alliance. This was also Christian's wish,¹⁷ but over the aims of such an alliance there was, unfortunately, to prove to be no close agreement.

La Forest communicated the offer to William in an interview, where he was supported by Schomberg and prince George.¹⁸ As has been seen, the king promised a speedy answer, and Nottingham said immediately afterwards that 7 - 8,000 troops for Ireland would be welcome. La Forest replied that negotiations could open as soon as the Holstein-Gottorp crisis was past and reported to Copenhagen that William was unwilling to commit himself without consulting his allies, although Plessen found him more favourably inclined.¹⁹ For a time it was uncertain where negotiations were to take place. Molesworth was informed only that they were being entered into,²⁰ and there seems to have been some thought of entrusting them to Heemskerck,²¹ but powers and instructions were drawn up for the English envoy on July 12th,²² a week after news of the Altona treaty reached London,²³ and Thomas Fotherby, who had been Sylvius' secretary,²⁴ was sent to assist him in negotiations, supervise the implementation of terms and return with the troops. William wrote personally to Christian thanking him for the offer.²⁵

Molesworth was to prove a far from ideal choice for the delicate tasks which lay before him. The confiscation of his Irish estates by James provide a reasonable pledge of his loyalty and interest in the swift conquest of the island, but he was inexperienced, highly irascible, outspoken and

contemptuous of things foreign.²⁶ This was his first and last diplomatic mission, but even after his return he was to do a disservice to Anglo-Danish relations with his 'Account of Denmark'.²⁷ He landed at Elsinore on July 8th and immediately reported a sincere desire for a long peace and a warm welcome, but, at the same time, that Denmark was 'an extream poor country and mony is omnipotent, & may push them to do things visibly contrary to their interest..and... Fr. mony workes miracles among pub^l ministers...'²⁸ His fear of the power of French money was destined to affect the course of the forthcoming negotiations. Like Duncombe in Stockholm he failed to secure the public audience planned for July 15th because he objected to certain demands made in new regulations for the reception of foreign diplomats. He feared that if he gave way it would be claimed that his master was anxious to get himself recognized at any cost, and he made counter-claims which the Danes could not accept.²⁹ He was finally allowed to be received in private audience at 5 p.m. on July 27th,³⁰ by which time Christian had heard of William's needs from La Forest.³¹

Molesworth had been instructed to refuse to pay levy money, since the men had already been raised, and to tell the Danes that 'we can be furnished with the same Number of Regiments by the king of Sweden upon much easier Terms, whereof Wee have received assurance by his Ministers in Our Court',³² an offer and assurance of which this is the only evidence. Christian was not happy about sending his troops so far as Ireland and ordered

La Forest to press for their employment in the Low Countries while an equal number of allied troops were sent across the Channel after the Swedish example in 1688. He had hoped that negotiations for a defensive alliance to provide additional security on favourable terms would proceed *pari passu*, but to save time he agreed to conclude the troops' agreement first.³³

(b) The Negotiations

Fotherby arrived on August 1st, and on the next day Molesworth asked for commissioners to be appointed.³⁴ On August 5th he opened his negotiations with Reventlow, Jessen and Ehrenschild,³⁵ and everything was settled in ten days and four meetings. The Danes began by claiming that, in view of the lateness of the year, the troops should be transported to England first instead of direct to Ireland, that they should act as one body under the commander-in-chief, and be returned to Denmark within three months if she were to be attacked, together with equivalent aid from William.³⁶ The main difficulties, however, as was to be expected, came over the financial provisions. The Danes agreed to reduce the sum demanded from 400,000 Rd. to 300,000 Rd. if the troops were transported to England, but Molesworth refused to agree that the whole of this sum should be paid after the embarkation and offered half then and half on arrival, with sureties for payment. The English envoy maintained his demand for transport all the way to Ireland under a Danish convoy, for which the commissioners asked 600,000 Rd.³⁷

On August 6th the Danish council reviewed the general European situation and decided to throw in Denmark's lot with the Allies

and come to terms with Molesworth.³⁸ This outwardly momentous decision, in view of the fluid and opportunist nature of Danish foreign policy, meant very little. On August 10th Molesworth told the ministers that he could agree to payment of the return transport of the troops only if Denmark were attacked and asked for vacancies among the officers to be filled by William on the Danish commander's recommendation and not by the latter on Schomberg's. His attempts to persuade them to prepare the troops for embarkation before the signing of the agreement proved fruitless.³⁹

Martangis had meanwhile been working hard to thwart the English negotiations. Christian refused the subsidized neutrality treaty he offered unless Sweden were included, and Louis in turn continued to refuse him the remainder of the subsidies owing to Denmark under the 1682 treaty,⁴⁰ without which she could not afford to keep her forces up to pre-Altona strength. The French envoy tried bribery and harped on the shame of hiring out to France's enemies troops raised with French help,⁴¹ but, since France could not promise to support them longer, Danish pride had to be sacrificed to more material considerations. Even Christian Albrekt's Tønningen project received Martangis' encouragement in hopes of causing the Danish king to hesitate.⁴²

Molesworth's knowledge and fear of the effect of this activity by the enemy led him to give way to several of the Danish demands in an effort to reach a speedy settlement, even though it meant exceeding his instructions. He agreed to the

appointment of officers by the Danish commander and left open the question of payment of the transport of the returning troops until the alliance negotiations, which, it was agreed in the treaty, should commence immediately.⁴³ The terms signed on August 15th demanded 240,000 Rd. for conveyance to England, or 325,000 Rd. if to Ireland, at William's option.⁴⁴ The English envoy was proud of his achievement and declared to lord Nottingham, 'I have done a great thing for the good of Christendom in generall and of his Maty and his kingdoms in particular, provided he do but think so', but feared both that the Danes would forbid their troops to go to Ireland after all at the last minute and that the treaty would not be ratified.⁴⁵ William was in fact not particularly impressed with his envoy's work and resented the high cost.⁴⁶ He ratified the treaty, however, when Greg arrived with it on September 3rd for both political and military reasons.⁴⁷ He merely insisted on Molesworth's original demand concerning the appointment of officers in article 5 and determined that the troops should be sent to Scotland, whence English transports would carry them to Ireland.⁴⁸ Greg reached Copenhagen again on September 22nd, and Christian agreed to the amendment and ratified in his turn on September 30th.⁴⁹

(c) Aftermath

The Danish king had been so uncertain of the outcome that, on the day Greg came to London, he had written to J.H. Lente in Berlin offering the same troops to the elector for less money if William refused them,⁵⁰ but some preparations were

nevertheless made even before William's decision was known. On September 17th Christian went to Copenhagen to supervise the sailing of the transports to Ribe, where embarkation was to take place, and issued orders for the assembly and composition of the troops, put under the direction of Sehested,⁵¹ Brandt and Ehlers,⁵² on the 20th.⁵³ On the next day he set out for South Jutland and the scene of operations.⁵⁴ Molesworth inspected the troops, whose quality and cheapness he lauded in his reports, and followed on the 27th to complete the work of ratification.⁵⁵ Command was given, at William's request, to his friend duke Ferdinand Wilhelm of Würtemberg-Neustadt⁵⁶ with the rank of lieutenant-general. La Forest and the Brandenburger Tettau were appointed majors-general of horse and foot respectively.⁵⁷ It had originally been intended to have the troops ready at Ribe or Listerdyb on September 20th and to embark them on the 22nd,⁵⁸ but this proved wildly optimistic. Not until October 8th could Christian hold a general inspection, and a further week elapsed before the foot began to be put on board.⁵⁹ The fleet of six royal and seventy-two private transports, protected by four large and four smaller warships, finally set sail for Scotland on November 6th, when a dozen ships almost immediately ran aground and a fresh start had to be made.⁶⁰ Storms separated the fleet and, when Flamborough Head was sighted three days later, the main body had been reduced to a strength of forty-six.⁶¹ Rear-admiral Christopher von Stöcken⁶² found it impossible to make for Scotland and put into the Humber on the 12th. Disembarkation

began a week later, by which time only eighteen ships, including three warships, were still missing.⁶³

The repeated postponement of the date of departure and the slowness of operations aroused anger and suspicion on both sides of the North Sea. William had to give up any hopes he had of using the troops before the 1690 campaign and to resign himself to support them all winter for no return of service, while James entrenched himself in Ireland. French intrigue and above all French gold was widely blamed, and it was commonly feared that the revival of the dispute with Holstein-Gottorp, the Saxe-Lauenburg quarrel and the delay in sending Swedish treaty aid would be used as excuses for further delay.⁶⁴ Dijkveldt told La Foulereuse bluntly that, if such a retardation had been anticipated, aid would have been sought instead from Lüneburg and Hesse.⁶⁵ Any good will created by the offer and the speedy conclusion of the treaty was dissipated by the manner of its implementation.

Molesworth returned to Copenhagen, leaving Fotherby behind with the troops, on October 23rd.⁶⁶ He had paid the first half of the transport money before embarkation in the hope of hastening operations and was highly dissatisfied with the place chosen for embarkation and with the handling of supplies.⁶⁷ Fotherby turned to Würtemberg for remedy, but the general refused to institute an enquiry or to be present when a protest was made.⁶⁸ He was, however, present when the English commissary sprang it by surprise on October 31st. Brandt 'looked as red as a Turkey cock' and claimed that it should

be ignored since Fotherby had no powers, but the latter, before sailing with the troops, sent it to Molesworth, who himself presented it on November 5th.⁶⁹ Christian had already written to William a week earlier apologizing for the delay, and on November 14th the Danish commissioners at Ribe wrote to their king defending themselves against the slanders they claimed had been perpetrated against them and asking for judgment before the council and that a complaint should be sent to William.⁷⁰ Molesworth was asked to substantiate the charges and La Fouleresse ordered to complain against the English envoy's biased reports, which were, it was claimed, wholly to blame for the situation.⁷¹ William wrote defending his envoy on December 19th, and La Fouleresse, although refused copies of Molesworth's despatches, was promised details of the accusations, only to be told on December 30th that these had been forwarded to Copenhagen.⁷² The whole question was in fact soon overshadowed by others more crucial, but some attempt was made to exact compensation by delaying payment of a portion of the second instalment of transport costs and by securing recruits without charge, and even as a condition for further payments.⁷³

It does seem clear that considerable incompetence was shown in the choice of place for the troops' embarkation and in supply and general organization, that the programming of operation was over-optimistic, and that there was lethargy in execution, which may not have been unconnected with

Ehrenschild's negotiations with the Gottorp envoys in Hamburg. But, while Greg reported that 'I have some passages y^t give me great reason to suspect y^t some of those employ'd in preparing things for ye Transportation, did their utmost endeavour to retard it',⁷⁴ he fails to supply any further details, and the charges of corruption remain unsubstantiated. Bad weather doubtless played its part and might well have been used to postpone sailings until too late if there had existed a deliberate decision to sabotage the treaty. The troops arrived in good shape in spite of their buffetings and were praised by William when he inspected those who had arrived at York on December 6th. Their late arrival also meant that they escaped the sickness which attacked Schomberg's men that winter in Ireland, where supplies were already short.⁷⁵

After wintering around York they were disembarked - the horse from Glasgow, the foot from Hoylake - in March 1690, by which time all but a handful of the missing men had been accounted for. They suffered their first casualties at Balingarry in May and distinguished themselves at the Boyne in July and at Marlborough's assault on Cork and Kinsale in September.⁷⁶

(ii) Alliance Negotiations

(a) Beginnings

It was hoped by both William and Christian that the hire of troops would be only the beginning of more far-reaching negotiations, but efforts to secure closer ties during the ensuing months were to meet with a discouraging series of

setbacks. The English king, while remaining justifiably suspicious of Danish motives, welcomed any opportunity of winning over the principal client still remaining to France and of minimizing the threat of a diversion in the North. He was not, however, prepared to purchase Danish support at any price, especially that of antagonizing Sweden. Nor was he to find it within his powers to fulfil many of the conditions demanded, especially those which also involved his allies. To Christian and his ministers a defensive alliance with the Maritime Powers would form an important link in the security chain they were trying to build up in this period. While the course of the war remained so uncertain, however, there was no reason why they should hurry into an offensive alliance against France, and they intended to squeeze every possible advantage from the Allies' predicament. Since entry into the war would bring to an end all hope of Louis' subsidies, an equivalent would have to be provided by his enemies and on better terms than could be expected for the simple neutrality with which the French king seemed to remain content. A settlement of Danish claims against the United Provinces and of trade disputes with them must be reached to Denmark's advantage and to support this a joint alliance with both William's dominions would be insisted upon. Some help might also be insisted upon against the duke of Holstein-Gottorp, the duke of Celle in the Saxe-Lauenburg dispute and the duke of Hanover's demands for the creation of a ninth electorate. Concessions to such demands would signify a very high value

placed on Denmark's friendship but, unless it were paid, a breach with France would not be worth her while.

Danish representatives had offered closer alliances and even entry into the war on frequent occasions during the early months of 1689,⁷⁷ but had failed to make it clear whether these were to be expected immediately after a settlement had been reached at Altona or on the expiry of Denmark's treaty with France in March 1690. La Forest's offer and William's impatience with the duke's allies improved the prospects of an approach to Denmark. Molesworth's instructions of June 6th contained a cautious injunction to inquire 'as dextrously and with as little noise as you can endeavour... whether they are willing to engage with Us and Our Allys in the common cause...',⁷⁸ Nottingham proposed an alliance to La Forest as well as a troops' treaty,⁷⁹ and Plessen found the English king more favourably inclined before he left.⁸⁰

(b) The United Provinces (June - December 1689)

Immediately after the ratification of Altona Lente was ordered to remind the States-General of his previous offer and to suggest that Heemskerck might be employed in negotiations while he was in the vicinity, but at the same time not to show too much enthusiasm in case the Dutch brought forward demands for repayment of Danish debts and to insist that any alliance should be accompanied by a commercial settlement.⁸¹ The fate of previous trade negotiations between the two countries did not augur well for any fresh set of talks if Denmark should continue to insist on the latter condition.

Heemskerck reported a Danish willingness to negotiate, and Reventlow pressed both Goes and Molesworth to conclude a defensive alliance to cover the loss of the troops.⁸² Little response was aroused in the United Provinces, and new grounds for suspicion were provided by Stockfleth's approaches to Sweden for joint mediation, of which Swedish envoys immediately notified the Allies.⁸³ When Lente informed Heinsius in September of the ratification of the troops' treaty and Denmark's intention to open alliance negotiations with England, the pensionary asked innocently if the envoy had orders to conduct similar talks with the States-General. Lente expressed his surprise in view of his previous assurances and demanded the preliminary settlement of mutual claims, which Goes had already mentioned in Copenhagen.⁸⁴ He reported that Heinsius seemed favourably inclined but afraid of offending Sweden, and was sent on October 5th a copy of the project which Bodmyn had drawn up in 1680 with orders to say that the troops' agreement had already brought Denmark to the edge of belligerency and that it would not take much to bring her into the war, if the subsidies offered were sufficient and she were helped in her efforts to bring the duke of Holstein-Gottorp to reason.⁸⁵ Heinsius promised to consult William and proposed an offensive alliance becoming defensive after the war, to which Christian expressed himself agreeable.⁸⁶ The Danish king did, however, object to the holding of a conference, where his envoy should make his offers, as too public. It was, he claimed, for the Dutch to draw up a project and he would

prefer the sending of a special delegation to Copenhagen, for which the fast approaching expiry of the 1688 preliminary trade treaty could serve as an excuse.⁸⁷ The pensionary and Dijkvelt objected to this the need to consult the individual provinces and claimed that Goes had been sent orders to invite Denmark to enter the Grand Alliance, to which an alliance with the United Provinces could then form a supplement if required.⁸⁸

Lente suspected that this invitation, made to Sweden at the same time, together with that to attend the proposed congress of allied ministers in the Hague, on condition of a preliminary declaration of intentions, was made merely to test reactions, and, as he realized, it would bypass all his government's conditions for an offensive alliance, which, he insisted, must come first.⁸⁹ Goes received the same answer from Christian, who added that Denmark would have to be more certain of the advantages to be gained before making such a sacrifice.⁹⁰ There was, however, interest in Copenhagen in finding out how far the Maritime Powers were willing to go to secure Danish support as well as an anxiety not to be outmanoeuvred by Sweden. In a conference on December 6th Reventlow made more specific conditions - a defensive alliance based on that of 1674 and a commercial treaty based on that concluded in 1684 but unratified. Denmark could then, he said, offer 12,000 troops for subsidies.⁹¹ On December 14th Lente was finally sent powers to draw up a project with the deputies of the States-General, but was forbidden to commit

his sovereign to anything on paper.⁹²

There does seem to have been a swing of Danish opinion in favour of the Allies in the autumn of 1689, encouraged by military successes on the Rhine and in the Netherlands and by Louis' intransigence in the matter of subsidies. Yet relations with the Emperor and the Maritime Powers were never Christian's sole concern. Negotiations continued with Martangis, who was promised that, if the subsidies provided for by the treaty of 1682 were paid, no further engagements would be undertaken until it expired, and attempts were still made to interest Sweden in joint mediation.⁹³ The effort by William to ban all neutral trade with France was also beginning to counterbalance factors in the Allies' favour.⁹⁴ Much suspicion of Denmark and fear of Swedish reactions remained to dictate caution in both London and the Hague and encouraged Christian's 'wait and see' policy.

(c) Molesworth's Talks (August 1689 - February 1690)

It is not therefore surprising to find that negotiations for an English alliance made no greater progress than those for a Dutch, even if no account were to be taken of their close interdependence. It will be remembered that Christian had agreed only with difficulty to postponing a defensive alliance until after the troops treaty, and then only if negotiations commenced immediately.⁹⁵ No great hurry was, however, taken in London to instruct and empower Molesworth. On August 9th he was promised orders on treaties of alliance and commerce and William's views on the projects for these

drawn up by Bodmyn and Sylvius respectively, and on the 16th Nottingham wrote that he was to 'endeavour to go on with both together or rather that of Commerce first, or at least to sign both at a time, for we shall get better terms probably of Commerce in hopes of an Alliance than we shall do after the Alliance is perfected.'⁹⁶ A copy of Bodmyn's project with the desired emendations was dispatched in the middle of September after discussion with the Dutch ambassadors, who were given a copy and urged to arrange for negotiations on similar lines.⁹⁷ The clauses in the original binding the party not attacked to go to war against the aggressor, if so requested, within two months of receiving a call for aid from its ally and meanwhile to attempt mediation and supply a certain number of ships and troops were unchanged but, Molesworth was ordered, if the Danes refused to send any contingent during the war with France, 'the Obligation of sending them Succours commence not on either side till after this war...' The help specified - in the first separate article of the project - 10,000 troops and twenty ships from England and 6,000 troops and twelve ships from Denmark - was to be cut by half 'because tis most likely to be performed by Denmarc'.⁹⁸ Powers for Molesworth were drawn up at the same time but do not seem to have been despatched until early in December⁹⁹, and not until December 4th did Molesworth reveal his instructions to a commission consisting of Reventlow, Juel, Jessen and Ribe.¹⁰⁰ The bad feelings and negotiations resulting from the execution of the troops' treaty must be

held largely responsible for the delay.

Reventlow informed the English envoy on December 16th that, if a treaty based on the project were to come into operation at once, further English offers and stipulations would have to be made. Molesworth pleaded the need to write for further instructions on this but asked how much Denmark wanted for further troops. He was told that this would have to form the subject of a separate alliance and that she could provide 16,000 troops for 800,000 Rd. or at least 700,000 Rd. and support for Danish claims against the Emperor, Spain and the United Provinces.¹⁰¹ This offer was repeated in the instructions drawn up for Hans Henrik Ahlefeldt til Neuenhof, who had been chosen to replace La Forest in London and arrived there in January.¹⁰² Goes complained that Molesworth would not give him details of his negotiations because the Danish commissioners had insisted on secrecy until the United Provinces had declared their views on a defensive alliance, and the terms were finally communicated to the States-General by William via Citters.¹⁰³ Molesworth in his turn claimed that Goes had no orders to join him.¹⁰⁴ Dursley explained that these could not be sent owing to the difficulties over the Danish and Dutch monetary claims against each other but also that Goes, a mere resident, was not trusted with such important negotiations and that such negotiations as were taking place were being concentrated in the Hague.¹⁰⁵ The English envoy was instructed on December 20th to concert with Goes in pressing Denmark to join the Grand Alliance, an invitation which he had criticized

when he had been first informed of it, as one which seemed to demand sacrifices of Christian without offering anything in return.¹⁰⁶

In a new conference on January 8th he agreed to discuss Bodmyn's project without reference to mutual military obligations during the war but proposed the addition of a separate article excluding French trade from article 4, which promised freedom of trade and communication, for the duration of the war.¹⁰⁷ It was decided in a council meeting to agree to certain restrictions but to insist on the postponement of any further obligations. It was hoped that in this way French subsidies could continue to be claimed. Nothing further could be decided until the outcome of the negotiations with Sweden and the Emperor was known.¹⁰⁸ Molesworth was informed of this decision immediately and given a trade project recording the stage reached in negotiations with Sylvius, in which the privileges accorded the 'defence ships' had again played a large part.¹⁰⁹ On February 3rd he intimated to the Danes William's desire to concentrate negotiations in the Hague, where the States-General and the Emperor could be consulted on the sum demanded, towards which they would have to contribute. In that case, he was told, the English king would have to use his good offices with the States-General and guarantee not only the payment of their debts after the war and settlement of their trade differences with Denmark but also the granting by the Emperor of a toll on the Elbe. Molesworth took these demands ad referendum, and the Copenhagen negotiations came to

a standstill. He feared, quite justly, that Denmark was in no hurry to conclude and intended to delay in the hope of receiving really advantageous offers.¹¹⁰ Leijonclo drew the same conclusions and attributed Danish lack of enthusiasm to the ban on neutral trade, a fear of losing her neutral status and, with it, her chances of mediation.¹¹¹ The reports sent by Ahlefeldt after his arrival - that there was no anxiety in England to make an alliance immediately owing to a shortage of money and a desire to see the outcome of the Irish campaign first¹¹² - could only have strengthened Christian's resolve and he and Lente were ordered in February not to hurry their negotiations.¹¹³

(c) The End of the First Stage

After the receipt of his orders of December 14th Lente spoke to Dijkvelt and again emphasized the necessity for a preliminary settlement of commercial disputes. He was, he said, not very hopeful of Christian's willingness to break with France, especially in view of the ban and the failure to hold up the Altona guarantee, but at the beginning of the new year he was instructed to say that Denmark was prepared for a breach in exchange for subsidies, suitable guarantees and trade compensation.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, in a conference with the foreign affairs deputies at the end of December, complications soon arose over the choice of a basis for a commercial treaty, and Lente was given a Dutch project. He then presented a list of claims totalling over 7,000,000 Rd., which he promised would be reduced to 1,500,000 Rd. if the United Provinces would

drop their counter-claims. To a fresh invitation to join the Grand Alliance he said again that the States-General must detail its terms, settle all disputes, allot quarters for Danish troops and provide subsidies. On the last two points Heinsius replied that the first was not within their competence and that no further subsidies could be afforded. He then broke off the talk on the pretext that England would have to be consulted.¹¹⁵

Negotiations thus came to a standstill in February 1690 in both Copenhagen and the Hague. In the Danish capital the conclusion of an offensive alliance with England had been made dependent on agreement with the United Provinces and the Emperor, who would have to contribute their shares of the subsidies demanded. William ordered Paget in mid-January to get the Emperor to instruct Berka, his envoy in the Hague, to consult with other ministers in the Congress on the apportioning of joint subsidies to the Northern Crowns, but, when Dursley raised the subject in March, he was told that the Emperor had no money to spare and that it was feared that Denmark's entry alone would drive Sweden into the arms of France.¹¹⁶

With this all hope of Denmark's belligerency had to be abandoned for the time being. For a defensive alliance to come into operation after the war William demanded a settlement on French trade, and any pact with the States-General was dependent on agreement over commercial differences and debts, neither of which promised a speedy settlement.

The renewal of Denmark's defensive alliance with Sweden on February 1st¹¹⁷ had strengthened Christian's position and

made an alliance with the Maritime Powers so much the less vital, while the secrecy in which the negotiations and the terms of the treaty were shrouded had caused grave suspicions, especially in view of Sweden's increasingly unsatisfactory attitude. Neither side, however, abandoned all hopes of an agreement. Denmark continued the negotiations with the Emperor which she had begun in Vienna in February. To him she also offered 15 - 16,000 troops, in exchange for a toll on the Elbe until the compensation she claimed had been offered to her for her part in the Dutch war of 1672-9 had been paid, opposition to the creation of a ninth electorate, expulsion of Celle from Saxe-Lauenburg and support in her claims against Holstein-Gottorp and the States-General. ¹¹⁸ Talks on French trade continued in the Hague, and preparations were made to send the Dutchman Amerongen to join Molesworth in an attempt to settle some of the commercial differences outstanding between Denmark and his country. ¹¹⁹

Chapter 4The Quest for Swedish Help (January 1689 - June 1690)

- (i) Swedish Treaty Aid
- (a) Negotiations in 1689

On January 1st 1689 Rumpf in Stockholm was ordered by the States-General to notify the Swedish government of France's unprovoked attack and have instructions sent to Gabriel Oxenstierna to negotiate for the despatch of the troops and ships owed under the guarantee treaties of 1681 and 1683.¹ The chancellor simply promised in reply that orders would be sent as soon as Charles XI returned to his capital.² Both Heinsius and Dijkvelt mentioned the matter to Gabriel Oxenstierna at the same time and were told that the obligations would be duly fulfilled. When, however, Rumpf's request was discussed in the Swedish chancery in February, Lindsköld, supported by Gyldenstolpe, claimed that Holstein-Gottorp was a prior emergency and that the United Provinces must first help Sweden under the 1686 defensive alliance and their guarantee of Northern peace in 1660. Gabriel Oxenstierna was ordered to answer in this vein and to express surprise that the 1686 treaty had not been mentioned by Rumpf, since Sweden had assumed that the conventions of 1681 and 1683 had 'as good as' ceased to be operative when the crisis which had called them into being had been settled by the Twenty Year Truce and that they had in any case been superseded by the alliance of 1686, which was intended to renew all previous agreements. There were even, he was

told, doubts whether the latter was strictly applicable to the French declaration of war, but it was considered in Sweden's interests to agree to help her ally, and the envoy was to hold out hope that matters could be settled once Sweden's hands were free.³ The claim that Sweden could not weaken herself further while war with Denmark threatened was in fact a reasonable one, and, in view of her previous earnestness of good will for William's cause, which gave considerable excuse to hope for her eventual entry into the war at his side, there was little reason at this stage to doubt the good faith behind such promises, and little more was heard of the matter until the Altona agreement had been signed.

Immediately news of the latter was received in Stockholm Bengt Oxenstierna promised the aid as soon as the treaty between Denmark and Gottorp had been ratified and again that all would be made ready meanwhile.⁴ Instructions were sent to Gabriel Oxenstierna to invite the States-General to submit proposals for the various points which had to be settled before the troops and ships could be despatched and especially to find out whether the troops were to be divided or whether an arrangement was to be reached with Leopold, who was also entitled to them under the 1683 treaties, to keep all 6,000 men in one body, a solution which Sweden would prefer, how the ships were to be used and what was to be arranged about the carrying of flags and about salutes, especially delicate matters when the union of royal and republican units and England's claim to a salute in the

Channel were involved. At the same time he was to point out that only with the provision of the Altona guarantee could the Holstein-Gottorp dispute be considered settled and Sweden's position safe.⁵ It soon became obvious that detailed and possibly lengthy negotiations would have to precede any move by the Swedish troops and ships, and hopes of receiving them in time to take part in the 1689 campaign faded rapidly.

Even if the duke of Gottorp's affairs were quickly settled and the details for the junction of ships and troops arranged to the Swedes' satisfaction, they were united in their reluctance to send them so late in the year. Gabriel Oxenstierna was told on August 9th to argue that they would be better preserved in Sweden itself over the winter and could then be despatched in good time for 1690.⁶ The chancellor, although he feared that any delay beyond this would lose Sweden too much credit and lead to her isolation, supported this argument and explained to his master that negotiations could in any case be expected to delay matters until the spring.⁷ William feared that Sweden would be unable to support a contingent of 6,000 men abroad, and this was confirmed by Duncombe, who reported that 'such a charge to be borne by this crowne (for so runs ye treaty) is a difficulty next to insuperable' and that there was little likelihood of aid in 1689.⁸ Bengt Oxenstierna again echoed the Swedish concern with the expense involved in a conversation with Rumpf in September, when he claimed that Sweden was not obliged to support her troops beyond her own

frontiers, but this was a contention which Rumpf had already been instructed to expect and for which he had been prepared with references to the relevant articles in the alliance of 1640.⁹

Gabriel Oxenstierna's absence in London delayed the opening of the talks, and Heinsius expressed his impatience openly to the Swedish legation-secretary Friesendorff in mid-August and proposed of himself the replacement of the ships, over which most of the troubles in negotiation were expected, by extra troops. Friesendorff replied simply that everything would have to await his superior's return.¹⁰ When the latter did arrive back in the Hague on September 23rd he applied to the pensionary for details of precedents on the junction of allied fleets and repeated all the old excuses for delay, which, Sweden was anxious to point out, was not due to any inclination for France or to the negotiations with Denmark, as the Allies seemed to suspect.¹¹ Heinsius and the States-General continued to urge the immediate despatch of the aid in view of the danger of a French winter offensive,¹² but William, highly dissatisfied by this time with Swedish conduct, recognized reluctantly that it was too late to expect it 1689 and that the best that could be done was to work for an early start in 1690.¹³ He informed the States-General through Citters that he wished the troops to serve in Flanders but that he was not hopeful of a settlement on the ships since differences over salutes, flags and precedence, which involved

questions of national prestige, were likely to prove insuperable, or at least to lead to interminable haggling. He left it to the United Provinces to make arrangements for the Swedes' junction with the Dutch fleet and promised to take counsel on that with the English.¹⁴

Negotiations with Gabriel Oxenstierna finally opened on November 1st, when the Swede listed the points to be settled. The Allies must agree among themselves, he claimed, where the troops were to be used, how they were to be commanded and how the council of war was to be organized; his master, he repeated, wanted them to act as one body. Concerning the naval aid he wanted to know, beside the proposals on flags and salutes, how it was proposed to treat Swedish officers in council and action and how prizes were to be divided. He could not promise that the troops would be sent before May 1st, which was much too late for the Allies' liking, and, to Heinsius' proposal that the troops be sent first to the Netherlands and then allocated to their sphere of operations, he protested that this would waste both time and money.¹⁵ On the ships Heinsius claimed, in a further conference on December 26th, that their small number made them mere auxiliaries and as such wholly subordinate to Dutch command, that they should salute the English fleet in the same manner as the Dutch did and that the Swedish officers should sit on the left of the council board with the Dutch. Oxenstierna countered with a proposal that they should form a separate squadron brought up to strength with Dutch ships.¹⁶

When the year ended neither side seemed any nearer agreement than they had been when the questions were first raised.

(b) Bidal's Mission to Stockholm (January - April 1690)

At the beginning of 1690 Sweden was causing great concern in allied circles. She avowed her intention of forming convoys to protect her trade, and Denmark was known to be urging more drastic measures.¹⁷ There were widespread rumours of negotiations with France for a neutrality treaty and even that this had already been concluded.¹⁸ In such circumstances it is understandable that the arrival of a French agent in Stockholm caused an uproar.¹⁹

Lieut.-Col. Benoît Bidal, brother of the French resident in Hamburg,²⁰ arrived at the end of December 1689, ostensibly on private business concerned with the family estate of Harsefeld in Bremen, which had been involved in the reduction, but in fact to encourage Sweden, if he found her unwilling to enter the war or at least send large numbers of troops to Germany, in a strict neutrality, to persuade Charles and his ministers that the sending of aid to the Allies was wholly incompatible with this, with a hint that all chance of mediation might thereby be lost, and to build up a strong pro-French party. He was empowered to offer 300,000 Rd. for a strict neutrality and security by means of an alliance with Denmark.²¹ He found much in his favour. William's attempted ban of neutral trade with France²² provided an admirable excuse for refusing aid on the grounds that the United Provinces had violated the treaty

on their side. Charles was most reluctant to part with any more of his troops, especially in view of the treatment accorded to those lent under the 1688 treaty,²³ and to incur the cost²⁴ of their maintenance, which was estimated at 5 - 600,000 Rd.p.a. His honour was offended by the Allies' demands on the procedure to be followed on and after the union of his ships with their navies. Other factors were, however, not so favourable to Bidal's purposes. The Swedish king's sensitiveness on points of honour also made him unwilling to be accused of breaking treaty obligations which he considered binding,²⁵ and his chancellor could well argue that his failure to send the aid would be equally fatal to hopes of mediation.²⁶ Even the presence of Bielke in Stockholm from January to April was a mixed blessing, since there was considerable jealousy between him and Bidal and the Frenchman's attempts to win over Oxenstierna, whom he contacted through Vellingk, rather than to secure his downfall did not endear him to the chancellor's rivals.²⁷ It seems certain that the money which Bidal spent and the promises which he made, in excess of his instructions, before he departed on May 1st did not bring commensurate results, although the extent to which he succeeded in building up a united pro-French party in Sweden is a subject of dispute among Swedish historians.²⁸ The arguments for neutrality and against the sending of ships and troops were powerful enough without the backing of French intrigue, and the course of Swedish policy was largely determined by the time he arrived.

This was made evident in the debate which took place in the royal council in March and April 1690. Oxenstierna put up little opposition to the arguments of Wrede and Lindsköld that no aid should be sent until the Maritime Powers conceded Sweden her rights as a neutral.²⁹ He went so far as to draw up, on March 13th, a memorial which supported the sending of the troops asked for with a further 6,000 in place of the ships, whose despatch would halve the Swedish fleet while Denmark's remained intact and partially mobilized. But this force was then to form the nucleus of an army, joined by a number of German princedoms, to impose peace terms on both sides and restore the European balance of power, which was threatened by the array of might ranged against France.³⁰ The genuineness of the sentiments expressed herein has caused considerable controversy, and it is possible, as Bidal suspected,³¹ that the chancellor was playing on Charles' vanity to enable aid to be sent at all, but they are not wholly inconsistent with his known support for the maintenance of a balance of power. The plan could hardly have been put into operation before the results of the 1690 campaign were apparent, which gave plenty of time for second thoughts. In spite of all arguments, Charles decided that the troops at least should be sent to the Emperor, to whom the United Provinces had agreed to concede their claims in March,³² since he had had no part in William's trade ban.³³ And no one dared gainsay the king. He was, however, easily persuaded by Bielke to agree to such delays as could reduce

the losses of his beloved troops and keep the expense to a minimum, and the governor-general returned to Germany to accomplish what he could in this direction.³⁴

(c) Last Attempts to Secure Swedish Ships (January - June 1690)

The ships were, however, quite another matter. Admiral-general Wachtmeister's request to command them was turned down by Charles, since it would mean his serving under a Dutch admiral, and first admiral Sjöblad and finally, as a concession to the precedence controversy, vice-admiral Ankarstjärna, himself of Dutch origin, was appointed,³⁵ but, with an eye on French reactions, it was insisted that the Swedish flag should continue to be flown after the junction, while the Dutch, demanded that, as mere auxiliaries, the Swedish ships should fly the Dutch flag.³⁶ William, who was equally adamant in denying the Swedes their flag, proposed as a compromise that they should carry no flag at all.³⁷ This they found quite unacceptable, and Gabriel Oxenstierna continued to demand that he should be provided with details of the former junctions of the ships of a kingdom and of a republic, in spite of Heinsius' claim that no exact precedent for the present case had ever been established.³⁸ William found quite unacceptable Oxenstierna's demands, put forward at a conference on February 14th, that Swedish officers should have precedence over Dutch officers of equivalent rank. The Swedish ships, he claimed, must act in precisely the same manner as the Dutch and, if.

Sweden insisted on sending a vice-admiral, he would have to serve as a Dutch officer with William's commission, for it would create an intolerable situation if a Swede should, as the Swedes claimed, act as second-in-command and succeed the Dutch admiral in the event of his death.³⁹ Charles was equally adamant and wrote to Leijonberg on March 29th that, 'in spite of our great friendship for him, we must yield nothing of our sovereignty to the king of England'.⁴⁰ He also refused Dutch requests to send the ships before agreement was reached, and in the council on April 8th Stenbock's proposal that they should sail as far as Marstrand to await there concessions from the Maritime Powers was adopted as a means by which Charles should 'be applauded and the Allies incur all the blame'.⁴¹ Orders were sent to Ankarstjärna on May 2nd to leave Karlskrona, and in the middle of June the squadron finally passed through the Sound, not without awakening considerable apprehension in Denmark.⁴²

William agreed with Portland in mid-March in rejecting the proposal, now put forward by Gabriel Oxenstierna, to exchange ships for troops as likely to umbrage Brandenburg and other North German princes, who would not welcome such an access of Swedish military power on their side of the Baltic any more than he would himself.⁴³ This decision is interesting not only as a reflection of the changed attitude to Sweden, whose intentions had become so ambiguous, but also in view of its

support in Oxenstierna's memorial for just the reason it was now rejected by the English king. William also rejected the Swedish suggestion that her ships should form part of an independent, augmented squadron, since this would so weaken the united fleet as to make it numerically inferior to the French.⁴⁴ Even had he not thus vetoed a scheme favourably considered by the States-General,⁴⁵ any hope of its acceptance disappeared when the Swedes demanded that the squadron should be commanded by one of their own officers. An entirely independent Swedish unit might, it was commonly feared, be employed not against the French but in defence of Sweden's trade with France, in which case it would be better that the ships never left Marstrand.⁴⁶

One final, desperate effort was made by Heinsius in mid-June, when he communicated to Gabriel Oxenstierna a proposal by Wilde that the Swedish ships should be used to destroy the large French fishing fleets off Newfoundland. The envoy raised objections at once, and Charles described the idea as 'unworthy, shameless and impossible'.⁴⁷ Negotiations were at an end, and, although Bengt Oxenstierna persuaded his master to postpone Ankarstjärna's withdrawal from Marstrand until the proposals of the new Dutch envoy Haren had been heard,⁴⁸ the ships sailed back in mid-August and were not even fitted out in 1691.⁴⁹

There is no evidence that Swedish claims were put forward

as an excuse to withhold her naval detachment and, if an arrangement which Charles considered consistent with his dignity could have been arrived at, at least before the Maritime Powers' attempt to interfere with neutral trade so weakened their case, it is probable that it would have been despatched, but it is difficult to see how such a clash of proud temperaments could have been resolved and certain that the Swedes were relieved at escaping the expense and compromising of their neutrality which the sending of their warships would have involved.

(ii) Negotiations for Further Swedish Help

(a) Early Attitudes

At the time of William's accession he had good reason to hope for much more from Sweden than the fulfilment of her treaty obligations, and the disillusionment which he suffered over the latter is paralleled during the same period by a still greater frustration of his dream of Charles XI's entry into the war by his side. In fact twelve months after Altona it was Denmark's more pliant attitude which offered him the more solid advantages.

