Discourse Conerning the Government in Ireland (c.1613?)

Sir Charles Cornwallis

Transcript

British Library, Additional MS 11600, ff. 279r–275v

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A: Discourse: of S[i]r. Charles Cornewallis Concerninge: The: Gouerment: in Ireland

Your: Ma[jes]ty hauinge the hoonor. to shutte up the gates of Janus Temple by hauinge peace w[i]th all your Neighbours princes & Cuntreys & wee your subiect[es] the hapines under soe peacable & soe Just a kinge to Inioy the frewt[es] of soe great a blessinge for my owne p[er]ticuler I cannot but desire that your Ma[jes]ty should alsoe to your perpetuall fame & the eternizinge of your glorious memorey . effecte that w[hi]ch soe wisley & soe fortunatly you haue begone, namly the p[er]ficte reducinge of your kingdome of Ireland to Religion Civilitey & ` obedeince w[hi]ch honnor none of your predecessors (though maney of them in there owne p[er]sons marciall and valorious & divers of them wise & pollitique) yet could neuer attayne unto. And therefore out of my euer Inducinge desire to doe yow servis doe humbly prsent unto your Ma[jes]ty some fewe observation & meditacions of myne owne Concern[n]inge that estate & goverment w[hi]ch in tyme of the late servis yow imployed mee in that kingdome I Collected.

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Lawes of Auncyent tyme in Ireland prohibited all great offices and . Judg[es] of your Ma[jes]ty court[es] in that kingdome to purchase land[es] or to estate them selues there The wisdome of those tymes thought that the makinge of estat[es] unto them selues in that Cuntrey was cause of maney Temptacions.

Your Ma[jes]ty in your great wisdome well knoweth that men placed in Chayres of supreame government or seates of Justice in kingdomes & provinces remote are to bee transitorey.

That lounge Continuance breedes p[er]ill eather of too much prsuminge of theire power or too little respecting theire Charge /

The further remote that those gouerment[es] are from your Ma[jes]t[ies] most Judicious . & diserninge eyes the more care is to bee taken uppon whome they are conferred

If your Ma[jes]t[ies] shall bee pleased to make Ireland the stage where uppon those that shall bee sent from hence either for Ecclesiasticall or Civell goverment shall play there prize & giue proofe of theire abillityes and Integrities to the end the may att there returne Receaue the reward of them in prefferment to places of honnor and Authoritey heere, yow shall bee assured that duringe those yeares that they shall Remayne there they will imploy the uttmost of there skills and diligence to do {you} servis in that kingdome and euery one will Emulate & striue to exceed other in well p[er]forminge the Charge Comitted unto them /

Your Ma[jes]t[ies] Court[es] of Justice in that kingdome and would bee strengthned w[i]th men of more Learn[n]inge Courage & Abiliteys then some of them are that nowe possesse them The remoues to haue pensiones w[hi]ch shall bee saued un[n]to your Ma[jes]ty either out of retrenchment[es] or other Charges or increase of your profit[es] arisinge out of those your Court[es].

Your Ma[jes]t[ies] armey in that kingdome is of exceedinge great charge but of little use or utilitey were there either by forren invasion or Intestyne Insurreccion occasion to use forces.

To Ashure the obedience of that wateringe people and secure the p[ro]ceedinge in your parlement[es] intended and not to drawe ~~e~~ aney thinge from your treasure) your Maty may bee pleased . that bee fore the tyme of your parlement & soe euery yeare here after there bee in the shires of England . & Walles Confyninge upon Ireland

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Ireland mustred trayned & in redines 4000 foote prparred upon a dayes waringe to bee transported into Ireland iff uppon aney tumulte or other generall acte of disobedience by the Irish it shall bee thought requisett and those Cuntreys att there owne charges to hould them coated & armed & redy to passe into that kingdome The like allsoe to bee done in the Confyninge p[ar]t[es] of Scotland to the end the same may bee knowen to the Irish as allsoe that those forces are to bee continued wholly of that kingdome if theire disloyaltey & disobedience shall giue unto your Ma[jes]ty aney Just occasion of theire passinge thither

