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**Vox Populi Or News from Spain, Translated According to the Spanish Copy Which May Serve to Forewarn both England and the United Provinces How Far to Trust to Spanish Pretenses, Imprinted in the year 1620**

Thomas Scott

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# Vox Populi

## Or News from Spain

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## Editors' Preface

In 1618, war broke out between the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs and the Kingdom of Bohemia, headed by King Frederick V, Elector Palatine, and brother-in-law to Prince Charles of England (later Charles I). As a supporter of his sister Elizabeth and the reign of her husband Frederick, Charles sought to restore Frederick after the Bohemian king suffered major military losses in 1620. To this end, Charles pursued a marriage suit between England and Spain that had been promoted as early as 1614.

Charles' father, King James I of England (James VI of Scotland), promoted to the marriage suit as a way to bolster his international standing as a peacemaker, for he had already brokered a peace treaty with Spain in 1604 that concluded the Elizabethan Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604). The English diplomatic aim of the marriage was to secure the Habsburg's withdrawal from the Palatine, while the Spanish sought to prevent further English support of the Protestant Dutch United Provinces who had been in a state of rebellion against Habsburg rule since 1579 (a prolonged conflict known as the Eighty Years' War). Charles and James initiated negotiations with Count Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador to England, for a match between Charles and the Infanta María Margarita. However, both English establishment Protestants and Spanish Catholics opposed the match on religious and ideological grounds.<sup>1</sup>

*Vox Populi* (The voice of the people) appears in 1620 as an anonymous pamphlet, likely penned by the polemicist Thomas Scott, to voice the discontent of certain English faction over the potential match. As its subtitle *News from Spain* indicates, the pamphlet purports to be a firsthand account of a meeting of Count Gondomar, the Pope's Nuncio, the Inquisitor General, and other ranking members of the Spanish government and the Catholic Church that was intercepted and translated from Spanish into English. Although it is grounded in the political reality that Spain sought influence in England, the account is a fanciful fabrication that aims to portray and satirize a secretive cabal of Spaniards and Catholics plotting underhandedly to gain absolute power in England by subverting the authority of James and the Anglican Church. Given that the match was opposed by a number of the English nobility, the anonymous composition of the pamphlet is unsurprising. It produced a furor and it incurred the disapproval of James and Charles just as they were trying to close negotiations with the Spanish, leading to a search for its author.<sup>2</sup> The pamphlet places flatteries of James in the mouths of the Spanish speakers, while accusing courtiers and judicial officials of otherwise being too

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<sup>1</sup> Mark A. Kishlansky and John Morrill. "Charles I (1600–1649), king of England, Scotland, and Ireland," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<sup>2</sup> Sean Kelsey, "Scott, Thomas (d. 1626), protestant polemicist," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

inept, corrupt, or self-interested to do much to curb the influence Catholic recusants in England and their Jesuit co-conspirators operating in secret in England and throughout Europe.

We produce this edition of this pamphlet to offer an example of early seventeenth-century conspiracy theories and “fake news” in the hope that this text can be used as a point of comparison to our present moment for the study of political rhetoric, misinformation, and ideological polarization in our digital era. In an effort to make the text as accessible as possible, the text is rendered in a sans serif font, and the spelling of the text has been modernized throughout. The long s (ſ), u/v, vv/w, and i/j have been replaced by their equivalents in the modern English alphabet. Superfluous commas denoting parenthetical, dependent, and appositive phrases have been suppressed. For clarity, periods have replaced colons and semicolons in lengthy sentences with multiple independent clauses.

VOX POPULI  
OR  
NEWS FROM SPAIN,  
translated according to the Spanish copy

Which may serve to forewarn both England and the United Provinces how far to trust to  
Spanish pretenses

Imprinted in the year 1620

His Catholic Majesty<sup>3</sup> had given commandment that presently upon the return of Seigneur Gondomar his lieger<sup>4</sup> ambassador from England (1618) a special meeting of all the principal states of Spain (who were of his Council) together with the Presidents of the Council of Castile, of Aragon, of Italy, of Portugal, of the Indies, of the Treasure, of War, and especially of the Holy Inquisition, should be held at Mouson in Aragon,<sup>5</sup> the Duke of Lerma being appointed President, who should make declaration of His Majesty's pleasure, take account of the Ambassador's service, and consult touching the state and religion respectively to give satisfaction to his Holiness' Nuncio, who was desired to make one<sup>6</sup> in this assembly concerning certain overtures of peace and amity with the English and other Catholic projects, which might engender suspicion and jealousy betwixt the Pope and His Majesty if the mystery were not unfolded and the ground of those counsels discovered aforehand.