At his audience with Leijonberg in February, before Gabriel Oxenstierna's arrival, he had promised an alliance offer in the near future and expressed great satisfaction with Nostitz' favourable account of Swedish intentions.⁵⁰ Rather vaguely worded assurances were frequently made by Charles'

envoys during the early months of 1689 and, as has been seen, efforts were made by allied statesmen to persuade Sweden to join the coalition at once as the best means of assisting the duke of Holstein-Gottorp,⁵¹ but, as with the treaty aid and the Danish troops, it soon became clear that she was not anxious to take further action until a settlement had been reached in Altona. When news of this reached London in the first week in July, however, neither William nor the Swedish envoys were at all satisfied with the state of their mutual relations. Gabriel Oxenstierna betrayed resentment at the negotiations for the hiring of the troops from Denmark, which he and Leijonberg did their best to discourage,⁵² and the latter expressed his deep dissatisfaction with the English court's attitude since La Forest's arrival.⁵³ William was fully conscious of this and favoured the hiring of Swedish troops in the same way as the Danish as a means of ensuring Charles' friendship. He seems to have expected them to be cheaper than any to be had from German princes and, in view of the size of the Swedish army, well able to be spared.⁵⁴ Gabriel Oxenstierna did indeed raise the matter in an attempt to wean the Allies from Denmark, but his government gave no hopes of reducing their forces while relations between Christian V and the duke of Gottorp remained unsettled, shortage of money on both sides threatened serious difficulties and the matter was not pressed.⁵⁵ In mid-August, when William's confidence in Sweden seems to

have improved somewhat, he told the Spanish ambassador Ronquillo that he considered it better to hire troops, whom he obviously regarded here primarily as a pledge of loyalty or bribe for friendship, from the less reliable duke of Hanover.⁵⁶

(b) English Alliance Negotiations (July - December 1689)

Gabriel Oxenstierna was asked in July whether Sweden had any intention of making a declaration against France but excused himself from making a reply for lack of orders.⁵⁷ A month later Nottingham asked Leijonberg if he had any orders on alliance negotiations. The Swede replied that he had understood that matters had been entrusted to Duncombe. To this Nottingham said that the envoy had merely been instructed to request Swedish proposals, for which William now intended to wait.⁵⁸ Leijonberg and Gabriel Oxenstierna were, however, ordered on July 31st to raise the matter as on their own initiative and themselves to invite proposals.⁵⁹ As in the negotiations with Lente each side waited for the other to make the first offer.

Duncombe had been told to improve 'the friendship and good correspondence' with Sweden and 'toe improve the same by further allyences and entring into common measures...for carrying on the war against the French king until the quiett of Christendome can be secured against his attempts by a firme and useful peace',⁶⁰ but he found soon after his arrival in Stockholm on July 16th, as others had already reported, that there

was far less enthusiasm for entry into the war among the Swedes than might have been gathered from their professions and actions hitherto.⁶¹ Like Molesworth he ran into difficulties with a new ceremonial and had to forego a public audience with the king, but secured a private one on August 6th.⁶² In spite of his instructions, he hesitated to raise the question of an alliance for fear he would be asked for his powers to negotiate, which he did not possess,⁶³ but at the end of the month, when the chancellor was ill and Charles away, he plucked up enough courage to speak to secretary Bergenhielm. The latter agreed to draw up an alliance project while the envoy took care of one for commerce.⁶⁴ On September 12, Duncombe wrote to Bengt Oxenstierna himself, asking for proposals while his powers were being drawn up, and Charles promised negotiations as soon as they were sent.⁶⁵ At the same time, however, he reported home that Sweden was not forward in entering into engagements 'because of ye jealousy it may give their neighbours' and that want of money led even well-intentioned ministers to press for a delay of one or two years.⁶⁶ He finally received, on October 6th, an alliance project from London identical with the one sent to Molesworth and with similar instructions on the modifications to be adopted in it.⁶⁷

Akerhielm now drew up a chancery memorial summarizing the case for and against the conclusion of an anti-French alliance. Swedish grievances against Louis were listed, but it was pointed out at the same time that all these could be settled without a

resort to arms and that Sweden had never yet been at war against France. The whole question was debated in the council on November 11th.⁶⁸ A conference with Duncombe had to be postponed because of his illness but was held at last on the 26th. In this the Swedish commissioners made it clear that they were prepared to make as few concessions as the Danes were in their roughly contemporary negotiations with Molesworth on the same project. The envoy admitted to them that it was hoped to bring Sweden into the war by means of his alliance and put out feelers to test reactions to the idea of further military aid, but the Swedes insisted that any alliance should remain purely defensive for the time being and should not apply to current hostilities.⁶⁹ They promised to draw up a counter-project, which was discussed in the chancery on December 18th and handed to Duncombe on December 24th.⁷⁰ This limited the obligations of the power not attacked to the giving of aid within three months of being asked, and its ally was not entitled to demand a declaration of war; the Swedes contended that there must be a strict observance of the three separate stages - mediation, military help and finally, if necessary and convenient, war. Any aid was to be lessened by that given to another. The amount supplied by England was reduced to that to which Sweden was bound viz. 6,000 troops and twelve ships, since this was considered more in accordance with Swedish dignity, and Sweden was given the right to claim a money payment in lieu of the naval contingent, which she felt might not be needed. An

additional clause limited the treaty's validity to 'de aggressionum casibus futuris'. The English envoy took most of the points ad referendum and sent the project to London,⁷¹ where it was shelved.

Duncombe gives a brief account of his alliance negotiations in his despatch to Nottingham of November 8th 1690,⁷² as follows -

'I need not remind y^o y^t for sever^{ll} months after I first made y^e Overture of an alliance I was fed wth assurances of a readiness on ye p^t of this court, to enter into mutuall engagements wth his Ma:ty yet plausibly put off, wth a quand on s'en expliqueroit davantage; till suche time as I delivered them ye project of Alliance that y^r Lpp sent me, upon w^{ch} they gave me a counter-project of a treaty, not to comence till ye end of ye present Warr: and therein also, as well as in conferences, insisted upon ye point of comerce with france, to ye degree, that nothing could be proceeded on, till that were determind...'

In view of this last remark it is interesting to note that, in spite of the envoy's instructions, trade with France was not mentioned in the conference on November 26th 1689 and that article IV, which concerned it, was one of those which passed without comment. The real reason why the question of a defensive alliance was dropped at this stage and why Duncombe, as he pointed out in his 'summary report',⁷³ received no instructions on the counter-project was the Swedish insistence on excluding the war already in progress from its provisions. William had to turn to other means of attracting Sweden into belligerency.

(c) The Invitation to the Grand Alliance and the Hague Congress
(September 1689 - May 1690)

At the end of October, in view of Gabriel Oxenstierna's

unsatisfactory attitude on treaty aid, William expressed a wish for a Swedish alliance as soon as possible, but the approach was now to be an invitation to join the Grand Alliance with an offer of subsidies, which the king had first proposed in September and which Duncombe had thought in August that Sweden might accept.⁷⁴ The States-General resolved on November 25th to make the request to both Northern Crowns, and a copy of their decision was communicated to the Swedish government by Rumpf on December 8th as well as to Gabriel Oxenstierna in his conference about treaty aid with the deputies for foreign affairs on December 10th.⁷⁵ Charles sent his reply to the Hague on December 18th. His envoy was told that it was considered unwise to reject the invitation outright for fear of proposals being made to Denmark which should prove unfavourable to Swedish interests, or, on the other hand, to show too much eagerness in case Denmark should then draw back altogether and wait for an opportunity to offer her mediation. He should therefore state simply that Sweden was not yet prepared to enter the war or to stand the loss to her trade which this would involve and should ask what more could be expected of Sweden over and above what she had already promised. Further, it was claimed, the object of the Grand Alliance was to reduce France to her 1659 boundaries and in this Sweden had less interest than the Allies. Since, however, conditions might change, so, he was to intimate, might Sweden's attitude to the war.⁷⁶ Rumpf was handed a similar answer on December 23rd, and Leijonclo was ordered to find out Denmark's attitude

to the invitation.⁷⁷

It was especially unfortunate that this reaction, unsatisfactory and ambiguous as it was, should come at a time when concern over Sweden's attitude had reached such a high pitch. William spoke of bribing her ministers as the only means to keep her friendship.⁷⁸ Yet he continued to plan for the raising of large enough subsidies from the coalition as a whole to persuade both Sweden and Denmark to overcome their scruples and, while Heemskerck's instructions for his embassy to Vienna on April 4th included an injunction to persuade the Emperor to make a fresh effort to engage them,⁷⁹ Haren's of April 18th were to renew the invitation to Charles to join the Grand Alliance or to conclude a similar agreement in the Hague,⁸⁰ where the congress of allied ministers had begun its meetings on March 6th.⁸¹

Already in early September it had been suggested to Gabriel Oxenstierna that Sweden might send a representative to this congress, and he had been ordered to stand by and await further orders.⁸² At the beginning of November he asked Portland for William's views and more details of the agenda.⁸³ He repeated the latter request at the conference on treaty aid of December 10th.⁸⁴ Finally, on December 1st, the States-General had resolved to send a formal invitation to Stockholm 'in regard his Majesty (of Sweden) has several times showed his inclination to send by the nexte yeare the succours agreed upon...and that their HM have desired the sayd king to enter into the Alliance made between the Emperor and their HM'.⁸⁵ There is no

evidence that any specific conditions were originally implied in this request, nor that it was intended by itself to commit Sweden in any way, although it was probably hoped that her participation would bind her even more closely to the anti-French camp, with which she had in the past betrayed such sympathy; it sprang, in part at least, from an unjustified optimism. The Swedes, however, suspected that the States-General wanted a declaration of war to precede an acceptance, and Gabriel Oxenstierna was ordered to find out if this were so. He was nevertheless sent powers to attend if circumstances made this imperative.⁸⁶ He received these on April 14th, after two further invitations had been made to him, and on May 8th attended on his own initiative.⁸⁷ His explanation of why he had not waited for new orders was that such a move had become necessary in order to counter the suspicions aroused against Sweden.⁸⁸ This was considered hardly sufficient to justify his precipitancy, but it was decided in Stockholm that it would be too damaging to Sweden's relations with the Allies to order his withdrawal, and his action was sanctioned on May 24th with a strict injunction to avoid committing himself any further.⁸⁹

It seems that he continued to attend meetings during the remainder of his stay in the Hague but that some of the belligerent members later criticized the presence of a neutral in their midst, and his successor Lillieroot was instructed, on his appointment in 1692, not to take part unless specially summoned. He was, however, to do his best to find out details

of what was discussed.⁹⁰ After 1690 the congress in any case ceased to have any importance in the development of allied policy, which was evolved in the course of more intimate gatherings of William, his closest advisers and such representatives of his allies as he considered necessary.⁹¹

Chapter 5The Opening of the War on French Trade
(August 1689 - June 1690).(i) Introductory(a) Seventeenth Century Attitudes to Neutral Trade

In spite of attempts since the later Middle Ages to evolve a generally recognized international code regulating trade between neutral and belligerent powers, and in spite of limited progress in theory and practice, many problems remained unresolved, and consequently many openings for conflict persisted, in the last decades of the seventeenth century. To a certain extent the position was regulated by treaty, but the contrasts between the provisions in the various agreements only serve to emphasize the divergence of opinion in the field. Few, if any, treaties were able to make allowances for all possible contingencies, and many were deliberately vague. When none at all bound together a belligerent and a neutral, or the validity of treaties was in dispute, as was the case with England and Sweden in 1689,¹ the amount of disagreement was liable to be limited solely by the community of interest and the degree of good will on each side.

Certain restrictions on neutral trade had, it is true, come to be recognized by convention. The concept of contraband was acknowledged, but the question as to what did and what did not constitute weapons of war remained open. Blockade of an enemy port gave the blockading ships an unchallenged right to bar entry to all neutral shipping, but the blockade

had to be 'effective'. Amidst all possible answers to the central problems of the right of neutral ships to carry enemy goods other than contraband and the right of their owner to neutral goods found in an enemy ship, three had crystallized into systems, and from these the powers concerned might choose according to their convenience when rights were not enshrined unequivocally in treaties.

Most favourable to neutrals was the doctrine, which had emerged about the middle of the seventeenth century and which had been adopted with fair consistency by the United Provinces, of 'free ships, free goods, unfree ships unfree goods' or that the flag covered the cargo. According to this, enemy cargo, unless contraband, could be borne in neutral bottoms without molestation, while neutral goods on enemy ships were liable to seizure and confiscation with the ship. Its simplicity was appealing, and its general adoption would have undoubtedly forestalled many internal crises at this and later times. It did not, however, eliminate the possibility of fraud by enemy ships posing as neutrals and neutral ships concealing contraband, nor of claims by belligerents to go further in their visitations than the examination of papers. A closer definition of contraband and blockade would also have to be agreed to.

At the other extreme was the doctrine, embodied in the French Marine Ordinance of 1681, by which not only might enemy goods found in neutral ships be confiscated but the ships themselves be declared 'de bonne prise.' Several

countries, including Denmark and Sweden, were in 1689 exempted by treaty from the rigours of the Ordinance, and Louis attempted to apply it only in the latter half of Nine Years' War, when he had ceased to maintain a battle-fleet and was concentrating all his energies at sea on privateering activities. It was a claim which would almost certainly have to be imposed by force, and, unless imposed with the greatest strictness, for which a complete mastery of the seas and a large number of ships engaged in no other task would be necessary, the ill-will engendered would almost certainly outweigh any material and strategic advantages. William was to discover all this to his cost when he tried to go even further.

A compromise between these two views, although in time the earliest, was the 'consulato del mare', originally promulgated in the late fifteenth century. Under this enemy merchandise on neutral vessels would be seized but the ships themselves released, while neutral goods on an enemy vessel might be redeemed by the owner by purchase of the ship on which they were found. The 'consulato del mare' was a solution adopted, though again not consistently, by England.²

Even, however, when the choice of policy had been made and, in regard to the first and last at least, embodied in a treaty, there remained the problem as to how far the belligerent government could ensure that its obligations to the neutral concerned were observed by its agents. These were not in the main ships of the regular fleet, which could rarely be spared

for such duties, but privateers, who depended upon the sale of their prizes for their profits or even for repaying the cost of fitting out their ships and had every interest in impinging upon neutral rights if it could be done without risking the loss of commissions.³

Even if William had not favoured more drastic action, treaties would have been little help in regulating relations between the Maritime Powers and the Northern Crowns in 1689. The only agreement recognized as valid by both parties was that signed by Sweden and the United Provinces in 1679 and renewed on Dutch initiative with the alliance in January 1686. Its guiding principle was 'free ships, free goods'.⁴ The Danish convention signed with the United Provinces in 1688 was only provisional while a full treaty was being negotiated and was due to expire in June 1690.⁵ England had long been negotiating for a commercial alliance with Denmark to replace that of 1670⁶ and one with Sweden to succeed that of 1661, which England claimed had expired but which the Swedes contended had been embraced by a later agreement of no established duration and had always governed their treatment of English merchants.⁷ If they were right, it was the sole treaty in force in 1689 not embodying the principle of 'free ships, free goods'.⁸

(b) The Formation of William's Policy and the Anglo-Dutch Convention of August 1689

Thus William found himself in 1689 in control of the policy of two countries with strongly contrasting traditions with regard to neutral trade and with little guidance, or restriction, in

the way of treaty provisions. He was largely free either to leave each to pursue its own maritime policy, a course which would bring with it the risk of endless complications in negotiations with neutrals and of differences between England and the United Provinces such as would not only harm their effectiveness in the common cause but also undermine his own none too secure position, to attempt to impose the policy of one on the other, with much the same danger, or to evolve an entirely new policy for both. In fact he chose the latter, but it was a policy which could be represented as an imposition of the attitude of one Maritime Power on the other, one likely to offend neutral susceptibilities more than the previous practice of either England or the United Provinces and one which demanded the utmost skill in presentation and argument on the part of his envoys in neutral capitals.

The genesis in his own mind of the idea of forbidding unilaterally all neutral trade whatever with France is obscure. Examples could be found for such a measure on a small scale in the past,⁹ but these were never quoted in justification of the Maritime Powers' decision in the early months of its execution. The regulations universally recognized in the case of a blockaded port certainly played some part but only, it seems, to justify a decision already taken, for they were not mentioned when Waldeck and Dijkvelt spoke to Gabriel Oxenstierna in January 1689.¹⁰

The approach was then extremely tentative. Waldeck simply tried to impress on the Swede the impossibility of forcing France to agree to allied terms unless all countries without

exception agreed not to fetch off her goods. It is therefore clear that the idea, raised, if not by William, then in his immediate entourage, was not a new one when brought forward by the English commissioners during the Anglo-Dutch alliance negotiations in London in June.

William was not allowed to overlook all the dangers of such a policy, even if they had not occurred to him already, for Nicolaas Witsen, Amsterdam's delegate in the Dutch embassy to London, protested strongly and expressed his fear of neutral reactions, especially those of the friendly Sweden, and of the establishment of a precedent for future wars, in which the United Provinces might remain neutral herself. He and Citters delayed appending their signatures to the agreement as long as possible and finally signed, on August 13th, under protest.¹² William confessed that he doubted the strict legality of what he was doing and feared the furore it would cause. He had no faith in the claim made in the convention that the whole French coast was in a state of blockade, but his mind was made up and he would allow no compromise. He declared to Witsen that it was¹³ 'droit du canon'.

It seems that William was willing to risk losing the friendship of the neutral powers by such cavalier treatment for the sake of depriving France of all her imports and her export markets; he may have been little interested in the finer points of economic theory but he grasped the essentials of economic warfare. There is little doubt that he was determined to

humble France by all means at his disposal as quickly and completely as possible and he was encouraged by the attitude of his new subjects,¹⁴ but it remains difficult to account for such an open flouting of established neutral rights. Later, when it had become obvious that neither of the Northern Crowns was willing to submit meekly to his dictates, he wrote to Heinsius 'it will be impossible for us to watch those two powers or those who use their flags trade with France while our subjects are (deprived) of this advantage...which afterwards, when peace comes, could be very prejudicial to the inhabitants of England as well as the States',¹⁵ but this appears to have been a justification post facto rather than an original prime motive of his policy. He may have believed that Sweden's devotion was such that it would outweigh any economic loss, of which he had no exact estimate, inconvenience, with which he would have little sympathy, or feelings of wounded pride.¹⁶ This was certainly an argument used with Swedish representatives, and Charles' early reactions to the idea of a ban may have encouraged hopes of its being accepted. For, although in January Gabriel Oxenstierna had told Waldeck that it seemed unfair to deprive subjects of nations still at peace and that such a ban had never been practised,¹⁷ he was sent no definite instructions while Sweden needed William's support in the Holstein-Gottorp dispute, and the attitude he was ordered to display was as submissive as was possible without actually agreeing to the proposal.¹⁸ William may have believed that Sweden would

in any case soon become a fellow belligerent or that, as the Swedes themselves claimed to believe later,¹⁹ that she could be forced to enter the war by so reducing the attractions of neutrality. If so, his diplomacy was slow to respond when it became obvious that such calculations were proving false. As for Denmark, she was little to be feared if her neighbour was willing to fall in with his designs.

It is true that no drastic action was taken immediately against Scandinavian ships, and he may have intended from the beginning merely to test Swedish and Danish reactions during the winter of 1689/90 in order to be in a clearer bargaining position when the trading season re-opened, but in this case the declaration of August 12th was a clumsy opening to negotiations and a largely unnecessary aggravation. Unfortunately we have little better evidence on which to base a surmise of his motivation than the official arguments employed at a later stage by his envoys and ministers. Possibly the best estimate is that made by Sir George Clark in a slightly different and wider context, that 'as an English statesman, as a Dutch statesman, and as a European statesman he shows the same fixed habit of getting the immediate action he wants, without regard to the confusion and damage that he causes to the political, military, or diplomatic system.'²⁰ He recognized that the economic strangulation of France was necessary in order to bring her to her knees and to ensure a speedy end to the conflict and overestimated his ability to impose it by either force or persuasion.

In extenuation of his attitude it must be emphasized that some trouble over neutral trade was inevitable from the beginning. Ships of both Northern Crowns were seized in the summer of 1689 on various pretexts;²¹ the Dutch vice-admiral Almonde brought five Swedish and four Danish vessels into Plymouth in June.²² And they continued to be seized long after the policy of an absolute ban on French trade had been abandoned; such formed the subject of negotiations up to the end of hostilities and beyond. It is often difficult to distinguish the two strands during the early months of the war, since ships held under more traditional interpretations of neutral rights were often seen by their owners as victims of William's new policy, and it was fairly easy, the state of international law being what it was, to find a pretext for holding and even confiscating ships on grounds other than the convention when the situation demanded a relaxation of its terms. The principle of the 'consulato del mare' was upheld by an order-in-council of August 15th 1689, by which all neutral ships held in English harbours were to be released after removal of enemy goods, and, by a States-General resolution of October 22nd, all ships not offending against the provisions laid down in the declaration of war of February 26th were ordered to be freed.²³ The United Provinces ratification of the convention was not complete until Zeeland notified her agreement in December, and not until then could her envoys lend their official support to English efforts.²⁴

(ii) Early Scandinavian Reactions

Although the convention was not signed until August 13th, rumours of the proposal reached Stockholm and Copenhagen soon after the Altona agreement,²⁵ which had considerably changed the attitude shown by Sweden in February. Both Gabriel Oxenstierna and Leijonberg were ordered to protest and claim absolute freedom of trade, while Lente received similar instructions.²⁶ A copy of the agreement was sent to Molesworth four days before the signing, with the pious hope that 'the necessity of this method is so great and so plain, that there will need not many arguments to convince any that are not friends to France', and on August 13th itself he was immediately ordered to urge its acceptance on Christian, while Duncombe was to secure Charles' approval.²⁷ Reventlow merely took the notification ad referendum on August 23rd, but on the following day Jessen ordered Lente to protest against the seizure of ships which had set sail in ignorance of proposed allied measures, but not to refuse expedients until more favourable times allowed Denmark to press her claims for freedom with more vigour.²⁸

Denmark was very conscious of the weakness of her position and had realized at an early stage that her best hope lay in securing the co-operation of the more highly favoured Sweden. Her first approaches, made by Vibe to Leijonclo and inspired by news of Almondes' seizures, had not been encouraging; Leijonclo was wholly without orders.²⁹ Yet the problem was an urgent one, especially as many members of the court, led

by Reventlow and Jessen and including the king, had large stakes in trading ventures, and Christian hoped that his shaky financial position might be helped considerably by capturing a portion at least of the Dutch carrying trade and by exploiting other avenues open to a neutral power in time of war, such as the sale of passes to belligerent merchants for trade with the enemy.³⁰ On August 1st Stockfleth told Bengt Oxenstierna that he had orders to negotiate on measures in defence of trade at the conclusion of talks on a renewal of the 1679 Dano-Swedish defensive alliance, for which Christian had been pressing even before the Altona treaty and to which Charles had now agreed.³¹

Sweden was, however, in no hurry to enter a concert which might result in her throwing away her main advantages over Denmark in her relations with the Allies, especially as it would be comparatively easy for Christian to throw the blame on her and to arouse suspicions which would aid him in securing a rapprochement with William at Sweden's expense. She decided to leave it to him to make the first definite proposals and was at pains to point out that the alliance talks with Stockfleth, which soon aroused allied suspicions, had nothing to do with the securing of any trading advantages.³² She was on the other hand even less inclined to submit to William's dictation than Denmark. She could refer to her treaty with the United Provinces, which the States-General had pledged itself to hold sacred in its declaration of February 26th, and to her 1661 alliance with England, even if its validity was disputed by

the latter. Whatever gloss was put on the convention by allied representatives and however much they might protest that no prior consultation had taken place with neutral powers for fear of French counter-measures and of advantage taken by English and Dutch merchants,³³ she protested at the injury to her sovereignty in such an order. Like Denmark she entertained hopes of engrossing much of the belligerents trade and could accuse the Maritime Powers, with justification, of wishing to dash such hopes rather than to deprive France of supplies. Her finances were sound, but she could claim that the royal income from customs dues would be seriously affected and that the blow to her economic life would harm her capacity to aid her allies.³⁴ Among her main imports from France was salt, which was essential for the preservation of fish and meat over the winter and fears of a shortage of which were endemic in Sweden.³⁵ Both she and Denmark feared an equivalent French prohibition and the permanent upsetting of the balance of sea-power.³⁶

Duncombe wrote to the chancellor, who was away from Stockholm, on August 30th with his request to inform the king of the convention.³⁷ Oxenstierna advised his master to act with caution and for the time being answered the envoy 'nothing in particular', only saying that he was sure justice would be shown to Swedish ships held.³⁸ When Stockfleth approached him again with proposals for joint action, the Dane was told that the allied explanations seemed reasonable, that Swedish ships had been released,

and that the United Provinces had claimed they could supply all Sweden's needs for two years. ³⁹ On Charles' return to Stockholm a more definite answer to William was worked out. In a debate in the råd on October 9th it became apparent that the convention was providing the opposition to the chancellor with a new lease of life. Wrede and Lindsköld immediately demanded vigorous action, pressed the need for convoys, a recommendation already made by Leijonberg, and forecast the ruin of all Swedish trade. Oxenstierna realized the delicacy of his position and attempted to steer a middle course. He admitted that the argument of a blockade was a strange one and that the prohibition was not consonant with the treaty of 1679 with the United Provinces, but claimed that it would be enough to point out to William the losses it would cause to Swedish trade, of which, the Allies were apparently unaware, to remind him of the help Sweden was sending and to argue in favour of modifications. Charles supported him and said that too vigorous action would merely play into the hands of France and of Denmark, whose demands on Gottorp threatened a new crisis. He rejected the idea of negotiations with Stockfleth, and it was decided to go no further than a mild verbal protest. ⁴⁰ On October 12th Gabriel Oxenstierna and Leijonberg were ordered to deliver this. It rejected the claim of effective blockade, Swedish merchants knowing only too well that French privateers were not confined to their ports, invoked Sweden's treaty rights, and ⁴¹ pointed out how vital was French trade to Sweden. When

Gabriel Oxenstierna spoke to Dijkvelt at the end of November, the latter blamed England for the violent manner in which the measure had been rushed through without consulting neutral powers, and Nottingham, when Leijonberg informed him of his orders, not received until December 4th, promised that such a fleet was being made ready as would keep all French ships in harbour.⁴²

It soon became evident that the verbal protests to the Maritime Powers were not having the effect which Oxenstierna had hoped for, and at the end of November Sweden decided to arrange for convoys to escort her ships to Spain and Portugal.⁴³ The failure of a new crisis in Gottorp to develop also favoured Denmark's efforts to persuade Sweden to agree to joint action, and on December 7th Stockfleth was told that Charles was willing to discuss joint convoys with Denmark, preferably in Stockholm, though he insisted on the omission from the renewed alliance of the clauses concerning defence of trade, as liable to lead to complications, and refused to agree to any other change in the original terms.⁴⁴ Powers for Stockfleth were immediately drawn up in Copenhagen and a project composed by Jens and Nils Juel.⁴⁵ At the same time as Swedish envoys were informed of the intention to send convoys, they were also instructed to reiterate their country's absolute right to free trade and to demonstrate how reasonable Sweden was prepared to be by quoting orders to the convoy commander forbidding the ships under his escort to carry not only contraband but all French goods and by inviting proposals to alleviate the harm done to

Sweden without demanding an explicit revocation of the ban.⁴⁶

The decision to send convoys, even though as yet only to Spain and Portugal, aroused considerable allied suspicion, especially as the Maritime Powers themselves offered their protection. Many saw this as only a beginning of measures in defence of Northern trade.⁴⁷ Heinsius gave Oxenstierna a roundabout answer, when the latter informed him and asked for orders to be sent to Dutch ships not to interfere.⁴⁸

In a conversation with Lejonberg on January 1st Nottingham confessed English jealousy that so much war material was being sent to Portugal, when the latter had not recognized the new government in London and was rumoured to have an agreement with France. He asked if it would be possible to arrange to sell the goods in England on the way and proceed to Portugal with ballast.⁴⁹

The States-General was not in a position until December 20th to order Rumpf to join Duncombe in pressing Sweden to accept the ban as the quickest way of securing a return of peace.⁵⁰ He notified the chancellor on January 5th and was told that an answer would be given in the Hague, but on January 24th he received an oral reply protesting against the prohibition as against the 'ius gentium' and Sweden's treaty with the United Provinces, and as threatening both a complete stoppage of trade, when France took revenge, and dissensions from which only the enemy would benefit.⁵¹ The English and Dutch envoys protested against passages in the written version of this, to be sent to Gabriel Oxenstierna, which suggested that Sweden was speaking

on behalf of all neutrals, and against the omission of all reference to the offer of expedients by the Maritime Powers, which suggested that all negotiations were broken off. The Swedes gave way but emphasized at the same time that any proposals would have to come from the allied side.⁵²

Denmark made very little progress in her attempts to persuade Sweden to go beyond a promise to discuss joint convoys, partly because she hesitated to make any definite proposals in the knowledge that her earlier approaches on joint mediation had been immediately reported to the Allies, but mainly because of continuing Swedish suspicions. For the time being she had to confine herself to protests to the Maritime Powers against the continued detention of Danish ships⁵³ and to watching developments in Stockholm. Negotiations on the renewal of the 1679 alliance, which had been proceeding since August, ended in agreement at a conference on January 17th, when Gyldenstolpe, of whom Duncombe for some time entertained great hopes, told Stockfleth that England had offered terms and had ordered her ships not to interfere with Swedish ships, though no assurance had in fact been secured.⁵⁴ Immediately afterwards Oxenstierna confessed that it was not yet clear whether the Allies' offer were serious, but claimed that they should not be provoked before they had revealed their real intentions.⁵⁵ After the signing of the renewed alliance on February 1st, he confessed that the reactions to Swedish protests had been negative, but attempted at the same time to justify the ban as necessary. Stockfleth took this as a signal for breaking off the talks, but on the same day Christian had

convoys to sail to the Maritime Powers and Portugal. ⁵⁶

In spite of the identity of the Northern Crowns' interests in the field of neutral trading rights, it was apparent, and was to become even more so as the war progressed, that their clash of interests in other spheres had created such a deeply engrained mistrust of each other's motives that no really effective co-operation was possible. Sweden was especially conscious, during the early months of the attempted enforcement of the Anglo-Dutch convention, of the strength of her position in opposition to it and was unwilling that Christian should be given any opportunity to draw benefit from this and at the same time to undermine it to his own advantage.

(iii) First Attempts to Reach a Settlement (January - June 1690)

(a) With Denmark

William continued his efforts to persuade the neutral powers to accept the ban into the new year but was not wholly uncompromising. In mid-January Nottingham wrote to the English envoys in both Northern capitals ordering them to continue in the attempt, and at the end of the month the king himself declared to Citters his intention not to give way. ⁵⁷ But he had already offered to grant a number of passes to Scandinavian merchants to trade with France, 'Provided it be not in such number as may offend his Allies', ⁵⁸ and States-Generals' deputies told Gabriel Oxenstierna that, in so far as they were their own masters, they had ⁵⁹ abandoned the idea of imposing the prohibition by force. Strong suspicions that the Northern Crowns were plotting to join forces in defence of their trade, to which the Danish alliance negotiations had lent colour, provided a prime motive

for some concession. In spite of the Swedish convoy instructions, which raised William's hopes of dividing the two powers,⁶⁰ it was Denmark who was found the more accomodating.

As soon as it became clear that little was to be expected from Sweden for the time being, Ahlefeldt was ordered on January 11th, while threatening reprisals for Danish ships still held, to propose private applications for allied passes and the inclusion of all ship-building materials in contraband.⁶¹ On his arrival in London he informed Nottingham that, while the ban could not for the present be accepted, an opportunity to build up a store of essential supplies from France might enable it to be so in the future. The secretary pointed out that wine and salt could be procured from elsewhere but asked how many ships might be needed to fetch them from France and wrote to Duncombe that he found Denmark 'not so positive against all the points of ye prohibition as Sweden seems to be',⁶² an opinion William still shared in May. Also in January Reventlow applied to Goes for passes,⁶³ but he and Molesworth were sent strict orders not to issue any.

Both Northern Crowns refused to give any official sanction to applications for passes offered by the Maritime Powers, but Lente was ordered to agree 'spontaneo' to limit the number of the ships to be engaged in the traffic and of the ports from which they sailed. Heinsius insisted that the United Provinces could supply Denmark with all the salt, wine and brandy she needed but wrote to William for his opinion on the proposals from Copenhagen and urged the need for a settlement if serious

trouble was to be avoided.⁶⁴ Meanwhile Christian was threatened with a stop of all allied trade if he continued to allow his subjects to trade with France⁶⁵, but it cannot be imagined that he took this very seriously.

He was most reluctant to make written proposals for fear of French reactions but finally gave Ahlefeldt and Lente permission to do so on March 25th. As usual he wanted negotiations to take place in Copenhagen, while William insisted on the Hague as more convenient.⁶⁶ In response to his enquiries Lente was instructed on May 10th that it was for the United Provinces to propose the number of ships they were prepared to permit, but a week later he was allowed to offer fifty with the warning that this number would not be adhered to if the alliance negotiations should fall through.⁶⁷ Denmark took full advantage of the Swedish decision at the beginning of April to extend their convoys to France, and on April 29th Lente was sent a copy of Stockfleth's account of this so that the States-General could see that Sweden had no intention of joining the coalition and that a trade agreement should be made with Denmark, whom Sweden would then follow.⁶⁸ William soon came to the same conclusion and wrote to Heinsius at the end of May that 'necessity shall oblige us to come to terms'.⁶⁹

Finally, on June 17th, Lente was empowered to negotiate in the Hague for an agreement based on a yearly allowance of fifty Danish ships to trade with France.⁷⁰

(b) With Sweden

Sweden had expressed her willingness to listen to expedients

as soon as she received official notification of the Anglo-Dutch convention, but the only proposals made in response to this were to supply her with goods previously obtained from France, (principally salt, wine and brandy), and to buy all Swedish exports, which meant in practice naval stores such as pitch, tar and hemp.⁷¹ The Swedes were unenthusiastic and suspicious. To the former offer, first made to Gabriel Oxenstierna by Heinsius in the conference on treaty aid of November 1st, she expressed doubts if it was possible, and, if it were, whether allied merchants would be willing to sell below the prices inflated by war conditions.⁷² Leijonberg protested to Nottingham in December that England did not have enough salt even to supply her own needs.⁷³ To the invitation to sell her exports, made originally by Duncombe on his own initiative, Sweden also responded with uncertainty as to the adequacy of any remuneration which might be tendered.⁷⁴

Leijonberg was reprimanded for agreeing in writing to discuss expedients,⁷⁵ but some interest in the selling of at least a proportion of exports to England and the United Provinces was expressed and in January Bengt Oxenstierna discussed the possibilities with Duncombe. The English envoy was promised a detailed calculation of Swedish trade, and the chancellor suggested that £20 - 30,000 p.a. should make good the losses caused by a stop of that with France.⁷⁶ Dursley promised Gabriel Oxenstierna to write to his father in the City to discover what Swedish stores could be bought in England, and on February 25th Nottingham told Duncombe that, if Sweden were

content with £12,000 p.a. in compensation, this would cause little difficulty, while, if not more than 200,000 Rd. of naval stores was in question, England alone could probably take them all.⁷⁷ He later suggested to Leijonberg that a third of the exports might be left in Sweden and a third⁷⁸ bought by each of the Maritime Powers.

Duncombe was most anxious to reach a settlement before the trading season should open and feared that the Swedes were playing for time, waiting to observe the outcome of the Irish campaign.⁷⁹ He found reason for optimism in a conference on February 23rd, but was doomed to disappointment.⁸⁰ Continuing complaints from Swedish merchants compelled the råð to hold new discussions on trade during March and April, when Oxenstierna, for all his moderation, found his influence weakening rapidly. Wrede and Lindsköld claimed that England, in spite of the offer of passes which the chancellor sought to stress, would never allow trade with France and demanded a joint declaration with Denmark. Oxenstierna wanted to await the English reply, and nothing was decided in the first debate, but Duncombe found his hopes dashed by Charles' answer to his renewed arguments in defence of the convention given to him in a conference on March 7th. He found that 'it⁸¹ answers little to our hopes or their protestations'.

So urgent had he considered the matter that he had begun negotiations on his own initiative with the four directors of the Tar Co., which had enjoyed an eight year monopoly of Swedish tar production since July 1689, for the purchase of

all available stocks. He soon found that a much greater quantity could be had than he could afford to pay for from his own funds and that much was already ear-marked for individual merchants. At first the Swedes agreed to 200,000 Rd. to be paid over within a reasonable period, but suddenly demanded 2,000 Rd. by May 20th and a further 32,000 Rd. by the end of the same month, which Duncombe protested could not be promised. On hearing that thirty lasts had been sold, even though to an English merchant, in breach of the agreement made at the beginning of the negotiations, he broke off the talks at the beginning of April.⁸² Nottingham was pleased, since England would have been unable to use so much tar, but the Swedes found the seemingly trivial excuse for ending the negotiations a reason for doubting the seriousness of English intentions to buy all their available naval stores.⁸³

Meanwhile Duncombe had, on March 20th, communicated to Oxenstierna the definite offer to buy naval stores contained in Nottingham's instructions. The chancellor feared that peace might find England overstocked with goods, but the envoy assured him that William was building a large fleet and that he would rather destroy naval supplies than see them go to France. On the issue of the ban as a whole Oxenstierna explained that the main difficulties were 'first Majestas Imperiy (but that wee pospond) the next, their necessity of keeping measures wth France and the last, ye contracts allready made for y^e delivery of suche goods'.⁸⁴ In the rād two days

later Charles said that he thought the sales suggested should be a matter for private agreement. Bielke and Wrede pressed for the extension of convoys to France, and this was decided on when treaty aid was discussed on April 8th, after Charles' fears that his merchants would demand compensation for any ships lost had been overcome. It was agreed that a new customs duty should be imposed to cover the cost of convoys to sail in May, July and September, each under the protection of two warships, and Charles finally declared that 'if the Maritime Powers attack we shall then see what they are up to'. Oxenstierna, realizing the extent to which his master's feelings had been aroused, offered little resistance, and on April 11th Leijonberg was ordered to protest once more against the convention, to declare that Swedish merchants could no longer stand the prospect of further loss and to threaten more drastic measures if the Allies did not give way.⁸⁵

Nottingham sent Duncombe a calculation of Swedish trade with England on the latter date, but the envoy himself could not obtain from the Swedish government a satisfactory account of their demands.⁸⁶ On April 16th he sent to London a rough calculation, according to which naval stores to France amounted to £37,580 p.a. or about a tenth of the value of those sent to the United Provinces and England. He was also given a brief account of goods available for purchase, sent also to Gabriel Oxenstierna and Leijonberg on April 26th. This listed also 10 - 12,000 hogsheads of wine and 10 - 12,000 lasts of salt as Swedish needs.⁸⁷ Little progress was made. Duncombe lacked powers

and instructions; the Swedish government refused official recognition to any transactions he might conduct with the merchants.⁸⁸

In May William decided to institute negotiations in the Hague with both Northern Crowns. He realized that both the Danish solution of a limited number of ships and the Swedish one of purchase of exports raised innumerable difficulties. The first involved not only agreement on the number but the problem of visitation, the second those of quantity and price, which the United Provinces was unlikely to pay. But instructions were sent to Dursley to offer terms based on the former project, and it was determined that 'in the meantime the convoys of Swede and Denmark (were) to be conniv'd at'.⁸⁹ Ahlefeldt attributed this change to Swedish resolution and the influence of Portland.⁹⁰ Duncombe was informed of the offer on May 20th and outlined it at the end of a memorial on June 14th. A limited number of ships, carrying properly authorized passes countersigned by an allied envoy but no naval stores and liable to visitation and search, were to be allowed to trade with France.⁹¹ Most members of the råd were opposed to any answer being made, especially as Duncombe had said that, as long as no agreement was in force, the ban must remain in operation, but Oxenstierna referred the matter to Charles, who returned a surprisingly mild riposte. Duncombe was told that, although Sweden had thought that all was laid down in treaties, Gabriel Oxenstierna would be empowered and instructed as requested and the proposals examined, on condition that Swedish trade

92

was meanwhile unmolested. A copy was sent to Gabriel Oxenstierna on June 18th, and he was instructed that, although the conditions on which the Maritime Powers insisted were unacceptable, it would be dangerous to give a definite answer at once and would be preferable to play for time and try to win better terms in negotiations.

