which might hold about two quarts, was presented to him ; and, as soon as he received it, he pulled out the clapper, and giving it to Sir William, to whom he intended to drink, ordered the bell to be filled. He drank off the contents to his majesty’s health ; and asking Sir William for the clapper, put it on, and turning down the bell, rang it, to show that he bad drunk fair, and left nothing in it. He then took out the clapper, desired Sir William to give it to whom­soever he pleased ; and, ordering the bell to be filled again, presented it to Sir William : but as the latter seldom used to drink, he had generally some gentleman with him to sup­ply his place in this respect whenever it might be necessa­ry. Having finished his business at Munster, he returned to Brussels, where he passed a year with great pleasure and satisfaction.

Two months after the conclusion of the peace with the Dutch at Breda, Sir William’s sister, who resided with him at Brussels, being very desirous of seeing Holland, he went thither incognito to gratify her desire ; but while he was at the Hague, he paid a private visit to De Witt, in which he laid the foundation of that close intimacy which afterwards subsisted between them. In the spring of 1667, a new war breaking out between France and Spain, which exposed Brussels to the danger of falling into the hands of the for­mer, Sir William sent his lady and family to England ; but he himself remained there with his sister till the Christmas following, when he was ordered by the king to come over privately to London. Taking the Hague in his way, he paid another visit to De Witt, and, pursuant to his instruc­tions, proposed those overtures to him which produced the triple alliance. Soon after his arrival at the British court, he returned, on the 16th of January 1668, with the charac­ter of envoy extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Holland ; where a conference being opened, he brought that treaty to a perfect conclusion in the short space of five days. The ratifications of this alliance being exchanged on the 15th of February, he repaired to Brussels ; and a treaty being set on foot between France and Spain at Aix-la-Chapelle, he proceeded for that place on the 24th of April in quality of his majesty’s ambassador extraordinary and mediator. Here he arrived on the 27th ; and it was chiefly owing to his as­sistance that the Spaniards were brought to sign the articles of that peace on the second of May. This service being completed, he returned to Brussels, with a view of remaining there in his former station of resident ; but he received letters from the earl of Arlington, with the king’s order to continue as ambassador, and to serve his country in that quality in Holland, as, on account of the late alliances, his majesty was resolved to renew a character which the crown of England had discontinued there since the time of King James. Sir William being now left at liberty to return to England, embraced the opportunity ; and upon his arrival at London he was received with every possible demonstration of favour, both by the king and the court.

Setting out again for Holland, with his new character of the king’s ambassador, he arrived at the Hague in the end of August 1668. Here he enjoyed the confidence of that great minister De Witt, and lived in great intimacy with the prince of Orange, who was then only eighteen years of age ; but, in September 1669, he was hurried back to Eng­land by Lord Arlington, who ordered him to put his foot in the stirrup as soon as he should receive his letter. When Sir William waited on the earl, he found that he had not one word to say to him ; for, after making him attend a long time, he only asked a few indifferent questions respect­ing his journey. Next day he was received as coolly by the king ; but the secret soon came out, and he was urged to return to the Hague, and pave the way for a war with Holland. In this, however, he excused himself from having any concern ; which so much provoked the lord-treasurer Clifford, that he refused to him an arrear of two thousand pounds due from his embassy. Disgusted with Arlington’s behaviour, which was so unlike the friendship he had for­merly professed, Sir William now retired to his house at Sheen, near Richmond, in Surrey ; and in his retreat, when free from the hurry of business, he wrote his Observations on the United Provinces, and one part of his Miscellanies, in the time of the second Dutch war. But about the end of summer 1673, the king wishing to put an end to the war, sent for Sir William, and desired him to go to Hol­land to negociate a peace ; but powers having been sent from thence at this time to the Marquis de Fresno, the Spanish ambassador at London, Sir William was ordered to confer with him ; and a treaty was accordingly conclud­ed in three days, and the point carried respecting the su­periority of the British flag, which had been so long con­tested. In June 1674 he was again sent ambassador to Holland to offer the king’s mediation between France and the confederates, then at war, and it was accepted not long after ; Lord Berkeley, Sir William Temple, and Sir Leoline Jenkins, being declared ambassadors and mediators. Ni- meguen, which Sir William had proposed, was at length agreed upon by all parties to be the place of treaty. Dur­ing his stay at the Hague, the prince of Orange, who was fond of the English language, and of the plain English way of eating, constantly dined and supped once or twice a week at his house ; and by this familiarity he so much gained the prince’s confidence and esteem, that he had a consider­able hand in his marriage with the princess Mary, daugh­ter of James II.

In July 1676 he removed his family to Nimeguen, where he spent the remainder of that year without making any progress in the treaty ; and the year following his son was sent over with letters from the lord-treasurer, ordering him to return, and succeed Mr Coventry as secretary of state. In consequence of this order, Sir William came over to England in the spring of 1677 ; and though the affair of the secretary’s place was dropped at his desire, he did not re­turn to Nimeguen that year. About this time, the prince having the king’s leave to come over, he soon after married the princess Mary ; and this gave occasion for a new cool­ness between Lord Arlington and Sir William, as he and the lord-treasurer Osborne, who was related to Sir Wil­liam’s lady, were only privy to that affair. After the prince and princess were gone to Holland, as the court always seemed inclined to favour France, the king wished to en­gage Sir William in some negociations with that crown ; but he was so ill satisfied with this proposal, that he offered to give up all pretensions to the office of secretary ; and desiring the lord-treasurer to acquaint his majesty with his intentions, retired to Sheen, in hopes of being taken at his word. Upon a discovery, however, of the French de­signs not to evacuate the Spanish towns agreed by the treaty to be delivered up, the king commanded him to un­dertake a third embassy to the states. With them he con­cluded a treaty, by which England engaged, in case France refused to evacuate the towns in forty days, to declare war immediately against that nation ; but before half that time was elapsed, one Du Cros was sent from the English court to Holland upon a business which there damped all the good humour excited by the treaty, and which produced such sudden and astonishing changes in this country, as gave Sir William a distaste for all public employments.

In 1679 he returned to Nimeguen, where the French delayed to sign the treaty till the last hour ; but having concluded it, he returned to the Hague, whence he was soon after sent for to enter upon the secretary’s office, which Mr Coventry at length resolved to resign. He accordingly came over, and went to court, as all his friends hoped, with a full intention of assuming his office ; but he started some difficulty, because he had not a seat in the House of Com­mons, thinking that, by his not being a member, the public