

La Diplomatie secrète au XVIII^e Siècle ; ses Débuts. III. *Le Secret de Dubois.* Par ÉMILE BOURGEOIS. (Paris : Colin, s. a.)

THIS is the third of a trilogy of secrets, the two former being those of the regent and the Farnesi. It is a somewhat lengthy method of telling secrets, which had indeed much in common, and which were not very closely kept. M. Bourgeois makes the secret of Dubois to consist in sacrificing the national interests to the dynastic ambitions of the regent and his own insatiate love of authority. France after the death of Louis XIV needed peace, and this every one admits. While professing to give her peace, the regent, under the guidance of Dubois, plunged her into active hostilities in the war against Spain, while he defrayed the expenses of war in the Baltic. The Quadruple Alliance in the Mediterranean had its counterpart in the Triple Alliance of England, France, and Sweden in the Baltic, and both were for the benefit of England and to the detriment of France. France, it is urged, should have been the mediator, the angel of peace ; instead of this Dubois provoked the war with Spain, a nation and dynasty naturally allied to France, while in the Baltic, after conniving at the dismemberment of Sweden, the ally of the past, he alienated Russia, a most promising ally for the future. It is shown that Dubois's method was indeed directed towards peace, but it consisted in siding with the stronger power in order to enforce it. This principle is ingeniously extended to the religious quarrel in France, for the author points out that Dubois threw his weight upon the side of the papacy and the constitutionalists to overpower the national party and the Jansenists.

This, after all, was the system considered by Machiavelli as essential to a weak state, for which he regarded neutrality as ruinous. Now France during the early days of the regency was a relatively weak state, just as England was a relatively strong one. It is improbable that the benevolent and impartial neutrality of France would have been accepted, and she would then have been forced to support the weaker combatant. France, moreover, is a highly sensitive nation, and at the moment when she has suffered humiliation is the most eager to reassert herself. The policy of Dubois, therefore, in so far as it was militant, was in accord with the temperament and traditions of the nation ; nor does the author deny that the regent made a considerable figure in European politics, though he paid too dearly for it. It may be admitted that in Spain the policy of France, as that of England, was precipitate and brutal. In the Baltic she did not engage in actual hostilities, but she subsidized the Swedish fleet, and bought off the Danish attack on Sweden, and all this to secure Bremen and Verden for her Hanoverian ally. Yet, if she had not intervened, Sweden would have been irretrievably lost. The power of Russia was in *posse* rather than in *esse*, and Peter, and still less his successor, could not be regarded as a friend to be trusted. The naturalness of a Franco-Russian alliance is antedated ; it is doubtful whether the aggrandizement of Russia was to the interest of France, when Prussia was as yet France's probable counterpoise to the Habsburgs. Again, it may be doubted whether Spain and France were kindred spirits. The Spaniards had much devotion for Philip, who had stood to his post when Louis XIV decided on withdrawal ;

but there was no friendly feeling at all for the French nation, the secular enemy of Spain, and, if Philip had deserted his throne for that of France, loyalty would have given place to passionate indignation. The insistence of Dubois on the Orleanist claim is regarded as a crime, but it was a recognized fact in the law of Europe, and its abrogation must have been followed by a revival of the War of the Spanish Succession. The action of Dubois tided the danger over; every year that he could fight off Philip's claim was a year gained for the strength and growth of the delicate boy king.

M. Bourgeois divides Dubois's policy sharply into two halves, the alliance with England and the alliance with Spain, the treaty of Hanover and the treaty of Madrid. He skilfully converts a chapter on Law into a hinge between the two halves. Dubois's attack on the System is, indeed, represented as being engineered by Stanhope, who throughout plays the Mephistopheles to Dubois's Faust, whilst to France falls the part of Marguerite. The fall of Law suited England, but Dubois, to avert a powerful combination against himself, had to make his peace with the royal bastards and the old court, and, for this end, to throw himself into the arms ostensibly of Spain, but really into those of the Farnesi. Dubois, it may be said, surrendered to the duke of Parma, that is, to the principle of war against the emperor in Italy. But he showed his skill by accepting the principle, but indefinitely postponing the fact. The reconciliation between Philip V and Orleans, purchased at the expense of France by the surrender of Pensacola, was followed by the accession of England to the treaty of Madrid. This is explained as being due to her weakness, caused by the split in her government and the ruinous results of the South Sea Bubble. The force of this change of policy is perhaps exaggerated. Both England and France were all along not so much opposed to the claims of the Farnesi as to their methods, and England's change of front was due less to weakness than to determination that France should not monopolize Spanish commercial favour. The alliance between the Spanish and French courts was cemented by the Orleans-Spanish marriages. It was indeed a triumph for Orleans that one daughter should sit on the throne of Spain and another on that of a considerable state to be formed in Italy. France unquestionably paid a heavy price in the betrothal of the growing king to the child infanta, and the postponement of his marriage opened new chances for the Orleanist succession. Nevertheless, France did avert grave internal and external dangers by the reconciliation with Philip and his voluntary abandonment of his claim.