93

Chapter 6

New Disappointments (June 1690 - March 1691)

(i) Embassy to the North

Early in 1690 a proposal was made in Dutch circles, possibly by the grand pensionary himself, to despatch an extraordinary embassy to Stockholm and Copenhagen in a fresh bid to win the Northern Crowns to the common cause.¹ Nottingham was favourably inclined to the scheme, but it was not greeted with any enthusiasm by William himself. He objected that, since all negotiations were now to take place as far as possible in the Hague and the envoys chosen for the mission could thus be given only general instructions, expectations would be fostered among the Danes and Swedes which were doomed to disappointment and negotiations would be unnecessarily complicated. He agreed, however, to allow the plan to go forward, while pointing out that England could not participate, since such a mission was not in accordance with her diplomatic practice.² He also gave his approval to the choice of candidates - William van Haren³ for Sweden and Godard Adriaan, baron van Reede, vrijheer van Amerongen, heer van Ginkel for Denmark⁴ - who were proposed formally by the delegates of the States of Holland before the States-General on March 13th.⁵ The instructions for these two men were, as William had anticipated, in the most general terms. They were to urge the respective kings to accede to the Grand Alliance or conclude a similar agreement, to be negotiated in the Hague, and to agree to cease all trade with France but inform the Allies of any expedients which might

make this less burdensome. Haren was given the additional task of ensuring the despatch of Swedish treaty aid.⁶

(a) Haren's Mission (July - September 1690)

Haren, like Amerongen, was no stranger at the court to which he was accredited and had been popular in Stockholm, but his assignment in 1690 was a particularly thankless one; William was very doubtful of his success but considered there would be little lost by trying.⁷ He reached the Swedish capital on July 10th at the same time as the news of Fleurus, where losses among the Swedish auxiliary troops had been especially heavy, and only a few days before that of Beachy Head, where the Allies' claims to have the whole French coast under blockade and to be able to protect Swedish ships from French reprisals were blown to pieces.⁸ He judged his reception cool and soon formed from his conversations with Duncombe an unfavourable impression of his chances.⁹

He could do nothing until Charles returned to Stockholm from his summer travels except attempt to prevent the situation deteriorating still further.¹⁰ The Boyne failed to restore the Allies' military reputation, and the French trade negotiations made no progress in the Hague, while Swedish merchantmen continued to be seized.¹¹ The treaty troops failed to reach the front until September, and the twelve warships were ordered back to Karlskrona.¹² Haren himself seems to have appreciated rather inadequately the requirements of the hour. At a time when it was necessary above all for the Maritime Powers to present a united front to enemy and neutral alike

he sought, in his early talks with the Swedish chancellor, to lay on England the whole blame for the difficulties encountered in the French trade and treaty aid negotiations.¹³ However justified he might have been in making such a charge and however well the Swedes may have been aware of English responsibility in these matters, it was hardly judicious to present them with such an opportunity and such encouragement to play off one Maritime Power against the other.

He and Rumpf secured an audience with Charles soon after his return in early September in order to inform him of their orders.¹⁴ The chancery debates which followed revealed Sweden's desire at this stage to avoid offending the Allies so seriously as to drive them to conclude an alliance with Denmark on terms which could not, it was felt, but be prejudicial to Swedish interests, and the Dutch envoy was told simply that the king's attitude remained the same as at the time of Rumpf's previous invitation to join the Grand Alliance in December and that the conditions then asked for had not been forthcoming.¹⁵ Haren proceeded to revive the proposal to exchange the treaty ships for a body of troops. Oxenstierna gave him hope that this might be done and further aid given in exchange for subsidies,¹⁶ but the chancellor had no authority for this, and all else was temporarily eclipsed by Sweden's offer of mediation, which was contained in orders to her envoys of September 24th.¹⁷

(b) Swedish Mediation

Amongst Duncombe's first impressions after his arrival

in Sweden had been that 'they had here rather umpire than engage',¹⁸ and there can be no doubt that the idea of mediation had lain in the background of Swedish foreign policy since the beginning of the war. Charles was particularly susceptible to an idea which offered him not only greatly enhanced prestige in the councils of Europe and more material advantages - both those which would flow from this prestige and those which a mediator was in a good position to press - but also a good opportunity to hold back his troops and ships from the holocaust. The course of the campaign in 1690 added fresh weight to these arguments and provided Bielke, as high now in his sovereign's favour as he had ever been,¹⁹ with a good opportunity to make a formal proposal to the king in July.²⁰ Charles would have preferred to wait for an invitation from the belligerents but ordered his chancellor at the end of the month to compose with Gyldenstolpe a memorandum on the subject.²¹

Oxenstierna had already, in view of the currency which the idea had gained, recorded his views in a letter to Charles a few days previously. He approved the principle of an offer of mediation by Sweden but feared that the Allies would regard it as merely an excuse for withholding treaty aid; he would go no further than to recommend that it be mentioned privately by envoys to test reactions.²² Bielke, however, persuaded the king that neither side would be prepared to make the first move for fear of its being regarded as a sign of weakness, and Oxenstierna argued in vain in the council on September 17th that the time was not yet ripe. His influence was approaching

its nadir, and his opponents could point to Denmark's negotiations in Vienna as as an additional argument for action. ²³

William's expectations of Sweden were, as has been seen, slight, but he seems nevertheless to have been unprepared for the mediation offer when it came. He considered it 'very strange for one who claims to be an ally' when Leijonberg presented his memorial on October 20th. It would lead, he feared, not to the general peace which the Swedes professed to desire, but to the defection of his weaker allies, which he always dreaded. He could not see how Gabriel Oxenstierna could be allowed any longer to attend the Hague Congress - a view shared by Berka.²⁴ It is hardly surprising that there was widespread suspicion of French intrigue, and Nottingham instructed Duncombe to discover 'out of what Quiver this Arrow comes, whether from France thro' Sweden or originally from Sweden itself', and later William wrote that 'the step which Sweden has taken must result from French corruption, or it is incomprehensible'.²⁵ When Gabriel Oxenstierna notified Heinsius of his instructions on October 17th, the pensionary replied that nothing could suit French purposes better than Sweden's action.²⁶ Fresh alarms came with the rumour that Palmquist had visited king James to inform him of the mediation offer. Bengt Oxenstierna assured Duncombe that no orders had been sent to do so and that he could not believe such behaviour of the Swedish legation secretary, who was 'cautious to a fault'. He believed that the accusation was merely a device to sound his reactions and complained to Leijonberg that 'the Allies are so

suspicious that one must grow tired of them'.²⁷ But William's reactions to the report may well have been prompted by fear of the conclusion of a separate peace under Swedish auspices which did not recognize the English Revolution.²⁸ He finally replied to Charles' offer on November 30th in the only way really open to him. While thanking his brother sovereign, he stated 'que sa Majesté s'est engagé par les Traittés conclus avec les Alliés de ne pas entrer même en aucune negotiation de paix ou de Tresve, sans le consentement commun de tous les Alliés'.²⁹

The suspicion of which Bengt Oxenstierna had warned - that the mediation proposal was a device to avoid giving treaty aid - was reinforced by the behaviour of the Swedish troops under Mellin, who immediately seized the opportunity offered by a rash dismissal of them by the elector of Saxony to march back to their bases after less than a month in the field and ignored an appeal to stay made by the Emperor through Horn, the Swedish envoy in Vienna.³⁰ William made no secret of his indignation and gave his support to efforts to halt the march and obtain Charles' consent to the troops' maintenance on allied territory during the winter months in order to ensure their prompt despatch in 1691.³¹ Haren proposed to Oxenstierna on October 28th that they should be supported in the United Provinces.³² The council decided, however, on the following day in the chancellor's absence that the Dutch attitude to Swedish trade did not entitle them to any consideration but that they should not be told this so bluntly until they applied for aid in 1691; for the time being Haren was to be answered,

with some justification, that his proposal came too late, when the troops were nearly home, that they must be replenished and re-equipped, that the treatment of Swedes already in Dutch service gave little cause for confidence and that the Emperor himself was responsible for the dismissal of the troops by the elector of Saxony.³³ In December Haren made the anticipated request for aid and was met by the reply prepared.³⁴

At the beginning of November Duncombe told Nottingham that Haren 'judges, and I must owne I doe so too, that during this war we shall only spend our owne time and o^r Masters money to no purpose' in trying to win Sweden and that Charles' ministers were 'to far engaged with France to be brought off'.³⁵ Others were, however, more optimistic. In Vienna a project emerged from conversations in December between Solms, Heemskerck and Paget by which Leopold promised a third of a subsidy of 30,000 écus per month to Sweden in exchange for 6,000 troops. This was sent to England for William's approval,³⁶ but the financial situation in the Maritime Powers doomed such a scheme to failure from the start, even if Sweden had shown any serious intention to bargain away her troops.³⁷

The cool reception accorded to the mediation offer intensified a crisis long developing in Swedish policy. Charles XI's growing impatience with the Maritime Powers, especially in regard to their cavalier treatment of his subjects' ships, is fully in evidence in the council debate on October 29th and rose to such a pitch that Leijonberg wrote to Bengt Oxenstierna on November 25th that 'I find my Most Gracious King and Master's

orders to me (diverge) so sharply from the former style of writing that matters seem to have come to such an extremity that a rupture between Sweden and England is preferred to a friendly composition.³⁸ At the beginning of November Charles ordered a general review of the situation in the council.³⁹ Gyldenstolpe, who had by now come to eclipse temporarily a highly embarrassed chancellor and shared the king's ear with Bielke, expressed the concern at allied distrust and hostility, which he knew his master also felt and which, in view of the continuing allied negotiations with Denmark, led him to support a policy of closer co-operation with the princes of North Germany.⁴⁰ Bielke was given permission to negotiate with the duke of Hanover, but the king was unwilling to commit himself when the marshal reported that Ernst August, anxious to bring pressure to bear on the Emperor in his struggle for the ninth electorate, was offering to leave the war. Bielke was, however, far from being discouraged and proceeded to develop his grandiose plans for a third party, which had been originally mooted by Bidal during his visit to Stockholm; of these his master was told nothing.⁴¹

(c) Denmark and the Defensive Alliance of November 1690

Amerongen was far from happy about his return to Copenhagen. He was in his seventieth year and 'had not thought in (his) old age to be employed abroad.' He had been heaped with honours by the Danes twenty years before but was now being sent to a court where the king he had known and most of the ministers were dead. He left behind him an aged wife and a large brood of

grandchildren, whom he entrusted to William's favour.⁴²

He arrived in the Danish capital on June 3rd, was granted a private audience on the 9th and four days later asked for the appointment of commissioners with whom he could discuss the purpose of his mission.⁴³ It soon became apparent that William's reluctance in supporting the embassy had been justified. In the first conference on June 20th the Danes replied to the renewed invitation to enter the Grand Alliance that France was offering large sums for simple neutrality, and Jessen urged La Foulereuse to persuade the English king to have Amerongen sent full instructions.⁴⁴ Molesworth was no less surprised and disappointed at the vagueness of the Dutch envoy's orders, and Amerongen sent home repeated requests for powers.⁴⁵ He was told that, in view of the recent disasters, the States-General could not raise its subsidy offers, but in mid-July, after discussions in the Hague which placed the financial problem even further to the fore, orders were sent to negotiate an 'Alliance defensive provisionally and in toe an Alliance or League offensive', for which a project was to be drawn up and sent home for approval.⁴⁶

Just before the arrival of the news of Beachy Head, when both allied envoys dared 'not go to Court for fear of being affronted there',⁴⁷ Molesworth revived the offer to negotiate a defensive alliance on the basis of Bodmyn's project excluding article 4 on trade, which was still to be settled in the Hague. At the end of July the Danes decided to accept this, drew up a project and sent to Lente details of the debt owed by the

United Provinces.⁴⁸

Particular exception was taken on the allied side to the Danish demands for the entry of one party into the war if the other were attacked, the granting of the Elbe toll and freedom of trade.⁴⁹ Nottingham wrote to William that 'the whole treaty (even without these new demands) seem in the present circumstances to be of no advantage but only to the K. of Den.⁵⁰' The English king agreed that Denmark would be the chief gainer but, since he saw no hope of an offensive alliance owing to the impossibility of offering subsidies, which would then be demanded by all the German princes, thought that no better treaty could be hoped for.⁵¹

Amerongen continued to urge an offensive alliance according to his instructions.⁵² At the end of August Christian stated that he was still willing to lend 12,000 troops in exchange for subsidies of 600,000 Rd. p.a. but considered that a defensive alliance, which, he had pointed out, would defeat France's aims to bring about a union between Denmark and Sweden, whom she had already won, should be settled first and insisted anew on the conclusion of a definitive trade treaty with the United Provinces and an agreement on debts, which did not, however, have to be implemented until after the war.⁵³ The States-General finally agreed to empower its envoy to negotiate on these preliminaries side by side with Molesworth, and a conference with Danish commissioners took place on October 24th.⁵⁴ Matters moved surprisingly swiftly. The alterations demanded in the Danish alliance project were

conceded, as was also Molesworth's proposal that a time limit should be set for the negotiations on mutual financial claims and commercial differences written into the alliance. Christian proposed that three months should be allowed for these and for the ratification, which was to be consequent upon their successful conclusion. On November 3rd the defensive alliance was signed.⁵⁵

In spite of Amsterdam's opposition to the conclusion of a trade treaty with Denmark, Heinsius anticipated that it would be ratified.⁵⁶ William was not so optimistic but was particularly anxious to obtain Danish troops and supported a plan to exchange Irish prisoners for recruits under threat of reducing or dismissing the Danish regiments, though in fact recruiting was his responsibility under the terms of the original treaty, and the non-payment of the remainder of the sums still owing to Christian.⁵⁷ The Danes replied to this that the Swedish offer of mediation had caused such misgiving that they must think twice before reducing their forces.⁵⁸ Denmark made the fullest possible use of Charles' action to sow distrust of her neighbour among the Allies and demonstrate the value of her own alliance, while threatening at the same time to accept Louis' offers for neutrality. Negotiations in fact were opened with Martingas in November, when the failure of Liliencron's talks in Vienna became apparent.⁵⁹

The Danish demand for a toll at Glückstadt, which played such a large part in the latter, was also a cause of friction with the Maritime Powers, as well as revealing differences between them. Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg led the opposition

from the beginning, and Berlin feared that the imposition would become permanent, but there was no official reaction from either England or the United Provinces until Rycout, who had been informed of the Danish condition by Paget, forwarded to Nottingham on July 22nd a protest from the English merchants in Hamburg.⁶⁰ Paget had already claimed that the toll 'would effect ye English traders in those parts very much',⁶¹ and the question was discussed in the English council on July 31st.⁶² As a result Paget, Dursley and Johnston were now ordered to oppose the demand vigorously, which, Paget complained 'comes very late'.⁶³ Both Ahlefeldt and Lente protested at the attitude in Vienna, especially as the Maritime Powers had promised to assist Liliencron's negotiations, and Nottingham told the former quite unblushingly that no instructions had been sent to Paget to account for this.⁶⁴ The Dutch were considerably less interested in the matter, and Dursley reported that, although 'this State is very jealous of the concerns of their merchants...theire merchants interest will no ways enter into the ballance.'⁶⁵ In view of this Paget, and James Johnston in Berlin were told on August 12th to be 'less vigorous in opposing this grant though you cannot give your consent to it till the king's pleasure be knowne',⁶⁶ but Paget acted on his previous instructions and presented a memorial to the Emperor.⁶⁷ Heemskerck confined himself to proposing orally to Leopold that other means might be found for satisfying Denmark.⁶⁸ Molesworth could not 'see that it will be very prejudicial',⁶⁹ and Paget was finally ordered to be wholly passive.⁷⁰ When Ahlefeldt

thanked William for this, the king pointed out that, since there was considerable opposition, he could not promise to give the plan any positive support, which might alienate Brunswick and Brandenburg, and urged the discovery of an alternative method.⁷¹ Such changes in allied attitudes did not add to Danish confidence.

The three months agreed upon for the ratification of the defensive alliance passed without the reaching of any agreement on either a new Dano-Dutch trade treaty or the Danish claims for payment of Dutch debts, and early in February Molesworth and Amerongen were sent ratifications which omitted the clause imposing this time-limit in the hope that Christian would rest content with a promise that negotiations would continue and matters be settled as soon as possible; Heinsius regretted bitterly that such a precise term had been fixed.⁷² The Danes would, however, agree to no more than an extension of six weeks,⁷³ and, when this was also exceeded without any progress having been made, the question had, for the time being, to be shelved.⁷⁴ Nottingham wrote optimistically to Molesworth on April 4th that, 'there is no doubt but they will ratify ye defensive alliance, for they have all from Us, that they can wish'.⁷⁵ The Danes were unfortunately not of his persuasion.

(ii) French Trade and Armed Neutrality

(a) The Hague Negotiations (July 1690 - January 1691).

The negotiations on Scandinavian trade with France, on which so much in William's Northern policy depended and which appeared ready to begin in July, were long delayed. Beachy

Head greatly weakened the allied position but had little effect on the basic attitudes of the Danish and Swedish courts. Denmark, while professing a greater willingness to compromise, sought to strengthen her position by closer co-operation with Sweden. At the beginning of August Christian agreed to limit sailings to eight ports of his kingdom and to enforce a strict ban on contraband, although Lente was ordered to avoid, if possible, any discussion of its definition and to demand compensation for seizures as a preliminary condition.⁷⁶ Sweden continued to demand her full treaty rights. Gabriel Oxenstierna was instructed on July 15th that, if the Maritime Powers insisted on modification of these, he was then to employ Wrede's criticisms of the project presented by Duncombe and finally to offer sale⁷⁷ of Swedish exports, of which tar was considered the most suitable. The envoy urged his government not to provoke the Allies too much for fear of reprisals when they should regain their lost power⁷⁸, and for some time Sweden was anxious to seem reasonable. Orders were sent to her German provinces to obey strictly the Imperial avocatoria.⁷⁹

However, as has been shown, Charles' reserves of patience ran low as Wrede pressed harder for reprisals and Zeeland privateers continued their seizures. On August 23rd Gabriel Oxenstierna was told to demand reparation, threaten reprisals and warn of the dangers to friendship between Sweden and the Maritime Powers.⁸⁰ The first Swedish convoy had passed through the Channel without incident, much to William's relief, but in August Sir Ralph Delaval seized seven merchantmen and their two

escorts on their way to France with naval stores.⁸¹ Nottingham advised his master that, while nothing should be done to hazard the principle of the convention, especially as the convoy appeared to be an attempt to test allied reactions after Beachy Head, 'at this time it may be expedient to buy rather than confiscate these merchandises, in case the king of Swede would agree to such termes for trading with Fr. for the future as your Majesty and the States should approve', and Delaval himself was 'a little tender of being too severe with them, being sensible of the use we have of their commodities.'⁸² William agreed and, after some delay, instructed Nottingham to offer to buy the naval supplies in the ships.⁸³ Much difficulty still remained over the price which the Swedes would accept, and, while the States-General was 'not overwell satisfyd with this business', being faced as they were with a fait accompli, Charles protested that his subjects were being forced to sell their goods against their will.⁸⁴

One of the States-General's objections to the English action was that it would prompt Gabriel Oxenstierna to raise his demands, although talks with him had not yet begun.⁸⁵ He objected firstly that the powers of Dursley and the Dutch deputies were not as precise as his own and then rejected Heinsius' proposal to sit 'pell mell as at the Congress.'⁸⁶ His obstructiveness was in the spirit if not according to the letter of his instructions, and Dursley believed that either 'he has not mind to treat at all or at least greater disputes will be raised when we come to it',⁸⁷ Lente was unwilling to

appear more eager than the Swede but was agreeable to making preliminary arrangements.⁸⁸

By the beginning of October all seemed at last ready, and Dursley and the States-General agreed on the terms to be offered, terms very similar to those proposed by Duncombe earlier in the year. These were presented to the Northern envoys on October 17th.⁸⁹ Gabriel Oxenstierna intimated that, if the number of ships allowed to trade were left to Charles' discretion and sufficient compensation offered, something might be done, but his official reply was in accordance with Wrede's memorandum.⁹⁰ Heinsius confessed to William that Oxenstierna's refusal to propose new expedients made him doubt if the Swede had any serious intention to reach an agreement.⁹¹ Lente still demanded a preliminary settlement on the Danish ships which had been seized and rejected the demands for visitation and the counter-signing of passes by allied envoys, but he did agree to the principle of limiting the number of ships engaging in trade with France, although his demand for fifty was considered too high.⁹²

Berka's brother Nostitz, just replaced in Stockholm by Franz Ottokar Starhemberg, arrived in the Hague in November with a highly optimistic report that an allowance of twelve to fifteen ships and annual compensation of 25 - 30,000 Rd. would satisfy Sweden.⁹³ Heinsius was rightly sceptical, since neither Imperial diplomat bore any written instructions and Gabriel Oxenstierna showed no sign of yielding, but William thought the offer, as well he might, 'not wholly unreasonable;

and Haren was ordered to try to negotiate on this basis. Gyldenstolpe and Lillieroot showed some willingness to discuss matters with the Dutch envoy in the chancery debate on December 30th, but Åkerhielm urged the full settlement of all merchants' claims before anything more were done, and in a lively council meeting on January 2nd, in which the chancellor and Stenbock found themselves quite isolated, Charles refused to discuss any new expedients. ⁹⁵ At no stage was there any acknowledgement of the original proposals, which Nostitz had given the impression were of Swedish provenance. Haren was told that compensation could be discussed, but he replied that, according ⁹⁶ to his orders, this could only be done in the Hague.

(b) Danish Reprisals

While Sweden debated and protested it was Denmark who first passed to action. On December 12th Christian resolved to arrest Dutch ships in the Sound. ⁹⁷ A stream of memorials from Lente demanding satisfaction for the seizures of Danish ships was having no apparent effect and pressure from their owners demanded some outlet, but the king was also anxious to prove his sincerity to a suspicious Sweden, whose help in defence of trade he was soliciting, and to France, with whom negotiations for a profitable neutrality treaty were in full swing. He made much of his moderation in reducing, at Amerongen's request, the number of ships held to six and on January 10th agreed to release these on being given the Dutch envoy's promise that negotiations would begin as soon as William should arrive in the Hague, but with the threat that, if no agreement had been reached in

Copenhagen within six weeks, new reprisals would take place.⁹⁸ At the end of the month Christian went further and agreed to accept a lump sum in compensation and to reduce the fifty ships originally demanded for the French trade by five or six, although he rejected the Allies' condition that each ship would make only one voyage.⁹⁹ A trade treaty project was even drawn up with Amerongen and sent to the Hague for comment, and, as has been seen, the time limit for ratification of the defensive alliance was extended by six weeks.¹⁰⁰

Yet the underlying suspicions and differences remained. The Dutch ships were re-arrested twice before the six weeks expired¹⁰¹, and agreement on French trade expedients was still far off. Amerongen and Molesworth drew up a project on the latter, to which the Danes replied with one to which they bound themselves for only sixteen days. It was in any case unacceptable in the allied capitals¹⁰², and any progress which had been made was nullified when Molesworth was informed on March 9th that, since Sweden had been granted full freedom of trade, Denmark must demand the same and could no longer agree to any limitation in number of ships or lading.¹⁰³

In spite of mediation by Brandenburg, little was accomplished in the Hague, and consternation greeted Lente's threat of a convention with Sweden in defence of trade.¹⁰⁴ Although a States-General resolution of February 19th ordered no more arrests of neutral ships to be made under the terms of the ban, eighteen Danish merchantmen were confiscated the same month and Christian, convinced that the Maritime Powers were playing for

time and confident in the effects of his policy, ordered new reprisals on February 25th. The original victims found themselves again constrained, since they had not been able as yet to leave harbour, and frigates were despatched to seize more up to a round dozen.¹⁰⁵

On March 10th the threatened convention with Sweden was signed in Stockholm, and three days later Christian resolved to accept Martangis' offer of 200,000 Rd. p.a. and help if attacked on account of the reprisals in exchange for a strict neutrality during the war and the maintenance of an army of 15,000 men.¹⁰⁶ William's Northern policy seemed to be in ruins.

(c) The League of Armed Neutrality.

The fear of a Dano-Swedish rapprochement to the benefit of France, especially in defence of their common commercial interests, had haunted the minds of allied statesmen to a greater or lesser extent ever since the reactions of the Northern Crowns to the ban on French trade had become apparent, but the alliance of February 1690 had proved to contain no provisions for the protection of trade, and many comforted themselves with the unlikelihood that two rivals of such long standing would agree on anything for any length of time. At the end of November Greg was writing home that 'it ought to be considered y^t a War may possibly happen betwixt these two Crowns before our War with France be ended'.¹⁰⁷

A certain strain had indeed been apparent between the two powers in the middle of the year, when Danish troop concentrations in South Jutland seemed to threaten Holstein-

Gottorp,¹⁰⁸ but these had dispersed again without incident, and the situation in Stockholm grown more and more favourable to Bielke's policy. The marshal assured Christian through Ehrenschild of Sweden's eagerness for the co-operation Denmark desired as her relations with the Allies deteriorated, while Charles' impatience grew.¹⁰⁹ The Swedish king remained suspicious and unwilling to commit his realm, but in one of the general debates on foreign policy on November 25th, at which Wrede and Gyldenstolpe supported negotiations with Stockfleth, he expressed his willingness to consider any proposals which might be made.¹¹⁰

He did not have to wait long. On December 13th, the day of the reprisals, orders were sent from Copenhagen to the Danish envoy to explain that Christian had been encouraged to take action by Swedish threats against the Maritime Powers and to offer to negotiate on joint measures.¹¹¹ This was discussed in the council on January 2nd, at the same time as a renewed offer by Duncombe to buy Swedish exports and Nostitz' proposals. In accordance with the previous decision Oxenstierna, Wrede and Gyldenstolpe were deputed to listen to Stockfleth's suggestions, while committing themselves to nothing and continuing to try to reach agreement with Haren on compensation.¹¹² The Dane was found to be without detailed instructions, and it was proposed by him that a Swedish project should be sent to Bielke to discuss in Copenhagen. Charles was not averse to Copenhagen, since the previous talks had been in Stockholm, but insisted on the use of normal diplomatic channels, and Wrede and Gyldenstolpe

urged strongly the case for Stockholm for fear they would lose control to the chancellor. On January 31st Stockfleth was sent the necessary powers but instructed to wait for a Swedish project.¹¹³

News of the negotiations soon leaked out, and Swedish envoys were ordered to make no secret of them, though to avoid going into any details.¹¹⁴ Gabriel Oxenstierna reported a more conciliatory attitude, and Amerongen, who had also received word of a report from Meyercrone, the Danish envoy in Paris, that France approved of a triple agreement to include herself, thought the situation serious enough to send his secretary de Bie to the Hague to report.¹¹⁵ Haren and Duncombe redoubled their efforts, and the latter offered full freedom of trade with certain regulations to prevent abuses, a move which, as has been seen, Denmark exploited immediately. But, when he developed his scheme in a conference on February 23rd, the Swedes found his conditions unacceptable on the ground of possible French reactions.¹¹⁶ They offered once more to sell their tar.

On the same day the Swedish project, which Stockfleth had been promised at the beginning of the month, was at last handed to him, but Christian was already growing more and more impatient with the length of the negotiations as the day when he must embark on new reprisals approached. He was most anxious for Swedish support for these and had ordered his envoy to agree to any reasonable Swedish conditions.¹¹⁷ Stockfleth, who had noted with alarm a growing suspicion of Danish intentions in Stockholm, was only too pleased to sign as soon as possible.¹¹⁸

The treaty was for four years, enjoined both parties to make reprisals if the Maritime Powers failed to give satisfaction within four months and to go to war if counter-reprisals resulted. Each side was, however, to be free to continue its separate negotiations. Christian ratified these terms on March 23rd.¹¹⁹

Chapter 7Stalemate

- (i) The Results of Armed Neutrality and the Temporary Settlement of French Trade (March 1691 - October 1692)
- (a) The 1691 Conventions with Denmark

The crisis caused by the second seizure of Dutch ships in the Sound at the end of February 1691 and the creation of the first League of Armed Neutrality shortly afterwards resolved itself in a temporary solution of the problem of Scandinavian trade with France and the abandonment of all pretensions to enforce the original ban, a ban surely breached already by the offers of compensation for the past and limited sailings for the future. On March 6th the Danish council had resolved to reject the latter conditions on hearing of Duncombe's offer in Stockholm of free trade subject to guarantees against fraud. It proceeded to draw up a convention, which included a compensation agreement on this basis, and was to be ratified in three or six weeks depending upon whether William was or was not in the United Provinces.¹

Heinsius could protest as much as he liked that an offer, in the form the Danes claimed, had never been made to Sweden and that the Danish envoys in the Hague and London had no powers to negotiate claims;² the position of the Maritime Powers was extremely vulnerable. The number of Dutch ships lying within the Copenhagen boom was mounting, Christian was threatening to sell those seized if no satisfaction were given within four weeks³ and there was no guarantee that Sweden would not follow

her ally's example. Amerongen was consequently empowered to negotiate, but even then only if Denmark seemed sincere and willing to give military aid; otherwise, he was told, there was no reason to waste Dutch money.⁴ On April 15th he communicated his willingness and ability to open discussions and asked for the immediate release of the sixteen ships held.⁵ Such an offer was, however, not enough for the Danes, who demanded agreement on a definite sum to be given in compensation first. Amerongen finally gave way and began to examine with Danish commissioners the merchants' demands, which stood at 200,000 Rd.⁶

On April 30th he was prepared to present a project for a convention, which was intended to govern the conduct of Danish trade with France and the attitude of the Maritime Powers to it for the future. It revealed the weakness of William's position and his anxiety to reach a solution and break up the threatening Northern entente. No limitation was now placed on the number of ships to be engaged in the trade, although sailings were still confined to seven Danish and Norwegian ports and all coasting trade was banned. All passes were to be renewed by Christian and ships held by each party to be released.⁷ The Danes, fully aware as they were of the Maritime Powers' hopes of breaking their links with Sweden, wanted to include a clause promising the latter compensation. Although William could see no objection to this, Amerongen could not agree.⁸ On the Danish counter-project of mid-May he again pleaded lack of instructions but was persuaded by Falaiseau to double his original compensation

offer of 30,000 Rd.⁹ Falaiseau, who acted as mediator throughout the discussions, intimated that the Dutch were prepared to go to 80,000 Rd., but this was still not enough when the merchants claims could not be reduced below 128,870 Rd.¹⁰

New proposals were put forward by the Brandenburg envoy on behalf of Amerongen and Molesworth. Contraband was to be defined and was to include tar, goods were to be carried to and from France direct, and no privateers were to be allowed to prey in Danish and Norwegian waters.¹¹ Christian would at first agree only to an oral promise on the first and second, valid for 1691, and on the last merely offered that two frigates should patrol the Norwegian coast. The allied envoys managed finally to get the validity of the first two conditions extended to eight or nine months and all the terms in writing. They could not obtain a close definition of contraband but decided to rest content with their gains.¹² Amerongen raised his compensation offer to 85,000 Rd., which the Danes, having decided on June 12th to be content with 80,000, gladly accepted, and both instruments were signed on June 20th.¹³ Christian, still anxious to give a demonstration of Northern solidarity, pointed out that both were invalid unless agreement was also reached with Sweden and told Charles that he had settled for so little because he had heard that such an agreement was very near.¹⁴

William declared at the end of June that Denmark and France had drawn so close together that any compensation agreed to would be "money down the drain" and, when news came of the pact, feared the effect which it would have on Sweden, who was

for the moment behaving well.¹⁵ Heinsius considered Amerongen had given too much away, especially in his failure to have contraband defined closely, and refused to advise the immediate release of Dutch trade with Norway, banned since the first reprisals.¹⁶ Disputes also arose over the mutual release of the ships and only after strong representations had been made were those belonging to the United Provinces set free on July 10th, and then only on payment of caution money.¹⁷

The English king doubted if the Danes would agree to any changes in the June convention,¹⁸ but the States-General determined to insist on certain elucidatory articles as the price of its ratification; contraband would, for example, have to be defined in accordance with the original demand and all French privateers banned from Norwegian ports.¹⁹ Christian V agreed to all their conditions except the exclusion of privateers, which, he claimed, would not be in accordance with his neutrality but he promised to order Norwegian ports to refuse to allow any prize to be sold, to release any prize taken in Norwegian waters and to force any privateer in harbour to wait twenty-four hours after the departure of a merchantmen before giving chase.²⁰ Heinsius still wanted the enforcement of an absolute prohibition, but the States-General was satisfied and agreed to ratify.²¹ Ratifications of the compensation treaty were exchanged in Copenhagen on September 2nd, but negotiations on the elucidatory articles and the toll and trade treaty, which were re-opened, were interrupted by the death of Amerongen, possibly hastened by a quarrel with Molesworth, on September 28th and hampered by

the delay in sending the English ratification, which did not arrive until early December, with modifications similar to those asked for by the States-General. The final ceremony took place on December 21st in the presence of Molesworth, Goes and Haren, who had arrived on the previous day from Stockholm to try to settle the affairs left unfinished by Amerongen.²²

William had good reason to be pleased with his envoy's work. The new agreement was, it is true, a far cry from what he had envisaged two years previously, but Denmark had, in spite of her league with Sweden, acceded to nearly all the demands originally put forward by Amerongen in April and June; naval supplies for France from Norway could now be legitimately seized; a mutually acknowledged check was imposed on general Danish trade with the common enemy, and the number of possible causes of friction had been considerably reduced. More important still, however, was the effect which the convention could be expected to have on Dano-Swedish relations and the brighter prospects which it opened up of reaching agreement with Sweden also. The readiness of the Danes to agree to the elucidatory articles is some measure of the rapidly fading force of the Armed Neutrality League. As Christian's suspicions of Sweden's seriousness grew he had less and less compunction in agreeing to measures, such as the inclusion of tar in contraband, which would weaken his neighbour's bargaining position.

While he refused to risk his neutral status by excluding French privateers from his ports, he proposed in September and again in November that the Baltic and North Sea should be

neutralised. The fact that Louis, according to the Danes, had, after initial rejection, showed interest in the plan aroused allied suspicions. Heinsius even suggested that France was hoping to use it in order to convince the weaker members of the Alliance that separate peace negotiations were being initiated and feared that its execution would at best cause them to relax their restrictions on French trade. Even Sweden, who also suspected that the proposal had originally come from France when asked to support it, declared that it would be impossible to agree on terms with the Maritime Powers; it seems that she was unwilling to risk associating herself with such a hopeless project and incurring further allied displeasure to no purpose. In face of the apathetic response Lente was ordered in January 1692 not to press the subject, which was dropped for the time being.²³

(b) Haren's Compensation Agreement with Sweden

It had been hoped that Sweden might be persuaded to join the Anglo-Dutch convention with Denmark or conclude on similar terms, but she remained adamant in defence of her treaty rights and in demanding negotiations on compensation alone. Haren was authorized in March to discuss claims against the United Provinces as a preliminary to a wider agreement.²⁴ The talks which opened as a result were often useful to Sweden as an answer to Stockfleth's repeated invitations to join Denmark in the reprisals she had no intention of making alone; not until mid-June had all the claims from Swedish merchants, with the relevant papers, been received in Stockholm for

examination by the commission appointed for the purpose.²⁵ But there were strong suspicions among the Swedes that Haren was also hoping to gain time, and Charles was genuinely anxious that the work of reducing the claims to a reasonable figure should be completed as soon as possible to avoid being blamed for delay. He was not, however, able to prevent Dutch accusations that Sweden was holding matters up in order to escape her treaty aid obligations.²⁶

On October 14th Haren was finally presented with a demand of 80,216 Rd. for fifteen ships, which William considered exorbitant and a sure sign of Sweden's lack of serious intention to reach a settlement.²⁷ The envoy himself was doubtful what his next step should be and would almost certainly have held out for a considerably reduced sum, if he had not received instructions to leave for Copenhagen and been warned by Bengt Oxenstierna through Duncombe, who himself urged a conclusion 'well assured in My Conscience that it would be for the service of my Master and his Allys', of the certainty of reprisals if he left without having reached an agreement.²⁸ He was also concerned with the question of treaty aid and tried to salve his conscience by including a clause promising that it would now be sent, but this was understandably refused as irrelevant, and, with no further discussion, a convention was signed on November 19th. It was expressly stated to be based on the terms of the 1679 treaty between the two countries, which was thus acknowledged to be in full force.²⁹

In spite of his initial reaction to the Swedish claims, which he still declared to be unjust, William welcomed Haren's settlement more enthusiastically than he had Amerongen's. He was worried, however, by the opening left in it for further claims to be made for past injuries and recommended that no money should be paid until this loophole had been closed.³⁰ His advice was not taken, but, as always in such matters touching the provinces' pockets, there was much trouble in securing the various ratifications, and, in spite of repeated Swedish protests, all was not completed until April of the following year.³¹

(c) Trade Negotiations in 1692

The effective abandonment of the policy embodied in the Anglo-Dutch convention of 1689 (it was never specifically revoked) meant in no way the end of the difficulties over neutral trade. Ships claimed by the Northern Crowns continued to be seized on various pretexts, new claims for compensation presented and accusations of fraud and injustice freely made. The activities of English and Dutch privateers indeed grew, and their control became an ever more pressing problem for their governments.³² These developments help to put William's original policy in perspective and to reveal even more clearly that it was an aggravating rather than a decisive factor in his Northern policy.

As a result of the change in the attitude of the Maritime Powers to neutral trade which had expressed itself in the negotiations of 1691 and the Danish convention, new instructions to their naval officers had to be drawn up and some attempt made to reach a uniformity of

practice. After a correspondence and negotiations lasting from March to September 1692 no agreement could, however, be reached between London and the Hague, largely owing to the English objections to the freedom of trade, especially in regard to contraband and the principle of 'free ships, free goods' allowed to Sweden and Portugal in their treaties with the United Provinces, which the States-General refused to depart from, and William could find "no other expedient than to leave them unsettled".³³ The confusion continued.

