

THE
LIFE
Of the truly EMINENT and LEARNED
HUGO GROTIUS,
CONTAINING
A Copious and Circumstantial History of the several
Important and Honourable Negotiations
In which he was employed;
TOGETHER WITH
A *Critical* Account of his WORKS.
Written originally in French,
By M. DE BURIGNY.

THE AUTHOR'S

PREFACE.

It were to be wished that such a celebrated Genius as Grotius had found an Historian equal to his fame: for in this high rank we can by no means place those who have contented themselves with giving a superficial account of his Life, and a catalogue of his Works. M. Lehman, to whom we owe Grotius's Ghost revenged, is much fuller than any that went before him; yet he is far from having taken in all that deserves to be known of that illustrious writer, the two most interesting Distinctions of whose Life have been entirely neglected by all who have spoken of him; I mean his Negotiations, and his sentiments in matters of Religion.

Gaspar Brandt and Adrian Cattenburg have indeed published a long Life of Grotius; but the Dutch language, in which they wrote, is so little known, that their book cannot be of general use; with a view to which we have made choice of a more universal language, to communicate farther light concerning this excellent man, whom every one speaks of, tho' few with any certainty.

His being one of the most learned Authors that ever wrote, was not our sole motive for compiling his Life: for if we consider him only in that light, and with regard to the excellent treatises with which he has enriched the Republic of Letters, perhaps others may be found to compare with him. But his Life was so diversified, and filled with so many revolutions, that what regards literature is not the most curious part of it; greatly differing, in this respect, from the generality of men of letters, whose Lives are only the histories of their works. Besides, Grotius's prudence on all occasions, his modesty in prosperity, his patience in adversity, his steadiness in his duty, his love of virtue, his eagerness in the search of truth, and the ardent desire which he constantly maintained for uniting Christians in one Faith, distinguish him so advantageously from most other Scholars, that his Life may be proposed as a model to all who make profession of literature.

It is divided into six Books. The first presents us with the brightest genius ever recorded, of a Youth, in the history of the republic of letters. The second contains all that is worth being known of the disputes between the Gomarists and Arminians; the part Grotius took in them; his disgrace, and the manner of his escape out of prison. The third relates his transactions at Paris, and his retreat to Hamburg, where he continued till the

great Chancellor Oxensteirn sent for him, to employ him in the important and honourable post of Ambassador from Sweden to the Court of France. The fourth and fifth Books give a detail of his Negotiations; which have never yet been published. We have been accustomed to consider Grotius only as a Scholar; his embassy is known but by report: we shall see, however, that he was employed in affairs of the greatest importance; that he succeeded in several; that he gave excellent counsels to the ministry; and that he always conducted himself with zeal, firmness, and integrity.

The sixth and last Book gives an account of such of his Works as we had not occasion to mention before; and examines particularly his theological sentiments, and his project for a coalition of Christians, and bringing them to unite in one creed.

Advertisement by the Editor.

The Abbé RAYNAL[1], a judicious French writer, gives the following character of this work.

"M. de BURIGNY hath executed his Plan with abundance of erudition, and an astonishing depth of enquiry. He has introduced nothing but facts well supported, or theological discussions delivered with the greatest conciseness and accuracy. Such readers as aim at amusement only, will think the author too minute in some places; those who are desirous of information will think otherwise. The most valuable part of this work is, in our opinion, the just and concise idea which it gives of *Grotius's* several Writings."

FOOTNOTES:

[1] *Mercure François*, an. 1752.

APPROBATION.

By Order of my Lord CHANCELLOR, I have read the *Life of GROTIUS*. This History, which gives us a pleasing Idea of the Extent of the Human Mind, farther informs us, that *GROTIUS* died without reaping any Advantage to himself from his great Talents. For the rest, I think it deserves to be made public on account of its relation to Literature, and to the general History of *Europe*.

DE MARSILLY

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BOOK I.

I. The learned and illustrious Writer whose Life we undertake to give, derived the name of Grotius from his great-grandmother, married to Cornelius Cornets. This was a Gentleman of Franche-Comté, who travelled into the Low-Countries about the beginning of the sixteenth century, and coming to Delft, got acquainted with a Burgomaster who had an only daughter: He took a liking to her, asked, and obtained her in marriage.

The name of this magistrate was Diederic de Groot, or Diederic the Great; his family was of the first distinction in the country; and had produced several persons of great merit[2]. It is said the name of Great was given to one of Diederic's ancestors, above four hundred years ago, for a signal service done his country; and it has been observed[3] that all who bore the name of De Groot distinguished themselves by their zeal for the public.

Diederic de Groot had several important employments, in which he acquitted himself with great honour. The name of his only daughter was Ermengarda de Groot: Her father, on giving his consent to her marriage, insisted that the children should bear the name of De Groot; and Cornelius Cornets agreed to it in the marriage contract. There were several branches of the Cornets: one settled in Provence, as we are informed by[4] Grotius.

FOOTNOTES:

[2] Acad. Leid. ed. 1614.

[3] Vita Grotii ap. Batesium, p. 420.

[4] Ep. 264. ad Peyresc. p. 91.

II. Cornelius Cornets had by his marriage with Ermengarda de Groot a son named Hugo de Groot, distinguished by his knowledge of the Greek and Latin, and his skill in the Hebrew. He died in 1567, fifth time Burgomaster of Delft. He married Elselinga Heemskerke, of one of the ancientest noble families in Holland, and by her had two sons, Cornelius, and John de Groot.

III. Cornelius de Groot, eldest son of Hugh, was born at Delft on the 25th of July, 1544. He studied with much success at the University of Louvain, at that time very famous. The Greek and Hebrew he knew perfectly, and was well acquainted with the Mathematics. The Platonic Philosophy pleased him extremely, and he retained a liking to it all his life: he had read all the books of the sect, had commented their works, and knew them almost by heart.

The Law wholly took him up afterwards: he went to study it at the faculty of law at Orleans, the most celebrated for that science, and took the degree of Licentiate. Returning home he followed the Bar; some time after, he was nominated Counsellor and Echevin: William prince of Orange made him Master of Requests.

The University of Leyden being founded in 1575, Cornelius de Groot resigned his post in the magistracy, to follow his ruling inclination of being useful to youth; and did not think it beneath him to accept of a Professor's place in the new University: he first taught Philosophy, and was afterwards made Law-professor; an employment that pleased him so much, he preferred it to a seat in the Grand Council at the Hague, which was several times offered him, but which he constantly refused. His reputation was so great, the Grand Council often consulted with him on affairs of importance. Six times he was honoured with the dignity of Rector, a place of great honour and authority: the members of the University, and all who are enrolled in the Rector's book, depend on his jurisdiction; before him their causes, civil and criminal, are brought, and from his sentence there is no appeal: a revisal of it is all that can be demanded. Cornelius de Groot died without issue in the year 1610, on the same day of the month of July on which he was born. He left several Law Tracts which have never been printed.

IV. John de Groot, brother to Cornelius and second son of Hugh, studied under the famous Justus Lipsius, who esteemed him much: in some letters of that learned man to John de Groot he speaks of him with great commendation. There is one, written in 1582, in which Lipsius tells him, "You have loved the Muses, they have loved you, they will love you, and I too with them will love you."