There still remained for the armies of Tilly and Buquoi the reduction of the smaller garrisons in Bohemia, and these when finally expelled rallied under Mansfeld, who was joined by the disbanded soldiery of the Protestant Union’s short-lived army. Then there began the wolf-strategy that was the distinguishing mark of the Thirty Years’ War. An army even of ruffians could be controlled, as Tilly controlled that of the League, if it were paid. But Mansfeld, the servant of a shadow king, could not pay. Therefore "he must of necessity plunder where he was. His movements would be governed neither by political nor by military considerations. As soon as his men had eaten up one part of the country they must go on to another, if they were not to die of starvation. They obeyed a law of their own, quite independent of the wishes or needs of the sovereign whose interests they were supposed to serve.” These movements were for preference made upon hostile territory, and Mansfeld was so far successful in them that the situation in 1621 became distinctly unfavourable to the emperor. He had had to recall Buquoi’s army to. Hungary to fight against Gabriel Bethlen, the prince of Transylvania, and in an unsuccessful battle at Neu­häusel (July 10) Buquoi was killed. Tilly and the League Army fought warily and did not risk a decision. Thus even the proffered English mediation in the German war might have been accepted but for the fact that in the Lower Palatinate a corps of English volunteers, raised by Sir Horace Vere for the service of the English princess Elizabeth, the fair queen of Bohemia, found itself com­pelled, for want of pay and rations, to live, as Mansfeld lived, on the country of the nearest probable enemy—in their case the bishop of Spire. This brought about a fresh intervention of Spinola's army, which had begun to return to the Low Countries to prose­cute the interminable Dutch war. Moreover Mansfeld, having so thoroughly eaten up the Palatinate that the magistrates of Frede­rick's own towns begged Tilly to expel his general, decamped into Alsace, where he seized Hagenau and wintered in safety.

The winter of 1621-22 passed in a series of negotiations which failed because too many interests, inside and outside Germany, were bound up with Protestantism to allow the Catholics to speak as conquerors, and because the cause of Protestantism was too much involved with the cause of the elector palatine to be taken in hand with energy by the Protestant .princes. But Frederick and Mansfeld found two allies. One was Christian of Brunswick, the gallant young knight-errant, titular bishop of Halberstadt, queen Elizabeth’s champion, and withal, though he called himself *Gottes Freund, der Pfaffen Feind,* a plunderer of peasants as well as of priests. The other was the margrave George Frederick of Baden-Durlach, reputed to be of all German princes the most skilful sequestrator of ecclesiastical lands. In April 1622, while Vere garrisoned the central fortresses of the Palatinate, Mansfeld, Christian and George Frederick took the field against Tilly, who at once demanded assistance from Spinola. The latter, though engaged with the Dutch, sent a corps under his subordinate Cordova. Before this arrived Mansfeld and the margrave of Baden had defeated Tilly at Wiesloch, south of Heidelberg (17/27 April 1622). Nevertheless Tilly’s army was not as easily dissolved as one of theirs, and soon the allies had to separate to find food. Then Cordova came up, and Tilly and the Spaniards combined defeated George Frederick at Wimpfen on the Neckar (26 April/6 May). Following up this success, Cordova chased Mansfeld back into Alsace, while Tilly went north to oppose Christian of Brunswick on the Main. On June 10/20 the latter's army was almost destroyed by the League Army at Höchst. Mans­feld, and with him Frederick, had already set out from Alsace to join Christian, but when that leader arrived with only a handful of beaten men, the war was practically at an end. Frederick took Mansfeld and Christian back to Alsace, and after dismissing their troops from his employment, retired to Sedan. Henceforth he was a picturesque but powerless exile, and his lands and his electoral dignity, forfeited by the ban, went to the prudent Maxi­milian, who thus became elector of Bavaria. Finally Tilly con­quered the Palatinate fortresses, now guarded only by the English volunteers.

The next act in the drama, however, had already begun with the adventures of the outlaw army of Mansfeld and Christian.