This made all men expect the Ambassador's return with a kind of longing, that they might behold the issue of this meeting and see what good for the Catholic cause the Ambassador's employment had effected in England, answerable to the general opinion conceived of his wisdom, and what further project would be set on foot to become matter for public discourse.

At length he arrived, and had present notice given him from his Majesty, that before he came to court he should give up his account to this assembly, which command he gladly received as an earnest of his acceptable service, and gave thanks that for his honor he might publish himself in so judicious a presence. He came first upon the day appointed to the council chamber (exc. the Secr.) not long after all the

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<sup>3</sup> Philip III of Spain (1578-1621).

<sup>4</sup> "An ordinary or resident ambassador; also, a papal nuncio. Obsolete exc. Historical in form lieger" (*Oxford English Dictionary* "ledger" n. 6), hereafter abbreviated as *OED*.

<sup>5</sup> Monzón.

<sup>6</sup> i.e. declaration.

Council of State and the Presidents met. There wanted only the Duke of Lerma<sup>7</sup> and the Pope's Nuncio, who were the head and feet of all the assembly. These two stayed long away for diverse respects. The Nuncio that he might express the greatness of his master and lose the See of Rome no respect by his oversight, but that the benches might be full to observe him at his approach.

The Duke of Lerma to express the authority and dignity of his own person and to show how a servant put in place of his master exacts more service of his fellow servants than the master himself. These two stayed till all rest were weary of waiting, but at length the Nuncio, supposing all the Council set, launched forth and came to road in the council chamber, where, after mutual discharge of duty from the company and blessing upon it from him, he sat down in solemn silence, grieving at his oversight when he saw the Duke of Lerma absent, with whom he strove as a competitor for pomp and glory.

The Duke had sent before and understood of the Nuncio's being there, and stayed for something the longer, that his boldness might be observed, wherein he had his desire; for the Nuncio having a while patiently driven away the time with several complements to several persons, had now almost run his courtship out of breath, but that the Duke of Villa Hermosa (President of the Council of Aragon) fed his humor by the discharge of his own discontentment upon occasion of the Duke of Lerma his absence, and beckoned Seigneur Gondomar to him, using this speech in the hearing of the Nuncio, after a sporting manner:

"How unhappy are the people where you have been, first for their souls, being heretics, then for their estates, where the name of a favorite is so familiar. How happy is our state, where the keys of life and death are so easily come by," pointing at the Nuncio, "hanging at every religious girdle, and where the door of justice and mercy stand equally open to all men, without respect of persons?" The Ambassador knew this ironical stroke to be intended as a by-blow at the Nuncio, but fully at the Duke of Lerma, whose greatness began now to wax heavy towards declension, and therefore he returned this answer: "Your excellency knoweth the state is happy where wise favorites govern kings if the kings themselves be foolish, or where wise kings are, who having favorites, whether foolish or of the wiser sort, will not yet be governed by them. The state of England, howsoever you hear of it in Spain or Rome, is too happy in the last kind. They need not much care what the favorite be (though for the most part he be such as prevents all suspicion in that kind, being rather chosen as a scholar to be taught and trained up, then as a tutor to teach) of this they are sure, no Prince exceeds theirs in personal abilities, so that nothing could be added to him in my wish, but this one, that he were our vassal and a Catholic."

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<sup>7</sup> Don Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas, a favorite courtier of Philip III and therefore a powerful figure of state. See Antonio Feros, "The King's Favorite," *Humanities: The Magazine of the National Endowment of the Humanities* 29.2 (2008), <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2008/marchapril/feature/the-king%E2%80%99s-favorite>.

