

Considerations upon the Treaty of Marriage between England and Spain (1622?)

Transcript

British Library, Hargrave MS 311, ff. 175r–178r

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[*Left margin:* Anno 1618.] Marriadge bet{weene Engl}and and Spaine./

The essentiall points thereof seeme to be the advantages and dissadvantages of such an alliance and whether both weighed in equall ballance the one will not oversway the other./

The aduantages that England may pr[e]tend are these

- 1 A great Kings daughter
- 2 Much money
- 3 Safetye
- 4 Continuance of trade
- 5 The bridling of the growing greatnes of States
- 6 The Subjects of Spaine will not be burdenous to England being more remote, as those of France would be that are neerer neighbours.
- 7 The hindering of the Scottish Faction for strenthning it selfe by the alliaunce of France, which though it be not publikelye taken knowledge of, yet hath his place amongst the reasons that further the match w[i]th Spaine

These and the like benefitts and aduantages, some promise to them selves, by running the Course of Spaine, but of God or of o[u]r Cause hitherto noe menc[i]on at all and yett vnlesse the Lord build the house the builders labour in vaine.

Answer

1 The meanest of the houshold of faith are much greater then the greatest of those that are w[i]thout for they are borne to a greate inheritaunce, These are the promises, God is their god, and w[i]th them hath he made a Covenante, nor ought it to be forgotten that the house of Spaine is Stained w[i]th incest in the match betweene the last King and his sisters daughter w[hi]ch cannot be but very loathsome to euery true Christian hart, and yet to speake according to the world, the house of England is great enough of it selfe match it where it will, as it hath done in times past and as other great Monarches haue led the way, and the allian{ce} of france a lesse dangerous euill and that hath noe ill aspect (vppon England) as honorable as that of Spaine it will not proue so beneficiall and so neither so dangerous nor preiudiciall /

2 Money will soone be wasted and melt away, but the price of it will abide still, lett not any deceave, of flatter them selues, Spaine giveth nothing, but for something, and where he giveth much he will looke for a greate returne, examine well their acc[i]ons and p[ro]ceeding^s and make vse of Experience, neither cann or ought money to be any essentiall considera^{c[i]on} to sway the weigh of so important an alliance. /

3 Is not England stronger at this pr[e]sent and Spaine weaker then heretofore; whence then any Cause of feare, but alow that the state of England, stood in feare of any daunger from

Spaine, will this alliance secure them; the feare is Idle, and the remedie Idler vnlesse any
Could make it good, that the loue of Spaine to England be a match going

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Forward would p[ro]cure the predominate humor in him that should sway his ambition,
wherof the world so much experience hath on the Contrary, Charles the first giue his
owne sister in Marriadge to francis the first, was Francis euer a whit the safer, for such an
alliance Savoy hath married w[i]th Spaines sister who neuerthelesse doth what he cann to
swallow him vp France and Spaine haue lately made a double match, let it be examined
whether Spaine haue laboured most to quench or kindle the fire in France, & yet they were
both of one Religion

They err who thinke there is any thing to be had from a papist for love rather then for
feare or that Spaine will ever absolutely desist from aspiring at the vniuersall monarchie
of Christendome, and p[ar]ticularly the recouery of the vnited prouinces, for though he
often str{ike} saile and put into harbour in foule wather, yet he doth not neglect to weigh
ancor againe, follow his intended Course when the season is fitt for it; England doth hinder
his designes therefore he would match w[i]th England, to haue the free passage for them,
and if he were in quiet ^{possession} of all the 17 prouinces then would they be made a staple
and storehouse for all things necessarie in so plentifull and well fitted a scituac[i]on for
the invading the parts neere adioyning, whereof the plotts are not new if England give way
to him, then disappointed of their defences and Bulwarkes that will stand as it were at his
mercy, and lie open to all manner of Batteries, As on the other side if he be crossed, then
will things be but where they were, both for Continuance of trade and assurance against
feare of invasion, Nay rather in somuch the worse termes, because he shall faile of his
expectac[i]on which comonlie doth breed much harshnesse euen amongst the dearest friends. /