After Höchst, had it not been for them, the war might have ended in compromise. James I. of England was busy as always with mediation schemes. Spain, being then in close connexion with him, was working to prevent the transfer of the electorate to Maxi­milian, and the Protestant princes of North Germany being neutral, a diplomatic struggle over the fate of the Palatinate, with Tilly’s and Cordova’s armies opposed in equilibrium, might have ended in a new convention of Passau that would have regulated the present troubles and left the future to settle its own problems. The struggle would only have been deferred, it is true, but meanwhile the North German Pro­testants, now helpless in an unarmed neutrality, would have taken the hint from Maximilian and organized themselves and their army. As it was, they remained powerless and inactive, while Tilly's army, instead of being disbanded, was kept in hand to deal with the adventurers.

These, after eating up Alsace, moved on to Lorraine, whereupon the French government ” warned them off.” But ere long they found a new employment. The Dutch were losing ground before Spinola, who was besieging Bergen-op-Zoom, and the States- General invited Mansfeld to relieve it. Time was short and no détour by the Lower Rhine possible, and the adventurers therefore moved straight across Luxemburg and the Spanish Netherlands to the rescue. Cordova barred the route at Fleurus near the Sambre, but the desperate invaders, held together by the sheer force of character of their leaders, thrust him out of their way (19/29 August 1622) and relieved Bergen-op- Zoom. But ere long, finding Dutch discipline intolerable, they marched off to the rich country of East Friesland.

Their presence raised fresh anxieties for the neutral princes of North Germany. In 1623 Mansfeld issued from his Frisian strong­hold, and the threat of a visitation from his army induced the princes of the Lower Saxon Circle to join him. Christian was himself a member of the Circle, and although he resigned his bishopric, he was taken, with many of his men, into the service of his brother, the duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel; around the mercenary nucleus gathered many thousands of volunteers, and the towns and the nobles’ castles alike were alarmed at the progress of the Catholics, who were reclaiming Protestant bishoprics. But this movement was nipped in the bud by the misconduct of the mercenaries. The authorities of the Circle ordered Christian to depart. He returned to Holland, therefore, but Tilly started in pursuit and caught him at Stadtlohn, where on 28 July/6 August 1623 his army was almost destroyed. Thereupon the Lower Saxon Circle, which, like the Bohemians, had ordered collectively taxes and levies of troops that the members individually furnished either not at all or unwillingly, disbanded their army to prevent brigandage. Mansfeld, too, having eaten up East Friesland, returned to Holland in 1624.

The only material factor was now Tilly’s ever-victorious Army of the League, but for the present it was suspended inactive in the midst of a spider’s web of European and German diplomacy. Spain and England had quarrelled. The latter became the ally of France, over whose policy Richelieu now ruled, and the United Pro­vinces and (later) Denmark joined them. Thus the war was extended beyond the borders of the Empire, and the way opened for ceaseless foreign interventions. From the battle of Stadtlohn to the pitiful end twenty years later, the decision of German quarrels lay in the hands of foreign powers, and for two centuries after the treaty of Westphalia the evil tradition was faithfully followed.

France was concerned chiefly with Spain, whose military possessions all along her frontier suggested that a new Austrasia, more powerful than Charles the Bold’s, might arise. To Ger­many only subsidies were sent, but in Italy the Valtelline, as the connecting link between Spanish possessions and Germany, was mastered by a French expedition. James, in concert with France, re-equipped Mansfeld and allowed him to raise an army in England, but Richelieu was unwilling to allow Mansfeld’s men to traverse France, and they ultimately went to the Low Countries, where, being raw pressed-men for the most part, and having neither pay (James having been afraid to summon parliament) nor experience in plundering, they perished in the winter of 1625. At the same time a Huguenot rising paralysed Richelieu’s foreign policy. Holland after the collapse of Mansfeld’s expedition was anxious for her own safety owing to the steady advance of Spinola. The only member of the alliance who intervened in Germany itself was Christian IV. of Denmark, who as duke of Holstein was a member of the Lower Saxon Circle, as king of Denmark was anxious to extend his influence over the North Sea ports, and as Protestant dreaded the rising power of the Catholics. Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, judging better than any of the difficulties of affronting the Empire and Spain, contented himself for the present with carrying on a war with Poland.

Christian IV. raised an army in his own lands and in the Lower Saxon Circle in the spring of 1625. Tilly at once advanced to meet him. But he had only the Army of the League, Ferdinand's