With that, the noise without gave notice of the Duke of Lerma's entrance, at whose first approach the whole house arose, though some later than other[s], as envy had hung plummets<sup>8</sup> on them to keep them down, the Nuncio only sat unmoved. The Duke cherished the obeisance of the rest with a familiar kind of carriage, too heigh for courtesy, as one not neglecting their demeanors, but expecting it, and after a filial obeisance to the Pope his Nuncio, sat down as President under the cloth of state, but somewhat lower. Then, after a space given for admiration, preparation, and attention, he began to speak in this manner:

"The king my master, holding it more honorable to do than to discourse, to take from you the expectation of oratory, used rather in schools and pulpits than in council, hath appointed me president in this holy, wise, learned, and noble assembly. A man naturally of a slow speech, and not desirous to quicken it by art or industry, as holding action only proper to a Spaniard as I am by birth, to a soldier as I am by profession, to a king as I am by representation, take this, therefore, briefly for declaration both of the cause of this meeting and my master his further pleasure. There hath been in all times from the world's foundation one chief commander or monarch upon the earth. This needs no further proof then a back-looking into our own memories and histories of the world. Neither now is there any question, except with infidels and heretics, of that one chief commander in spirituals in the unity of whole person the members of the visible Church are included, but there is some doubt of the chief commander in temporals, who, as the moon to the sun might govern by night as this by day, and by the sword of justice compel to come in, or cut off such as infringe the authority of the keys. This hath been so well understood long since by the infallible chair, as that thereby upon declension of the Roman emperors and the increase of Rome's spiritual splendor (who thought it unnatural that their sun should be sublunary) our nation was by the Bishop of Rome selected before other peoples to conquer and rule with a rod of iron, and our kings to that end adorned with the title of Catholic King, as a name above all names under the sun, which is, under God's vicar eneral himself, the Catholic bishop of souls. To instance this point by comparison, look first upon the grand Seigneur the great Turk, who hath a large title, but not universal. For besides that he is not an infidel, his command is confined within his own territories, and he [is] styled not Emperor of the World, but of the Turks and their vassals only.

"Among Christians, the defender of the faith was a glorious style, whilst the king to whom it was given by his Holiness, continued worthy of it. But he stood not in the truth, neither yet those who succeed him. And beside, it was no great thing to be called what every Christian ought to be, defender of the faith; no more than to be styled with France, the most Christian King, wherein he hath the greatest part of his title common with most Christians. The Emperor of Russia, Rome, Germany, extend not their limits further than their styles, which are local, only my master the most Catholic king is for

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<sup>8</sup> i.e. lead weights.



dominion of bodies, as the universal bishop for dominion of souls over all that part of the world which we call America, except where the English intruders usurp, and the greatest part of Europe, with some part of Asia and Africa by actual possession, and over all the rest by real and indubitable right, yet acknowledgeth this right to be derived from the free and fatherly donation of his Holiness, who as the sun to this moon lends luster by reflection to this kingdom, to this king, to this king of kings my master.<sup>9</sup> What therefore he hath, howsoever gotten, he may keep and hold; what he can get from any other king or commander by any stratagem of war or pretence of peace he may take. For it is theirs only by usurpation except they hold of him from whom all civil power is derived, as ecclesiastical from his Holiness. What the ignorant call treason, if it be on his behalf is truth; and what they call truth, if it be against him is treason. And thus all our peace, our war, our treaties, marriages, and whatsoever intendment else of ours, aims at this principal end, to get the whole possession of the world, and to reduce all to unity under one temporal head, that our king may truly be what he is styled, the catholic<sup>10</sup> and universal king. As faith is therefore universal and the Church universal, yet so as it is under one head the Pope, whose seat is and must necessarily be at Rome where Saint Peter sat, so must all men be subject to our and their Catholic king, whose particular seat is here in Spain, his universal everywhere. This point of state or rather of faith, we see the Roman Catholic religion hath taught everywhere and almost made natural, so that by a key of gold by intelligence, or by way of confession, my master is able to unlock the secrets of every prince, and to withdraw their subject's allegiance, as if they knew themselves rather my master his subjects indeed, than theirs whom their births have taught to miscall sovereigns. We see this in France and in England especially, where at once they learn to obey the Church of Rome as their mother, to acknowledge the Catholic king as their father, and to hate their own king as an heretic and an usurper. So, we see religion and the state are coupled together, laugh and weep, flourish and fade, and participate of either's fortune, as growing upon one stock of policy. I speak this the more boldly in this presence, because I speak here before none but native persons, who are partakers both in themselves and issues of these triumphs, above all those of ancient Rome, and therefore such as besides their oaths, it concerns to be secret. Neither need we restrain this liberty of speech from the Nuncio his presence, because that besides that he is a Spaniard by birth, he is also a Jesuit by profession, an order raised by the providence of God's vicar to accomplish this monarchy the better, all of them being appropriate thereunto and as public agents and privy counselors to this end. Wherein the wisdom of this state is to be beheld with admiration, that as in temporal war it employs, or at least trusts none but natives, in Castile, Portugal, or Aragon, so in spirituals it employs none but the Jesuits, and so