Let not any cast a mist in others eies though Spaine had laid asside his wonted ambition
(which none cann sufficientlie assure) yet will he neuer loose his hope, or relent in his
resoluc[i]on of recouering the vnited prouinces wherein his honor and reputac[i]on are so
deeply interested./

Nor cann such a great scattered bodye that hath soe many Irons in the fire be but continually
armed, and still in acc[i]on, to daunger both of freinds and foes, as he shall finde his best
aduantages and opportunities./

If England feare Spaine, their safetie therefore, will rather stand in keping him at the stauess
end then receauing such an ambitious new reconcyled enemie, and doubfull freind in their
bosom corrupting of the subiects, then he cann otherwise by open hostilitie which he will be
wary enough not to attempt, lest they ioyning their forces by Sea, with those of the vnited
prouinces should giue him to great a Shocke./

Straight intelligigence, and Correspondencye w[i]th neighbour Princes, and Allies will alwaies
prooue a safer refuge, for England against Spaine, then the marriadge with Spaine, because
all haue a com[m]on quarrell to his ambition and greatnes, which in him will neuer giue way
to any other Considerac[i]on whatsoever, for there hath euen been and will still continue in
Spaine *Constans et perpetua voluntas suum {vnicuiq[ue]} auferendi*, whereof a great part of
Christendom doth yet beare the scarres and feele the stripes. /

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4 Trade will be allowed to Continue, and as safe w[i]th the alliance of marriadge, as w[i]th it, for Spaine doth not onely reape a benefitt by it, but will also be afraid to scare or discontent England, by the ill vsage of the marchantes, else why haue they so baselie, and abiectly begged a peace, but whensoever he seeth his opportunitie and shall find a greater aduantage to breake then to Continue in good termes with England the alliance will secure the marchantes noe more then if it were not at all./

The States may in time grow greate, and their greatnesse dangerous, but Spaine is both the one and the other allreadie and this alliance will add much vnto him, there may also grow iealousie and vnkindnesse and thence open enmitie betweene England and them, And so on the otherside things may be so discreetlie carried, as they two may entertaine good amitie and correspondencye one w[i]th another for common defence for they both professe the same religion and their estate and Condition, seeme to vnite them together in a necessitie of putting out their hands one to another for mutuall pr[e]servac[i]on doe they carrye themselves now vnkindlie or somewhat vnrespectfullie that doth not soe vrgentlie prooue, that they may become enemies hereafter, as therevpon to ground a necessitie of making an alliance, w[i]th a knowne enemy, w[hi]ch were noe other then to runn into a pr[e]sent mischeefe, for feare of a future inconvenience, that take an alarme at Englands ioyning w[i]th Spaine to their hurt, w[hi]ch though it be not so ment by England yet it is the scope that Spaine aimeth att, and that p[er]happs may make them somewhat to neglect England, but remove the Cause and the effect will cease, let them be assured of their freindshipp, and they will be found true and respectfull freinds, if they prosper and grow great, who knoweth whether it be not of god by such weake meanes to pull downe the loftinesse of Spaine, and then to w[i]thstand them, were to runne against a Rock. the very first occac[i]on of their libertie was the deriving of them to despaire, which made them to take hart and resoluc[i]on to resist, the violence that was offered wherein being encouraged with good successe, and feeling their owne strenght they haue in time made such further progresse, as is this day to be seene, Better then for England to make ^{vse of} a necessarie euill, and runn a Course with them whereby they may haue a part in their well speeding, then to ioyne with Spaine a religion and state enemy, who allieth himselfe vnto England but for his owne ends, and must needs draw after them the ouerthrow of the Cause of religion and ruinne of the state, and will neuer prooue but a secret enemy and doubtfull freind, and it must not in this place be forgotton, that if true professors, be iustly reprobred for going to law before heathen Iudges, much lesse may they side themselues w[i]th any of those that arr without to the hurt one of another./