Negotiations in Copenhagen on a trade treaty between Denmark and the United Provinces, which was always insisted upon by the Danes as a necessary preliminary to the conclusion of an alliance, had by the end of 1691 reached such a stage that only the question of the privileges and number of Danish "defence" ships barred the way to agreement, and on January 25th Christian's council decided to accept Goes latest project, although grudgingly and with every intention to interpret it in Denmark's favour when the occasion should arise.³⁴ But Goes then declared himself to be without adequate instructions, new demands arrived from the Hague, and the breach re-opened.³⁵ In July Lente was ordered to offer the abolition of defence ships if Sweden would do the same, but further than this the Danes would not go, and negotiations were again broken off.³⁶

Denmark soon became dissatisfied with the way in which the convention of 1691 was being executed by the Maritime Powers; La Foulereffe reported in April that it had still not been notified to English privateers.³⁷ It did not prevent the seizure

of her ships, and the activities of the Zeeland "capers" continued unhampered. In the spring Bolle Luxdorph, the new Danish envoy in Stockholm, was again urged to seek Swedish co-operation in making joint protests and to negotiate further reprisals, while Lente made thinly veiled threats in the Hague.³⁸ The wording of a memorial which was presented by La Foulereesse in March caused such offence that William approved a decision to accept no more memorials from him until a suitable apology had been made, and he was recalled in June.³⁹ Sweden agreed to discuss common measures and draw up model memorials threatening further action and presenting fresh claims for compensation,⁴⁰ but she showed her usual reluctance on the question of reprisals. All preparations were completed by the Northern Powers in May, and Christian added a threat to withdraw his troops from William's if all were not settled.⁴¹ La Hougue, however, changed the situation as Beachy Head had done two years before. Lillieroot, who had arrived in the Hague shortly after the battle as the new Swedish envoy to the States-General, agreed with Lente to postpone an action which might provoke the Maritime Powers dangerously at such a time.⁴² Not until August 17th were the demands finally presented, and, in spite of his new superiority at sea, they seem to have caused William no little alarm.⁴³

Rumours had reached London from Copenhagen at the beginning of the month that fresh Danish seizures were imminent, and Mary ordered Russell to prepare a squadron to sail to the Sound if necessary.⁴⁴ William could 'hardly believe (the report) because

it is so much against the interest of the Northern Crowns to interrupt that trade or to breake with Us' and feared that despatch of the ships would only drive Denmark into the arms of France.⁴⁵ The joint memorial made him much less sure and caused him to demand an immediate report on the rumour, which Greg, who had been left in Copenhagen as chargé d'affaires on Molesworth's departure under a cloud of Danish displeasure and without recredentials in June, was ordered to supply, and enquired whether a show of force in the Sound might not after all be desirable.⁴⁶ Greg replied that there was no sign of preparations for reprisals, although 'they can fit out ships enough in less than a weeks time to perform it',⁴⁷ but, by the time his letter was received, the king had had news also of the Swedish answer to a new Danish request for joint action, which convinced him that Sweden would not support Denmark, and had been told that most of the allied merchant ships were safe. The squadron, formed with some difficulty, was again dispersed.⁴⁸

About the same time fears of rather a different nature were allayed when the terms were learnt of a treaty between Denmark and Hamburg concluded on August 16th. Reports had come in at the beginning of the year that Danish passes and flags were being offered to the city in exchange for a yearly subsidy.⁴⁹ Much unofficial traffic of this kind was already carried out between the Elbe and France⁵⁰, but such a flagrant abuse of neutral rights by Christian brought orders to Rycout to make strong representations to the Hamburg senators against such an agreement, which William considered 'no less in

Consequence than a Neutrality with the French'.⁵¹ The reports were in fact substantially correct, but Denmark blatantly denied the charges and protested at such interference. Rycout had to confine himself to private representations.⁵² The final treaty, by which Hamburg was to pay Denmark 400,000 Lübeck marks in nine years in return for Danish protection and rights in the Greenland fisheries, did not indeed include any provision for the city's trade with France but not because of allied representations but because the burgher party had asked for the clause on passes to be dropped and because Christian had been unable to appease Louis' wrath at the expulsion in 1691 of his agent in Hamburg, who had been sent to Vienna. The Danish negotiators added in a codicil a promise to continue their efforts to persuade France to accept the city back into favour, in which case the subsidy to Denmark would be increased.⁵³ The whole incident places Danish diplomacy in a far from favourable light.

(ii) Sweden and the War 1691-2

(a) The Second Mediation Offer and the Collapse of the Hanoverian Third Party

Not until April 1691 was Bengt Oxenstierna able to regain much of his old position in the formation of Swedish foreign policy, enough to ensure that his master would not follow the dangerous path being laid down for him by Bielke's intrigues in North Germany. He was still far from secure, and even in 1692, when the influence remaining to the governor-general of Pomerania was rapidly approaching its nadir, he thought it necessary on two occasions to address to Charles lengthy

defences of his policy and to appeal to him not to provoke the Allies too far.⁵⁴ Fortunately his tried, cautious counsel suited well the king's desire to avoid foreign entanglements while engaged so deeply in the task of internal reconstruction.⁵⁵

Bielke's activities in Hanover in November 1690 and the welcome given to him in Copenhagen in March 1691 on his way back to Stockholm, combined with Sweden's refusal of treaty troops to Haren and the turning down of a request by Starhemberg in January for 3,000 troops, all lent colour to William's fears of a third party led by Sweden to impose Louis' peace terms on the Alliance, such as France and Denmark envisaged.⁵⁶ His suspicions certainly remained long after such a project had ceased to be a serious possibility and indeed reveal his failure to understand the relative strength of the influences acting upon Swedish policy. He predicted in April that the fall of Mons would 'set the Third Party upon its road' and make the Northern Crowns unmanageable. With the town's fall he predicted that the Northern Crowns 'will lay down the law to us' and prescribe terms of peace. He stressed the even greater urgency⁵⁷ of gaining Sweden, of which he still obviously entertained hopes. The decision in the r ad on April 22nd to renew the offer of mediation was a victory for the chancellor's policy, although also motivated by the allied setbacks at Mons, where Swedish losses had been heavy, and at Nice,⁵⁸ but the English king proclaimed it a direct result of the formation of a third party and of the negotiations in Hanover and a move which he had, he claimed, long expected.⁵⁹ It was too dangerous to reject the new

invitation outright, but Charles was left in little doubt that it was considered highly inopportune.⁶⁰

A third party was indeed in process of formation as a result of Bielke's engagement with Ernst August; Saxe-Cotha and Münster joined Hanover in March. But Charles had already declared to his marshal in January that he aimed to secure the mediation for himself alone, and, when in May a Hanoverian envoy in Stockholm followed an unsuccessful new attempt by Stockfleth to interest the Swedish king in the idea of joint mediation and entry into Denmark's neutrality treaty with France with a direct invitation to Sweden to participate in a full-blooded third party, he was rebuffed.⁶¹ The best he could obtain was a treaty, signed on June 1st, which promised Hanoverian support for Swedish mediation but which was otherwise little more than a strengthening of the defensive alliance with Brunswick-Lüneburg of 1690.⁶² Denmark repeated her bid to interest Sweden in July as the consequence of a promise of French subsidies but had no more success than previously and gave up the attempt. Stockfleth was recalled in October and replaced at the end of the year by Bolle Luxdorph.⁶³ The rejection of Hanover's blandishments was greeted with some optimism by the Allies. Duncombe reported to Paget shortly afterwards that Swedish professions of friendship 'may ye rather be trusted to' in view of the rejection of the third party invitation, though he was not overoptimistic about the settlement of trade differences, and Heinsius could not believe that Sweden would risk her chances of mediation, to which it was

apparent her foreign policy was mainly directed, by joining in Hanover's schemes. But news of the Hanoverian alliance revived all William's fears.⁶⁴

Meanwhile the third party had all but fallen to pieces. Münster withdrew half the troops she had originally offered, and Saxe-Gotha retired altogether in August after the death of duke Frederick I. Hanover won the new ruler of Saxony, John George IV, to her side in October, but Ernst August's real goal drew in sight as Leopold, under certain pressure from the Maritime Powers, showed himself increasingly more accommodating to his electoral ambitions. In December he broke with France and in April 1692 formally announced his abandonment of the third party and signed an alliance with the Emperor.⁶⁵ Whereupon, as will be seen, a new third party rose against him under Danish leadership.⁶⁶

Of practical military aid from Sweden William expected none, although some in allied circles still hoped that the Dutch share of treaty help might be forthcoming in 1692 after the compensation agreement in November.⁶⁷ On the 20th Haren, having failed to have a pledge incorporated into the convention itself, presented a formal memorial on the subject. It was answered within the week with a statement pointing out that certain 'difficulties well known to the Lords States-General' - a phrase, purposely vague, which could be taken to refer to both the original differences over the naval aid and the compensation still to be paid for Dutch seizures - would first have to be resolved and that peaceful offices would be more

useful than armed intervention.⁶⁸ Not only was the aid due to the United Provinces as good as lost for another year but that which had been granted to the Emperor under the alliance of 1682, which had reached the front in 1691 again too late to play an effective part in the campaign, was threatened by a Swedish announcement in October that in the renewed version of this agreement, for which Starhemberg was applying and which was concluded in May 1692, the terms would not be operative during the current war, as full renewal would be injurious to Sweden's prospects of mediation and to her trade. This meant that Swedish troops would march to the Rhine for the last time in 1692.⁶⁹ The stage was thus cleared for the drama of mediation. Even if the opportunity to act should never offer itself, Charles had at least saved his precious troops from the slaughter. But the new year brought hopes that mediation might not be far off.

(b.) Swedish Policy in 1692

By the beginning of 1692 fears of Sweden's joining a pro-French third party had largely disappeared, but, while Charles himself was respected in the allied camp, Oxenstierna was regarded as the sole member of his council who could be trusted to keep the Allies in favour, and any support for his rivals in the 'francophile party' threatened to destroy even Sweden's usefulness as mediator and guarantor of the Westphalian settlement. It is against such a background that must be viewed the impact made by the news early in 1692 that France, after a break of ten years, was sending to Sweden a fully accredited envoy.

Bielke had originally suggested through Denmark that such a move would be welcome in Stockholm, and Denmark herself backed it as support for her joint mediation plans.⁷⁰ Louis regarded such intimations as an official approach, but, when in November Croissy told the Swedish secretary of the intention to send an envoy, Charles replied that he feared allied reactions to such a move before Sweden took on the role of mediator and that it would be quite sufficient for the time being to give La Picquetère an official character.⁷¹ The latter applied for an audience, but in October instructions, partly prompted by the Swedish declaration on the renewal of her Imperial alliance, had been sent to the marquis de Bèthune, who had done much to help keep Poland favourable to France, to sail from Danzig for Stockholm.⁷²

He arrived in January, and Charles hastened to assure the Allies that this was not to be taken as a sign of any weakening in his regard for them.⁷³ Duncombe reported to Colt what was probably also William's view of the situation, that 'may be his ministry will be ineffectual, if he means to engage us in Warr. But for a peace: he therein may goe farr'.⁷⁴ The English envoy himself, tired of his ineffectiveness and the Swedish climate, had already asked to be recalled and had been granted his release⁷⁵, but, in view of Bèthune's arrival, Brunswick-Lüneburg urged William not only to retain him but to send a representative from the States-General to replace Haren.⁷⁶ The English king agreed with Heinsius to order his envoy to stay for the time being if the pensionary thought he

could be of use, although he did 'not see that he will be able to do any good', and recommended the sending of a Dutch envoy.⁷⁷ In reply in March to an enquiry by Nottingham, who was acting under some pressure from Mrs. Duncombe, who wanted her husband back in England, Blathwayt reported that the king thought that Duncombe should wait for further orders before taking his leave,⁷⁸ but the latter took matters into his own hands. At the beginning of July he wrote to Blathwayt that he had received his recredentials at his own request, for 'as I am an honest man, I can beare these people no longer; for I have lost all temper and all patience, since I find they will doe nothing, notwithstanding their protestations, for ye King our Master or his subjects' and interceded with the secretary to obtain William's permission to return to England.⁷⁹ It is not clear, owing to a defect in the records, whether this permission was granted, but the envoy finally departed from Stockholm at the end of August⁸⁰ leaving behind John Robinson,⁸¹ his secretary and chaplain, to act as chargé d'affaires until his successor were appointed. The United Provinces did not send an envoy until the spring of 1693.⁸²

There was in fact no urgency. Béthune's presence did little to alter the political situation in Stockholm. His instructions anticipated that it would not be possible to bring Sweden into the war, and his efforts were devoted to an attempt to convince Charles of the community of his interests with those of France and to heal the breach caused by the occupation of Zweibrücken and to making vague promises to

restore the Westphalian peace in Europe. He was divided from the chancellor's opponents by his attempts to win Oxenstierna, had little opportunity of direct contact with the king during the summer months when Charles was away from his capital and had even his proposals for a defensive alliance received coolly. He was also a sick man and died in October when on the point of beginning alliance talks with the chancellor.⁸³ Bielke, already under suspicion when he left Sweden in September 1691, fell further and further into royal disfavour, both because of his attempts to execute an independent foreign policy and the slowness with which he carried out the 'reduktion' in his province, and, when Oxenstierna produced evidence of his intrigues with the French agent Asfeld in Saxony and he travelled to Dresden without permission to try and bring about a reconciliation between Christian V and John George IV, who, he hoped, would replace Ernst August in his third party, his master demanded in December the return of his letter promising special grace and favour.⁸⁴ France's refusal to grant full freedom of trade to Sweden and her weakness at sea after La Hougue made it difficult for Louis to exploit Charles' commercial grievances against the Maritime Powers.

But La Hougue was offset by the fall of Namur in June and the bloody battle of Steenkirk in July, and William's mind turned seriously to thoughts of a compromise peace, such as might at least secure French recognition of the English Revolution. Heinsius had approached Lillieroot for his views even before Steenkirk, and William wrote in September of the need for an

end to the war. He was, however, not sure of the desirability of using Sweden, since negotiations through Stockholm would take three months and Lillieroot was highly suspect in view of his close connections with Oxenstierna's critics and his forthcoming marriage into the Olivekrans family.⁸⁵ Bethune's promises that the French would restore the settlement at Westphalia provided an opening but, since this was applicable only to the Empire and could be regarded as an attempt to divide the Allies, William insisted upon hearing France's offers to Spain.⁸⁶ Lillieroot denied that there had been any formal offer on Westphalia,⁸⁷ and the question was for the time being overshadowed by preparations for the new campaign.

During 1692 a new and politically dangerous situation arose in North Germany, to which only Sweden's immediate reaction will be examined in this section. Hanover, as has been seen, gained Leopold's promise of the electoral hat, which had been the *raison d'être* of her third party adventure, but in April Denmark concluded an alliance with the dukes of Wolfembüttel directed against the remaining members of the Welf family, who had become reconciled to each other in 1691, against Hanover's electoral ambitions, in defence of the Imperial princes' rights against the Emperor, and against Celle's continued occupation of Saxe-Lauenburg,⁸⁸ which threatened Christian's own ambitions in the Lower Saxon Circle. France, realizing the possibilities of such a conflict, lent her support and appealed to Sweden to join in opposition to the ninth electorate. But Sweden, careful of her friendship with Brunswick-Lüneburg, mindful of her alliance

with Ernst August, to whom she had conceded the titles and ceremonies to which an elector was entitled as far back as September 1687, and suspicious of Denmark's motives, promised Hanover her support, reserving the rights of the German princes. Denmark continued to press for an open condemnation of Leopold's high-handedness, and for a short time it seemed as if she might be successful. In September Snoilsky, the Swedish envoy in Ratisbon, was told to steer a middle course in the controversy, and the reply to a Danish memorial on September 10th promised to oppose the increasing power of Hanover but stated at the same time that opposition to the creation of the electorate seemed likely to prove fruitless in view of Leopold's consent to it and would be taken by the Allies as favouring France. ⁸⁹ The decision of the electoral college in November to invest Ernst August, who had won Brandenburg and Saxony to his cause, on condition that a further Catholic electorate were also created brought forth a strong Swedish protest, but Danish hopes of securing active participation faded. ⁹⁰ Of her moderation in the matter Sweden made full use to raise her credit at allied courts. ⁹¹ ⁹²

(iii) Denmark, Hanover and the New Third Party

(a) Danish Policy in 1691 and Troop Negotiations

Christian's attitude to the war at the turn of the years 1690/1 was stated clearly in a memorial drawn up in December and a council resolution of January. His immediate aim was the conclusion of a neutrality treaty with France and of the defensive alliance with the Maritime Powers and the settlement of trade difficulties with the United Provinces. Otherwise he intended to watch the course of the campaign and ally himself

with the winning side.⁹³ As has been seen, by the middle of the year the neutrality treaty was signed and a provisional agreement reached on French trade, but a full trade treaty with the United Provinces was no nearer and the defensive alliance remained unratified. Denmark continued her policy of "wait and see" in all spheres. Amerongen was told in response to his request for troops in January that there might be a possibility of some if Sweden should remain loyal to the 'good party'.⁹⁴ In February Molesworth was ordered to renew negotiations for the 12,000 men in exchange for subsidies, which could be taken from the money released by the breakdown of talks with the Swiss cantons.⁹⁵ Denmark replied first with a demand for a guarantee in addition to the 1690 alliance and then with a refusal of all military aid in view of the threat of an alliance between France, Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg. A new attempt, backed by a promise to have ships ready to come to Denmark's aid if she were attacked, was answered with the assertion that her trade with France would be sacrificed, a prospect she could not contemplate.⁹⁶

William's attempts to obtain recruits for the Danish regiments in his service met with little better success. Ahlefeldt gave hopes of them when the defensive alliance should be ratified and the troops brought over from Ireland to Flanders. The king protested that the first had nothing to do with the case and that he was not bound to make any promises on the second, but Molesworth and Amerongen, in applying for the additional 12,000 men on February 8th, intimated that the

troops would in fact be brought over. Reventlow for his part had promised recruits if this were done and if William agreed to take over the 4,000 troops owed as the Imperial contingent in exchange for Irish prisoners.⁹⁷ Col. Barre, sent to Copenhagen in February to try to obtain 1,000 recruits and to promise payment of the sum still owing under the original 1689 troops treaty if these were granted, had a cool reception, and, after the conclusion of the neutrality treaty with France in March, which forbade recruiting, he had to be content, in spite of reports from Würtemberg of heavy losses, with the offer of an opportunity to secure a number unofficially in Norway or Courland.⁹⁸

William expressed alarm in June at Danish mobilisation, and rumours, strongly supported by and possibly emanating from Molesworth, became current in April that a design had been formed against Hamburg after the fall of Mons, but the scare subsided again in May, and after the trade convention in June Molesworth was ordered to make a fresh attempt to obtain troops.⁹⁹ The aims were now, however, more modest. He was to offer a stricter defensive alliance in exchange for 5,000 troops and additional recruits. Ahlefeldt said that all trade disputes would first have to be settled, and in Copenhagen it was said that 2,000 might be given as the Imperial contingent when all claims on the Emperor had been adjusted but that only 'secret' recruiting would be allowed.¹⁰⁰ William considered the plan unjust but was willing to discuss it with Windischgrätz. The latter was, however, equally unenthusiastic and found the Emperor

disinclined.¹⁰¹

Württemberg himself came to Copenhagen in March 1692 with orders to try again for the 5,000 men and, if this were found impossible, to discuss the 2,000 as the Imperial contingent.¹⁰² The campaign was drawing too near to neglect any opportunity. Of the first possibility there was no hope, as is evident from the memorandum drawn up for Christian himself in February and entitled 'Reasons for not reducing the strength of the army'.¹⁰³ The second, in spite of Molesworth's report that the Danes were likely to 'treat us more civilly than hitherto (they have) done. being sensible of ye false step they have made in suffering Hanover and Münster to close wth ye Emperor before them',¹⁰⁴ depended at first on an offer, made to Martangis in January, of a Danish battalion as a counter-balance. This scheme merely annoyed William and was rejected by France with some contempt.¹⁰⁵ But Christian wanted to show good-will and maintain the corps and hit on another device, which, however, suited neither belligerent much better. Denmark signed an agreement on April 11th for the 2,000 troops to be hired from Brandenburg,¹⁰⁶ whose intrigues Molesworth was blaming, with little or no apparent justification, for the Allies' failure to gain Denmark.¹⁰⁷

On the whole 1691 was a quiet year for Danish diplomacy. Martangis offered subsidies for a third party, but Stockfleth failed to obtain any promise of Swedish co-operation, and Christian was quite unwilling to act alone, especially as he himself had eyes on the mediation.¹⁰⁸ At the end of the year Reventlow proposed this to Schmettau, the Brandenburg envoy at

the Hague, together with an agreement to attack France if Louis rejected just terms. Heinsius treated it all with justifiable caution and advised William that, even if Denmark was found to be acting above board, she should be told that the offer was premature and that, when the time came, both Northern Crowns could be approached. William was, however, interested to know what terms Denmark considered just, and a month later, on January 22nd 1692, he wrote to the pensionary, after painting a very gloomy picture of the situation, that he would like to know what Denmark could get from France. His sentiments were passed on to Schmettau, but no more is heard of mediation until the discussion between Heinsius and Lillieroot referred to above.¹⁰⁹

(b) The Revival of Alliance Hopes: The Missions of Skeel, Württemberg and Plessen in 1692

In January 1692 Danish finances were taken out of the hands of Brandt, whose efficiency Christian had long suspected, and given to Plessen.¹¹⁰ In time the Mecklenburger's pro-English sympathies came to exercise a significant influence on his adopted country's foreign policy, but no immediate change of course is apparent. Mogens Christiansen Skeel,¹¹¹ who was sent in March, rather against his will, to replace Ahlefeldt, who had been recalled from London the previous September, was the new minister's nominee,¹¹² but Meyercrone continued to receive repeated orders to persuade Louis to grant an extra 50,000 Rd. in subsidies and in Copenhagen much was made to turn on his success.¹¹³

Skeel's instructions were to offer mediation, which, he

was to state, had already been accepted by Brandenburg and the Emperor, a closer alliance and a trade settlement and to ask for William's support in Denmark's trade negotiations with the United Provinces.¹¹⁴ He was well received by the English king when he arrived in the Hague at the end of April, and the same month a treaty project was drawn up in Copenhagen and given to Würtemberg to carry back with him at the end of his recruiting mission. It provided for 16,000 men and twenty to twenty-five ships, to be supported by annual subsidies of 300,000 Rd. and held in readiness to aid the Allies in case another power should join France or a third party should attack them, and for the lending of 4 - 5,000 troops immediately on conditions, but at the same time as it was composed it was resolved to draw out negotiations with the Maritime Powers as long as there seemed to be hope of receiving from France 250,000 Rd. each year for no added risk.¹¹⁵

William discussed the project with Würtemberg on the duke's return but showed little enthusiasm for it; he offered 200,000 Rd. for the loan of 5,000 men. Würtemberg claimed in his report to Reventlow on this talk that the king was willing to go up to 250,000 Rd., although William later said he could not remember such an offer, and had suggested that Plessen, who was coming to the Hague on prince George's affairs, might negotiate on this basis.¹¹⁶ It was decided in Copenhagen to let Plessen discuss the matter but to temporize and, as in 1691, to watch the outcome of the campaign. Louis finally gave way over the increased subsidy, and in July Christian determined to make the question

of an alliance depend on the result of negotiations being conducted with Mecklenburg, Wolfenbüttel and Sweden on the third party and Saxe-Lauenburg and finally, to win still more time as well as some prestige, to tell William that, since Plessen, who was delayed on purpose in Mecklenburg, could not yet come to the Hague and could not be spared long enough to negotiate there and since to give powers to Skeel might upset Sweden and France, an English envoy should be sent to replace Molesworth.¹¹⁷

On hearing this William, gave orders for new envoys to be chosen for both Stockholm and Copenhagen, but Nottingham found that none of the men proposed were able for one reason or other to go, and in fact Robinson and Greg continued to represent England alone until the end of the war.¹¹⁸ But Heinsius, after reporting on the promising situation in Denmark, persuaded the States-General to appoint an envoy to exploit this state of affairs and to select Jacob Hop, who was for the time being to look after English interests as well.¹¹⁹ Plessen arrived in the United Provinces at last in September, burdened further with the task of raising a loan of 1,000,000 Rd. at 4 - 5% on the security of the Sound tolls, and was ordered to suggest the drawing up of a counter-project to that brought over by Würtemberg.¹²⁰ He was given this on October 12th and took no pains to conceal his disappointment with it. It offered only 200,000 Rd. and demanded a ban on French trade. Plessen returned without the loan, which the Dutch had refused on the grounds that they themselves were about to raise one,

but was closely followed by Hop.¹²¹

The beginnings of the anti-Hanoverian third party have already been outlined. Its history, as has been suggested by Sweden's reaction, was little happier than the first, although its consequences were more dramatic. Efforts by France to reconcile Denmark and Saxony, whose young ruler had jilted his Danish fiancée on coming to the throne, lost much of their purpose when Schönning, the pro-French Saxon minister, was arrested on the Emperor's orders in July, Louis' enthusiasm for Denmark's plans for an attack on Brunswick-Lüneburg cooled and Christian found France's offers unsatisfactory.¹²² The assault on Ratzeburg was postponed until 1693, negotiations came to a standstill, and Martangis was ordered home in November.¹²³ All this augured well for Hop's mission, but Christian was far from discouraged and was soon able to build up a situation which demanded William's urgent attention.

Chapter 8

The Second League of Armed Neutrality and the Ratzeburg Crisis
(November 1692 - September 1693)

(i) Hop's Mission to Denmark (November 1692 - March 1693)

When William, in September 1692, had recommended to Heinsius Hop's speedy despatch to Copenhagen, he had spoken of reports that Denmark was willing 'to do something good',¹ and the same news which caused him to order the disbanding of the Sound squadron shortly before² may well have encouraged him at this particular moment to hope that Christian, having failed to secure the co-operation from Sweden he had hoped for, might be more sincere in his alliance offer than his previous dilatoriness would suggest. The Danish declarations of solidarity with Sweden and new joint memorials presented on October 28th in the Hague made him, however, despair of his envoy's success, since, he wrote on November 1st, 'the two Northern Crowns seek to unite to such a degree'.³

On his arrival in Hamburg Hop confessed to Rycaut that his hopes of satisfying Danish claims for trade compensation had been dashed by reports of new seizures and that he even feared a complete breach.⁴ In the same town he caught up with Plessen, who claimed that he had not forwarded the counter-project to Copenhagen, since it differed so widely from that given to Würtemberg, and that the 250,000 Rd. offered would merely cover the loss incurred by the ban on French trade.⁵ Heinsius could not believe that he had kept the allied alliance proposals with him and guessed that he had wished, by pretending

to have done so, to demonstrate both his zeal for good relations between his government and the Maritime Powers and the shortcomings of the project.⁶ The pensionary was right in so far as the latter had in fact been sent home and possibly also in judging Plessen's motives, although the minister had simply written in his despatch that Hop might not want the real purpose of his embassy acknowledged so soon.⁷ Christian doubtless welcomed a further opportunity to win time and learn what could be gained from France.

Hop left Hamburg again before Plessen and arrived in Copenhagen on November 6th to stay with his brother-in-law Goes,⁸ in whose company he resumed negotiations on a trade treaty with Danish ministers on November 16th.⁹ Plessen did not arrive until the 19th, and only then could the question of an alliance be broached.¹⁰ As was to be expected, the Allies' counter-project was immediately rejected. The Danes offered instead a maximum of 5,000 troops, of whom some were to be retained in Dutch service after the end of the war, for recruiting bounties, which the Dutchman deemed enormous and which in any case he had been instructed to refuse,¹¹ and then only after debts and trade compensation had been settled. Würtemberg, it was claimed further, had had no authority to offer any restriction on French trade or privateers, about which Sweden would have to be consulted, and the defensive alliance of 1690 was considered insufficient security. Hop pleaded that he had no instructions to negotiate changes in the terms offered and even that he was unaware of the original

Danish draft. He could do no more than propose a preliminary settlement on the hire of troops and the defensive alliance.¹² William read his envoy's reports on these opening encounters with a diminishing trust in Christian's good faith, found the Danish security demands unbearable and declared that little would be gained if French trade were to be left free.¹³

Heinsius wrote to Hop on December 6th that Denmark was adopting the same attitude as before when negotiating with France; the demand for settlement of debts in particular made him suspicious. But, while no success was really to be expected, Denmark might have to climb down in time and he thought it worth while continuing negotiations.¹⁴ William was not even sure of this and a few days later wrote that the Danish demands seemed so impossible that the complete breaking off of talks would have to be contemplated.¹⁵ By the end of the month, however, he was persuaded that Hop should stay while Heekeren, who had been appointed to see what could be gained in Sweden, negotiated in Stockholm, where, it was hoped, a favourable settlement might help an understanding with Denmark.¹⁶

In Copenhagen the Danes continued to make fresh demands and few concessions. They offered to abandon the claim for recruiting bounties, but only in exchange for the higher subsidies and the employment of a proportion of their troops by the United Provinces in peace time.¹⁷ William told Skeel, who had urged his government in October that an alliance with the Allies was likely to prove more reliable than one with Sweden,¹⁸ that excuses could always be found when there was

no intention to conclude¹⁹, and news of Hanover's investiture as elector on December 9th provided Denmark with fresh material to support her delaying tactics. On December 30th Hop was informed that this latest move had made the lending of any troops extremely difficult but that Jens Juel was being sent to Stockholm to try and clear the way for further negotiations and that talks would meanwhile continue with Königsegg, who was offering a defensive alliance to include support for Danish mediation.²⁰

In fact, as will be seen, Juel's mission was to obtain Swedish support for opposition to Hanover, for joint mediation and for a renewal of the armed neutrality agreement, and the Allies, while remaining ignorant of the exact nature of his instructions, were little deceived.²¹ Hop expressed his suspicions openly during a conference on January 9th, after he had refused once more to depart from the counter-project.²² The alliance negotiations now came to a virtual standstill, although progress was still made on the toll treaty.²³ The Dutch envoy deemed his continued presence in Copenhagen necessary in order to penetrate further into the talks known to be going on between the Danes and Asfeld, who was representing France unofficially until Martangis' successor should arrive, and to watch Denmark's threatening military preparations against the Brunswick-Lüneburg dukes.²⁴

William agreed that he should stay, 'the affairs of Europe being in a state of crisis', at least until Molesworth's successor should be sent to replace him,²⁵ but Hop himself

seems to have soon come to the conclusion that he could do no more in the Danish capital itself and on February 7th informed Christian's ministers that he had orders to return. This was, however, too soon for the Danes; the results of Juel's negotiations were still uncertain. They protested their wish to resume negotiations and finally agreed, as an earnest of their good intentions, to forbid privateers to take their prizes into Norwegian harbours.²⁶ They failed, however, to deflect Hop from his purpose, and, with this single concession to show for his mission, he left Copenhagen on February 26th, a few days after the arrival of the new French envoy, the marquis de Bonrepos. He made his way to Brunswick to help with the efforts to reconcile the dukes of Wolfenbüttel and of Brunswick-Lüneburg and so frustrate Danish plans for union with the former in action against the latter.²⁷

(ii) The Renewal of Armed Neutrality (September 1692 - July 1693)

(a) Juel's Mission

Luxdorph, as has been suggested, was little more successful in 1692 than Stockfleth had been in 1691 in committing Sweden to a closer identification with Danish policies on defence of neutral trade with France, mediation and a third party, and in convincing her of the threat of growing Hanoverian power. Charles and his ministers remained suspicious of Denmark's motives and, even if some of the councillors would have liked to see a more adventurous foreign policy, they knew that their master would do nothing to risk his chances of mediation nor to expose his troops. The idea of general reprisals was flatly rejected, the question of the

ninth electorate declared to have gone too far and the suggestion that a third mediation offer should be made turned down as inconsistent with Sweden's dignity.²⁸ Denmark was, however, not to be easily discouraged. Every move she made had to take Swedish reactions into consideration.

In September 1692 the council in Copenhagen had decided to use Bielke to try to extract a more favourable reaction in Stockholm,²⁹ but the marshal's disgrace scotched this plan. He had, however, proposed to the Danes that Jens Juel might be sent on a special mission, and Christian had in June promised him through Hansen, Danish secret agent in Stockholm, that this would be done. Some encouragement was also given by orders issued by Charles in November for the junction of Danish and Swedish convoys, for which the Danes had been working unsuccessfully since the first northern trade convention, by Sweden's professions of solidarity with Denmark and by her rather firmer line on the princes' rights in the electoral dispute. Juel arrived in Stockholm on January 13th.³⁰

The Allies had little fears of his succeeding in persuading Sweden to offer joint mediation or to enter the system of anti-Hanoverian alliances built up by Denmark during 1692, but it was felt generally that his journey boded no good and that on the question of French trade he might well succeed in concluding a new agreement.³¹ These forecasts proved correct. Juel was told that opposition to the ninth electorate would endanger Sweden's mediation prospects and that the Hanoverian envoy would be received as an elector's represent-

ative. He met with a like rebuff when he renewed the invitations to joint mediation.³² Once Christian decided, however, to press on with trade talks alone great progress was made. There was still considerable Swedish hesitation over reprisals, but excuses for avoiding such had been found in the past and the threat of them promised considerable gains. It was agreed to set September 1st as the time limit for satisfaction to be made and to present demands in April. If any counter-measures were to be taken by the Maritime Powers, the terms of the 1690 defensive alliance were to come into operation. A treaty incorporating these provisions was signed on March 17th.³³ Juel stayed in Stockholm to help Luxdorph wring what advantage he could from circumstances which were to change rapidly during the following months.

(b.) The Reactions of the Maritime Powers

Greg was able to send a copy of the new Dano-Swedish convention to Blathwayt at the beginning of May.³⁴ Already on May 11th Lillieroot and Lente presented claims for a total of 89 ships,³⁵ and it is plain that William viewed the situation with considerable alarm; Blathwayt wrote to Trenckard, 'his Maty noways doubting but that the Committee will interprett these Memorialls if those Courts be in Earnest, no less than Declarations of Warr against which fitting preparations are to be made or Expedients found out... the worst that may happen foreseen and provided for.' Particular exception was taken to a clause making the Maritime Powers responsible for the depradations of Spanish privateers, which was described as

'the most unreasonable and extravagant pretension that ever appeared in a treaty.'³⁶ The situation was extremely delicate, since, in view of Denmark's threatening gestures against the Lower Saxon Circle, so much depended on not antagonizing Sweden. Denmark could represent the squadron, which it was planned to send to the Sound to discourage her own aggression, as intended to prevent joint reprisals.³⁷ Sweden's conduct over the ninth electorate and the third party had already earned William's favourable comment when he arrived in the Hague,³⁸ but her attitude in the event of an open conflict in north Germany was still uncertain and her trade the matter on which she had proved herself most sensitive.

On September 22nd Blathwayt had written to Nottingham that England had no binding agreements on trade with the Swedes and 'the King does not conceive it necessary to settle any instructions relating to them and if their ships trading to France be brought up into our ports upon suspicion of trading irregularly, they may the sooner be induced to enter into some convention with us which may be more to our purpose than our present treaty,'³⁹ a treaty whose validity England had denied since the beginning of the war. The main objection to it was made explicit at the end of December, when Nottingham offered Gabriel Oxenstierna simply to make it the basis of a new agreement with a new definition of contraband i.e. one embracing naval stores.⁴⁰ But such a policy brought only threats of closer co-operation between the Northern Crowns, and early in the new year it was resolved in England to recognize the treaty's

validity and the form of passes, about which most disputes arose, embodied in it.⁴¹

The decision was expressed in the regulations for the guidance of English privateers and prize courts, which had been the subject of such lengthy negotiations with the States-General in 1692.⁴² Nottingham told Robinson that the decision had been taken after hearing of Sweden's reply to Juel's invitation to join Denmark against Hanover,⁴³ but there seems little doubt that fear of the success of his invitation to unite in a new alliance in defence of free trade played a part as great or greater. Robinson, with his usual good sense, pleaded for an end of all quibbling over passes, since 'No precautions of this nature are worth contending for they being in truth no more than hedges of aire; when they come to be broke thro' by the Arts and evasions of Marchts.'⁴⁴ Quibbling, however, did continue and, although in early May William ordered every favour to be shown to Swedish ships in England,⁴⁵ he could do not more against the strict legalism demanded by judge Hedges than could the States-General on his behalf against the stubborn opposition of the Zeeland admiralty.⁴⁶

The new English regulations on neutral trade, published finally on May 2nd after being shown to the Scandinavian envoys,⁴⁷ generally recognized the Swedish claims and did much to define the rights of both sides and reduce the area open to dispute. They were not, however, wholly acceptable to Sweden, and both Northern Crowns protested at the attempt

to exploit the poor French harvest of 1692 by including corn among contraband wares, on the excuse that France had also ordered its seizure.⁴⁸ William ordered the claim to be dropped, at least for the time being, after Leijoncrona had denied that Louis had adopted any such measure,⁴⁹ but was to enforce it again when the Second League of Armed Neutrality had lost its terror.⁵⁰ It remained to settle for the past attacks on neutral trade, and in July the Swedes presented Heekeren with claims amounting to 93,378 Rd. against the United Provinces and began to calculate the extent of damages required of England.⁵¹

(iii) Heekeren's Mission to Sweden (April - July 1693)

Lillieroot was highly suspicious on hearing of Hop's proposed embassy, as of any allied move involving Denmark, and asked Heinsius at once if it was intended to send a similar mission to Sweden.⁵² Such had in fact not been originally mooted, but in mid-October the pensionary could tell the envoy that a minister was being appointed and, at the end of the same month, that Heekeren would be sent to Stockholm from Dresden.⁵³ His instructions of November 18th were to make a further bid for Swedish treaty aid and, if Charles showed himself to be willing, to negotiate an alliance and restriction of French trade, but, unlike Hop, he had no positive offer to exploit and could only wait to see what success attended the talks in Copenhagen. He was to go first to Brunswick to offer mediation in the family disputes.⁵⁴

But, with the news that the comte d'Avaux, French ambassador

to the United Provinces between the wars,⁵⁵ was being sent to take Bêthune's place in Stockholm, William felt that Heekeren should try to reach the Swedish capital first.⁵⁶ In December orders went out to hurry the negotiations in the Lower Saxon Circle, but the Dutchman delayed and William grew impatient.⁵⁷ The king apologized to Lillieroot when April came and Heekeren had still not arrived in Sweden and promised that a new envoy would be appointed.⁵⁸ D'Avaux had come to Stockholm on February 20th. Heekeren did not reach there with the Hanoverian Görtz until April 8th.⁵⁹

Neither he nor the Frenchman found much immediate satisfaction. D'Avaux complained that Bielke's friends were able to do little, in spite of their claims, and were constantly reproaching France with neglect. Bêthune, he reported, had accomplished nothing. In accordance with his instructions he tried, as his predecessor had done, to win the chancellor and enjoyed some success with Charles by making a positive promise to restore Zweibrücken, but the growing activity of French privateers was interfering more and more with Swedish trade.⁶⁰ A request by Leopold for 3,000 troops, either under the terms of the guarantee treaty or as the Imperial contingent for Sweden's German possessions, was turned down on March 17th on the grounds that there had been no agreement on pay under the second alternative and that satisfaction on trade from the Emperor's allies was necessary for fulfillment of the first.⁶¹ Robinson had very little hope of Heekeren's obtaining any troops, not only in view of the seizure of ships but also because of

'the mine Denmark seems to make'.⁶² The Dutch diplomat concluded that compensation claims would have to be settled before anything else could be discussed.⁶³

It was hoped, however, that he would be able to improve on Haren's achievement and incorporate an agreement on troops into one on compensation.⁶⁴ As has been seen,⁶⁵ the Swedish claim was presented on July 14th, but by this time the whole Northern scene was overshadowed by Denmark's interference in the question of the succession to Saxe-Lauenburg.