Allsoe that in the seuerall Cuntreys all the Brittish Inhabitant[es] as allsoe the Irish that either by Conformitey in religion or by other firme Ingagment[es] are Judged to bee faithfull and Assured to the State bee turne in the yeare mustred by Appoynment of some Commissionrs for the musters w[i]thin euery seuerall shyre to bee named by your Ma[jes]t[ies] Deput[es]: or the prsident[es] of the provinc[es] . to whome yt shall appertayne. To the ende that both the Deput[es] and state my knowe what number of able men are upon aney sudden occasion to bee had . in redynes w[i]thin euery Cuntrey . as allsoe that the bee trayned and Armed . and that all theire princiapll armor & militarey municons bee layd up in some stronnge & shure place or forte within that Countey or the shire Confyninge to the ende the Irish by noe sudden Insurreccion may prvaile them selues $^{\text{of}\ \sout{\text{of}}}$ w[i]th them as here to fore in like case they haue done.

And this beeinge done by the English it will not bee euill taken by the Irish. if they alsoe w[i]thin those seuerall Cuntreys . bee inioyned to doe the like & that all there Armes and military weapones bee delivered to be layd up by your Ma[tes] officeres in places of surety and none to bee p[er]mitted to weare aney weapon other then sword or rapier by theire side when the ride or travell . from home and yt only to gen[tes] of birth and men of good qualitey and Abillitey.

FFor your Ma[jes]t[ies] assurance of the Cyteys of Corke and Watterford w[hi]ch are the townes of most doubte w[i]thin that kingdome as those w[hi]ch are most apte for landing of forraigne forces & most popish and Spanish in theire Religion and affections. and for the better gardinge And

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And suerty of keepinge your Ma[jes]t[ies] municion and provi sions of ware all redy there and such others as shall bee delivred upp. by the Cittizens of those Cittyes whome it will bee as fitte . to disarme as those of the Cuntryes . abroad.

The Charge of 1000 or little more w[hi]ch shall bee drawen out of some Increase of profitt that may bee raysed to your maty in that kingdome will att your Castle of Skiddies in Corke make a barre before the dore and a platforme Whereuppon to place some ordinance upon the

gate of that Cittye . Adioyninge unto it and at Waterford like wise make up a forttification allredy bee gon[n]e neare unto a forte there.

And these for the prsent addinge unto them the redin[n]es of an hundred English men & familyes Inhabitinge w[i]thin Corke Consistinge of maney ould souldiers may bee putt in uppon all occasion[es] to make a p[ar]tey w[i]th such garrisons as may bee drawen theaither and well spared out of the foote Compeneys of the Lord prsedinte & vice=prsident of Munster, and out of those of the Erle of Thomand. & Sr Thomas Roper will sufficently secure the Cytteys.

In the Cittyes of Limricke there is all redy a Castle and Ward: Youghall is well replennished w[i]th English . and the Collidge there nowe mad an house of stringht soe as the Cittyes of Corke & Watterford before said beinge in maner before provided for, of all the rest of the Marityne townes of that kingdome there will bee noe doubte att all /

The greatest Impediment[es] to the observance of your Ma[jes]t[ies] Lawes for Religion & to the incivilinge of that people are two. 1 The Authoritey & excample of the noblemen & gent[es] . of that kingdome whoe nurrish the Roman preist[es] . animate and Incurradge theire tenna[u]nt[es] in theire disobedience and keepe maney Idle sword men beinge the younger sonnes & bastard[es] of gent[es] for theire {dependaunces}. 2 The want of breedinge & imployinge the meaner sort in good artes and maniuel trades the might keepe them from Idlenes & giue them a tast for thrift and proffitte . and a proofe & experience howe much Comlines & cleannes in theire apparrell & in there howses exceed theire nowe barbarous & sordid Cloathinge & livinge.