6 If England and France should match together, yt doth not therefore consequentlie follow, that the french should be burthenous to the state by reason of their neernesse, The lawes of England allow noe offices, nor pr[e]ferment to Aliens, The French will

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haue more hope in their owne Countrey, where there is without Comparison much more to be given then in England. The English seeke not to make any fortunes in Scotland, but if the French should be importunate, they are alsoe impatient, let them finde Visage de Boy, and yo[u]r Coldenesse shall were out their earnestnesse!/

7 The strength w[hi]ch the Scottish faction may gather by the alliance, of france, is but a p[ar]ticuler considerac[i]on against w[hi]ch may be opposed the greatnesse that the Spanish faction will grow vnto by a match with Spaine to the daunger of the state./

This answer doth greatly lay open the value of such advantages, as England doth promise him selfe by matching w[i]th Spaine, w[hi]ch how deere they would notwithstanding be bought, will more p[ar]ticularlye appeare, if knowledge be also taken for the inconveniences and mischeefs, would follow, for the better concealing whereof his ends are seriously to be examined, for it is not likely that Spaine a Kingdome and State Catholique, who hath both religion and state quarrels against England, will yeild to giue his daughter in marriage to England, Nay rather doth offer great sommes for the Compassing thereof but that he looketh for a great returne, *Timeo Danaos &c sic notus vlisses-*

The price of this alliance therefore will be the breaking of the match w[i]th France, to the weakening both of England and France wherby he may haue the greater footing, in either deuiding England from his Allies especially from the states of the vnitied Prouinces the making way for another match, betweene his second sonne (whom he hath plott to set in the low Countries, and from thence to promote him if he can to the Crowne Imperiall and another daughter of France, w[hi]ch would giue so greates an alarme to the whole side of those of the religion if the pr[e]tended match w[i]th England come not betweene, And altering in time the state of religion in England, whereof if hee had noe hope, neither would he euer harken to the match, for none must thinke that he will treat such an alliance without the priuitie and Aduises of his deuines, or that they will not give their consent to it, but vpon greates probabilitie, that it shall tend to the furtherance of their Catholique faith The supposed Catholique religion is knowne to be in Spaine one of the fundamentall lawes of their estate, and not doubt but Spaine is himselfe a very rigid Romish Catholique, the further therefore he speedeth his religion the more satisfaction it is vnto his conscience, and the more doth he propp and increase his greatnesse, namely because those of that religion that are most deuout but especiallie the greater part of the Clergie throughout Christendome, haue their eyes fixed vpon him, as vpon the greatest stay and pillar of their Catholique faith, who therefore he should match w[i]th an heretique (so they terme in England) but w[i]th a settled purpose by such meanes to roote out heresie, would both wrong his one Conscience and loose his reputac[i]on, amongst all these of his beleefe to the ouer greates weakening of his estate, w[hi]ch error none of sound iudgment, that knoweth Spaine well, can easily beleue that he will euer Commit. /

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That a Change or tollerac[i]on of religion should happen in England by meanes of the intended match is more to be feared then any can warrant to be impossible, wherein that were well worth the labour to find out what hopes Spaine doth ground vpon, and what possibilitie there is, that the same may be disappointed, in the meane time very likelie that it is in generall that there will be no meanes vnattempted, be left on his side to bring his purpose to passe./

And then it must in this place be remembred, first whatsoever is not of faith is sinn-~~gap~~e, and that sinne hath noe promise of blessing, nor is this a worke of faith &c. Next that England hath too much experience alreadie of the increasing of Poperie, w[i]thin these few yeares, for want of due execut[i]on of the lawes, which hath bred exceeding great boldnes in the papists aswell at home as abroad, if the marriage goe forward they will take much the more hart and greater encouragement no small number of Subiects want teaching, and so the easer shaken, many waver, and many are new fangled, the more prepared for a Change, and therefore will accordinglie be wrought vpon, The old serpent will seduce many Eues, and