The last act of Dubois was to prepare for a possible war with the Habsburgs by the reconciliation of the tsar with England and Sweden. Here again Orleanist interests were in the forefront, for a marriage was being negotiated between the Duc de Chartres and Peter's daughter Elisabeth, with the prospect of the reversion of the crown of Poland. Too much weight must, perhaps, not be attributed to this scheme, for the beautiful young girl was tossed at the heads of many princes, at that of Louis XV among others.

In spite of the author's invective against Dubois's foreign policy, he is fair to his personal character. After close examination he concludes that, while corrupting others, he was himself incorruptible. Having given

an excellent account of the skill with which Dubois shouldered out every enemy or rival, he admits his fruitful labours for the efficiency of the army, and for a sounder system of taxation, finance, and commerce. The chief indictment is his initiation of the evil practice of secret, unofficial agents such as Lafiteau, Destouches, Chavigny, and Mornay, from whose correspondence he derives his newest and most interesting matter. It is true that Dubois carried this system to an unprecedented length, but the history of the treaty of Utrecht alone would prove that it was nothing new, and Alberoni is a striking personal example.

The volume is a little over long, but the mechanism is skilful, and the arguments are forcibly thrust home. Italian geography is not the author's *forte*. He makes the Spaniards at Palermo issue from the lava beds of Etna to attack the Austrians. Parma and Tuscany are described as occupying *tout le centre de l'Italie du Tibre au Pô*, and separating *en deux tronçons les domaines de l'Empire*. He forgets that Modena was thrust in as a wedge between Parma and Tuscany, that the latter only touched the uppermost Tiber at a single point, and that the Austrians had a straight run from Mantua through Papal Ferrara and Bologna to the great southern high-road, without touching the intended Farnesi state. E. ARMSTRONG.

J. P. BRISSOT, *Mémoires (1754-93) publiés avec Étude critique et Notes*.
Par C. PERROUD. (Paris: Picard, s. a.)

THE memoirs of Brissot, edited by F. de Montrol, were first published in the years 1830-2. Neither then nor at any later time was the original manuscript forthcoming, and, from the first, doubts were expressed as to the authenticity of the memoirs. Some years afterwards Quérard stated positively that part of the third and the whole of the fourth volume were the work of Lhéritier, a literary hack, who had succeeded Montrol as editor. Montrol himself had hinted at certain liberties taken with the text by himself and by Lhéritier. He also used expressions implying that there was no one complete manuscript of the memoirs, but a number of fragmentary manuscripts hastily thrown together by Brissot and therefore marked by a confusion and an incoherence which would tempt an editor to complete and to harmonize. All these circumstances suggested the need of a careful investigation. This M. Perroud undertook, and the results are set forth in his critical introduction. They illustrate what critics know so well, the unsatisfactory character of 'contemporary memoirs' as sources of history.

That Brissot did write memoirs, and that the original editors worked upon manuscripts from his pen, M. Perroud thinks certain. But these manuscripts not being enough to furnish out a full biography, the editors supplemented them in various ways. The edition of 1830-2 was in four volumes containing about 1,300 pages of text. Close examination showed M. Perroud that about 600 pages had been transferred by them from the published writings of Brissot, especially from the newspaper edited by him during the revolution, the *Patriote Français*. About 100 more were made up of letters written by or to Brissot which the editors had found in different places and inserted in the text, modifying