Ffor remedy of the first, Conformitey of what hath bine done in England . in like Cause, all the noble men & gent[es]. that are of greatest power beinge recusant[es] . & whoes lyoal tyes are most doubted of, may bee confined to seuerall Cittyes of most suritey w[i]th in that kingdome there to make there habitacion[es] to ye end that your Ma[jes]t[ies] min[n]isters may Continually Bee

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Bee knowen {} aswell the resorters to theire houses as the behaviour of them selues, for by that meanes will the Continuall repaire that the Jesuitt[es] seminarys ffryares and other Romish Preist[es] by and to theire houses bee either prvented or remedied.

Neather shall them selues dwellinge in places remote from theire owne Cuntreyes haue that Comand and power of theire tennan[n]t[es] to raise tumult[es] or geather Assemblyes as nowe the haue, And much more facill it will bee in the absence of them to reduce theire tenan[n]t[es] to Conformitey in goinge to Church /

That in euery of those townes by Proclamation peanall & ymprisenmt[es] bee denownced against euery householder that shall suffer aney man or woman Cominge from aney other p[ar]te or towne in Ireland to lodge by the space of one day and a night in his or theire houses w[i]thout the p[ar]tie soe lodged shall first showe him selfe to som[m]e of the Aldermen or officers authorised for that purpos w[i]thin that towne, givinge him an account from whence hee cometh and how lownge he purposseth to remayne w[i]thin the towne, and the like penalty to the p[ar]tie him selfe that contrarey to that order prsumeth to lodge him selfe either in the house of another or in aney house hired bought or Lent unto him, And that in euery Cittie Borrough towne Corporrate the like order bee established for the ymployinge of

the meaner sorte in good art[es] & manuall trad[es] yt will bee nesecarey that the scituation of euery Cittey towne Corporrat & villadge w[i]th in the kingdome bee well viewed & Considered of by p[er]sons of fidelitey Judgment & experience.

The people in euery of them to bee numbred and by theire seuerall familyes to be seene what proffession mistrey or other exercise ~~of~~ or trade such as haue not Land[es] Rent[es] or offices to Live upon doe use, or how or in what maner or by what meanes the sustayne and mayntayne them selues.

That in the Cittyes & townes Corporrate all such bee inforced to some arte trade or occupation whereby to gett theire owne livinge and become profitable to the Com[m]on wealth.

And that a stocke bee provided for the erectinge of such occupations or trad[es] as shall best agree w[i]th the ~~Cor~~ scituation of the said Citteys & townes Corporate Corporate

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And the like to bee done in villages for settinge one worke the people to the end . that none may live Idley to theire owne p[er]dition and the detryment and ympoverishment of the Com[m]mon wealth.

And if aney younger sonnes or bastard[es] of gent not hauing where upon to live shall not aplay them selues to some honest course of life or trade whereby to sustayne them selues . or follow there wares in some forran Cuntrey where by direction from your Ma[jes]t[ies] the shall bee sent or lycensed to . serue . but will remayne in that kingdome as dependa[n]t[es] upon aney noble man[n] or gent: from whoes house the cleame to bee desended That then all such as {shuch as} shall mayntayne them in soe Idle & unprofitable course of life shall giue good securetey for their good behaviour . & for theire forth Com[m]inge att all tymes to bee Answerable to the state for aney delict[es] or breach of your Ma[jes]t[ies] peace by them Com[m]itted / Ffor the coertion and inforcement of the p[er]formance here of it will bee fitt that in euery great Cittey or shire towne there bee erected an house of correction for the punishmt[es] of Idle lewed & incorridgable vagrant[es] or p[er]sons . disobedient to there parent[es]. mastrs or your Ma[jes]t[ies] officers in executinge those profitable orders, And this Charge is allsoe that of the stocke for settinge people one worke to bee raised upon the forfyturs imposed by the Statut[es] for not repairinge to the Church upon the sundayes and holydayes.