Pistolls will haue free passage euery where, The worst is yet, And there must needs be p[ar]tie Children, for the mother will giue her selfe noe rest, vntill he hath nusled some them in her owne religion, which would make the way very plaine, and easie for a Change because the head once Corrupted, the infection will in short time spread itselfe over all the bodye, and true religion is vnsatiab[le] sorte it w[i]th selfe worshipping, and it will soone forsake his dwelling place./

If Spaine can proue a tollerac[i]on of religion (w[hi]ch must needs be followed w[i]th the ruine of the state) he may then assure himselfe of a side w[hi]ch will allwaies be able either directlie or indirectlie to divert the state from hinderinge his designes aswell in the low Countries as wheresoeuer else.

And though he should not pr[e]vaile at the first by practise to p[ro]cure a tolleration of Religion (w[hi]ch neuerthelesse the very increasing of the number of papists will of it selfe effect in processe of time) yet when he hath once a faction on foote, and that many of the Subiects are p[er]verted in religion he will notwithstanding be in good hope, that the state may be stayed and hindered from opposing it selfe against his designes, by the working of his faction, and the ieaousie, that wilbe conceived of the papists within the realme./

And whether his hopes may faile him or noe yet if he should vpon such ground make any attempt, against those of the vnited prouinces, it would not but fall out, to the greate trouble annoyance, and daunger of the state, especiall if he send his forces by Sea, for then must England vpon such occac[i]on either rigg out their nauie to see that he keepe his Course which will alwaies be a matter of greate burthen & Charge or otherwise abide the hazard of his landing vpon their owne Coasts if he haue intelligence w[i]th the papists whereof it will in such Cases alwaies be safer to be somewhat ieaous then too secure./

Now the alliance w[i]th Spaine will not onelie scare and discourage in generall the whole side of those of the religion abroad to the great weakning, of the state of England

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But also breed a p[ar]ticuler ieaousie in those of the vnited Prouinces when they shall see both that poperie increaseth, or that Spaine hath a part or faction within the realme, whereof one of these two Mischeefs must consequentlie follow, either that they will make their peace w[i]th Spaine, if they mistrust their owne strength or else stand Continually vpon their Guard against England and Spaine in the narrow seas Seas, if they be able to hold out, especially vpon the comming of any supplies by Sea to the Archduke during the truce (which as they are a people ieaous and suspitious enough by nature) may at one time or other by occasions happening grow to some dangerous inconuenience./

For betweene too so neere neighbours, both potent at Sea, if there be not straight amitie kept things cannot long stand without breaking forth into termes of open hostilitie./

And for the state of those prouinces though strong by Sea, alliance and scituac[i]on, yet are not the foundations thereof so sure that England may w[i]th safetie leave them to themselves for the later sects and questions about matters of religion threatens their disvnion, and Spaine that lieth Continuallie in waite for their libertie hath his penc[i]oners, and dailie practises among them, who therefore once freed, from the daunger of the enemies (this tricke is weake & the Empire like to be continued still in the house of Austria) If he be able to sett to puissant

armies on foote, one to keepe the feild, and another to keepe the townes may in time put them to great distresse./

It is also verie considerable, that if by meanes of this treatie Spaine cann breake that of Fraunce, he will then thinke to haue the better end of the staffe, when England shall haue noe other aduantageable alliance, at his owne Choyce, And so be p[er]happs encouraged to stand vppon so great termes, as may be cause of breaking off w[i]th them to the losse still of the reputac[i]on of England that would consent to treat w[i]th a professed enemie, and p[er]secutor of his religion, and yet shall not reape and benefitt or aduantage to Counteruaile the same Some doe noyse much the ancient amitie w[i]th the house of Burgundie, but that house is Changed, and hath not kept truce in the Condictions of the alliance, and soe ought the Cause to be altered too, it was too weake for France, but now it is too strong, and England had then plotts against France, which now it hath not, the greatest vse of leagues and alliance is to pr[e]uent mischeefs, or to further some necessarie enterprize, otherwise the reason of state and Common experience teacheth vs to sway euer w[i]th the weaker, for the briding of the ambition and greatnes of the stronger./