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<sup>9</sup> Lerma refers to Pope Alexander VI's bull *Inter caetera* (1493) and its donation of the Americas to the Spanish crown (<https://www.papalencyclicals.net/alex06/alex06inter.htm>).

<sup>10</sup> "Of, relating to, or involving the whole world; worldwide, universal" (*OED* "catholic" adj. II.7.a).

employs them, that they are generally reputed, how remote soever they be from us, how much soever obliged to others, still to be ours, and still to be of the Spanish faction, though they be Polonians, English, French, and residing in those countries and courts. The penitents therefore and all with whom they deal and converse in their spiritual traffic must needs be so too, and so our Catholic king must needs have an invisible kingdom, and an unknown number of subjects in all dominions, who will show themselves and their faiths by their works of disobedience whensoever we shall have occasion to use that Jesuitical virtue of theirs. This therefore being the principal ends of all our counsels (according to those holy directions of our late pious King Philip III to his son now reigning)<sup>11</sup> to advance the Catholic Roman religion, and the catholic Spanish dominion together, we are met now by his Majesty's command to take account for you, Seigneur Gondomar, who have been ambassador for England, to see what good you have effected there towards the advancement of this work, and what further project shall be thought fit to be set on foot to this end. And this is briefly the occasion of our meeting."

Then the Ambassador, who attended bare headed all the time, with a low obeisance began thus: "This most laudable custom of our king's, in bringing all officers to such an account, where a review and notice is taken of good or bad services upon the determination of their employments, resembles those Roman tribunes<sup>12</sup> appointed for the soldiers; and as in them it provoked to courage, so in us it stirred up to diligence. Our master converseth by his agents with all the world, yet with none of more regard than the English, where matter of such diversity is often presented through the several humors of the state and those of our religion and faction that no instructions can be sufficient for such negotiations, but much must be left in trust, to the discretion, judgement, and diligence of the incumbent. I speak not this for my own glory, I having been restrained and therefore deceived meanly, but to forewarn on the behalf of others that there may be more scope allowed then to deal in as occasion shall require. Briefly, this rule delivered by his excellency was the card and compass by which I sailed to make profit of all humors, and by all means to advance the state of the Romish faith, and the Spanish faction together, upon all advantage either of oaths, or the breach of them. For this is an old observation but a true [one], that for our piety to Rome, his Holiness did not only give but bless us in the conquest of the New World. And thus in our pious perseverance we hope still to be conquerors of the old. And to this end, whereas his Excellency in his excellent discourse seems to extend our outward forces and private aims only against heretics and restrain them in true amity with these of the Romish religion, this I affirm, that since there can be no security, but such princes

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<sup>11</sup> Although the title page says this pamphlet was published in 1620, here Philip III's successor, Philip IV, is referenced. This creates a notable discrepancy to the date of publication.