(iv) The Saxe-Lauenburg Crisis

(a) Origin

Julius Franz, duke of Saxe-Lauenburg, died on September 30th 1689 leaving no male heirs but a territory claimed by Saxony, Anhalt and Brunswick-Lüneburg.⁶⁶ Even Sweden claimed the enclave of Hadeln. Of these the Wettins in Saxony seems to have had the best case, but it was the troops of the duke of Celle who, with the encouragement of Ernst August's chief minister Bernstorff, immediately arrested the governor of Ratzeburg, the chief fortress, and occupied the duchy on behalf, as they claimed, of the directory of the Lower Saxon Circle; Hadeln was sequestrated by the Emperor. Denmark backed Saxony against this aggression by a prince who had been one of the bitterest opponents of her policy in Schleswig-Holstein and appealed for all parties to submit to the Emperor. Brandenburg, who was not much in favour of Imperial sequestration, called on William for his assistance. The English king offered his mediation and pronounced in favour of a maintenance of the status quo.

This, however, brought little satisfaction, and, while Celle remained adamant, both Denmark and Brandenburg grew more menacing. In response George William ordered his troops to begin the fortification of Ratzeburg. Finally, in January 1690, after further appeals from William, talks opened between Brunswick and Saxony. These broke down in the following March, but an uneasy peace continued for two years while the parties looked round for opportunities to exploit the situation.⁶⁷

Celle occupied the time in seeking from the great powers guarantees of her possession of the duchy for the duration of the war. The Emperor was won in July 1690 and the Maritime Powers in June 1692. Saxony in the following month promised to allow the occupation for three years. But the all-important support of Sweden could not be obtained. In the alliance with her signed by Brunswick-Lüneburg, after long negotiation, in October 1690 Saxe-Lauenburg was specifically excluded from the lands Charles bound himself to defend.⁶⁸ The prospect of Ernst August's inheriting Celle on George William's death merged the problem with that of the ninth electorate, and the proximity of Ratzeburg to the south-eastern borders of Schleswig-Holstein provided Christian V with an additional grievance.

Alone he could do little, but he could hope to exploit the jealousy felt by many North German princes in the face of Hanover's ambitions. In May and June 1692 he evolved with his counsellors a plan to offer France, in exchange for subsidies, a diversion in the Lower Saxon Circle which would draw contingents from the front during the campaign.⁶⁹ It had many

attractions. Extra French subsidies would relieve the Danish crown's financial worries; the power of the Welfs would be checked with little danger; Denmark could pose as the champion of the rights of the princes and of the Emperor; the extent of the operation could be suited to the reaction it aroused. The plan was, however, laid before Louis too late in the year and was postponed with the rest of the third party project.⁷⁰

(b) Saxe-Lauenburg in 1693

In January 1693 Celle played into Denmark's hands by seizing the cathedral in Ratzeburg. Christian opened negotiations with Asfeld and Wolfenbüttel, who was already a member of the alliance against the ninth electorate and the most promising ally. Bonrepos took charge when he arrived and treated the whole scheme with some reserve. Louis, however, decided that the opportunity of securing such a diversion should not be missed, and by treaties concluded on March 1st and March 26th France pledged support against any increase in Hanoverian power and 300,000 Rd. for the destruction of Ratzeburg's fortifications during the course of the 1693 campaign. Wolfenbüttel on the other hand refused to commit herself beyond a strict neutrality, and an attempt to engage Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who also had claims to Saxe-Lauenburg, was equally unsuccessful.⁷¹ Denmark stood alone, and Juel's reception in Stockholm dimmed her prospects still further.

Such negotiations and agreements could not of course be kept wholly secret, and fears of Danish intentions had already become fully alive when, on January 9th, Hop was informed that,

if Brunswick should withdraw her troops from Flanders, Denmark would have to do the same;⁷² Heinsius began proposing to Lillieroot an alliance to check possible Danish aggression.⁷³ At the end of February William expressed his fears that the failure of the negotiations in Dresden to engage Saxony to the Allies would cause Denmark and Wolfenbüttel to launch an attack on Brunswick-Lüneburg.⁷⁴ On April 22nd Lillieroot reported that Heinsius was convinced that Christian intended to begin a war in the Lower Saxon Circle, and two days later the States-General ordered Hop to visit Ehrenschild in Hamburg and warn him that the United Provinces would be obliged to come to Celle's assistance if she were attacked.⁷⁵ Rycaut was instructed to make similar representations on England's behalf.⁷⁶

William was planning even more positive action to meet the threatening emergency. At the end of April he ordered the preparation of a joint Anglo-Dutch squadron, which could be sent to the Sound if necessary and could at least be used to discourage Denmark.⁷⁷ To all threats and warnings Christian replied that his sole wish was to see the destruction of the Ratzeburg fortifications, and in July he declared openly that, since Celle refused to carry this out herself, he must order his troops to do it.⁷⁸ But it was suspected that his intentions went much further, and rumour crowded upon rumour during the summer months. Reports of designs on Hamburg, Lübeck and Gottorp accompanied the massing of Danish troops on the border.⁷⁹

Sweden's attitude was not wholly satisfactory from William's point of view. She promised Brunswick-Lüneburg help if Danish

troops crossed the Elbe and warned Christian against any move on Hamburg or Lübeck. She declared that she would not recognize any counter-attack on Denmark as a *casus foederis defensivi*. But, while resenting any success her neighbour might gain, she was not particularly interested in Ratzeburg itself and considered that Denmark's demand for the razing of the defences built by Celle was a just one.⁸⁰ Her remonstrances seemed far too mild to discourage Denmark from a pro-French diversion, and efforts by Heinsius in the Hague and Heekeren in Stockholm to interest her in an alliance to protect the Lower Saxon Circle continued to be coldly received. The Dutch envoy offered the support of twenty-four allied warships if Sweden would commit herself to opposing Denmark, but Sweden feared getting herself involved and, as Robinson suspected, being left in the lurch.⁸¹ At the end of July William approved a proposal to send Hop to visit the Danish court at Rensborg to offer mediation and repeat his threats.⁸²

(c) Mediation and Settlement

Lord Lexington⁸³ was instructed to join Hop as English representative and support his efforts with a new alliance offer to Denmark.⁸⁴ The two held their first conference with Danish ministers on August 10th and proposed a mutual withdrawal leaving a token Brunswick force in occupation. They were promised that no action would be taken for four days and given a Danish project to present to Brunswick-Lüneburg but told that any alliance negotiations must wait on a settlement of the crisis.⁸⁵ The dukes rejected Christian's terms,⁸⁶ but still

no hostilities began. Denmark remained alone but fully prepared to act decisively before any counter-measures could be taken against her. To William's threats to send his squadron to cut off Danish trade with France, she replied that she would engage not to cross the Elbe only if such a naval force were withheld, if Celle took no threatening steps and if the Emperor did not issue the avocatoria which he was threatening.⁸⁷ William in his turn refused to release the Danish troops in his service if those of Brunswick-Lüneburg were recalled. This, he claimed, would be contrary to the terms of the treaty by which they were hired.⁸⁸

Project and counter-project passed to and fro between the contending parties, but on August 18th Danish troops moved into Saxe-Lauenburg and invested Ratzeburg. Two days later they began a three day bombardment, at the end of which a fourteen day truce was arranged.⁸⁹ A large part of the fortifications had been destroyed, but the crisis continued, and settlement seemed still far off. Greg complained that the mediators, now joined belatedly by Sweden in the person of Leijonclo, 'hinder rather than help one another having different designs'.⁹⁰ William had hoped that Brandenburg might be able to find a solution, but Frederick III was too closely associated with Denmark to be trusted by Brunswick-Lüneburg, who worked with Lexington and Hop to the exclusion not only of Fuchs but of the Imperial delegate Königsegg.⁹¹ William, by the end of September, was despairing of a settlement,⁹² but in fact there was much bluff on both sides.

Denmark's threats to go beyond the destruction of Ratzeburg's

defences were hollow when Louis declared that the season was far too late for him to be interested, whether the dispute were settled peacefully or not, and that Denmark had broken the terms of the March treaty by delaying so long.⁹³ But the Allies' threats to send a squadron to the Sound also became less and less effective as the season advanced, and in fact much difficulty had been experienced in forming a squadron at all. Nottingham protested at the beginning of August that England could not spare any ships to join the eight to be provided by the United Provinces and indeed relied on the Dutch squadron outside Dunkirk, on which it had been hoped to draw, for the defence of the English coast.⁹⁴ Rooke at Kinsale was ordered a little later to prepare to send ten ships, but the demand had been reduced to two by September, and even these, under Nevill, did not join the Dutch until the middle of the month, when, as Blathwayt confessed to Lexington, it was too late to frighten the Danes.⁹⁵

The ships never sailed, for on September 29th a compromise agreement was signed in Hamburg which left Celle in possession but allowed her a garrison of only 200 men to maintain order and demanded the complete destruction of the fortifications of Ratzeburg within three weeks of ratification. The settlement was guaranteed by the Emperor, Sweden and Brandenburg.⁹⁶ Hop and Lexington returned home.⁹⁷

In spite of all her legal claims, Denmark had, for the second time during the war, threatened to break the peace of North Germany and create a diversion which could favour only France, with whom William for one had no doubts but that Denmark was

working hand in glove.⁹⁸ In fact, however, Louis had little to thank Christian for. The treaties against Hanover remained, but the second attempt to form a third party in Germany was to all intents and purposes at an end, leaving its prime mover more isolated than ever. While negotiations were in progress the date set for joint reprisals in March had passed, and, when Denmark chose later in the year to seize Dutch ships for the second time, she had, as in 1690, to act alone.⁹⁹ The time had come for a thorough re-examination of Danish foreign policy.

Chapter 9Denmark and the Allies 1693-5(i) Reprisal and Counter-Reprisal (September 1693 - June 1694)

On August 14th 1693, at the beginning of the Ratzeburg negotiations, Hop had asked for and been granted a Danish assurance that the Dutch merchant ships about to set sail for the Baltic would be unmolested, and ten days later Lente was ordered to repeat the promise.¹ The Danes later claimed that such an agreement had been made conditional on the granting of the compensation for seizures which Hop had promised,² and such a view is substantiated by the refusal to make a similar pledge to Lexington unless England also declared her willingness to make reparation for the interruptions in Danish trade for which she was responsible.³ No such limitation was made explicit at the time, but Christian had by no means abandoned hopes of putting pressure on the United Provinces to satisfy his subjects and free his trade by forceful means.

With the Saxe-Lauenburg dispute out of the way, Luxdorph raised the question of joint reprisals under the March alliance, and Lente was ordered to threaten such in the Hague.⁴ No immediate attempt was made in Copenhagen to resume the compilation of claims which had been begun before Ratzeburg, but the States-General was expected to back its envoy's promise by sending powers to Goes to negotiate.⁵ At the end of November Christian decided to appoint five frigates to seize Dutch ships as in 1690,⁶ but Sweden, in the midst of satisfactory compensation negotiations with Heekeren, replied no more encouragingly

than on previous occasions and made a special point of the fact that the time-limit of September 1st was long past. She merely hoped that Denmark would be content with as small a sum as she.⁷

Heckeren signed an agreement with Sweden on November 15th,⁸ and it became obvious that, unless Christian could get the help from France for which he was asked,⁹ he would have to act alone. He hesitated. Reports came from the Hague that, now Sweden was satisfied, Danish demands were laughed at,¹⁰ and it could be pointed out in Copenhagen that action in 1690/1 had brought swift settlement, but news of the release of five Danish ships by the States-General suggested that threats alone might be sufficient.¹¹ A few days after this news had been received however, Christian's hand was forced by a warning given to eighteen Dutch ships by van Deurs, the Dutch consul in Elsinore, on orders from Goes, that seizures were imminent, accompanied by his advice that they should escape to Landskrona across the Sound. On December 11th all these vessels were arrested before they could leave and troops placed on board.¹² Goes was told that they would be held until all Danish ships were freed and adequate compensation agreed on, but much was made of Christian's moderation in deciding to seize no more than twenty-four merchantmen.¹³

Dutch indignation at what appeared a breach of faith was aggravated by the recent Danish offer of mediation, which Heinsius had believed would at least delay reprisals.¹⁴ There was now a strong suspicion, in fact unfounded but understandable

enough, that the seizures had been made in close consultation with France and had as their main object the backing of French-inspired peace moves.¹⁵ The Dutch claimed that the ships involved had merely been ordered to Marstrand to avoid being frozen in, an assertion which does not bear very close examination, since Goes makes no mention of it in his early despatches or his first memorial,¹⁶ but the strength of their case lay in the Danish failure to produce any figure to indicate the extent of their claims. Only just before the reprisals were taken were merchants instructed on the form their demands should take.¹⁷

Both sides insisted on the release of their own vessels before any negotiations could begin, and, as in 1691, Falaiseau came forward as mediator with proposals for mutual release on an agreed date under a Brandenburg guarantee of satisfaction within a set period.¹⁸ Settlement seemed in sight when the Danish attitude was stiffened by news of the seizure of a joint convoy in the Channel in January.¹⁹ Hopes revived of more vigorous action by Sweden, who had confined herself to urging moderation on her neighbour, and new approaches were made to France. Luxdorph was ordered to propose general seizures and the recall of all troops in the service of the Maritime Powers; Christian demanded satisfaction before he would consent to free the Dutch ships. Oxenstierna stated coolly that Sweden would have to await further details of the new seizures from England and, since Louis' attitude was no more promising, the Danes decided on January 30th to accept

Falaiseau's project.²⁰

On the very same day, however, the States-General resolved to institute counter-reprisals and seized six Danish ships.²¹ Undauntedly Christian turned to Sweden for support and sent Jessen's immediate subordinate, secretary Johan Jensen, to Stockholm in a final bid to draw Charles into the dispute and to promise an alliance against the Maritime Powers if the Hague still refused to yield. France made it quite clear that she would do nothing unless Swedish co-operation was assured, and William wrote to Heinsius how essential it was to keep the two Northern Crowns apart.²² Charles wrote himself to Christian urging him to present Danish claims and, when Jensen returned on March 9th, having achieved nothing of any value, the Danes decided to conclude with Goes on the best terms available.²³

April 23rd was finally determined upon for the freeing of both Dutch and Danish ships. Denmark agreed to abide by the condemnation of two of the six vessels held in the counter-reprisals, promised to punish any merchants found guilty of fraud and gave way on her original demand that compensation negotiations should be completed within three months of the agreement.²⁴ In fact talks with Goes did not open until June and, as will be seen, continued a good deal longer than three months.²⁵

The reprisals and counter-reprisals of 1693-4 constitute the last serious clash in William's war on French trade, which from now on slips further and further into the background.

Ships continued to be taken by allied privateers and warships, and disputes arose over the interpretation or lacunae of the 1691 convention with Denmark and the trade treaties with Sweden, but attention shifts from the declining activities of English and Dutch privateers to the growing pressure exerted by those of France, who launched an all-out attack on enemy trade in 1694 which excited protests from both Northern Crowns.²⁶ But the clash has a wider significance. As in 1690/1 Sweden refused to follow Denmark into action, although it seems she came nearer to doing so than on the first occasion, and rose higher in William's estimation as a result, while Denmark's disillusionment with Sweden and France after the Saxe-Lauenburg crisis was further intensified.

(ii) Alliance Negotiations (August 1693 - July 1694)

Side by side with her threats Denmark had made repeated declarations during the Ratzeburg negotiations of her interest in concluding a closer alliance with the Allies on favourable terms. Falaiseau was told 'ostez nous cest espine, et vous voyeres ce que nous fairions pour les Alliez',²⁷ and the duke of Holstein-Pløn told William, when he accepted the latter's invitation to succeed Waldeck as commander-in-chief of his army, that Christian had given him his 'demission avec joye croyant que V.M. verroit par la qu'il n'estoit pas si attaschez a la France comme on le croyait'.²⁸ But her terms had changed little in essentials since the beginning of the year, and she still felt herself in a position to drive a hard bargain. Nor was she any less inclined to negotiate with both opposing

parties at the same time.

To Hop's offer in August of 250,000 Rd. p.a., ratification of the 1690 defensive alliance, a full trade treaty, and approval by the Maritime Powers of a toll on the Elbe in exchange for a ban or limitation on French trade, exclusion of French privateers from Norway and 4,000 troops, Christian offered 2,000 to 3,000 troops, liable to recall whenever needed, in exchange for a yearly subsidy of 300,000 Rd., a diploma from the Emperor promising the toll, to be guaranteed by the Maritime Powers, and satisfaction for Danish claims against the United Provinces.²⁹

When this brought no response, he opened negotiations in October with Bonrepos on a third party project and used the Allies' proposals to put pressure on France.³⁰ No satisfaction could, however, be gained from Louis, and new approaches were made to the Hague. Even in the midst of the reprisal crisis in December Christian told Plön that he still wanted an alliance which would compensate him for loss of neutrality and trade with France as well as settle Dutch debts.³¹

In January 1694 William was approached through Brandenburg with a request for a reply to the counter-project given to Hop, while Bonrepos was offered the formation of the third party he had proposed in October and the withdrawal of Danish troops from the front in exchange for subsidies of 800,000 Rd.³² Knowledge of this offer to France made William highly suspicious of the invitation to the Maritime Powers. He regarded the latter largely as a device to put pressure on his enemies but wanted Brandenburg to find out how far Denmark was in fact

willing to go.³³ When he found that France refused to act without Sweden, his fears of an open conflict with Denmark over the reprisal action subsided, and he was anxious to seize the opportunity for agreement before the opening of the campaign. Falaiseau remained the main channel of negotiation.³⁴ The Brandenburger was joined in June by a certain Petkum, whose mission was, however, unknown to Goes and who seems to have been sent as unofficial agent by Heinsius.³⁵

In June and July talks took place in Copenhagen with these two men on a project drawn up and approved by the Danish council in May. In addition to the terms offered to Hop, Christian now proposed the closure of Norwegian ports to privateers and war against France if she did not accept just peace terms within six months, but for this he wanted a promise of Danish participation in mediation and acceptance of the last Danish project for a trade treaty with the United Provinces. These conditions were finally forwarded to the Hague,³⁶ but there was hardly time for them to be considered before a new factor made its dramatic entry into William's Northern policy, one which he found highly embarrassing and which for a short time seemed to threaten war between England and Denmark. For on August 11th captain Neils Larsen Barfod of the Danish convoy ship 'Gyldenløve' was attacked by two English frigates, whose order to lower his flag as a mark of respect to English ships in the English Channel he had refused to obey.³⁷

(iii) Barfod and the Channel Salute

England's claim to a salute by lowering flag and top

sail from foreign ships while within range of her warships in the Channel dates at least from the reign of Henry V and probably has its origin in Angevin times when both shores were under the same crown but did not become of any great significance until the reign of Charles I. A serious encounter with a Swedish fleet took place in 1647, and the repercussions of the pretension on Anglo-Dutch relations are well known.³⁸ The Treaty of Westminster was, under strong Dutch protest, renewed in the alliance of 1689, but, in spite of talks on the subject with Denmark in the early 1670s, this remained the sole written agreement.³⁹ To avoid complications Swedish warships had been instructed at the beginning of the Nine Years' War,⁴⁰ not to carry flags in the Channel but Denmark had not followed this example, and even Sweden's expedient was not to exempt her from the conflict.

On June 30th 1694 a convoy of some eighty Danish and Swedish ships under Barfod's command was stopped by Berkeley's squadron and taken to the Downs for examination.⁴¹ The Swedish convoy ship 'Wachtmeister', under captain Wattrangh, had become separated from the main body a week before the encounter, and Christian threatened to take no further part in joint convoys if Sweden did not take more vigorous action,⁴² but all the Danish ships were soon released after selling their corn, and, at William's express order, the greatest possible leniency was shown to the Swedes, who had only two of their ships detained and the cargoes of six condemned.⁴³ The incident might well have passed with little more to show for

it than an increase in the compensation claimed from England by Scandinavian merchants had not admiral Shovell⁴⁴ taken offence on August 10th at Barfod's failure to salute the main English fleet in the Downs, whither he had followed his charges.⁴⁵

At the end of the action referred to, in which three of the Danish crew were killed and eighteen wounded, Barfod lowered his flag under protest, and his ship was brought into the Thames.⁴⁶ Pauli,⁴⁷ commissary-resident since July 1693 and sole official Danish representative in London after Skeel's departure in May,⁴⁸ presented a strongly worded memorial demanding the death of those responsible for the attack.⁴⁹ Such language from one of such inferior diplomatic rank, if of diplomatic rank at all,⁵⁰ roused English tempers to fever pitch and brought the most indignant counter-protests. Shrewsbury reported to Blathwayt on August 14th that 'the nation is so concerned for anything that may prejudice that dominion on the seas....that I am apprehensive this may lead us to an extremity with the Danes,' adding, however, three days later, 'yet how far the Allies will stand by us in such a quarrel is another question.' Preparations were made to bring all English ships home from Denmark.⁵¹ William agreed with Shrewsbury's assessment but was singularly helpless. He did his best to calm matters down without offending English susceptibilities by having Greg's orders sent to him for approval and causing them to be changed so that Christian was to be told that Barfod would be sent back to Denmark to

be punished for his insolence and not, as the council in London had first decided, that he would be put on trial in England, an action which Christian could hardly have been expected to agree to and one which might have had unfortunate repercussions in Sweden.⁵²

The Danes claimed justly that Barfod had been in the Downs for several weeks before he was challenged and had never had trouble when passing English warships on previous voyages,⁵³ but, when no strong support was forthcoming from Sweden, the problem became largely one of discovering a formula which would save face on both sides. Denmark was helped by the very circumstances which made Barfod's act all the more heinous in English eyes - the presence of the main English fleet and the scene of the crime, the 'King's Chamber' of the Downs - to avoid acknowledging the general claim to a Channel salute and also by her ability to make a counter-claim. Since 1689 English captains passing Kronborg castle had failed to salute it with cannon shot as international etiquette required, since their orders were to answer gun for gun and the three invariably given by the Danes and the inconvenience to which the governor had often put them in the past seemed to them a slight on the dignity of the English Crown.⁵⁴ Even before the attack on Barfod the Danish council had determined to protest at this neglect⁵⁵ and now decided to promise to punish Barfod if he were found guilty of disrespect on condition that the English captains who had lately sailed through the Sound were similarly treated. After talks of

some length with Greg, the English council agreed to accept a signed extractum protocolli of October 20th in these terms and ordered the Danish captain's release.⁵⁶ William instructed his captains to salute Kronborg with three guns if assured previously of the same number in return.⁵⁷

Pauli began to frequent the court again, and Christian changed his mind about recalling him as La Fouleresse had been recalled in 1692.⁵⁸ Barfod left England in February 1695, was allowed to resume his duties in March 1696 and rose to the rank of admiral at the end of the Great Northern War.⁵⁹

But the problem was too delicate to be solved so easily. In April 1695 Sweden was involved in an incident, which was, however, successfully passed over for the time being,⁶⁰ but at the end of May the Danish captain Juel refused a request from the frigate 'Charles Galley' to salute and had his lieutenant killed in the ensuing engagement.⁶¹ It was immediately claimed by the Danes that the case was quite different from that in which Barfod had been involved, and representations were made in Stockholm.⁶² At first Sweden was no more interested than in 1694 and reminded Christian that she had advised him to follow her example by carrying no flag,⁶³ but she suddenly found herself directly involved by an attack on her own ship.⁶⁴

(iv) Further Attempts to Reach a General Settlement with Denmark
(September 1694 - September 1695)

Christian's failure in July and August 1694 to enlist sufficient Swedish support in defence of Northern trade or to arouse her interest in the idea of joint mediation, which,

Charles asserted, would look too much like a third party alliance,⁶⁵ persuaded him to try again for an allied alliance which would harm neither Danish neutrality nor Swedish friendship, which he still prized in spite of its meagre fruits.⁶⁶ Petkum and Falaiseau were approached once again at the end of August, and on September 11th it was decided to instruct Plessen, then taking the waters in Aachen, to visit William and sound him on the project drawn up in May as well as to try to enlist his help in a settlement of the flag dispute.⁶⁷

Independently of these moves, William's interest in a Danish alliance revived at the end of the campaign, and the coming visit of Plessen was seen as a good opportunity to discuss the thorniest of the problems likely to be faced - that of Denmark's demand for the Elbe toll. Brandenburg was still regarded as the best agent for the work, but Dijkvelt was ordered to draw up a project for Frederick Ahlefeldt, deputy-governor of Holstein-Gottorp, who was serving with the Danish troops in the Netherlands.⁶⁸ Ahlefeldt sent a copy of this to Copenhagen on September 18th. Since, however, it included a demand for abandonment of opposition to the ninth electorate and for a complete prohibition of French trade, Christian resolved to wait for news of Plessen's talks in the hope of more favourable terms.⁶⁹

A French invitation in November to form a new third party, prompted by encouraging signs from Saxony, was, in view of Louis' behaviour in negotiations on similar plans in the past and especially of his refusal to pay the subsidies due to

Wolfenbüttel, coldly received, but it was decided to keep negotiations 'en Halleine' to see what he would offer if the Allies continued to insist on a trade ban. Whatever happened, the council in Copenhagen determined, Denmark should remain neutral during the 1695 campaign and try to secure some part in mediation.⁷⁰ Plessen left the Hague on October 26th after what appears to have been only a brief stay.⁷¹ He had informed Christian of William's willingness to make an alliance but also of his continued insistence on a cessation of all French trade, and on November 30th, after the minister had reported on his talks, a memorandum was presented to Christian recommending that a stop in trade with France should be promised in exchange for the grant of a toll at Glückstadt, but that this should not be mentioned specifically in a treaty and should be pledged only if Sweden's trade were also restricted. Before any new terms were proposed by Denmark, however, it was felt that she should await the allied project which was expected to emerge from Plessen's negotiations.⁷²

William confessed to Heinsius at the beginning of December that Plessen's assurances had overcome his previous conviction that the minister was being duped by his government, but that, fed presumably by intelligence of Denmark's relations with France and her efforts to strengthen the anti-Hanoverian alliances, he found her sincerity highly suspect.⁷³ He was willing, however, to continue negotiations, especially after Auersperg, Windischgrätz' successor in the Hague, had given positive assurances that the Emperor would be willing to give

Denmark the coveted toll if she renounced her claim to act as mediator in the European conflict.⁷⁴ William was, as always, concerned with the umbrage which negotiations with Denmark might give to Sweden but comforted himself with the thought that the question of French trade would provide an excuse to break off talks at any time.⁷⁵ Heinsius replied that Lente's demand for a restriction on Swedish trade, made as a result of the November memorandum, showed that Denmark was up to her old tricks and that it would not be easy to persuade her to give up her mediation hopes.⁷⁶ The project for which Christian waited was at last drawn up, but the pensionary, fearing the prejudicial use to which written terms might be put in Copenhagen, confined himself to reading it to the Danish envoy on December 24th.⁷⁷

On the last day of the year Christian, also assured of Leopold's willingness to satisfy him, reversed his former decision and ordered a Danish draft treaty to be composed, which resulted in one very similar to that discussed with Falaiseau and Petkum, and powers to be sent to Lente to conclude in the Hague.⁷⁸ This act somewhat revived William's confidence in Denmark, which was maintained by Christian's assurances in letters to prince George,⁷⁹ although his fear of offending Sweden and his pessimism at the outcome of negotiations, in face of the great obstacles still remaining, were undiminished.⁸⁰ He was willing to make fresh approaches to the Emperor over the Elbe toll, but the opposition to the ninth electorate, which Lente was ordered on no account to

introduce into a treaty or even to discuss, and the question of the payment of any troops that might be lent also loomed large. Danish mediation was something the English king would on no account consider, nor would he consent to deplete his meagre financial resources by paying compensation to Danish merchants.⁸¹ Heinsius accordingly rejected the demand for mediation and the subsidies demanded by Lente, insisted on a ban on French trade and abandonment of opposition to the new electorate and could offer only the Maritime Powers' bona officia in support of the grant of the Elbe toll.⁸²

In Copenhagen, where a full allied counter-project had been expected, this reply was found most unsatisfactory, and on March 12th Lente was sent two Danish projects. The first involved the Emperor and the Elbe toll. The second excluded these, but, as was pointed out, for this reason it could be regarded only as a temporary settlement and was not to be produced until all else had failed. Compensation of 350,000Rd. p.a. was demanded for the surrender of trade with France, but the claim for mediation was quietly dropped.⁸³ Certain factors were now operating in the Allies' favour. Their alliance with Münster, concluded on March 13th, weakened Denmark's position in North Germany; the death of Mary raised hopes in Copenhagen of a marriage alliance between William and a Danish princess; Plessen's influence began to make itself felt as the effects of his financial reform became apparent.⁸⁴ But the fact that Danish policy had made no sudden reversal was emphasized by the renewal in March of

the anti-Hanoverian alliances first concluded in 1692,⁸⁵ and Christian still wanted far more than William was willing to give, while offering very little in exchange. When the latter made his late appearance on the Continent on May 14th, he declared that all depended on the toll, subsidies and debts,⁸⁶ but, as had been hoped in Copenhagen, when Vienna continued to withhold any definite statement on the first of these, Heinsius himself proposed discussion of an alliance without the Emperor. The project which he produced on July 17th, however, largely reiterated the Allies' old terms and was rejected by the Danes.⁸⁷

In May Plessen had been sent once more to support Lente in the Hague, but he arrived with no new proposals, and negotiations dragged on through the summer without a solution of any of the major problems. The English and Dutch demand for closure of Norwegian ports to French privateers was again rejected and an offer of 300,000 Rd. as compensation for the Danish ships, which Goes had been discussing for over twelve months, turned down. The furthest that the Danes were willing to go was an agreement to limit trade with France to a certain number of ships and to remain passive on the ninth electorate. Heinsius gathered the impression that they were aiming to spin out the talks until the end of the campaign.⁸⁸

Plessen urged his master to accept William's terms in order to ease the strain on Danish finances and improve the chances of a Dutch loan, but Christian calculated that he would lose money if he agreed to them and was unwilling to risk a

break with France. He would allow no further retreat.⁸⁹

In September Plessen accordingly proposed to the Allies that negotiations might be continued in Copenhagen by a special envoy, a signal for the end of those in the Hague.⁹⁰ William confessed his deep disappointment that more had not been achieved, but he was conscious of the gulf which remained between the terms acceptable to each side⁹¹ and did not bother to take up the invitation.

(v) Molesworth and the 'Account of Denmark'

Anglo-Danish relations were additionally disturbed at the time of the second arrest of Dutch ships by the appearance in London in mid-December of a book bearing neither author's, printer's nor publisher's name and purporting to be 'An Account of Denmark, as it was in the Year 1692'. It contained a long preface contrasting the free institutions of England with Danish despotism and chapters dealing with various aspects of Danish life, many of which received adverse comment; Denmark itself was described as 'the least and poorest Kingdom in Europe'. Taxation was, it claimed, crushing, the peasants no better than slaves; Danish foreign policy was severely criticized. It attracted immediate attention and, although the author's name did not appear until its fifth edition in 1696, it was commonly ascribed at once to the impetuous Robert Molesworth.⁹²

Molesworth had left behind him an unenviable reputation in Copenhagen. Among other incidents, he had a violent quarrel in July 1690 with Leijonclo over the non-arrival of

the Swedish treaty ships⁹³ and a further altercation with the diplomat and master of the horse Anton Haxthausen on the occasion of the receipt of the news of La Hougue. Christian referred the latter insult to William, and Molesworth received permission to leave shortly.⁹⁴ His absence was announced as only a temporary one to visit his estates in Ireland, but he was formally relieved of his post by William in February 1693 and failed, in spite of repeated attempts, to obtain any recredentials from the Danish court. The Haxthausen charge was quietly dropped, but Molesworth was not employed again under the stadtholder-king.⁹⁵

Skeel protested as soon as he had read the book and on December 18th presented a memorial demanding a ban on its sale, the burning of all copies by the public hangman and punishment of the author.⁹⁶ He had, however, little hope of justice in view of the freedom accorded to the press in England, and William could promise him little for the same reason.⁹⁷ In response to a request from Trenchard, he presented a new memorial on January 1st 1694 with a list of eleven passages to which he took particular offence.⁹⁸ The council ordered the prosecution of the book's licenser on January 11th, but no further action was taken, and before the month was out Skeel declared the situation hopeless.⁹⁹

Danish hopes turned to the publication of an adequate reply, and in the course of 1694 there appeared 'Denmark Vindicated' by a certain Jodicus Crull, 'The Commonwealths man unmasqu'd' by T.R. Rogers and Dr. King's 'Animadversions'.

The first was inaccurate, outdated and written largely in the expectation of financial reward. The second dealt with Molesworth's preface alone and hardly mentioned Denmark at all. Only the third was an adequate reply, being based on information supplied by Iver Brinck, priest of the Dano-Norwegian community in London, though without Skeel's knowledge. But three editions of Molesworth's book had been published by March 1694 and it subsequently appeared in many different languages. It was to provide an unfortunate picture of Denmark for a large number of men of affairs for some time to come.¹⁰¹

Chapter 10

The Road to Peace (January 1693 - November 1695)

(i) Sweden and Mediation in 1693

(a) D'Avaux' Offer of Terms

Béthune's death at the end of September 1692 deprived William only temporarily of his hopes of learning of French peace terms through Sweden. News of d'Avaux' appointment, which reached the Hague a month later, caused him to write to Heinsius suggesting that the new envoy should be given a pass to meet Dijkvelt, presumably in the Spanish Netherlands at the start of his journey, 'and see if it were possible to arrive at any fair peace' but d'Avaux sailed with Bonrepos in January from Dunkirk.¹ William was disappointed but suggested that Lillieroot, with whose attitude he was for the moment more favourably impressed, should be approached again, and at the beginning of February 1693 the pensionary asked the Swede casually if he thought any details of Louis' offer might be obtained from d'Avaux in Stockholm.²

Further than this the English king was not willing to go for the time being. His sincere desire for peace was only strengthened by the events of the months following - the arrest in April of his friend Halewijn for engaging in negotiations with the French, the loss of Heidelberg in May, the disaster to the Levant fleet in June - and he was willing to sacrifice the original aims of the Grand Alliance to attain it, but he

would not run the risk of a public negotiation open to French intrigue and causing dissension among his Allies and was certainly not ready to offer Sweden unconditional mediation.³ He was pleased by the news of Juel's failure to involve her in the anti-Hanoverian alliances, but, as he explained to Windischgrätz in April, he would have to be absolutely sure of Sweden's sympathies before entrusting her with the fate of Europe.⁴ And he was far from sure. Oxenstierna was the only member of the council he could trust, and the chancellor's death - he was already seventy years of age - would, it was expected, divert his country's policy into wholly unfavourable channels.⁵

Even if Sweden could be relied upon to insist on terms which would curb French power and guarantee the English Revolution, negotiations through Stockholm would be slow and open to unwelcome publicity.⁶ It is not therefore surprising that speedier and more secret methods were sought, and that a pattern was soon established of direct contacts between Dutch and French agents in the Netherlands alternating or running parallel with diplomatic moves in Stockholm. In the same month of July 1693 Daguerre met Dijkvelt and Hulft in Brussels⁷ and d'Avaux informed Bengt Oxenstierna of Louis' terms for peace. These concerned the Empire alone and said nothing about the Spanish Netherlands nor the matter with which William was most concerned, the English crown. Even for the Empire Regensburg was modified only by the return of

Philippsburg and Freiburg.

Soon after d'Avaux' arrival the chancellor had asked him for French terms, which he could compare with those he claimed to have obtained from an unspecified Imperial source.⁹ This was after receipt of Lillieroot's despatch reporting Heinsius' approach, which presumably inspired Oxenstierna's attempt to open mediation negotiations. In a second conference shortly afterwards the French ambassador emphasized his king's determination to convert the Twenty Years' Truce into a permanent peace, while Oxenstierna demanded recognition of the English Revolution and return of French conquests as conditions for Swedish mediation. D'Avaux merely replied that such terms were harsh but that he was grateful for such frankness.¹⁰

The chancellor then turned to Robinson with a request to learn William's terms in order that France's reaction to them could be observed and Charles be persuaded to join the Allies if the response should prove unfavourable, but William preferred to work through a Dutch rather than an English agent, even if Oxenstierna preferred the latter, and it was Heekeren who was informed in May of his desire for a settlement for Spain half way between the Pyrenees and Nijmijgen treaties, and of his wish that Robinson should be kept in ignorance of these terms.¹¹

William feared that to continue to use Lillieroot might antagonize Oxenstierna, with whose opponents the envoy was so closely allied, but Heinsius nevertheless repeated his earlier

request to the latter in May.¹² Heekeren spoke to Oxenstierna in accordance with his instructions and promised a declaration as soon as France had produced one.¹³ Since d'Avaux said that any statement from him must wait on one from the Allies, a stalemate threatened.¹⁴ It was avoided by the despatch of terms from Paris already mentioned.