They enter feare who to avoyd the obiections made against Spaine, pr[e]tend that mariadges are but p[er]sonall amongst princes, for if there be noe realtie, where is then the good of England, and if there be any, who so weake, as to thinke that Spaine will easilie quite his interest in it. /

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To alleadge the example of fraunce, that holdeth good Correspondencie still w[i]th other Allies and Continueth to assist them against Spaine Notw[i]thstanding his match w[i]th Spaine, is to as little purpose in the iudgment, of those who doe alsoe know how much Spaine preuaileth in weakning the sinnewes and frustrating the effects of such assistance./

The some is that Spaine hopeth by reason of this match, so to Charme England, as it shall give way to him in his Courses, and England Contrariwise promiseth it selfe the honey of the Bee, without daunger of being stung, whether of both may come short, of their reckoning is at the least disputable, for Spaine on the one side will spare noe trauaile nor Chardge, but will vse all the meanes and practises he cann, and take the benefitt of all occasions, and aduantages that shalbe offered, to bring his purpose to passe, as it may be supposed that England for his part will alsoe stand vppon his watch preuent the mischeefe that shall threaten the state, Spaine may by a vigilant Care, and good foresight be disappointed, soe may England by the Contrarie be overtaken, for death will weare away these Watchmen that are now, and others may succeed in their places that will not be so watchfull, nay watchfullnesse it selfe ouer watched will in time wax drowsie, and overwearied Carefulnesse, will grow carelesse, the very best Cautions and Caveats must relent and wax old in time, in all strifes and Contentions as well of the bodie as of the mind, if one side get ground the other looseth it, Time will bring forth many accidents, which may fall out, as to the good, soe to the hurt of England, who it may (w[i]th good reason) be feared will not be watchfull, and haue his spirits alwaies in cense enough to pr[e]uent the practises of Spaine after so straight alliance, that cannot now so much as foresee them, or resolute to keepe out Spaine, wherevpon the question ariseth whether it be a sound Course for England not Constrained by any vrgent necessitie to putt the Cause of religion, and their owne well doing, and safetie, to so greate an aduenture, in a matter that stands vppon so many Contingents, for it is not new in experience, that euen those things w[hi]ch wee thinke euen impossible, and therefore feare them least, doe

neuerthelesse often come to passe, because neglected, and so not hindered by opposition, they creepe vnawares vppon vs through the mists of Our securitie, well said the Italian therefore Qualle che non volette che scia non fatis cosa per che auuenga. /

To Conclude Spaine who of late was thought to decline, and weake in the head, and wounded in his reputac[i]on by those of the vnited prouinces, yet w[i]thall neuer more weakly ballanced otherwise then at this pr[e]sent, beginns now resume his spirits, and w[i]thout timlie and strong opposic[i]on, will take so deepe a roote, and spredd his branches so farr as to overshadow all his neighbours, and deadlie dangerous it will be for anyone to sleepe in such a shade./

Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Additional MS 4149, ff. 218r–225v
- British Library, Additional MS 72286, ff. 125r–128v
- British Library, Additional MS 72392, ff. 1r–7r
- British Library, Harley MS 4888, ff. 259x–260x
- British Library, Harley MS 6865, ff. 239x–245x
- Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1153, item II, 30r–v
- Bodleian Library, MS Eng. hist. e. 28, ff. 653–678
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 151, ff. 98r–99r
- Cambridge University Library, MS Mm.6.33, ff. 158r–166v
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.b.50, pp301–322
- Huntington Library, EL 7713

Seventeenth-century print exemplars

- William Wood?, *Considerations upon the treaty of marriage between England and Spain* ([1623?]) [STC 10003]

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<https://mpese.ac.uk/t/ConsiderationsTreatyMarriageEnglandSpainv2.html>