Ffor the better efectinge here of euery Countey might bee devided into sertayne Lymitt[es] & euery Justice or Justices of the peace bee charged w[i]th some p[ar]ticullr lymitte that they are specially to gouerne & ~~to~~ take Charge of besides theire generall charge & regard to the observance of your Ma[jes]t[ies] Lawes & to the peace & quitte of the whole Cuntrey, and that they giue euery quartr of a yeare at least unto the Lord Debutey or the presidente of that province & the prsidente to the Lord Deputie an accountt or relation in writtinge howe they fynd the gent & people w[i]thin that theire said lymitte disposed . to good order . & to the observance of Your Ma[jes]t[ies] Lawes, & obedience both to the Civill & ecclisasticall gouerment whoe bee the well disposed & observars of good order. To the end from the Lord Deputey & the state they may Receaue Comendation & incurragment & whoe bee the delinquent[es] . & perverse, to the ende ymediate order (May)

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May bee taken eithr for theire Amendmt or punishmt as allsoe what euery of the said Justices haue or shall doe in theire owne p[ar]ticuler for reformation of Barbarisme Idlenes & disordrs, or for drawinge them to Conforme them selues to the English in apparrell in theire houses and in theire language & other Civell Courses /

That the said Justices of the peace use the like order w[i]thin theire severall Lym[m]itt[es] by takinge a quarterly accountt or oftener if they shall thinke fitt of the Chiefe Cunstables w[i]thin euery Barenney & they in the maner of the pettey Cunstables in euery parrish . to the end that by this distributiue order noe man within the whole kingdome may escape unknowen nor aney remayne unrestrayned that either is or likly to bee a disorderly or unruly p[er]son apte to raise tumult or to bee a disturber of the peace.

In all formar tymes it hath bine helde a fitt pollicy of state in that kingdome to hould disunite & devided men of power suspected in theire Loyaltie & affeccions to the gouerment /

And I make noe dowte but your Ma[jes]t[y] in your incomprable wisdome will hould yt necessary that your Deputie obserue that rule & haue an Attentiue eye upon the Combinacions . alliances . & Coniuncions of men of that qualitey & giue by all good menes Impediment unto them endeaveringe theire mariadges . w[i]th English & those of the Religion whereunto weare your Ma[jes]t[ies] word[es] in that kingdome well regarded and brought up in the English Collidge & theire p[er]sons & mariag[es] Committed to those of sownd Religion & not to those of Romish proffession could bee a very great helpe & furtherance.

By an anciant statute it was p[ro]vided that none of the English Race should marey w[i]th meere Irish yet Contray to the same hath the Lord Barry latly married the dowghter of Cormacke Mac-Dermy Carty Lord of Muskarry /

And these of late haue {passed} maney marriages and strounge Alliances . amoungst the great ones of that kingdome.

I will not truble yowr Ma[jes]ty w[i]th a Lounger discourse but doe most humbly end w[i]th this Conclusion yt I make no doubte but w[i]th in short tyme theare

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There your Ma[jes]t[ies] revenew may bee much increased your yearly charge asmuch abated . your kingdome in riched your subiect[es] there inciviled & brought to p[er]ficte obedence & w[i]th more facilitey & assurednes if your pleasure it shall bee to p[ro]hibitt the transport of the Comodytys . of that kingdome unwrought wch to the great uttilitey of you & your people may bee wrought w[i]thin that Cuntrey and giue occupacions unto them wch, willbee the greatest & most necessarey and Assured menes to bringe them to order and take away Idlenes w[hi]ch haue euer bine the occasion of all euill and unsetldnes amoungst them.

Other manuscript witnesses

- Beinecke Library, Osborn fb178, ff. 34r–37v
- Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C 929, ff. 43r–47v

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