Louis, in spite of his successes, was probably as anxious for peace as William but realized that his best hopes for a favourable one lay in separating his enemies and exploiting their jealousies. This was obvious from the offer communicated to Oxenstierna on July 10th. But, limited as this was, from the Swedish point of view a beginning had been made, and d'Avaux reported that even Wrede was impressed by Oxenstierna's presentation of Louis' project in the rad.¹⁵

To William the French offer was naturally seen as an attempt to split the Alliance. The return of Strasburg at least was considered a sine qua non for peace, and the statement in d'Avaux' intercepted instructions that the terms were being sent at the request of the German princes heightened the fears of defection already aroused by the fall of Heidelberg. He wished Oxenstierna's talks with d'Avaux to continue but was unwilling to see them extended to a wider circle, and Lillieroot was treated with extreme caution, especially after Heekeren's report that he was thought to be corresponding direct with d'Avaux through Oliverkrans.¹⁶ Lillieroot kept strictly to

his orders in pressing for an immediate and unconditional acceptance of Swedish mediation, but he also regarded this as the best means of breaking Oxenstierna's monopoly of negotiation. ¹⁷

The Brussels talks ended without result in October, but Louis immediately despatched the abbe Morel to the Spanish Netherlands with a more detailed programme. ¹⁸ He also, however, continued to work through Stockholm and, probably encouraged by d'Avaux' report of August 20th that, if the Emperor could be satisfied with the French offers to Spain, William would have to give way, ¹⁹ sent off his terms for the remainder of the Allies at the beginning of the month. All French conquests in Catalonia would, he said, be abandoned, together with Mons, Namur and Charleroi. The United Provinces was offered a tempting bait in the form of the elector of Bavaria's succession to the Spanish Netherlands, but on the all important question of the English Crown no more was said than that the Emperor and Sweden would be relied upon to find a suitable solution after all other terms had been agreed. D'Avaux commented to Oxenstierna that the latter might take the form of a pension to James and the recognition of his son's right to the succession and invited proposals, to which the chancellor replied that, while a pension might be obtained, he did not consider the problem of the succession suitable for public discussion. ²⁰

He informed Heekeren of these offers and was surprisingly optimistic of future progress. He wanted a more positive

declaration from France on the return of the re-unions and of Strasburg and Luxemburg, which Louis had shown no sign of conceding, but hoped for an early preliminary agreement signed in Stockholm and followed by a general conference.²¹ In view, however, of the discontent aroused in allied circles by the public presentation of the previous offer, Gabriel Oxenstierna in Vienna, Snoilsky in Regensburg and Storre in Berlin were told simply to mention the new terms in conversation and give details only if they appeared to arouse interest.²²

(b) Denmark and Mediation (June 1693 - May 1694)

Hopes of mediation did not and could not play the dominant role in Danish policy that they did in Sweden's, but Christian never despaired of stealing at least a portion of the limelight at a peace congress. Brandenburg, the Emperor, Saxony and Hesse-Kassel had already engaged themselves to support his claim,²³ but his only real hope lay in joining with Sweden in offering his services to the belligerents, and this Charles and his advisers never seriously considered agreeing to. Louis himself had little or no faith in Denmark's chances but could not afford to umbrage her at a time when her Ratzeburg plans promised a useful diversion. He accordingly sent his offers on the Empire to Bonrepos at the same time as to d'Avaux.²⁴ They were forwarded to Juel, already trying unsuccessfully to interest Sweden in peace talks, and to Ehrenschild in Hamburg, Mencken in Brunswick-Lüneburg and Schwartz in Münster.²⁵ In

September Bonrepos offered the establishment of a barrier for the United Provinces, and Lente was ordered to promise a Danish guarantee for this.²⁶ But Christian, like Oxenstierna, wanted a French project involving the whole Alliance. Louis agreed, but by this time Denmark could no longer serve any useful purpose in the campaign, and it was not until November 3rd that terms were sent and then without including any mention of William; Bonrepos merely stated orally that his recognition would present no obstacle to peace.²⁷ Christian naturally protested at the favour shown to Sweden and requested a more definite statement on England, but the French envoy replied that d'Avaux had exceeded his instructions and that he could do no more than hand in a copy of the relevant extract from his orders, which formed the subject of a memorial from Lente to the States-General on January 12th 1694.²⁸

When Skeel informed William of the offer on December 19th, the king replied that he must consult his allies.²⁹ Denmark might still be considered a channel of communication with France, but he and Heinsius agreed that Danish mediation was quite out of the question.³⁰ It was in fact a lost cause, but Christian continued to try his luck. Mediation was still, as has been seen, one of the conditions for entry into an alliance with the Maritime Powers, and on May 11th 1694 the council in Copenhagen considered a peace project drawn up by Jessen for discussion with Bonrepos. At the same time Lente was ordered

to insinuate that Denmark could be useful in securing the French promise to restore the Westphalian and Nijmijgen settlements, on which William insisted, and the Danish envoys in Vienna, Dresden, Berlin and Kassel were instructed to ask their respective governments to fulfil their treaty obligations to support Danish mediation in the Hague.³¹ Bonrepos asked for discussion of Jessen's proposal to be postponed until the end of the campaign, when it was, as Louis had obviously hoped, quietly shelved.³²

(c) Heekeren's Mission (May 1693 - January 1694)

Before Heekeren had become fully occupied in seeking more vigorous Swedish support against the threat of Danish aggression in the Lower Saxon Circle, some progress had been made towards the goals to reach which he had originally been sent. As soon as he had made it clear to his principals that there was no hope of securing Swedish military aid without a trade settlement, William consulted Odijk in an effort to ensure a more conciliatory attitude from Zeeland, and on June 26th the States-General, under the threat of the second League of Armed Neutrality, resolved to send Heekeren details of the twenty-two ships listed in Lente's memorial of May 11th. At the same time he was ordered, as Haren had been, to try to include the compensation settlement in a wider agreement engaging Sweden to send treaty aid in 1694.³³ Neerwinden brought a more urgent appeal, but the Ratzeburg crisis intervened, and it was not until October 23rd that Oxenstierna, Wrede and Gyldenstolpe, who had received their commission on June 12th, met the Dutch envoy with claims

amounting to 162,645 Rd.³⁴ Again like Haren before him Heckeren was in a hurry to conclude. Not only did Swedish military aid depend, after his efforts to secure a comprehensive convention had failed, upon agreement but he feared the effects of the merchants' call for reprisals in the riksdag, which opened on October 31st.³⁵

After only two meetings he agreed on November 15th to pay 76,000 Rd. for twenty of the ships and a further 46,165 Rd. if the remaining two were not released within the four months specified for ratification.³⁶ Two days later he presented a memorial claiming that all obstacles which stood in the way of the granting of treaty aid had been removed.³⁷ He was optimistic, but the situation was complicated by the Danish seizures and the French offer of peace terms, and no reply had been received by the end of the year. On January 5th he raised the matter again and offered to discuss the payment of troops and the replacement of the twelve ships by additional land forces.³⁸ The debates in the råd which ensued firmly associated for the first time the question of treaty aid with that of Swedish mediation.³⁹

The compensation agreement was not ratified by the States-General until April 9th, a delay which caused considerable discontent in Stockholm, and not until the very end of 1694 were all payments made.⁴⁰ Fortunately for the Maritime Powers the growing menace of French privateers and the official protection given to them brought an equal, if not greater, resentment against the enemy.⁴¹

(ii) Mediation and Treaty Aid 1694 - 5

(a) 1694

The chancery memoranda on Heekeren's request for Swedish treaty aid, read in the rad on January 10th and 16th, revealed the dilemma in which Sweden's policy now found itself.⁴² It was a dilemma from which she was never to extricate herself for the remainder of Charles XI's reign and which was to hamstring her influence on European affairs for the remaining years of the war. In allied eyes she remained under a solemn obligation to lend military help until France had been compelled to disgorge her conquests, and her arguments that the activities of English and Dutch privateers had broken the contract appeared a legal quibble to cover the pro-French inclination of a majority of her ministers. The only way in which these suspicions could be finally dispelled was to send the 6,000 troops requested, but by so doing she would, so d'Avaux warned her constantly, lose all hopes of having her mediation, on which Charles had set his heart, recognized by France. Even after Heekeren's compensation agreement, the old arguments emphasizing interference with trade could be, and still were, used, since the money was not yet paid, no settlement had been reached with the United Provinces' allies and seizures continued to be made, but their inadequacy was clearly felt. The main emphasis was now to be placed on Sweden's role as guarantor of the Westphalian and Nijmijgen treaties and on a claim that all efforts to secure Louis' promise to restore in their entirety must

be exhausted before she committed herself. Such a policy might be expected to appeal to France, since it lent itself to endless prevarication and enabled her to throw the blame for the continuance of the war on the Alliance while she sought to strengthen her bargaining power through military might and diplomatic intrigue. It could, however, also be represented to William as an effort to achieve his own war aims by other means. It had its dangers; Sweden might find herself in diplomatic isolation. But it was the only logical position which, as both a guarantor and an aspirant-mediator, she could possibly adopt.⁴³

Before Starhemberg and Heekeren were officially informed of the new refusal, a meeting was arranged with d'Avaux in the hope of extracting from him a declaration which would not only satisfy the Allies and enhance Sweden's position as a mediator but also fulfil Sweden's obligations towards them. Oxenstierna pressed the French ambassador for a definite promise to return Strasburg and for something specific on England, but he was told that Westphalia had been modified before without harm to the settlement as a whole and that there was no need for any pronouncement regarding William; France would recognize the two treaties in question as bases for negotiation and no more.⁴⁴

On January 22nd therefore, Heekeren and Starhemberg could be told nothing more encouraging than that Sweden would make every effort to secure a just peace, that her services as mediator were much more useful than her services as the purveyor of such a small amount of military help, and, as a second line of defence, that

interference with trade continued.⁴⁵ William began the new year seriously concerned by the welcome the French offers through d'Avaux seemed to have received in some quarters, the menace of Louis' intrigues in the North and the danger of the formation of a new third party. He believed that a counter-project drawn up with the Emperor might be the best answer, which would also prove that he had a sincere desire for peace.⁴⁶ He was, as in 1693, particularly anxious for a settlement before the opening of the campaign and remained uneasy about the slowness of negotiations through Stockholm, but, after the breakdown of Dijkvelt's talks in Brussels in January, he grew more and more convinced that Sweden offered him his best chance.⁴⁷ He was pleased to hear of Charles' insistence on Westphalia and Nijmijgen and empowered Heinsius to tell Lillieroot that he was willing to negotiate on this basis, i.e. that the Allies should present their requests for modification, if peace could thereby be restored before the armies should engage once more.⁴⁸ This did not, however, imply that his trust in the Swedish envoy had been appreciably strengthened, and he considered that an offer of 40,000 Rd. would be necessary to gain him and back the offer.⁴⁹ Oxenstierna was offended by the employment of one of his opponents after he had been promised that matters would be left entirely in his own hands, and, since Lillieroot continued to press for immediate acceptance of mediation, William in the middle of April ordered the pensionary to have no more communication with him on the subject.⁵⁰

The English king's hopes soon waned. At the end of February he approved Heinsius' proposal for a declaration in the Hague congress offering Swedish mediation once France had bound herself to restore Westphalia and Nijmijgen, as long as the other members of the Alliance, especially the Emperor, should agree; Heekeren had already made a similar statement in Stockholm.⁵¹ William was also still willing to join in the drawing up of a counter-project, but he was becoming apprehensive of the divisions among the Allies which its composition might reveal, a fear which had caused Dijkvelt to oppose such a solution from the beginning.⁵² The danger of Sweden's joining Denmark on the reprisal issue, though in fact rather remote, also depressed him.⁵³ This crisis, however, passed, and on May 28th Heinsius put forward the proposal in the congress, where only Spain voiced her objection to the abandonment of the original aims of the Grand Alliance.⁵⁴

Vienna and the Hague were, however, drifting apart. William finally turned against the idea of the counter-project, not only because of the discord it might create and the openings it would provide for France, but also because of the control it would give Leopold over negotiations; the Emperor trusted to the exchange of terms in Stockholm until sufficient agreement had been reached to call a public conference under Swedish mediation and felt himself obliged to back Spain's objections

to Nijmijgen.⁵⁵ The stage was set for the separate talks later in the year between the French and Dutch at Maestricht and the French and Imperialists at Steckborn.

When Sweden had declined to accept d'Avaux' vague assurances as sufficient, Louis had protested at her demands and instructed his ambassador to have no further conferences until she should show herself more accommodating.⁵⁶ When Oxenstierna accordingly told d'Avaux at the beginning of May that he was in possession of Imperial terms of which the nature is by no means clear, and asked for a signed copy of the French offers, the ambassador refused and said it was now too late.⁵⁷ Louis was, however, willing to keep Sweden in a good humour and not only empowered d'Avaux to accede to the chancellor's request but sent a new list of terms for the Empire, which were to expire on December 1st and contained some minor concessions. There was still no mention of William, but the ambassador promised that all conditions would be void if England were not satisfied.⁵⁸

The division between the chief Allies continued to widen during the summer and autumn.⁵⁹ Leopold asked in vain for terms to complete the official counter-project, while William felt he could not answer France before gaining an assurance about himself and the treaties.⁶⁰ If he had any secret proposals to make, he was determined that they should go to

Heekeren direct and not to Horn or Starhemberg through Vienna.⁶¹ But Amsterdam's call for peace grew more urgent, and he decided, after considerable hesitation, to accept the Polish agent Mollo's offer and resume direct negotiations in the Netherlands.

Dijkvelt met Harlay and Callières at Maestricht in November.⁶²

News of these talks, as well as of those which had opened between Morel and Imperial agents at Steckborn on Lake Constance in August, soon reached Stockholm, and Heekeren, returning in November after four months absence in the Hague, was closely questioned about them by Oxenstierna.⁶³ William decided that it was useless to deny their existence and, when Lillieroot protested at the slight to Sweden which they implied, Dijkvelt told him that, if his government were to act more vigorously to extract from France the guarantee demanded, such measures would not be necessary.⁶⁴

(b) 1695

The Imperial counter-project, by which Leopold seemed to set so much store, was finally sent off to Starhemberg in January 1695 after it had been communicated to Lexington. It was to be published, as Oxenstierna informed d'Avaux, as soon as France made an offer on England and at least deposited a signed copy of her terms with the Swedish king.⁶⁵ Even before d'Avaux' unsatisfactory reply to these conditions was received in Vienna William had ceased to take any interest in the counter-project and, in view of d'Avaux' stubbornness, did not believe that it

would ever be used, but the Emperor's insistence on supporting Spain's demand for a return to the Pyrennean Treaty and, above all, the stipulation of terms for the United Provinces without prior consultation with the States-General made him even more dissatisfied with and suspicious of Imperial policy.⁶⁶ The Maestricht talks ended, however, in December without result, and he was again willing to consider Sweden as a means to the peace for which he was more than ever anxious after Mary's death. He feared, however, that it was too late to expect any vigorous action in Stockholm to secure a promise of Westphalia and Nijmijgen and that Oxenstierna would be likely to favour Leopold at his expense. Heekeren, who was not highly regarded by the Swedish chancellor, seems to have been largely responsible for this latter impression.⁶⁷

The Swedish political scene had changed considerably since 1693. Bielke returned to favour as the Pomeranian reduction approached its conclusion and was finally allowed to visit Stockholm, where he arrived in February 1695 and where his conduct caused some surprise to both d'Avaux and the allied envoys. Robinson reported him 'to be altogether of Count Oxenstierna's sentiments', while the French ambassador was far from satisfied by the marshal's attitude. Bielke's influence seems to have regained its full power, but to have been exercised with an unwonted moderation.⁶⁸ He found a rival for the king's ear in Wallenstedt,⁶⁹ whose authority had grown

steadily since he attained a seat in the råd in 1693. While showing leanings towards France and to be numbered among the chancellor's critics, the latter disconcerted d'Avaux, who had boasted of having been responsible for his promotion by his apparent incorruptibility.⁷⁰ Hastfer,⁷¹ the governor-general of Livonia, remained the French ambassador's staunchest ally, but, while he enjoyed great trust from Charles, he was inconsiderable as a diplomat.⁷²

On April 1st Heekeren and Starhemberg handed in memorials requesting yet again Sweden's treaty aid.⁷³ The Dutchman had no hope of success after so many failures but considered it good to remind the Swedes from time to time of their obligations and enable them to put pressure on France.⁷⁴ The debates in the chancery and råd which ensued revealed much the same attitude as in January of the previous year; there is little evidence of the 'great difference of opinion and very hott spirits' which, according to Robinson, marked the debate on March 29th.⁷⁵ The answer given to Heekeren and Starhemberg on June 5th no longer mentioned interference with trade, since the money owing under the November 1693 convention had been paid and claims against England were being negotiated with Robinson, and discussions on the remaining obstacles standing in the way of the despatch of troops were offered, but its burden was the interest which Sweden shared with the Allies in

securing a return to Westphalia and Nijmijgen and a promise to approach d'Avaux once more for the requisite engagement.⁷⁶

A conference held with the French ambassador on the following day resulted in an exchange of projects on the form to be taken by the Swedish request and French reply and ended in a repetition of Louis' orders to give in nothing written regarding Westphalia and Nijmijgen until the Allies had made known their offers.⁷⁷

The following months witnessed a decided swing in the Swedish attitude in favour of the Allies. Resentment against France for her interference with trade ran high, especially after the seizure of six salt ships on their way home from Portugal, released eventually by Louis' special grace and favour, and after the declaration that all ships from Sweden's German possessions would be treated as enemies.⁷⁸ D'Avaux' continuing stubbornness brought a steady deterioration in his relations with Oxenstierna, whom the French king had instructed his ambassador to win, since all attempts to overthrow him had failed.⁷⁹ But it was above all the allied negotiations with Denmark, which, as has been seen, Lillieroot did his best to wreck, which caused alarm in Stockholm as Holstein-Gottorp began once more to loom into the picture.⁸⁰ In August the Swedish envoy offered Heinsius a convention by which Sweden would engage to send her treaty quota if France should once more refuse to give a suitable guarantee, but this was too

obviously motivated by a desire to sabotage the Danish talks to be welcomed by the pensionary with any enthusiasm; he also explained to Heekeren that 'le plus que nous nous exposons, le moins nous obtiendrons.'⁸¹ In September, however, Oxenstierna did write to Lejoncrona hopefully of having been able to perform 'a signal service' for the Allies, and Robinson told Trumbull of 'the best disposition that matters have been in here during the present war.'⁸²

William was sceptical, but new talks with Callières in the summer brought no benefit and the recapture of Namur in August strengthened the Allies' bargaining position.⁸³ He decided to make a further bid for Swedish treaty aid through Heekeren, who was ordered to apply again at the end of October, and so test Swedish sincerity, which had been placed in considerable doubt by d'Avaux' intercepted despatches assuring his master that no Swedish troops would be sent to the next campaign.⁸⁴

Heekeren's memorial of November 14th emphasized the great French preparations being made for the coming year.⁸⁵ The Swedish reply came more speedily than on previous occasions, being ready by the end of the same month, for it embodied most of the arguments already evolved. The only new factor of importance to arise was the revival of tension between Denmark and Holstein-Gottorp, and this was used as an additional excuse to keep Sweden's military power intact.⁸⁶ D'Avaux reported that an attempt by Oxenstierna to use the crisis to the Allies'

advantage was defeated by Bielke.⁸⁷ If so the chancellor did not have long to wait for another opportunity.⁸⁸

(c) Sweden and the Channel Salute

The English quarrel with Denmark over the Channel salute in 1695 seemed very likely to peter out in the same way as it had done in the previous year with face-saving clauses and no genuine settlement, but, with Sweden's involvement in the dispute in August, the situation became potentially dangerous and certainly doubly embarrassing for William when influential opinion in the Maritime Powers was already incensed by the revival in Sweden of edicts restricting the religious and commercial activities of her foreign residents.⁸⁹ On April 17th the Swedish captain Gustav Wattrangh, the same who had set sail with Barfod, had refused to strike his top-sail to the sixth-rate 'Sea Horse', had fought a four-hour engagement which had forced the English frigate to retire, and sailed on down the Channel.⁹⁰ The English council decided, since Wattrangh had not been stopped, to let the incident pass.⁹¹ Leijoncrona was simply instructed by his principals to ask for orders to be sent by which future spilling of blood might be avoided, but, when this was done at the end of May, it revived the whole question in London. The council now considered it necessary to order Robinson to present a memorial demanding the captain's punishment and the drawing up of stricter instructions to respect England's rights and to inform the Swedish envoy

officially of the reasons why no further action had been taken at the time, as well as to express the hope that William's moderation would not encourage any further insults.⁹² Before this reply could be delivered, however, news arrived of an encounter which was not so easily passed over.

On August 10th the Swedish convoy ship 'Wachtmeister' was attacked by the 'Mermaid' and 'Maidstone' after captain Ribbing had refused to strike his top-sail. He was mortally wounded in the engagement, and his lieutenant finally acceded to the English demand.⁹³ The council ordered the ship's release, 'there appearing no reason to detain them since the Captn. being killed had born the punishment of his insolence.'⁹⁴ Leijoncrona protested immediately but had to wait for further orders from Stockholm.⁹⁵

Charles' reported reaction was such that Robinson feared that Sweden's good disposition was completely lost, but he soon decided that general Swedish policy would be little affected.⁹⁶ In this he was undoubtedly right. Charles was certainly angry, especially after his gesture of goodwill in instructing Swedish warships to dispense with pennants; Leijonclo was empowered to discuss the matter with the Danes and Robinson's memorial returned. But Lillieroot was instructed to propose to William that negotiations should be opened on the whole problem of naval salutes, and the Emperor was asked to mediate.⁹⁷ D'Avaux even complained in his report on September 25th that the Swedes seemed more affected by the holding of their ships in Dunkirk

than by the English pretensions.⁹⁸

When Lillieroot saw William on September 30th, the king promised to do his best and a few days later proposed that, if the Swedes agreed that the incidents involving Wattrangh and Ribbing cancelled each other out, negotiations could begin on an agreement based on clause XV of the 1661 treaty; he could claim that Robinson's orders had been sent without his knowledge.⁹⁹ Dankelman, the Brandenburg envoy in London, offered his help and suggested that the ships of each nation should be instructed to avoid each other.¹⁰⁰ William was as pleased with Sweden's apparent reasonableness as Charles declared himself to be with William's, but the latter could not dictate any solution and remained deeply concerned.¹⁰¹ The need for a hasty settlement of some kind was emphasized by a fresh encounter just before Christmas, in which six Swedes on the 'Liefland' were killed by the guns of the 'Burlington' and 'Siren'.¹⁰² Finally, in mid-January, Russell adopted Dankelman's plan for avoidance, and the council authorized him on January 26th to consult with the admiralty on the issuing of the necessary orders.¹⁰³ The Swedes had favoured a reciprocity agreement, but this could plainly not be concluded in a short time if at all, and Charles expressed himself satisfied with this temporary expedient.¹⁰⁴ It was sufficient to prevent trouble for the remainder of the war, and Denmark, who had already shown signs in October of weakening her attitude, let the matter drop.¹⁰⁵

Chapter 11

Failure in Sweden (November 1695 - January 1697)

(i) The Revival of the Holstein-Gottorp Problem and its Consequences

(a) Denmark, Sweden and Holstein-Gottorp 1690-5

One of the excuses for the fresh refusal of treaty aid given in the Swedish reply to Heekeren and Starhemberg on November 30th was the threatening situation brought about by the revival, in an acute form, of the disputes between the duke of Holstein-Gottorp and the king of Denmark. On the afternoon of the very day on which the råð had determined on its answer to the Allies' request, but too late to influence its decision, a messenger arrived in Stockholm with an appeal for help from the duke. Denmark, he claimed, was preparing to attack him.¹

This was no sudden and dramatic gesture. As has been described in Chapter 2, the settlement in Altona had done nothing to resolve the fundamental differences between king and duke, both of whom were almost certain to exploit them whenever an opportunity presented itself. Christian Albrekt, largely it seems influenced by his chief minister Ahlefeldt, had shown himself anxious during his remaining years to effect a conciliation with Christian V, even at the risk of offending his Swedish ally. In 1690 he agreed with Bielke to allow a limited number of Swedish troops to continue to augment his army only on condition that they were taken into his service. At the beginning of 1691 he initiated negotiations with Denmark on outstanding problems but, in spite of offers of help from

Brandenburg and the United Provinces, made little progress. The most that he could gain was a compromise agreement in the autumn of 1694, by which a Danish dragoon regiment replaced that half of the Swedish troops in his pay which Charles XI had withdrawn, as he was entitled to do after three years under the terms of the 1690 agreement. On December 27th of the same year the duke died.²

The new duke, Frederick IV, was twenty-four, ambitious, highly favoured by Charles XI, at whose court he had spent his time since the beginning of 1692, and promised, it was believed, to the Swedish princess Hedvig Sofia. One of his first acts was to dismiss his father's ministers and promote his own favourite, Wedderkop. Christian V was at once put on his guard, and, when Sweden agreed to lend Frederick 500 troops from Bremen and Pomerania, he created difficulties over the oath which the young man had to take to him as overlord and demanded to see Christian Albrekt's will. Frederick refused to yield, and in August 1695 broke off negotiations and appealed to Stockholm and Vienna for assistance. Christian expressed great indignation at such a move and presented a series of demands which included the dismissal of all foreign troops and renewal of the 'unions'. At the end of October he suspended the joint High Court and Frederick began to recruit. Sweden was not wholly pleased with some of the duke's counter-claims, especially that demanding the abolition of the 'communions' which governed the lands of the knights and prelates, and at first tried conciliation but, fearing that

he would look elsewhere for a protector, she began to back her offers of mediation and proposals for a meeting of guarantors in Hamburg with threats. Denmark persisted in her usual claim that the dispute was a purely domestic matter.³

(b) The Stockholm Negotiation (November 1695 to February 1696)

Receipt of the duke's appeal at the end of November caused the råð to be recalled and the question of treaty aid to be revived. Oxenstierna, in what can only be interpreted as an attempt to favour the Allies, pointed out that, if their requests were again turned down, they might well choose to leave Frederick to his fate, but he was overruled by his colleagues who wished, justifiably, to keep the two matters distinct, and the previous decision stood.⁴ Sweden's envoys at the courts of the Altona guarantors were simply instructed to call for pressure to be put on Denmark to restrain her from aggression and for representatives to be sent to Hamburg.⁵

Heinsius, however, could not offer Lillieroot much encouragement. He in fact imitated Oxenstierna in linking Sweden's refusal of military help with the new Gottorp crisis and added her action against foreign merchants and Calvinists and Denmark's seeming willingness to reach agreement with the Allies as further reasons for inaction by the Maritime Powers.⁶ William confided to the pensionary that he believed some good might be done by a conference in Hamburg, but he suspected that Sweden would not act with sufficient vigour when the time came and would leave others to face Denmark's wrath. He refused therefore to commit himself until assured on this score.⁷

Leijoncrona had to report that there was little enthusiasm for the duke's cause.⁸

Oxenstierna continued to impress upon his master the dangers of isolation and advised him to promise the Allies aid in exchange for a guarantee to observe treaties and a settlement on the troops' maintenance.⁹ D'Avaux remained meanwhile as adamant as ever in the face of a fresh appeal for a satisfactory French declaration of adherence to Westphalia and Nijmijgen. France was anxious to gain time, and an attempt to by-pass the ambassador via Palmquist met with a sharp rebuff from Croissy.¹⁰

Tension in North Germany mounted steadily, and on January 10th, the day on which the new appeal was made to the French ambassador, orders were sent to Bielke and Dahlberg to be ready to march and to prepare the fleet for action in the duke's defence.¹¹

It was at this stage that Heekeren, acting on his own initiative under the promptings of the arguments put forward in the råd and a new request from Charles for the fulfilment of the Altona guarantees, came forward with a proposal to link Sweden's interests in the Holstein-Gottorp question with the Allies' interest in Swedish troops. He offered on January 15th to conclude an alliance in defence of the duke in exchange for a commitment to send the Swedish contingent once the quarrel had been settled.¹² This was debated in the råd three days later. Wrede again urged that the two matters be kept separate and warned of the danger of Sweden's being drawn into the

general European conflict. Charles was suspicious, especially as Heekeren had no authority to show for his plan, but the chancellor's views were becoming more influential as the threat from Denmark drew nearer, and the king agreed, although unwillingly, to allow a project to be drawn up offering aid when the differences between Frederick IV and Christian V had been 'concerted, brought to a Negotiation...& in due manner concluded & put in a state of security'.¹³ He comforted himself with the thought that no troops would have to be sent to the coming campaign, but a reluctance to part with them at all dominated his attitude to the subsequent negotiations.¹⁴

A project was drawn up in the chancery and discussed in the råd on January 22nd and 23rd, when Sweden's various treaty obligations were also examined. This project insisted not only on a final settlement in Schleswig-Holstein and the support of an allied squadron to that end, but also compensation from ships seized by Spain as well as the Maritime Powers and a promise to accept Swedish mediation when France promised to restore Westphalia and Nijmijgen before giving aid, for which a monthly subsidy would be demanded. While Charles was inclined to support the views Wrede had expressed when the subject was first raised and claimed that the ban on trade and claims to the Channel salute were 'such great indignities that we have sufficient reason to withhold our help from them', Wrede now drew nearer to Oxenstierna, and the

project was approved with some modifications, which included the abandonment of the mediation clause.¹⁵ Oxenstierna was hopeful when he met Heekeren, Starhemberg and Robinson, who had agreed to take part in the negotiations with some reluctance, on the 24th, but d'Avaux had written to Louis that, if the Swedish conditions were insisted upon, there was little to be feared.¹⁶ He felt, however, that some counter-action should be taken and on February 1st promised Charles a declaration on the guarantees demanded as soon as a similar one was given by the Allies, when Swedish mediation would be accepted, and that Sweden would be allowed to decide what alterations in Westphalia and Nijmijgen should be admitted. The Allies found his pronouncement insufficient, but he could go no further.¹⁷ On February 10th he tried again to wreck the talks by acting on his instructions to offer French mediation in the Holstein-Gottorp dispute. Charles refused the offer as politely as he could.¹⁸

The allied envoys commented on the Swedish project in a conference on February 8th. They found the articles on Holstein-Gottorp generally acceptable but protested at the demand for maintenance of the treaty troops, which, Robinson had calculated, would require 320,000 Rd.p.a., and at the trade clauses, especially when the settlement of claims against England had, it was asserted, been postponed by Sweden's persecution of her foreign merchants. They proposed in reply that the help should be despatched as soon as the duke could be considered out of danger and that it should be paid for by an

annual lump sum, remain with the Alliance throughout the winter and be supplemented by recruits from Sweden's Baltic possessions as a replacement for the twelve ships which had been long before written off. Heekeren was far from optimistic and wrote on the 12th that his hopes were almost gone.¹⁹

A new Swedish project, handed over on February 18th, embodied the råd's decision to give way to none of the allied demands, and, in spite of further exchanges, no material progress was made. On February 22nd the envoys broke off negotiations, in spite of Oxenstierna's pleas that something could be settled by further talks.²⁰

The chancellor was genuinely surprised by such an abrupt termination, and Wallenstedt believed the negotiations would be resumed,²¹ but no move was made. Both sides must bear some responsibility for the failure. The Allies might have been wiser to demonstrate their willingness by continuing discussions, even if they could see no hope of a settlement. On the other hand Charles could have been more pliant without committing himself irretrievably. He was suspicious from the beginning and never satisfied that the risks in which he was being asked to involve his country and his troops were worth what he was offered. As Robinson noted, he was strongly affected by the argument, first put forward by Wrede in the meeting of the råd on January 18th, that the Allies were obliged in any case to defend the duke's rights.²²

William had never been hopeful about the outcome of the talks, for his belief in the corruption of the Swedish court

was as strong as ever.²³ Heinsius immediately reflected in his letters to Heekeren both the hardening of the Maritime Powers' attitude to Sweden and their failure to appreciate the motivation of her policy. It was considered, he told the envoy, that more had been gained than lost by breaking off negotiations, since the Swedes would understand in this way that the Allies were not able to be deceived. At the same time he sent instructions to manage Sweden for the sake of Holstein-Gottorp and try to gain her sympathies by bribery.²⁴

Such management was, however, exceedingly difficult, since both parties had been left embittered by the failure of the February talks. Charles was angered by the Allies' demands and their curt ending of negotiations, the Allies by Swedish stubbornness and by the disappointment of their hopes for peace and military aid. But they had further causes for complaint, which had little bearing either on Holstein-Gottorp or the war.

(ii) The Foreign Merchants Dispute

(a) Robinson's Compensation Negotiations (1693 - 5)

Although Wrede had in July 1693 valued Sweden's claims for ships seized by English privateers and warships at 200,000 Rd.,²⁵ it was not until November 1694, that is twelve months after the second compensation agreement with the United Provinces had been signed, that negotiations opened with an English representative in Stockholm. This discrepancy can be attributed to the closer association between the claims against the United Provinces and the question of treaty aid,

which made a Dutch settlement more urgent for the Allies, and the greater menace of the Zeeland privateers, which caused Sweden to exert stronger pressure on the States-General, but there were also administrative difficulties, whose nature will emerge in due course, and possibly deliberate obstruction in London.

Gabriel Oxenstierna repeated a demand for satisfaction from England originally made in September 1692, in May 1693, while on his way through the Hague to take up his new appointment in Vienna, and on this occasion it was made under the threat of the second armed neutrality treaty.²⁶ Yet, when Heekeren asked Bengt Oxenstierna in July for details of the claims against England, he was told that all the documentary evidence had not yet been collected.²⁷ William hoped that a moderate increase in the size of the subsidy for the Swedish treaty troops might solve the problem,²⁸ but this could never even be offered, and he was reduced to ordering as much favour as was possible to be shown to Swedish ships seized by English warships or privateers.²⁹

Not until May 1694 were the Swedish merchants' figures complete. They stood by this stage at 603,957 Rd. for eighty-one ships or cargoes, most of which had been held for carrying passes not in accordance with the 1661 treaty.³⁰ This, it will be remembered, was now recognized by both countries, but its strict interpretation now caused the Swedes such annoyance that they called for a new agreement under the threat of repudiating the one for whose acceptance they had previously worked so hard.³¹

Robinson continued to campaign vigorously in his despatches for recognition of the principle 'free ships, free goods,' and for an end to the unprofitable quibbling which impeded the establishment of the amicable relations between England and Sweden, which was always his dearest wish.³²

Even when a negotiable figure was produced, the beginning of negotiations still lay six months away. Certain difficulties arose because neither Sweden nor England had a fully accredited representative in the other's capital. Names continued to be canvassed for the post left vacant by Duncombe, and it seems that lord George Douglas was prevented from taking up the appointment only by his sudden death,³³ but Robinson remained alone and without character, with the result that all official business had to be left to Heekeren. There was some talk in Stockholm of replacing Leijonberg, but it was generally considered more satisfactory to deal with 'the English priest', who was popular with Swedish ministers whatever their views on other matters, and in April Leijoncrona was ordered to have Robinson accredited.³⁴ Robinson himself was not above canvassing for promotion and was backed by Shrewsbury.³⁵ In July he was finally made agent and empowered to examine the Swedish claims, but not to conclude an agreement.³⁶ Commissioners to meet him were appointed on November 3rd, and talks opened on November 16th.³⁷

Both he and the Swedes urged on the English government the desirability of settlement for a lump sum on the Dutch

model, but the lords justices insisted on the examination of each individual item in the hopes of gaining a greater reduction in the merchants' figure.³⁸ The Swedes gave way, and meetings took place twice weekly until March 8th 1695, by which time twenty-eight ships had been agreed upon.³⁹ An interruption came when Robinson refused a request for an advance of 40 - 50,000 Rd., but October saw a resumption of negotiations.⁴⁰ On December 20th, however, when fourteen items had been passed in review, the agent informed the commissioners that he could not continue until he had received orders as to what his reaction should be to the restrictions being placed on foreign merchants in Sweden.⁴¹

(b) Execution of the Law (November 1694 - June 1696)

In 1617, following complaints from the estate of burghers of unfair competition, an ordinance was promulgated which forbade foreigners, already restricted to thirteen staple towns, to trade in Sweden for more than two months in any one year under threat of fines and confiscation.⁴² This was only intermittently enforced and, when revived in 1673 and 1687, brought forth such protests from English and Dutch envoys that it was suspended.⁴³ On November 9th 1694, however, foreign merchants in Stockholm were again told that they must become burghers and submit to all the burdens which this entailed or leave the country within eight weeks.⁴⁴ Although French intrigue was later blamed for this move and it was certainly welcomed by Louis,⁴⁵ it appears to have been largely a result of the desire of Stockholm burghers to gain a greater

control of trade in a period of Swedish commercial expansion and their jealousy of those who were free of the taxes imposed upon themselves. Another aspect of the same campaign can be seen in the rigorous enforcement at the same time of laws against non-Lutherans, in the main French and Dutch Calvinists. ⁴⁶

Heekeren and Robinson were ordered to protest against both measures, the one as a breach of the trade treaties of 1661 and 1679, the other as an encouragement to the enemies of Protestantism.⁴⁷ Oxenstierna promised Heekeren that his coreligionists would not be molested as long as they did not cause a public disturbance, and on February 25th a commission of sixteen was appointed to investigate the extent to which the merchant regulations might contravene the treaties, all action by the capital's authorities being suspended pending its report.⁴⁸ It seemed that diplomatic protest was to have the same effect as on the two previous occasions.

In June 1695, however, the college of commerce reported that it had been unable to discover any breach of treaty obligations in the proposed measure, and in the following month the Dutch envoy reported a revival of religious persecution.⁴⁹ To his protest against the latter the Swedes delivered an answer which he found wholly unsatisfactory, but no action was taken against the merchants until December. In an order dated December 4th the original law was reimposed but with the period of permitted residence extended to four months and the penalty laid down as 300 Rd. for the first week over this limit, to be doubled each subsequent week thereafter.⁵⁰ Defending the action

in letters to Lillieroot and Leijoncrona on December 18th, Charles stressed the antiquity of the law, the disadvantages under which Swedish burghers laboured and his generosity in extending the time limit.⁵¹

Both Heekeren and Robinson presented memorials, but the latter had little hope of success or faith in the efficacy of threats.⁵² The Swedes maintained stubbornly that no treaties had been broken and that no untoward hardship was being caused, since trade could be carried on during the remaining months of the year through Swedish factors. They also claimed that their own merchants suffered similar restrictions in the Maritime Powers, though they were in fact at a loss to name these and Leijoncrona had to be instructed to find out what they were in England.⁵³

The English and Scots merchants, numbering some fifteen, who feared that any property they left behind would be seized to pay the compensation money which Robinson had been negotiating, petitioned for a stay of execution,⁵⁴ and in a conference on April 27th the agent pleaded that, since they were not guilty of the offences against Swedish trade mentioned in the December 4th decree, they were not subject to its provisions, but in vain.⁵⁵ He wrote home asking to be withdrawn if a final attempt should prove unsuccessful and revived a proposal for reprisals in the form of a restriction of Swedish trade with England to the four months of December, January, February and March, when the Baltic was frozen.⁵⁶ Never does he, so ready

normally to see the Swedish point of view, appear so incensed as against the edict, although later in the year when he was in London he did, according to Leijoncrona, try to calm the tempers of the Eastland merchants, who were vowing revenge and considering plans to transfer their custom elsewhere.⁵⁷ The most he could obtain was permission for two merchants to remain as his domestics to watch over the royal contracts for naval stores, for a non-trading consul to reside in Stockholm, creditors to stay until their debts had been collected and a stay of execution until June 4th.⁵⁸ Only one merchant, according to him, chose to become a burgher, and nine left the country.⁵⁹ On June 25th Robinson himself started for England leaving Robert Jackson, one of his merchant-servants, as chargé d'affaires.⁶⁰ His absence, while it could be represented as a protest against Swedish policy, was intended to be only temporary and, after making his report, he returned to Stockholm on November 15th with a D.D. and the title of minister. He had proved himself too valuable to be allowed to remain away longer when peace was drawing so rapidly nearer.⁶¹

Sweden's action against her foreign merchants had by itself little or no effect on general policy, but it certainly aggravated her relations with the Maritime Powers at a time when, following the breakdown of the February talks, these were more strained than they had been for many years. The rad's support of the burghers' demands added, for its own part, an unnecessary and tactless irritant to the situation. D'Avaux was doubtless right when he reported that 'quand on a commencé cette affaire, on n'en concevoit pas toutes les

consequences...⁶² but even when the consequences became apparent, no effort was made to correct the original mistake.⁶³

(iii) Mediation (February 1696 - March 1697)

The chances for Swedish mediation in the spring of 1696 were, for reasons outlined earlier in this chapter, extremely slender. William pronounced the Stockholm court too corrupt to be trusted with such a task and reopened talks with Callières in May.⁶⁴ Sweden was understandably concerned by the criticism which her actions aroused in the Maritime Powers as well as by the dangers which a new journey to the Netherlands by Plessen portended, and on May 20th both Leijoncrona and Lillieroot were sent a reasoned defence of their country's policy to be communicated to their courts.⁶⁵ So anxious indeed did she seem to be to win favour with the Allies that, when Starhemberg and Heekeren presented memorials on May 22nd requesting an assurance on France's intention to restore Westphalia and Nijmijgen in toto and a promise of treaty aid until this was obtained, Robinson found 'some appearance they will have a tolerably good answer.'⁶⁶

Lillieroot, especially anxious, in view of his strong personal interest as a potential mediator, to forward his country's claims, lent further backing to these hopes by announcing to Heinsius at the beginning of June that he had been empowered to negotiate on what he claimed was his own project for a settlement. Sweden was to threaten France with the despatch of her treaty aid, doubled if necessary, should Louis continue to be adamant in refusing the required declaration

on Westphalia and Nijmegen, in return for a promise that no such aid would be required and mediation would be asked for as soon as the guarantee was forthcoming and that no agreement prejudicial to Swedish interests would be made with Denmark.⁶⁷ This was to take the form of a purely verbal pact between the two kings, but the envoy failed to make it clear how this was to be accomplished, and the pensionary, while impressed by the honesty of his intentions, was justifiably suspicious of the support such a programme would ultimately receive in Stockholm and forwarded the terms to William with little enthusiasm.⁶⁸ The king could see no harm in further discussion, provided that the secret negotiations were not thereby interrupted, but declared himself 'convinced that Lillieroot's whole object is to break them'.⁶⁹ There was no real chance that Charles would so endanger his neutrality as to threaten France in this way, and Lillieroot soon found himself engaged once more in the largely unrewarding tasks of pressing for immediate acceptance of Swedish mediation as the speediest path to peace and of working against the conduct of separate negotiations which still continued with Callières.⁷⁰

In the latter task it did indeed seem for a brief period that he might enjoy some measure of success. The memorials of May 22nd were a result of Imperial initiative and represented an unexpected acquiescence in the policy which William's envoys in Vienna had been urging for the previous twelve months.⁷¹ The Allies might after all be able to present a united front in their peace offensive. It was, however, too late, and

it soon became clear that Leopold wished to continue negotiations on terms in Stockholm even after the bases had been secured, a procedure which the English king had no intention of following. The old suspicions revived.⁷²

In a series of conferences following the new move, d'Avaux repeated his promise to allow only those changes in the two treaties which were permitted by the mediator, and Charles, who was genuinely desirous of retaining the Allies' good-will, promised to refuse all alterations not acceptable to both sides and declared that he would not look upon mediation as absolving him from his obligations as guarantor. In answer to a further memorial asking for an assurance on Lorraine and Savoy, however, he would not be more specific. He had gone, he claimed, as far as a mediator could be expected to go.⁷³

Heekeren was pleased with the result of these exchanges and expected the acceptance of Swedish mediation to follow soon. He added, however, that this was even more likely if Sweden could obtain a signed promise from France, and this he was instructed to demand.⁷⁴ Charles felt that he could not comply without both allowing the reliability of his word to be called in question and arousing French opposition.⁷⁵ The problem of Swedish mediation was not to be resolved in Sweden.

Callières showed himself surprisingly compliant after the replacement of Croissy by the moderate Torcy in July and made such concessions over the return of Strasburg, Luxemburg

and the 'reunions' that William suggested the discussion of a 'Public Treaty of Peace', the States-General resolved to inform Sweden that her mediation would be accepted as soon as the other Allies, i.e. the Emperor and Spain, did likewise, and Heinsius informed the Hague congress that all obstacles in the way of Swedish mediation seemed to have been removed.⁷⁶ Since d'Avaux was never empowered to make such sweeping promises as Callieres had indulged in, Sweden was puzzled and suspicious at this seemingly auspicious turn of events but was naturally anxious to profit by the occasion.⁷⁷ That her suspicions were justified was shown by a hardening of the French attitude in October, when, after the neutralization of Italy, the gulf between William and Leopold widened noticeably, and offers began to be withdrawn.⁷⁸ Heinsius told Lillieroot in mid-November that he feared that negotiations would have to be broken off.⁷⁹

It was at this moment, when William was having second thoughts on the wisdom of the decision in August, that Leopold chose to waive his previous restrictions and instructed Starhemberg to offer Sweden mediation in the conviction, so he claimed, that she would fulfil all her obligations as guarantor.⁸⁰ Robinson reported on the bad impression which this lone offer created in Stockholm, and Lillieroot and Gabriel Oxenstierna were ordered to try to heal the all-too-obvious breach between Vienna and the Hague and to prevent the conclusion of separate peaces without mediation.⁸¹

William would have liked to have drawn back and feared

the results of a public peace congress, but Louis had at last agreed to recognize him on the conclusion of the treaty, and the financial crisis in England and the cry for peace in Amsterdam were weighing heavily against him. He admitted that matters had gone too far.⁸² The situation was still complicated by the fact that the Imperial acceptance of Swedish mediation was based on Charles XI's declaration, while that of the Maritime Powers rested on Callière's promises. Finally, however, Leopold agreed to adopt a passive attitude to the latter, and in the congress on January 21st 1697 it was decided to offer mediation to Sweden. Spain, who still hoped for a return to the Peace of the Pyrenees, alone abstained.⁸³ On the 25th Kaunitz notified Lillieroot, whose powers as mediator and appointment as ambassador extraordinary had been sent from Stockholm ten days before.⁸⁴ Some days after this Callières dictated in Lillieroot's presence the preliminary French offer as well as his promise to recognize William once peace had been signed, and the official work of mediation had begun.⁸⁵

Robinson, Heekeren and Starhemberg informed Oxenstierna of the congress decision on February 7th, on the eve of Charles' departure for Kongsör, but delayed the presentation of memorials in the hope that Spain might step into line. Spain, however, remained silent, and the memorials were presented on March 9th and given to Charles on his return to Stockholm on the 19th. D'Avaux pointed out that France had already agreed to Sweden's mediation, but he consented to confirm the offer.⁸⁶

One of Charles XI's dearest wishes had been granted, but his victory seemed likely to prove a hollow one. William had shown himself singularly unwilling throughout to place the fate of the Maritime Powers in Swedish hands without guarantees which appeared to leave little or no room at all for mediation, and the widening breach between himself and the Emperor Leopold and the secret talks with French agents threatened to destroy completely whatever reality still remained to the public proceedings.

Chapter 12The Danish Alliance and Holstein-Gottorp in 1696(i) Goes' Compensation Talks 1694-6

The aftermath of the Danish reprisals against the United Provinces in 1693 proved to be a longer and more complex drama than Robinson's discussion of Sweden's claims against England in Stockholm. The negotiations which opened in June 1694 with Goes, the States-General's sole representative in Copenhagen after Hop's departure early in 1693, prospered or languished according to the changing fears and fortunes of each side, sometimes merging into the general alliance negotiations in the Hague, sometimes being broken off altogether or disturbed by revived Danish threats, and always complicated by Dutch counter-claims. For two years they constituted the Dutch resident's main preoccupation.

The account presented to Goes on May 12th for 253,066 Rd. was not intended as a basis for further discussion but as a final figure to be accepted without question.¹ In spite of the precedent set by Heekeren in his convention with Sweden a short time before, the States-General, or more precisely Hop, whose advice to the States of Holland and West Friesland provided a lead throughout the negotiations which followed, refused, as the lord justices in London were to refuse in face of Sweden's demands, to accept such a principle and demanded further details of individual merchants' claims.² Christian decided to show willing and agreed to discuss a small

number of ships, against the claims for which the Dutch might raise particular objection.³

In September, when little further progress had been made, Goes was empowered to offer agreement on a round sum if this seemed likely to speed matters. Since, however, the Dutch made counter-claims for their ships which, like some from England,⁴ had suffered from the attacks of French privateers in Norwegian waters and Hop's assessment of Danish damages differed widely from that of the Danish commissioners, the decision helped little.⁵ In reply to a Danish claim for 194,362 Rd., forwarded to the Hague in November, Goes was unable to go beyond 100,000 Rd.⁶ In February he did ask tentatively whether 120,000 Rd. might be acceptable, but not only was this rejected but claims were put forward that Christian alone had the right to punish any of his subjects who had offended against the 1691 convention and a demand made that further negotiations should be by written communication, a method by which Dutch offers could be made more binding.⁷ The Danes did now, however, offer to agree to 150,000 Rd., the sum which was embodied in Plessen's alliance projects.⁸ Repeated orders were sent to Lente to have Goes instructed to accept this figure,⁹ but interest was for some time deflected to the alliance negotiations in the Hague.

In September, before Plessen returned to Copenhagen, Heinsius tried to reassure him with a promise that fresh orders would be sent to Goes to resume the compensation talks, but when these arrived the Danes found them insufficient, and Greg

feared new reprisals.¹⁰ Not until January 4th 1696, when more satisfactory ones had been obtained, could discussions begin.¹¹ Hop had rejected the figure of 150,000 Rd. as based on excessive merchants' claims, modified by the Danish commissioners without discussion, and in December 1695 had informed the States of Holland that he could find no justification for a payment of more than 70,000 Rd. He continued, however, to recommend that a larger sum might be offered to show good will. The States-General would go no higher than 100,000 Rd., and this was to be set against Dutch claims involving twelve ships and amounting to 76,661 Rd. Heinsius had, it seems, tried to persuade them to agree to an amount nearer the Danish demand.¹²

The situation improved slightly when in February the States-General approved Lente's offer to settle the counter-claims within three months of Christian's receiving satisfaction,¹³ but this was an encouraging sign of both sides' willingness to reach a compromise rather than a major step forward towards the solution of the main problem. Even in May, when Christian was anxious for closer ties with the Maritime Powers, he would not take less than 80,000 Rd. at once and 60,000 Rd. to be set against an agreed figure for the cargo of the stranded Dutch ship 'Kindje Jezus' in settlement of all claims, and Hop could go no further than 80,000 Rd. at once and 30,000 Rd. to form the subject of further negotiation.¹⁴ In July Goes reported that no further progress could be made

and that he considered he should return.¹⁵ But the question had by this time been swept up once more into wider discussions in the Hague and made dependent upon them for its solution.

Negotiations on the claims against England were never even begun. Greg reported in May 1694 that they were being examined by a committee meeting thrice weekly and reporting to the council every fortnight, and a list totalling 1,000,000Rd. was sent to Lente the following September, but this was intended only for his information. In January he was told that 300,000 Rd. would be accepted.¹⁶

(ii) Plessen's New Attempt and the Alliance of November 1696

Denmark benefitted little at first from the strained relations between Sweden and the Maritime Powers at the end of 1695 and beginning of 1696. William wrote to Heinsius at the end of November that he expected nothing but harm from Denmark,¹⁷ and, when Pauli applied in February for the return of the troops lent in 1689, Portland taxed him with Christian's continued intrigues with France and his proposals to Sweden for violent action in defence of trade;¹⁸ William returned a cold refusal to the request.¹⁹ But in the long run Denmark reaped considerable benefit and took every opportunity to profit at the expense of her neighbour.²⁰

The French attitude after the Ratzeburg adventure and the slight offered in communicating the French peace terms still rankled in Copenhagen. The activities of the French privateers and the long absence of Bonrepos, who left Denmark in July 1695 for eighteen months, caused added offence. It

was above all, however, the need for allied support against the duke of Holstein-Gottorp and his Swedish patron, where Louis could and would offer little help, and the approach of European peace which enabled Plessen, who considered Gottorp a greater threat and peace nearer than did Jessen, to convince his ailing master of the necessity for making considerable concessions to gain the closer agreement with the Maritime Powers for which he had been working since he came into office.²¹

A tentative approach was made in March 1696 through Würtemberg, who asked William whether he was still interested in a Danish alliance. William had previously told Heinsius that he expected little to come from any new negotiations and informed the general bluntly that he must be sure 'Qu'on ne reculerait point, pour faire la marche mieux avec la France', but that he was anxious to conclude a pact.²² In view of this reply Christian agreed to allow Plessen, who had already received a call from prince George and arranged to travel to Aachen for his health, to negotiate under these covers.²³ He had determined to conclude on the best terms possible and empowered Plessen in his instructions of April 11th to accept 200,000 Rd. as compensation for ships seized and a subsidy of 300,000 Rd. p.a. and to offer a ban on French trade, a closure of all Danish and Norwegian harbours to French warships and privateers, 5,000 troops, passivity over the ninth electorate, and acceptance of the Maritime Powers' good offices with the Emperor for the Elbe toll. But it was hoped that a better bargain might be struck, and the last Danish project,

of 1695 was, the minister was told, to be adhered to as closely as possible. No new proposals were therefore to be made until the allied terms had been heard.²⁴ The prospects, even to those without knowledge of the limits to which Christian was prepared to go, seemed bright. Greg reported that Reventlow now supported Plessen's policy against Jessen, and Lillieroot claimed despondently that every favour was being shown to Denmark in the Hague.²⁵

William considered that a meeting in Aachen would lead to too much publicity, and Plessen, together with Lente, who had travelled to Aachen in April, also ostensibly for health reasons, agreed to negotiate with Heinsius and Dijkvelt in the Hague, where they arrived on June 18th.²⁶ The Allies soon made it plain that they were in no hurry to conclude; the demands of the campaign and the peace negotiations provided ample excuses for delay. The sole indication which the Danes were given of William's wishes was the anxiety he expressed to reach a settlement on the ninth electorate.²⁷ He had little to gain from Denmark which would benefit him in the 1696 campaign and can be forgiven if he remained suspicious of Christian's intentions. It was, on the other hand, essential for Plessen and Lente to conclude before the war ended, and they began to lose heart.²⁸ A project which Dijkvelt finally produced at the end of July did little to raise their hopes. In exchange for a subsidy of 200,000 Rd. p.a. until peace was signed or for two years, whichever should prove the longer period, and 100,000 Rd. p.a. for three years as a security for Danish claims against England

and the United Provinces, as well as good offices in Vienna on behalf of Denmark's claim to the Elbe toll, Denmark was to ban all French trade, close all her ports to French men-of-war and privateers and remain passive in the matter of the ninth electorate; the 1690 defensive alliance was to be ratified after certain minor alterations in it had been approved.²⁹

Plessen presented a counter-project which modified these conditions in accordance with the terms that he had offered in 1695, but Christian, on being informed, resolved to accept William's terms with such modifications as his envoys could obtain without opposition.³⁰ The English king, unmoved by Swedish protests against the negotiations, declared himself satisfied at the beginning of September, although anxious, as he confided to Heinsius, 'to discover one means or another so that, if peace be concluded, we are not obliged to pay all that money,'³¹ - a natural sentiment in view of Callières' concessions - and empowered lord Villiers to sign when the States-General gave its sanction.³² The defection of Savoy alone made the acquisition of a new ally desirable if the war continued, but it is to be remarked that no military aid was involved in the transaction. Plessen explained to his king that he had chosen to keep the offer of troops, which he had been authorized to make, as a card to be produced when it might seem important to create a favourable impression or to gain a concession.³³

Christian's compliance and William's consent did not end

negotiations, for Dutch claims for compensation and debts, which had bedevilled Goes' work for so long, and attempts to exploit the opportunity to contract a definitive trade treaty between the United Provinces and Denmark led to new delays. Agreement could not be reached on the latter owing to Holland's refusal to grant any privileges whatsoever to Danish defence ships, and all that could be achieved was a mutual undertaking to continue negotiations between Hop and Christian's commissioners independent of the alliance.³⁴ Dutch claims finally formed the subject of two appendices to the latter. By these the United Provinces were to retain, out of the 100,000 Rd. already agreed upon in the fifth secret clause of the alliance as their share of the compensation to be paid to Denmark, 90,000 fl. (i.e. c.60,000 Rd.) as an indemnity for ships attacked off the Norwegian coast and for the freight of the 'Kindje Jezus', and Denmark promised that the debts owed to Holland and Amsterdam should, if possible, be deducted from the 200,000 Rd. which was to be paid in settlement of the Dutch debts if no other agreement were arrived at, and, if not possible, should remain Denmark's responsibility to their full amount.³⁵

The alliance was finally signed on November 23rd, but even then its fate was a little uncertain.³⁶ It had been possible to retard Bonrepos' return journey to Copenhagen for a month at Mons by withholding his passport, but he was now on his way to prevent the ratification.³⁷ Plessen did not arrive back until December 15th, and Christian appended his signature to the treaty on the 29th, a mere fortnight before

the French ambassador's arrival.³⁸ Ratifications were exchanged with the United Provinces on January 30th 1697 and with England on February 1st.³⁹

(iii) Aftermath of the Alliance (December 1696 - March 1697)

The conclusion of the alliance was greeted by some among the Allies with mixed feelings; its terms fell a good deal short of the original aims of William's Danish policy, and it seemed in itself unlikely to contribute very materially to the crusade against France. Stepney wrote in mid-December that it 'may be useful to us in future Warrs but will not much availe us for ye present.', and William confessed to Heinsius in January that he was in no condition to pay the subsidies to which he had committed himself.⁴⁰ The ratification of the 1690 alliance was delayed until April 23rd, although the first instalment to Denmark was duly paid in the month following.⁴¹ The English king's confidence in Danish good faith can hardly have been strengthened by his reading of the intercepted despatches of Meyercrone, the Danish secretary in Paris, and Bonrepos, which, as will be seen, revealed Christian's efforts to maintain friendly relations with Louis, and Vernon wrote to Greg in February to enquire how far the commitment to ban trade with France was being honoured.⁴² But a serious blow had nevertheless been delivered to French diplomacy, the possibility of a permanent breach between Denmark and France had been increased and Dijkvelt's claim, reported by Lillieroot, that, if the alliance had not been concluded, Plessen would have been overthrown,⁴³ while used mainly to allay Sweden's suspicions

and answer her protests, does indicate its usefulness as a guarantee against any worsening of the situation, perhaps as important as any positive gain.

It may in any case have been some comfort that Christian benefitted as little as the Maritime Powers. When he resolved to ratify the agreement on December 11th, he determined at the same time to maintain Danish neutrality and good relations with France, which meant the continued receipt of subsidies under the treaty with Louis of 1691. Meyercrone was ordered to explain that Plessen and Lente were discussing no more than the settlement of compensation claims and debts, but the French were not to be fobbed off so easily and in October 1696 ceased payment of subsidies. Louis promised that they would be again forthcoming as soon as a satisfactory explanation was given to Bonrepos of the rumours that all Danish trade with France had been forbidden and all Danish ports closed to French warships and privateers, in answer to which he seized in December several Danish ships in French ports.⁴⁴ Meyercrone explained feebly that in wartime Norwegian ports were open only to merchant ships, and Christian complained more boldly that French subsidies had not compensated him for his losses in trading with France and that the ban, which he now admitted, was meant to be imposed only until such compensation had been gained.⁴⁵ Not only did he expect subsidies from both sides but indemnification from each of them for the same losses!

Even after Bonrepos had learnt of the ratification, and

the news was kept secret from him as long as possible,⁴⁶ Jessen gave him hopes that the terms would not take effect,⁴⁷ but, whether this was merely an attempt to soften Louis' heart or the expression of a genuine belief on the Danish minister's part in his ability to negative Plessen's policy, the French remained adamant.

In another direction, however, Christian's expectations of the alliance were more fully satisfied. The stadtholder's enthusiasm for duke Frederick's cause was considerably dampened.

(iv) Holstein-Gottorp

(a) Prelude to Pinneberg (February - August 1696)

William's attitude to the new Holstein-Gottorp crisis was basically the same as that in the months before Altona. His primary aim was to prevent by all means available an outbreak of hostilities in the Lower Saxon Circle, which would prevent the sending of the North German contingents to the front and threaten his naval supplies, concern for which, already intensified by the crisis over Sweden's measures against foreign merchants, led to discussions in the new English council of trade in the summer of 1696 on the possibilities of exploiting the resources of the North American colonies.⁴⁸ Questions of strict justice must, he considered, be subordinated, if necessary and within certain limits, to the larger needs of the war against France, and he made it clear to both Northern Crowns at the beginning of 1696 that he would act against the first power to resort to armed force, regardless of its rights.⁴⁹ He proposed an alliance to

threaten war on the aggressor and offered his mediation to Denmark.⁵⁰ His sympathies were certainly not engaged to one party in the dispute, for, while he protested at the contradiction in Christian's call for execution of the Altona guarantees against the duke at the same time as he was claiming the quarrel to be a purely domestic one⁵¹ and replied to the Danish king's call for a return of his troops that they could hardly be regarded as Danish when they would have ceased to exist as an independent body if their recruitment had been left to Christian,⁵² he found at the same time Frederick's demands for a revision of his traditional relationship to the Danish crown inopportune, feared Gottorp would be pushed too far by Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg and, as has been seen, was afraid of being left in the lurch by the former.⁵³ He could not in any case afford to offend Denmark too much and pressed for a provisional agreement until peace should confine the problem within its proper limits.⁵⁴

The tension slackened after Sweden had failed to form an alliance with Brunswick-Lüneburg and Brandenburg on the duke's behalf, owing to the latter's reluctance to commit herself and the former's insistence on including a guarantee for Saxe-Lauenburg, and Denmark, failing to enlist the sympathies of Louis XIV, who wished merely to keep the question open until the campaign was over, had adopted the Emperor's proposal to submit the dispute to the same mediators as at Altona - the Emperor himself, Saxony and Brandenburg.⁵⁵ This latter move was given as an excuse for the rejection of

William's mediation, but there can be little doubt that Christian remembered the behaviour of Heemskerck on the previous occasion and feared that the other guarantors - Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg - would claim equal rights.⁵⁶ The relaxation of tension had deleterious effects on the Stockholm negotiations, of which, as has been seen, Christian took full advantage, and which lessened sympathy for the duke's cause in London and the Hague. Portland told Leijoncrona bluntly in March that there was much to be said for Denmark's case.⁵⁷

A treaty between duke Frederick and the Allies, which was signed in the Hague on May 4th and which engaged him to provide 2,270 troops and to join the Grand Alliance, did much less than might have been expected to bring him the favour from William which he had hoped for; the motive behind the offer had been too patent, and it was known that Christian had encouraged the move in order to rid himself of such a body of troops on his borders. But it did make Denmark more amenable.⁵⁸ She procrastinated as long as possible, partly because of and by means of the Hague negotiations, but her agreement in June to the continued stay of the Swedish troops, which had entered the duke's service in 1695, and to Pinneberg, near Hamburg, as a meeting place for negotiations brought the time for these nearer.⁵⁹ The effect of such reasonableness on Plessen's work was doubtless watched by Christian with keen interest.

At the beginning of July the States-General agreed, in response to requests from Sweden and the duke, to send Hop to Hamburg to help reach a settlement, and on August 1st Cresset,

English envoy in Brunswick-Lüneburg since 1694, was ordered to join him.⁶⁰

(b) The Opening of the Pinneberg Negotiations

(August - December 1696)

Hop and Cresset did not arrive in Hamburg until the first week in September, by which time the mediators had already begun their work. The presence of representatives from the guarantors of Altona was resented by Christian, who refused to recognise them officially and was soon protesting against the behaviour of Hop, who, uninhibited by any but the most general instructions from his principals, co-operated with Vellingk, representing Sweden as at Altona, in defending vigorously the duke's *ius armorum et foederum* and in pressing the guarantors' claims to settle what the mediators failed to; Lente and Plessen were ordered to protest at the attempt of a third party to dominate the discussions.⁶¹ Little was accomplished at Pinneberg before a new subject of dispute was interposed.

Christian had made vain representations soon after the conference began to prevent the return of the Gottorp troops lent to the Allies to the duke's territories and on October 23rd issued orders to oppose their entry by force. Guarantors and mediators joined in protest and warned him of the possible consequences of such action. At the end of November both Cresset and Hop demanded free passage and supported plans for an alliance to defend the duke, which Charles ordered Vellingk to negotiate. Not until December 11th did the Danish king

give way.

The road seemed to be open for a resumption of discussions on the main points in dispute, but the negotiations languished. Christian's stubbornness over the return of Frederick's troops had evoked some sympathy for the duke, but it was not enough to outweigh the impression caused by the separate discussions, particularly resented by Hop, which he opened with Brandenburg, who hoped, as before the Altona treaty, to bring about a settlement single-handed, the effects of the dispute between Sweden and the Emperor over the Mecklenburg succession, which split the mediators, and of the signing of the Hague alliance between Denmark and the Maritime Powers, and above all the prospects of European peace. The Maritime Powers, Frederick's most valuable supporters, grew less and less interested in his fate and found in the Berlin talks, much as they disapproved of them, a good excuse to delay issuing the declaration in favour of the duke's 'ius armorum' for which Charles was pressing, since, so Heinsius instructed Hop in reply to his request for orders, this might prejudice the talks and also, as Cresset claimed, because it might offend William's trusted ally, Brandenburg.⁶³

With the solution of the passage dispute, Vellingk was ordered to shelve the idea of drawing up a project for an alliance to protect the duke, and Hop returned to the United Provinces.⁶⁴ He had done so, Heinsius explained to Lillieroot, to be present when the Amsterdam magistrates were changed and would soon return to Hamburg,⁶⁵ but it was obvious that Dutch interest was at a low ebb. It was to be revived dramatically before peace was signed.

Chapter 13

The Final Year

(i) Preliminaries to Rijswijk (January - April 1697)

Over three months separated the decision by the Hague Congress to accept Sweden's mediation and the opening of peace negotiations at Rijswijk. Lillieroot found himself fully occupied during this time in composing projects for the conduct of the conference, in making unsuccessful attempts to persuade the French to agree to an armistice, which William was anxious to arrange in view of the unfavourable military situation, and above all in inducing the Habsburg powers to modify their conditions for their participation in the talks, which threatened to drive the Maritime Powers into acting alone. Until mid-April Leopold demanded an assurance from France on the restoration of the duke of Lorraine, in which Charles also had an interest as duke of Zweibrücken, and consented to meeting at the place already agreed on by his other Allies only at the end of the month. Spain was persuaded with great difficulty to rest content with an oral promise of support from the remaining members of the Grand Alliance for her claims to a number of towns in the Netherlands, and the first meeting in the house at Nieuwburg near Rijswijk finally took place on April 29th.¹

The Habsburgs' stubbornness had already made it clear that the mediators' chief difficulties would lie in the maintenance of allied unity and in prevailing upon the Maritime Powers not to seek for a swifter settlement through separate negotia-

tions with France, which would not only harm his own status but also threaten Sweden's interests in the maintenance of the Westphalian and Nijmijgen settlements. He was unfortunately not wholly trusted by either side. While d'Avaux reported his 'grandes liasons avec le pensionnaire Heinsius' and the unreliability of Olivecrants, his father-in-law,² something of the reputation as a francophil with which he had arrived in the Hague remained, and it was thought necessary to gain and keep his interest in the Allies' cause by bribery. Dijkvelt proposed to Kaunitz that 60,000 Rd. might be employed to induce him to insist on the return of Strasburg³ and, as has been seen, William had supported use of the same means when writing to Heinsius.⁴ Whether any such amount actually changed hands remains uncertain, but there is nothing to indicate that Lillieroot had any desire other than to carry out his instructions to maintain his country's honour as mediator and interests as a guarantor of European peace.

Before his work could really begin, however, news arrived which called in doubt Sweden's position as either of these. Charles XI had died on April 5th, and, according to his will of August 1693, a regency council of six, headed by the queen-mother, had been set up to guide the kingdom until the young prince were declared of age.⁵

(ii) Sweden under the Regents

(a) The Change of Government (April - May 1697)

Charles had returned from Kongsör to accept the mediation

offer a sick man, and Heekeren had forecast that his passing would be a great blow to the Allies' cause, for, he also reported, Oxenstierna had not for some time been so deep in his master's confidence as he was at present.⁶ D'Avaux boasted that he had brought the Swedish king, towards the end of his reign, closer to the French point of view,⁷ and the Dutch envoy's judgement is not to be wholly relied on, since he confessed that his outspoken criticisms had lost him so much credit at court that he should be replaced and that he had not discussed matters with Oxenstierna for some time.⁸ There was, however, general agreement that the composition of the new government was not one to reassure William and his friends. Of the regents only the queen-mother herself and the chancellor were considered sympathetic to France's enemies, while the remainder - Wrede, Gyldenstolpe, Kristian Gyllenstierna and Wallenstedt - had long been lumped together as members of 'the French party'. Among the rest of the råd, to which all matters of foreign policy had to be referred, only the brothers Wachtmeister could be relied upon to follow Oxenstierna's lead.⁹

Doubts of Sweden's sympathies were matched by doubts of her ability to back with sufficient strength whatever policy she chose to follow and especially of her competence to fulfil her obligations as a guarantor of Westphalia and Nijmijgen. Reports flowed in from all sides concerning the havoc and discontent which had been caused by the succession of disastrous harvests since 1695 and the effects of the reduktion.¹⁰ Robinson,

however, forecast optimistically on May 15th that 'this Nation will again make the figure it ought to', since 'this new government pretends to look abroad with more concern than was done in the last reign', and assurances were issued from Stockholm that no changes would be made in the conduct of mediation or in attitude to the Holstein-Gottorp problem.¹¹ New credentials were sent to Lillieroot on April 10th, and a detailed denial, drawn up by Akerhielm, of the country's reputed weakness was despatched to all Swedish envoys on July 1st.¹² But the doubts remained, and, even if Heekeren's report to Heinsius at the same time as the English minister's to Ellis that 'entre vous et moy ces gens sont icy bouffis de vanite et de gloire',¹³ be dismissed as born of personal bitterness, the divisions among the regents could not be wholly concealed.

There is no doubt that Bengt Oxenstierna was seriously concerned for his position and his policy, already undermined by the quarrel with Vienna over the succession to Mecklenberg-Güstrow,¹⁴ and that this lay behind his approach to Heekeren immediately after Charles XI's death with proposals for the renewal of Sweden's alliances with the Maritime Powers and the Emperor. The Dutchman was not enthusiastic - such a measure offered little immediate advantage - but wrote home for orders, agreed to postpone the departure which he had planned and spoke to Gyldenstolpe and Wrede. Heinsius replied with equal coolness that any further move would have to wait on William's arrival, and there the matter rested until July.¹⁵ Any hope of Swedish negotiations with the Emperor vanished for the time

being with the news, which reached Stockholm at the end of April, that Gabriel Oxenstierna had been forbidden the Imperial court because of Sweden's part in the expulsion of the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin from G^üstrow. Even Swedish mediation seemed to be threatened.

(b) Mecklenburg - G^üstrow (January - September 1697)

The death of duke Gustav Adolf of Mecklenburg-G^üstrow in October 1695 had been followed by a quarrel over the succession involving duke Friedrich-Wilhelm of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who had the best claim by primogeniture, and duke Adolf Friedrich of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the deceased's uncle and of the elder line. The former's Danish connections and claims on Wismar, and the latter's being the nephew of queen Hedvig Eleanora made Sweden's choice of candidate a simple one, in spite of Friedrich - Wilhelm's attempts to achieve a reconciliation, and, when in January 1697 the Emperor announced that he had awarded the duchy to the latter, she stood forth as the champion of the rights of the Lower Saxon Circle against Imperial arbitrariness. Her attitude differed little in essentials from Denmark's to the ninth electorate.

When the duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin came to claim his new lands, the troops of the Lower Saxon Circle under the command of the Swedish lieutenant-colonel Klinkowström shut themselves in G^üstrow, called for reinforcements from Wismar and ordered him to leave again in ten days. In March the Swedes rejected a compromise proposal by Denmark, and Klinkowström expelled not only the duke but also the Imperial commissioner

Eck. ¹⁶

William had no reason to favour either candidate but was anxious to compose a quarrel which might seriously embarrass the peace negotiations and even lengthen the war. He had Lexington instructed at the end of March to persuade Leopold to modify his attitude,¹⁷ but this was too late to prevent the ban on the Swedish ambassador already referred to. After Starhemberg had indeed threatened to withdraw his acceptance of Swedish mediation at Rijswijk, to which the Swedes replied that the quarrel concerned the Lower Saxon Circle and not Sweden as such, the råð determined on May 3rd, in spite, it seems, of efforts by the chancellor, Robinson and Heekeren, to retaliate by refusing Starhemberg access to the Swedish court.¹⁸

In Vienna Heemskerck and Lexington continued to mediate and on June 25th succeeded in securing Kinsky's signature to an 'Act d'Accomodement', by which Gabriel Oxenstierna agreed to Sweden's disavowal of Klinkowström's action if he should be found on examination to be guilty and August 21st was set for resumption of normal diplomatic relations.¹⁹ Lexington gave vent to his feelings in a letter to Blathwayt immediately afterwards: 'God deliver me from the Trade of a Mediator, a man had better row in ye gallies, especially when one had to do with two such people as Kinsky and Oxenstierna', though he confessed that 'the last...has been much the resonablest.'²⁰ The document was referred by the råð to the Lower Saxon Circle, and peace was signed at Rijswijk before Starhemberg and Oxenstierna returned to their

duties.²¹ The dispute did not in fact harm Sweden as mediator, but it did lessen her effectiveness as protector of the duke of Holstein-Gottorp, who again became a focus of attention immediately after Charles' death, and divided the Pinneberg mediators.

(c) Denmark's Attack on Holstein-Gottorp (January - August 1697)

Throughout the early months of 1697, while the negotiations in Pinneberg languished, the Northern Crowns eyed each other suspiciously. Sweden feared, with considerable justification, a Danish attack on Gottorp and continued her efforts to bind the Allies to a definite promise of action against any move by Christian against the duke and a guarantee of his *ius armorum*, but, for reasons already stated, she received nothing more tangible than verbal assurances and vague promises. Denmark, heartened by her November alliance with the Maritime Powers, prepared to take full advantage of any further weakening of Sweden's position, and Charles' death, which, according to Luxdorph's reports, would release pent-up social forces such as a divided regency could not hope to control, provided a heaven-sent opportunity for action. Hop returned unwillingly to Hamburg in early May to face a crisis similar to that over Ratzeburg in 1693.²²

The Danes had a legitimate grievance against duke Frederick in that he had recommenced the building of forts, which he had promised the mediators in May 1696 that he would not undertake while negotiations were in progress. An excellent test of Denmark's diplomatic strength was thus at hand, and on April 18th

it was resolved in Copenhagen to send the duke an ultimatum and prepare to destroy his new defences, if, as was expected, he refused to destroy them himself. On May 3rd Christian left the capital for his headquarters at Rensborg, and Frederick fled to Tønningen.²³ Dankelman, who had remained in Hamburg after the departure of the other mediators, Eck and Militz, had himself left, and the responsibility for restraining the Danish desire for revenge fell fully on the shoulders of Cresset and Hop, who drew up a project for an alliance between the contending parties, warned the Danish king of the possible consequences of armed intervention and offered to guarantee that the forts would do him no harm.²⁴

William was by this time seriously concerned, especially by the threat of losing the contingents from Gottorp and Brunswick-Lüneburg. He asked Heinsius to speak seriously to Plessen, who had returned to the Hague at the head of a Danish mission to the peace conference, and to Lente and feared that Christian would not stop at destruction of the forts. He favoured the use of that familiar weapon in the armoury of the Maritime Powers' Northern diplomacy - the threat to send a squadron to the Sound, which Heekeren had already urged in his despatches.²⁵ But Christian's mind was made up, and Cresset complained of the lack of firmness shown on the duke's behalf by Hop, who seems to have received orders in the Hague to restrain his enthusiasm for Frederick. 'The Dutch....are now great Danes' he wrote to Ellis on May 28th, 'and I am not to

hold a different language from Myn heer Hop'.²⁶

Swedish counsels were, as Denmark had divined, seriously divided, the majority of the regents being unwilling to provoke the Danes unnecessarily by the extensive mobilization on land and sea for which the chancellor pressed and fearing that a part of the reinforcements it was proposed to send to the German provinces might be used by him to aid the Allies and compromise Swedish neutrality irretrievably. When it became apparent that Denmark was determined on the use of force, however, it was Gyldenstolpe who proposed in the råd on May 31st that negotiations should be opened with the Maritime Powers and Brunswick-Lüneburg for a concert on Holstein-Gottorp.²⁷

Danish troops opened the bombardment of Holmerskrans, the largest of the five forts involved, on June 1st. During an armistice on June 3rd Hop, who had arrived at Rensborg on the previous day, joined Cresset in proposing to Christian that the forts should be placed in the hands of the mediators until a settlement had been reached, but the Danish king replied that this would take too long, although he did promise to withdraw when the immediate task had been accomplished, and by June 10th the last fort had surrendered. The Allies had made no move.²⁸

In Stockholm the suggestion of an alliance met with a cool response from the allied diplomats, especially from Heekeren, who doubted whether Sweden was prepared to play her part and advised against a large scale transport which would be inter-

cepted by Danish warships before it reached its destination.²⁹ Kristoffer Gyllenstierna expressed a suspicion that the Maritime Powers wished to keep the Holstein-Gottorp question open to engage Sweden, and Oxenstierna promised the allied envoys in strict confidence that part of any Swedish reinforcements in Germany might, indeed, as his opponents had suspected, be used to support Sweden's guarantee of Westphalia and Nijmijgen.³⁰ Heekeren doubted if this would receive any support from the stad, and he and Robinson demanded to see for themselves the preparedness of the fleet at Karlskrona. The chancellor reported this request to his colleagues on June 7th, when permission was reluctantly given and orders sent to admiral Wachtmeister to warn him of the visit. Neither Robinson nor Heekeren was particularly impressed by what they found at the port, especially as they were aware of Wachtmeister's instructions,³¹ but it soon became apparent that the danger was not so great as had at first been feared, since Christian had found insufficient support for large scale operations and intended to keep his promise to Hop and Cresset. Danish troops began to withdraw on June 17th, and tension relaxed. In July Hop returned again to the Hague, which became the centre of negotiations.³²

Sweden still worked for an alliance to defend the duke, and, while Vellingk was sent to open negotiations with Brunswick-Lüneburg, Oxenstierna's son, serving as a brigadier with the allied armies in the Netherlands, was authorized to negotiate with William, with whom he had already spoken "on minor matters

in 1696, and to offer 6,000 or more Swedish troops if the Maritime Powers would engage themselves to send a squadron of warships to the Baltic.³³ The English king promised his support, and Heinsius, approached by Lillieroot on the subject of a league, promised to draw up a project.³⁴ This was, however, as far as things went. William considered that any hasty declaration on military aid would make the young duke, who visited him at Loo in August, too bold, and no support was forthcoming for a Swedish demand for Danish compensation to Frederick for the attack.³⁵

(d) The End of the War on French Trade (June - September 1697)

June 1697 witnessed the rising of the curtain on the last scene of the trade-war drama. On the 27th of that month a convoy of forty-six Swedish, six Danish and three Danzig merchant ships, returning from France in charge of a Swedish warship, was encountered by admiral Rooke's fleet and taken to Plymouth for examination.³⁶ The escort was released almost immediately, and brigadier Oxenstierna at once approached William to ask for the merchantmen to be similarly treated. The king promised that the requisite orders would be sent, but he could not prevent a tedious examination of all the ships' papers.³⁷

Brigadier Oxenstierna was ordered to demand compensation for the delay, and Lillieroot was told on September 24th to obtain a firm promise at least to release the remaining ships before the ratifications of the peace treaty, signed on the

10/11th, were exchanged.³⁸ An unfortunate impression was further created in Stockholm by the speedy freeing of the six Danish ships, especially as there was a strong suspicion that the arrest had been made on information supplied from a Danish source.³⁹ At the end of August Blathwayt wrote to under-secretary Ellis that 'this is not a time for us to disoblige that Court and therefore will it be well pleasing to the King Mr Secry Trumbull & you do take all possible care with the Judge of the Admiralty & otherwise that the Swedes may not suffer the least hardship or injustice...'⁴⁰, but judgment had nevertheless been passed on only half the ships by the time peace was signed.⁴¹

(iii) Rijswijk

(a) Denmark's Final Bid

In spite of constant rebuffs, the Danes never abandoned their ambition to play at least some part in the final peace settlement. Their neutrality should, it was deemed, win some such reward. Christian was annoyed by the Dutch demand made during Plessen's negotiations to include in the alliance a specific renunciation of any claim to mediate, and Plessen succeeded in evading a promise to embody such an abrogation in the final protocol.⁴² Jessen was therefore quite free to put forward the pretension again after the signing, and Christian to decide on February 5th to despatch Plessen to Rijswijk on the strength of the new treaty.⁴³ The growing rift between Sweden and the Emperor over G^ustrow even held out possibilities of

Denmark's succeeding as sole mediator. Promises of support were made to both France and her enemies, which pleased neither when they inevitably leaked out, and Heinsius, on hearing of the embassy, told Lillieroot, doubtless with some thought of both Holstein-Gottorp and Denmark's fulfilment of the November alliance, of his fears for the consequences of Plessen's absence from Copenhagen.⁴⁴ Denmark even had dangled before her by Portland, at the same time as Hop offered her a closer alliance, the possibility of acting as guarantor against any breach of faith by France, and a suggestion that she would be willing to take on such a responsibility was later used by the Dutch minister to Lillieroot as a threat when Sweden showed an obvious reluctance to fulfil her obligations.⁴⁵

No undue haste was taken with Plessen's journey. His instructions, to protect Danish interests, settle disputes over trade and debts with the United Provinces and sound the Maritime Powers on the possibilities of a more intimate agreement, such as had been suggested by Hop, were not issued until April 17th. He left finally with four trumpeters, twelve pages and twenty lackeys and arrived in Rijswijk on May 6th, before the first peace projects had been lodged with Lillieroot. He was backed by a threat not to recognize the peace if Denmark were not allowed to take part in its composition, which naturally made little impression, and did his best to convince the Maritime Powers of Sweden's inability to honour her guarantees, an inability which, as has been seen, they strongly suspected already. While he might have had some effect in preventing discussion of the Holstein-Gottorp question, in which neither

French nor Imperial delegates showed much interest, Denmark cut a rather sorry figure and received little return on her outlay on the embassy.⁴⁶

Christian's policy remained at the end of the war as uncertain as at the beginning. Neither the extent of his ambitions in Schleswig-Holstein nor his desire for revenge on Sweden had diminished with the years, and his partial commitment to the Maritime Powers in the 1696 alliance had failed to bring the prospect of satisfaction in either of these respects much nearer. Plessen had failed to build up the convincing case he needed, and, while the idea of a double marriage alliance with Sweden to break the latter's links with the duke was toyed with, beginnings were made in the creation of a more promising eastern alliance system, wholly contrary to the interests of William and his allies, which was to bring open war under Frederick IV three years later.⁴⁷

(b) The Path of the Mediator (April - September 1697)

Even when Lillieroot had succeeded in bringing together the representatives of the belligerents in the same building, it was some time before peace negotiations proper could begin. Trouble arose immediately over Imperial claims to precedence, and several weeks passed before the detailed conduct of the talks had been agreed upon. The private talks between Dijkvelt, Boreel, burgomaster of Amsterdam, and the French delegation continued in spite of the Swede's warnings of the suspicions they were arousing among the other Allies, and in the middle of June William, despairing of any conclusion to the public

negotiations and anxious to break through the clouds of mutual suspicion which divided him from Louis, decided to try to reach agreement on the all-important 'English question' through meetings between Portland and the French marshal Boufflers.⁴⁸ When news of these reached Lillieroot and he challenged Heinsius about them, the pensionary claimed that it was France who prevented the problem of William's recognition passing through the hands of the mediator and assured him that preliminaries alone were being discussed.⁴⁹

In the meantime the choice of a senior mediator, such as the Swedes desired to add more lustre to their mission and for which d'Avaux pressed to counter-balance Lillieroot's attachment to the Allies, had caused some concern in the råd. The first name suggested seems to have been that of the governor - general of Livonia, Dahlberg, but he excused himself on account of age, and the names of Bielke, Carl Bonde and Gabriel Oxenstierna were brought forward. The first, although d'Avaux claimed that he was supported by Wrede and Gyldenstolpe and on April 21st that he was elected, can hardly have been seriously considered as acceptable to the Allies, and both Heekeren and d'Avaux reported in January that the second was a strong possibility.⁵⁰ But on May 18th agreement was reached to appoint the third. At 7 a.m. on the following morning Robinson called on the chancellor to protest that Gabriel Oxenstierna's indiscretions while in London had made him persona non grata to William and, after considerable indignation had been expressed in the råd at the minister's action, Wrede

proposed Bonde for the vacancy. Bengt Oxenstierna offered no opposition and even reminded his colleagues that the late king had favoured such a choice.⁵¹

Bonde, a councillor since 1695 and Bielke's predecessor as envoy in Paris from 1674 to 1678, was firmly linked to the chancellor's critics by his marriage to Kristoffer Gyllenstierna's daughter and was highly favoured by d'Avaux who, however, found him rather weak.⁵² But he had little opportunity to demonstrate any bias. His instructions were not examined until August 17th, a circumstance naturally blamed on Oxenstierna's intrigues, and he did not arrive in Rijswijk until September 30th.⁵³

(b) Crisis (July - September 1697)

The progress of the talks between Portland and Boufflers at Halle, combined with military successes in Catalonia and the Netherlands, encouraged a stiffening in the attitude of the French ambassadors in Rijswijk, which resulted in the imposition of a time limit of August 21st for the acceptance of the terms they handed to Lillieroot on July 10th. The mediator, while he thought that the terms themselves might form a reasonable basis for negotiation, protested at the stipulation attached and refused to communicate them officially to the Allies. He complained once more, however, of the secret negotiations, which he blamed for such a state of affairs. They resulted in the reaching of a tacit agreement on William's recognition, and at the beginning of August the representatives of France and the Maritime Powers were ready to present Lillieroot with a fait accompli. Mediation, he reported, had become a mere

formality.⁵⁴

The struggle which developed over the French demands regarding the Empire centered on the return of Strasburg. Louis' new terms, as had Callière's preliminaries, offered the city with its fortifications razed or an equivalent acceptable to the Emperor. Leopold, in spite of Lillieroot's appeals, hesitated to agree to the destruction of its defences, and on the date stipulated the French, further heartened by the news of Barcelona's fall, presented new terms which offered only an equivalent and were to expire on September 10th. The mediator, who had appealed to the French for moderation in vain and failed on more than one occasion to conceal his annoyance at their conduct, once more protested violently and threatened to retire from the negotiations altogether. He called on the Allies for unity in defence of Strasburg and even offered Swedish help if France broke her word.⁵⁵ In this, however, he went beyond his instructions and met with some allied scepticism. Heinsius complained to him of Sweden's uncertain reaction to the new Holstein-Gottorp crisis and of the cool reception given to anything proposed by Heekeren, in spite of his agreeing to discuss the renewal of the alliances for which he had been asked.⁵⁶

The Emperor was, however, anxious to exert whatever pressure on France he could muster, and on August 30th the Emperor heard a request from Starhemberg, delivered through Heekeren, to present a memorial. It was decided to allow him to

communicate one through the Dutch envoy, and on the following day he appealed for a fulfilment of Sweden's guarantees.⁵⁷ Gyldenstolpe and Wallenstedt protested that any new condition would endanger mediation, and no more encouraging reply was given than a fresh promise to fulfil treaty obligations when this seemed necessary.⁵⁸ A report of the new French demands reached Heekeren with orders to apply once more for the fulfilment of Sweden's duties as a guarantor, and he himself now requested a conference, which met on September 8th, when he met Falkenberg, Åkerhelm and Bergenhielm and asked for a specific engagement that Sweden would compel France to respect Westphalia⁵⁹ and Nijmijgen and a definite answer on the renewal of alliances. This resulted in a particularly heated debate in the råd on the following day, when Oxenstierna failed to gain the detailed offer for which he pressed and had to be content with a repetition, similar to that made to Starhemberg, of Sweden's intention to honour her agreements and mild representations to d'Avaux to request a withdrawal of the ultimatum.⁶⁰ Heekeren was, however, granted a further conference on September 13th, when Robinson was also present, at which he presented two projects, one for a convention, by which Sweden bound herself to send help up to 18,000 troops if the negotiations in Rijswijk broke down, and one for a renewal of alliances between Sweden and the United Provinces.⁶¹

Negotiations on the latter had been resumed in July, when Heekeren told Oxenstierna of Heinsius' demands for a clearer

declaration on religious freedom and the residence of foreign merchants, but he was unable to elicit anything better than vague promises. He advised the States-General to wait for a more favourable opportunity and prepared again to leave. Robinson supported his efforts and in mid-August expressed England's desire for a new trade settlement and a closer alliance, which was well received by the Swedish ministers, and Heekeren was prevailed upon to stay a little longer.⁶²

But the whole scene changed on receipt of the news of the signing of peace between France, the Maritime Powers and Spain on September 10/11, before further negotiations could take place.⁶³

(c) The Final Act (September - October 1697)

Efforts by William to persuade the French to return to their original offer on Strasburg by means of a new meeting between the marshals fared no better than Lillieroot's appeals, and, when the hour struck, he resolved, with the Spanish succession open to discussion, the lands whose policies he controlled exhausted and weary of a seemingly endless war, many of his Allies uncertain, and his recognition secured, to risk the odium of deserting his principal ally.⁶⁴ This decision caused, however, a considerable dilemma for the mediator. He agreed, after what appears to have been a rather heated interview with Heinsius, to accede to the treaty in order not to alienate the Maritime Powers; after all his expedients had been rejected by both sides, he felt, he explained, that he had shown the Emperor sufficient compliance.⁶⁵ He defended

his action fully in his despatch to Stockholm on September 14th. The settlement was, he argued, one involving a majority of the parties, one which contained nothing prejudicial to either Swedish or Imperial interests and one against which the Emperor's representatives had done no more than show their displeasure. The Emperor would further gain nothing from his not signing - a just if ignominious assessment of the mediator's power.⁶⁶ The most Lillieroot had been able to secure was a further postponement of the time limit for Leopold's acceptance of the French offers until October 20th, but this merely put off the inevitable conclusion by a few weeks of pointless wrangling.⁶⁷ In answer to his report, the regents rather belatedly expressed their disapproval of the separate peace, and consequently there were appended to the final treaty protests by himself and Bonde against the Church settlement in Alsace, where they had failed to gain safeguards for the Protestants, and against the conduct of independent negotiations.⁶⁸

The prize for which Charles XI had striven for most of the war had been won, only to prove an empty honour, which had enhanced Swedish prestige not a jot; he was happy in the hour of his death. Yet Sweden's rigid observance of a neutral status, in the maintenance of which her king's desire for mediation played a not inconsiderable part, while it lay her open to the perils of isolation, saved her from the even greater hazard of involvement in a European war, in which none of the principal contestants could have rendered her much assistance and in which the jealousy of her neighbours would

Chapter 14

Conclusion

(1) Old Problems, Old Friends and New

The conclusion of a European peace left unsolved many of the problems with which William's representatives had had to grapple in the Northern capitals during the war. Swedish merchant ships were still held in English ports and compensation for seizures made during the war still unpaid: the restrictions placed on the residence of foreign merchants in Sweden still hindered the renewal of her agreements with the United Provinces: agreement on a commercial alliance between Denmark and the States-General seemed no nearer: England's payments for the transport and maintenance of her Danish auxiliary troops were uncompleted: her claim to a salute in the Channel had been merely shelved: the Emperor had yet to grant the toll on the Elbe at Glückstadt which Denmark claimed and which the Maritime Powers had pledged themselves to help her obtain: the Pinneberg negotiations languished: the Saxe-Lauenburg dispute awaited a final settlement: and Sweden's relations with the Emperor were strained by the question of the succession to Mecklenburg-Güstrow.

A few of these matters were finally settled during the early years of the new century. A commercial alliance between Denmark and the United Provinces was signed on June 15th, 1701, in conjunction with the renewal and exertion of the triple alliance of 1696, after Frederick IV had agreed to suspend the

customs concessions allowed to his defence ships on condition that Sweden agreed to do likewise in the trade treaty which she was negotiating with the Dutch.¹ In the same year the Emperor, anxious for Danish aid against France, granted Frederick IV the Elbe toll for six years,² and by a treaty between the dukes of Mecklenburg-Schwerin and Mecklenburg-Strelitz under Imperial mediation the greater part of Güstrow passed to the former.³ Saxony surrendered to Brunswick-Lüneburg her claims to Lauenburg for 600,000 Rd. in 1697, and Wolfenbüttel followed suit in 1703, although George I's right to the territory was not recognized by the Emperor until 1716 and the Imperial sequestration lifted from Hadeln only in 1720.⁴

Most of the questions were, however, only partially solved, swept up into larger issues or left to the passage of time. Existing defensive alliances between Sweden and the States-General were renewed in 1698 and confirmed in the alliance, which included England, made in January 1700, but the commercial treaty of 1679 was then referred for further discussion to commissioners meeting in the Hague, who appear to have failed to reach any agreement; in the twelfth article of the Anglo-Swedish alliance of January 1720 restrictions on the residence of English merchants alone were abandoned.⁵ The duke of Würtemberg-Neustadt was ordered to march his troops back from Flanders as soon as news of Rijswijk was received in Copenhagen, and all had returned by March 1698,⁶ but England was still

promising to pay arrears due under the treaty of 1689 in 1701, when they formed the subject of the eighth article of the alliance referred to above. ⁷ The disputes between the kings of Denmark and the dukes of Holstein-Gottorp, with which William found himself once more engaged, as a guarantor of the Altona settlement and ally of Sweden, by Frederick IV's unsuccessful attack in 1700 on the duke, now married to Charles XII's sister, dominated Danish foreign policy for a large part of the eighteenth century after her permanent seizure of Schleswig in 1713, which was guaranteed by Great Britain and France in 1720, owing to Russia's intermittent advocacy of the duke's cause between Nystad and the 'mageskifte' of 1767. ⁸ Stephen Poyntz, English envoy in Stockholm, was still afraid in 1726 that the Swedes would revive old claims to compensation for ships seized, ⁹ and England's pretension to the Channel salute, in spite of its causing a serious encounter with a Swedish convoy in 1704, was ¹⁰ not dropped until after the Napoleonic wars.

The whole Baltic problem was transformed by the outbreak in February 1700 of the Great Northern War. Ultimately this resulted in the emergence of Russia as the dominant power in the area, but while William III lived its prime significance for the Maritime Powers was as a distraction of forces in Northern Europe which might, after Louis XIV's repudiation of the last partition treaty and subsequent provocation had made a new conflict in the West inevitable, be employed against France, and as a threat to their supplies of naval stores; ¹¹ the situation

to prevent which William had intervened so vigorously before Altona and at the time of the Ratzeburg crisis had come about, and he devoted his energies up to his death to attempting to restore peace in the North. In spite, however, of his early success in restraining Sweden and restoring the status quo after Frederick IV's attack on Holstein-Gottorp in March 1700, all his efforts to persuade Charles XII to submit to mediation failed.¹² The defensive alliances made with Sweden in January 1700, on the eve of hostilities, proved largely ineffective; the threat which had driven one party to agree to their terms was of only secondary importance to the other, and William found it as vain to call for Swedish troops to fight against France as Charles did to appeal for aid from the Maritime Powers against his enemies in the East.¹³ As in the Nine Years War, William secured more practical help from Denmark, where Frederick was conscious that the Anglo-Dutch intervention had saved him from treatment far harsher than that to which he had to submit at Traventhal and realized that the enmity of the Maritime Powers was likely to prove more dangerous to him than that of France. Traventhal also removed Denmark from the Northern war and released her troops for hire. The stadtholder-king lived long enough to witness the opening of negotiations in Copenhagen which led to the signing, only three months after his death, of a new treaty which extended the existing defensive alliance and offered 12,000 troops for the service of the Maritime Powers.¹⁴

Of the diplomatic representatives of the Maritime Powers in Stockholm and Copenhagen and of the Northern Crowns in London and the Hague in 1697, Greg was promoted to the rank of minister-resident in 1701 and died in Copenhagen the following year:¹⁵

Robinson was made an envoy in 1702 and was recalled, after serving in Poland and Saxony, to become bishop of Bristol, senior British plenipotentiary at Utrecht and finally bishop of London in 1714:¹⁶ he was succeeded by that same Robert Jackson who had served as chargé d'affaires during his absence from Stockholm in 1696 and whom he had defended from the provisions of the ordinance against foreign merchants:¹⁷ Heekeren left Stockholm in 1698, and Rumpf died there in 1706:¹⁸ Goes was appointed envoy in Copenhagen in 1702 and left in 1718 after¹⁹ thirty-three years continuous service at the Danish Court:

Lillieroot left the Hague in 1698 but returned as ambassador the following year, played an important part in the negotiations leading up to the alliances between Sweden and the Maritime Powers concluded in the Hague in January 1700 and was not finally recalled until 1703, when his services were rewarded with a countship:²⁰ Leijoncrona was made envoy to queen Anne in 1703 and died in London 1710 so deeply in debt that even his body and coffin were seized by his English creditors:²¹ Lente was recalled to Copenhagen in May 1698 and Pauli from London the following September.²²

(ii) William III's Northern Policy: an Assessment

In the first chapter of this study an attempt was made to enumerate the possible objectives open to William III in his relations with the Northern Crowns in time of war;²³ the time has now come to try to summarize the part actually played by each of these in his policy between 1689 and 1697 as well as to examine the main factors in the Baltic situation with which he had to contend during this period, to assess the extent of his success and to apportion the blame for his failures.

He was unable to bring either Sweden or Denmark into the anti-French alliance. Of the two, Sweden, economically stable, militarily powerful²⁴ and universally respected, was considerably the greater prize, which, in view of her attitude since Nijmijgen, he had, at the beginning of the war, high hopes of winning.²⁵ He failed, however, to appreciate the strength of the arguments which influenced Charles XI in favour of neutrality. The Swedish king had, in spite of his great personal courage, a distaste for war and its wastefulness unless his kingdom's interests could be shown to be directly involved. They had²⁶ been in the Holstein-Gottorp crisis of 1689 and would be if Denmark should join France against the Alliance, but the Baltic war which this would bring about was certainly not a price which William would have been prepared to pay for what would, in such circumstances, have been Sweden's purely nominal alliance. Her wholesale commitment to the allied cause might further tempt Sweden's jealous neighbours to form such a league as was in fact

forged in 1699, against which the Maritime Powers could, while engaged in the west, offer little security. Charles was deeply solicitous of the welfare and safety of his troops and had no desire to see them decimated on foreign battlefields fighting for a cause not their own.²⁷ War would at least seriously interfere with his uncompleted programme of internal reform and might weaken the strong financial position in which the reudktion policy had placed his government.

But neutrality also offered Sweden more positive benefits. A far greater share of Baltic trade and even the monopoly of which Swedish statesmen had long dreamed might be captured from belligerent merchants harassed by enemy privateers, and, in spite of the losses incurred at the hands of the latter, the war indeed proved to be a period of great expansion for Sweden's merchant marine.²⁸ Even at the beginning of the conflict allied diplomats were noting the hold which the idea of mediation²⁹ had on Swedish governing circles, and the prestige, as well as the possibility of the more material gains and the futherance of specifically national claims which might be hoped for by a mediator, certainly appealed to Charles and his ministers, whatever their differences on other aspects of policy.³⁰ And while neither side could gain a decisive advantage on the battlefield such attractions would continue to militate against active participation and even the showing of undue favour to one side.

The necessity of devoting all available energies to the defeat of France, which was so clear to William, was by no means so clear to Swedish statesmen. They were not directly threatened by Louis' ambitions and indeed owed the integrity of their Baltic empire to French support at Nijmijgen, however high-handedly this might have been given.³¹ Such differences as existed between France and Sweden might be ironed out by negotiation;³² and here again the acceptance of Swedish mediation would place her in a favourable position. The tradition of Franco-Swedish friendship was of long standing, and the two countries had never been at war on opposing sides.³³ To some at least in Stockholm William's success in uniting the Maritime Powers and the alliance of those powers with the Emperor constituted a threat to the European balance of power, to the maintenance of which Bengt Oxenstierna himself had devoted his talents throughout the '80s, as great as if not greater than French designs on the Rhine.³⁴ The challenge to Sweden's plans for control of Baltic trade was considerably enhanced by the English Revolution, and an Emperor, victorious on Rhine and Danube, might well turn his attentions northwards and attempt to revive the plans of Wallenstein for Imperial control of Germany's destinies to the exclusion of all powers beyond her borders. William's appeals to a European conscience might well be listened to with sympathy at the Swedish court, but the response to them was either that Sweden could not be expected to provide anything beyond the aid to which she had already committed herself by

treaty or that she could render more valuable service as a peace-maker.³⁵ William could never accept such arguments, and his dismay was commensurate with his initial expectations. But it may be doubted whether Sweden's belligerency would have brought him the advantages he imagined would flow from it unless Denmark could also be secured, and the failure of Louis' efforts to affect a reconciliation between the two Northern Crowns,³⁶ except in the limited sphere of an armed neutrality in defence of common commercial ambitions, suggests the remoteness of this possibility.

William never betrayed much hope of Denmark's joining the Alliance; her previous conduct had taught him caution. Christian V, threatened as much as was Charles XI by the close alliance between the Emperor and the Maritime Powers, made little secret in 1688 of his opposition to the Revolution,³⁷ but, when an Anglo-Dutch squadron might appear in his waters at any time and French military support was not to be expected, the situation demanded considerable caution and the exploitation of opportunities as they arose. Denmark was too weak to risk any independent action on a large scale, and no other power, whether it be France before Altona or the attack on Ratzeburg, Sweden in the defence of neutral rights or Hanover in the third party plans of 1690-1 ever offered sufficient support to encourage Christian to advance beyond the most limited objectives. These circumstances led him finally to a trial of the policy, always favoured by Plessen, of attempting to further national ambitions

through co-operation with the Maritime Powers. This resulted in the alliance of November 1696 and appeared to be bearing fruit at Pinneberg at the end of the war.³⁸

He would probably have been willing to join the Allies if he could have been assured of sufficient security, very large subsidies, including compensation for his trading losses, and practical support for an aggressive policy in the Lower Saxon Circle.³⁹ The first seemed to the Allies to have been provided by the defensive alliance of November 1690, but this was not enough for the Danish king. The second were beyond William's financial capacity, especially when he had to compete with generous French offers for mere neutrality,⁴⁰ and, even if they had not been, it is doubtful whether he would have considered Danish assistance worth such a price. The last was not in the interests of the Maritime Powers to give; such encouragement would have created an explosive situation in the North such as would have cancelled out all benefits.

William did succeed in securing Danish troops, which gave him good service in all his campaigns, but the initiative for the transaction came from Denmark for motives amongst which devotion to the allied cause was evidently not one, and his hopes that their loan would draw Denmark closer to him were doomed to disappointment.⁴¹ His efforts to enlist recruits produced nothing more promising than the agreement in April 1691 for the hire of troops from Brandenburg,⁴² and, after further unsuccessful attempts had been thwarted by Christian's anxiety

not to violate the 1691 neutrality treaty with France, the matter was not even raised in the negotiations leading to the treaty of November 1696, although, as has been seen, Plessen was empowered to include the loan of troops in the terms.⁴³

Charles XI's sense of duty prompted the despatch of Swedish troops to the Rhine for three years,⁴⁴ but for this, such as it was in view of the slight part played by the troops in the actual fighting, William's diplomacy can claim little credit, and he never expected much to come out of the States-General's repeated requests for the furnishing of their share of treaty aid.⁴⁵

It is possible that a speedy settlement of disputes over the seizure of Swedish merchant ships, over which William had at this stage little control, would have enabled Oxenstierna to draw a closer parallel between the position of the United Provinces and the Emperor, in whom no such fault could be found, but, unless he could have also proved to his master's satisfaction that a refusal of aid would so increase Sweden's isolation that the integrity of her empire would be placed in jeopardy - and it is highly unlikely, in view of the failure of his actual efforts in this direction, that he would have succeeded in doing this - the argument that, since the United Provinces had not themselves been attacked, the casus foederis had not arisen could have still been brought forward.⁴⁶ It is significant that the only

situation in which William seemed likely to obtain his troops was one in which Holstein-Gottorp was threatened.⁴⁷ It does seem that the Swedes would have sent their twelve ships, however

unwillingly, under certain conditions, but the English king was quite justified in rejecting demands, prompted by national pride and fears of antagonizing France, which threatened to remove the squadron from his control altogether. ⁴⁸

The same factors which militated against Sweden's entry into the war also helped to defeat all attempts to persuade her to ban her trade with France; not only would any acquiescence in such a request have compromised her neutrality so as to spoil all hopes of mediation, but it would have forced her to abandon her dreams of commercial expansion ⁴⁹ and exposed her to French reprisals. ⁵⁰ The approach, once more flowing from a misunderstanding of the Swedish attitude to the war, was clumsily handled, insulted Swedish pride, caused unnecessary friction and drove her closer to Denmark, with whom her interests on this one issue coincided, ⁵¹ but a more diplomatic treatment had no better chances of ultimate success; Sweden's legal position was unassailable. The various schemes to buy her exports seem at first sight promising, but it is highly doubtful whether any mutually satisfactory agreement could have been reached in private transactions with individual merchants, which is all that Charles XI would finally sanction. ⁵² The policy's only real hope of success lay in the establishment of an overwhelming superiority at sea, which would have enabled the claims of an effective blockade of the French coast to approximate to reality and have left neutrals with no alternative; but Beachy Head made this impossible. ⁵³

Danish opposition to the ban was less stubborn and less doctrinaire,⁵⁴ but William's failure here was no more due to a failure of his diplomatic methods than was the case with Sweden. Christian V and his ministers also entertained hopes of profiting from their neutral status, and in a more personal way than their Swedish counterparts, and, if the latter could not be persuaded to join the boycott, Danish participation in the early years of the war was out of the question. Not until the very end of hostilities, when Christian's disappointment with France and the failure of his attempts to build a united front with Sweden had driven him to try his luck with a rapprochement with the Allies, did he give way, and even then at a stiff price and when it was too late to affect Louis' war potential.⁵⁵ Only in the convention of June 1691, which did much to ease the tension caused by the trade war, did William achieve a limited success.⁵⁶

Friendly mediation, the third type of positive aid a neutral power might have rendered William's cause, was a possibility which he never considered willingly; the resort to any form of mediation was a confession that the original aims of the Grand Alliance had been abandoned.⁵⁷ His attitude was always that, if mediation should prove to be the only road to a satisfactory peace, Sweden was the most suitable, and indeed the only, power worth considering for it.⁵⁸ He did indeed consider her especially when secret talks with French agents in the Netherlands offered no immediate hopes of a settlement, as an alternative channel through which to learn Louis' intentions

and even thought on occasions that she might help in binding the latter to a firm promise to recognize his occupation of the English throne and that her interest in the Westphalian settlement might prompt her to demand its preservation. ⁵⁹ Negotiations in Stockholm, even when they appeared to be attaining none of these objectives, provided some cover for the secret talks and a means of keeping Sweden's friendship by flattering her ambitions. Stockholm's distance from the Hague, however, and the dangers of independent Imperial action and influence there did not make it an ideal site for peace negotiations, ⁶⁰ and by the time the possibility of a compromise settlement had to be faced, William's suspicions of the Swedish court had become so deeply engrained that his demands for a French promise to restore Westphalia and Nijmijgen were aimed at providing as much a guarantee against Sweden's possible actions as mediator as against French duplicity. It is difficult even then to believe that he really expected either Charles XI to ask France or Louis XIV to agree to shut the door on any possibility for bargaining before peace negotiations began and thus to make mediation superfluous. His faith in the Swedish king himself remained firm throughout the war; never is there a suggestion in his correspondence that Charles was to blame for any strained relations. But he could hardly believe that, in the light of previous Swedish reactions the latter would antagonize, or be allowed by his advisers to antagonize, France to no purpose by trying to impose conditions she had no intention of accepting.

The demand was, it seems, largely a device to avoid committing himself to accepting Sweden's mediation until he had obtained by some means a promise at least of Louis' giving way on the all important problem of his own recognition, with which a mediator in whom he had greater confidence might have been entrusted. Only then was Swedish mediation accepted and even so the final solution of the 'English question' was made the subject of secret negotiations over which Lillieroot, who found his duties reduced largely to those of witnessing agreements already reached and attempting to keep the public congress in session, had no control.⁶¹

William never even considered the possibility of Danish mediation, and it is doubtful whether those of the Allies who bound themselves to support by treaty would have done so if they had considered that it had any hope of being accepted.⁶²

William's efforts to secure positive aid from the Northern Crowns thus enjoyed comparatively little success. Negotiations for Sweden's belligerency, troops, ships and participation in the ban on French trade came to nought; her attitude made her mediation very much of a pis aller to be surrounded with extensive safeguards and was employed in the end as little more than a sop to her pride, from which she gained none of the prizes which had made its attainment such a dominating factor in her attitude to the war, and as an insurance of her friendship. Denmark lent no further troops after 1689 and agreed to ban trade with France only when it was too late to affect the outcome of the war and with the full intention of maintaining as friendly relations with

Louis XIV as possible.

What of William's more negative aims - the prevention of aid being given to France and the maintenance of peace in the North? There was, as has been suggested in examining Sweden's reasons for neutrality, as little danger of her repeating the mistake of 1675 as there was a possibility of her hurrying to the defence of the Maritime Powers; she had learnt a salutary lesson on that occasion and Louis did not seriously expect her to take the risk again.⁶⁴ The most he hoped for was that, by laying stress on Swedish grievances against his enemies, he could persuade her to join Denmark, Hanover and other German princes in the formation of a third party to impose terms favourable to France, specifically the acceptance of the Twenty-Year Truce as a permanent settlement. The danger of this seemed very real to the Allies at the beginning of 1691, and the fear of it haunted William for long afterwards,⁶⁵ but the possibility of achieving it was in fact as remote as that of Sweden's openly joining France. Even at the height of his influence, Bielke's plans never received Charles' full approval,⁶⁶ and the co-operation of Denmark and Sweden in such an enterprize would have encountered insuperable obstacles.

Charles had little desire to share the honours of mediation, whether armed or not, with a king with whom he had been on the point of war in 1689 and whom he strongly suspected of awaiting only a favourable opportunity to attack him. Only the interest of the two powers as neutral traders provided common ground for a

détente, and in this sphere some progress was indeed made. The threat of even closer union and joint action, to which the treaties of armed neutrality pointed⁶⁷ and which might exclude the ships of the Maritime Powers from the Baltic altogether, compelled William to sanction the relaxation and finally the complete abandonment of the Anglo-Dutch convention of 1689 and the payment of compensation; but even here the co-operation between the Northern Crowns was never wholehearted. In spite of all her declarations of solidarity with her neighbour and her consciousness of the use which might be made of an outward show of friendship, Sweden suspected that Denmark was using the dispute over neutral rights to embroil her with the Allies for purely Danish ends and to cover fraudulent trading with France, with which she had no wish to be associated.⁶⁸ She was conscious both of her stronger legal position in possessing a commercial treaty with the Dutch and one with the English whose validity was fully recognized in 1693.⁶⁹ and of the greater value which was placed on her friendship by the Allies. Both these advantages might have been lost by following Denmark's lead too closely or too far beyond the limited objectives which were achieved.

But, had William not agreed so readily to modify his original plans, a much closer and more dangerous union might have been forged, and he must enjoy full credit for his part in weakening the links between the two countries in this sphere.

A rigid adherence to his interpretation of neutral rights, especially in regard to Sweden, might well have driven the latter against her will into joining Denmark in a drama of reprisals and counter-reprisals such as that played out between Denmark and the United Provinces in 1693/4.⁷⁰ That Denmark failed to secure the support she required on this occasion can be attributed, in part at least, to the successful conclusion of Heekeren's compensation negotiations in Stockholm on the eve of the crisis.⁷¹ William and his ministers must also be given their due for the skill with which they helped to keep the Northern Crowns apart by exciting their mutual jealousies, especially in regard to Holstein-Gottorp, and by maintaining negotiations with one of the two powers even when a speedy and successful outcome seemed unlikely.⁷² This played a considerable part in ensuring the continuous flow of Baltic naval supplies throughout the war, even if a greater share in their carriage had to be allowed to neutral merchants.

Denmark would have been willing to join France on the same terms as she would have been willing to join the Alliance, but her security requirements included a guarantee against Swedish attack which Louis could not give except by drawing Sweden herself into a French alliance. The possibility that Christian might hire out troops to France as he did to William was a remote one in view of the formidable transport problems involved but was a further reason for acceptance of the English King's terms of the 1689 treaty. It was Denmark who was always the prime mover

in the first half of the war, in any scheme for reprisals against allied shipping or for armed neutrality,⁷³ but here again she relied heavily on Swedish support and without it had to give way and make the most of the situation created by the threat of joint action.

The most pressing danger provided by Denmark was that of a disturbance in North Germany flowing from her claims in Holstein-Gottorp and the Lower Saxon Circle. By taking a firm stand against aggression before concerning himself with the merits of the case on either side,⁷⁴ William did much to ensure peace in the area without risking a breach in his good relations with either of the Northern Crowns; this was the field in which he could act with most effect. It was fortunate that his threats never had to be translated into action, as is shown by his efforts to fit out a Baltic squadron during the Ratzeburg crisis,⁷⁵ but it is obvious from this same incident that he did not rely on bluff to secure his ends. Other factors beside fear of direct intervention by the Maritime Powers persuaded Christian to give way in 1689 and 1693,⁷⁶ but, had William's envoys not acted with vigour on these occasions, Denmark might well have been persuaded to defy Sweden and Brunswick-Lüneburg on the former or to risk the consequences of crossing the Elbe into Brunswick-Lüneburg on the latter.⁷⁷

Some of the reasons for William's limited success in the North have already been suggested. His strained financial resources handicapped him in his negotiations with Denmark, but

it is doubtful whether he would have been willing to accede to her early demands however much money he had been able to call on; and Christian could not be bought with subsidies alone. The same is true of his attitude to the compensation demands of the Northern Crowns; he resented the very existence of the claims as much as their size, felt more than once that his representatives had given way too readily and agreed to grant such sums as were negotiated unwillingly and from political necessity.⁷⁸ More important was his failure to break the military stalemate in Flanders and to establish an unchallenged supremacy at sea. He was well aware of the close relationship between war and diplomacy,⁷⁹ but, on the other hand, a spectacular victory, while it might have encouraged Denmark to renounce her French ties, would have jeopardized Oxenstierna's position and might even, if the latter's memorandum of the spring of 1690⁸⁰ is to be taken at its face value, have driven him to support a third party programme in a bid to restore the European balance of power. The mutual jealousy of the Northern Crowns was a handicap to William in so far as the entry of one into the allied camp might drive the other into the arms of France, but it did militate against vigorous action by both, or indeed either, against his interests.

His position as the ruler of two states who had long been commercial rivals with contrasting traditions of government and policy certainly added to his difficulties but surprizingly little friction in fact arose in the affairs of the North. The

effective exclusion of the English parliament from any practical control over the direction of foreign policy, the general ignorance of continental affairs on the part of English ministers⁸¹ and consequently the limited influence they were able to exert, and the use made of the obedient Blathwayt and of Heinsius, whose views coincided so closely with William's own, to convey his orders direct to his envoys all reduced such friction to a minimum. There was certainly some jealousy and even some open animosity between the Dutch and English representatives in the Northern courts and even a failure to present a united front in the Scandinavian capitals,⁸² but this never reached the point at which either Sweden or Denmark could play one Maritime Power off against the other as they had been able to do in the past. Much friction was avoided by the reliance placed after 1692 upon Dutch representatives of higher rank than their English colleagues, and William's efforts to concentrate all negotiations in the Hague,⁸³ although not wholly successful, was, from this point of view alone, a wise move.

The interpretation of the role of neutral trade which he adopted was that long held by his kingdom and, as has been described,⁸⁴ was vigorously opposed by independent Dutchmen. Yet it was not Dutch opposition which made him modify it in practice; in fact ~~his~~ exploitation by the privateers of Zeeland became an embarrassment when the inadvisability of its application had become apparent.⁸⁵ Dutch commercial interests did lead to an approach different from England's to the question of a toll on

the Elbe and scotched the attempt to draw up identical instructions for all allied privateers,⁸⁶ but these disputes, if such they can be called, had no significant effects on relations with the Northern Crowns. Trade disputes between the United Provinces and Denmark might appear to have placed an obstacle in the way of an early agreement with the latter, but the 1696 alliance was concluded without the reaching of a settlement in this sphere,⁸⁷ a fact which suggests that the Danes used their differences with the Dutch merely as an excuse for the failure of previous negotiations for other reasons. England's claim to the Channel salute seemed to threaten war with Denmark in 1694, but Denmark was certainly unwilling to act without an assurance of Swedish support⁸⁸ and England's policy was hardly likely to be viewed with sympathy in the United Provinces.⁸⁹ The immediate reaction of the lords justices was foolish, but William's control of his diplomatic service was adequate to soften its worst effects.⁹⁰

His distrust of all James II's appointees in the diplomatic service, which led him to choose new and often inexperienced men for his English representatives had unhappy results in the appointment of Duncombe and the singularly undiplomatic Molesworth. The earlier promotion of Robinson, who was able, experienced and trusted by the Swedish court, might well have favoured the allied cause, but even he could not have changed Sweden's basic attitude to the war any more than a diplomat more tactful than Molesworth could have persuaded Christian V to modify his ambitions.

For his Dutch servants in the Northern courts William was fortunate in being able to call upon men not only of considerable diplomatic experience but also with first-hand knowledge of the countries to which they were accredited. This often made them act too independently for William's liking,⁹¹ but on the whole he had little reason to be displeased with the way in which they carried out their orders. Amerongen, Haren and Heekeren all concluded successful compensation agreements⁹² which, however much William may have resented the sums involved and felt that his representatives had given way too easily,⁹³ helped to break the threat of armed neutrality. Heekeren showed praiseworthy initiative in seizing the opportunity offered by the Holstein-Gottorp crisis in January 1696,⁹⁴ and Hop worked untiringly in mid-1693 to avert war over Saxe-Lauenburg.⁹⁵ It was their greater fund of experience and the fact that problems such as the payment of compensation for ships seized, the conclusion of a commercial alliance with Denmark and the securing of Swedish treaty aid concerned the United Provinces more specifically than England rather than any national prejudice on William's part which gave greater prominence to Dutch diplomats in both Stockholm and Copenhagen during the war.⁹⁶

William's Northern policy was so closely bound up with factors beyond his control that it is difficult to see how he could have achieved more than he did. In Sweden the attractions of a neutral status far outweighed anything he could offer to tempt her to abandon it or even to risk its abandonment.

Denmark's price for active help of any appreciable size would have weakened rather than strengthened his cause. He made mistakes, as in his attempted enforcement of the ban on French trade; he failed fully to appreciate the aspirations of the Scandinavian crowns or to understand the balance of power within their courts. But he exploited the limited resources at his disposal with skill, and the maintenance of friendly relations with both Sweden and Denmark throughout the crises which arose in the course of the war was no mean achievement.