<sup>12</sup> "A title designating one of several officers in the Roman administration; spec. (a) tribune of the people (Latin *tribūnus plebis*), one of two (later five, then ten) officers appointed to protect the interests and rights of the plebeians from the patricians; (b) military tribune (Latin *tribūnus militāris*), one of six officers of a legion, each being in command for two months of the year" (*OED* "tribune" n. 1).

though now Romish Catholics, may turn heretic hereafter. My aims have ever been to make profit of all, and to make my master master of all who is a faithful and constant son of his mother Rome. And to this end I behold the endeavors of our kings of happy memory, how they have achieved kingdoms and conquests by this policy, rather than by open hostility, and that without difference, as well from their allies and kinsfolks, men of the same religion and profession such as were those of Naples, France, and Navarre, though I do not mention Portugal now united to us, nor Savoy (that hardly slipped from us) as of an adverse and heretical faith. Neither is this rule left of, as the present kingdom of France, the State of Venice, the Low Countries, Bohemia (now all laboring for life under our plots) apparently manifest. This way, therefore, I bent my engines in England, as your honors shall particularly hear. Neither shall I need to repeat a catalog of all the services I have there done, because this state hath been acquainted with many of them heretofore by the intercourse of letters and messengers. Those only I will speak of that are of later edition, done since the return of the Lord Ross<sup>13</sup> from hence, and may seem most directly to tend to those ends formerly propounded by his Excellency: that is, the advancement of the Spanish state and Romish religion together.

“First it is well observed by the wisdom of our state that the King of England, who otherwise is one of the most accomplished princes that ever reigned, extremely hunts after peace and so affects the true name of a peacemaker, as that for it he will do or suffer any thing. And withal they have beheld the general bounty and munificence of his mind and the necessity of the state so exhausted as it is unable to supply his desires, who only seeks to have that he might give to others. Upon those advantages they have given out their directions and instructions both to me and others, and I have observed them so far as I was able.

“And for this purpose, whereas there was a marriage propounded betwixt them and us, howsoever I suppose our state too devout to deal with heretics in this kind in good, earnest, yet I made that a cover for much intelligence and a means to obtain whatsoever I desired whilst the State of England longed after that marriage, hoping thereby, though vainly, to settle peace, and fill the exchequer.”

Here the Archbishop of Toledo, Inquisitor General, stepped up and interrupted Gondomar, saying, that marriage was not to be thought upon; first for religion’s sake, lest they should endanger the soul of the young lady and the rest of her company, who might become heretics; secondly for the state, lest by giving so large a portion to heretics they should enrich and enable them for wars and impoverish and weaken the Catholics.<sup>14</sup>

To the first objection the Pope’s Nuncio answered, that his Holiness for the Catholic cause would dispense with the marriage, though it were with a Turk or infidel.

1. That there was no valuable danger in hazarding one for the gaining of many, perhaps

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<sup>13</sup> Perhaps James Ross, 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Ross (d. 1633).

<sup>14</sup> The pamphlet clumsily alternates between paraphrastic, indirect summary and quotations throughout.

of all. 2. That it was no hazard, since women, especially young ones, are too obstinate to be removed from their opinions, and abler to work Solomon to their opinions than Solomon to work them to his faith. 3. That it was a great advantage to match with such from whom they might break at pleasure, having the Catholic cause for a color, and besides, if need were be at liberty in all respects since there was no faith to be kept with heretics. And if his Holiness may dispense with the murder of such, and dispose of their crowns (as what good Catholic doubts but he may?) much more may he, and will he in their marriages to prevent the leprous seed of heresy and to settle Catholic blood in the chair of state.

To the second objection the Ambassador himself answered, saying, that though the English generally loathed the match and would, as he thought, buy it off with half of their estates (hating the nation of Spain and their religion, as appeared by an uproar and assault a day or two before his departure from London by the apprentices, who seemed greedy of such an occasion to vent their own spleens in doing him or any of his a mischief) yet two sorts of people unmeasurably desired the match might proceed. First, the begging and beggarly courtiers, that they might have to furnish their wants. Secondly, the Romish Catholics, who hoped hereby at least for a moderation of fines and laws, perhaps a toleration, and perhaps a total restoration of their religion in England. "In which regard," quoth he, "I have known some zealous persons protest that if all their friends and half their estates could procure the service of our lady (if she came to be married to their prince) they would freely use the means, faithfully to fight under her colors when they might do it safely. And if it came to portion, they would underhand contribute largely of their estates to the Spanish Collector and make up half the portion out of themselves, perhaps more. So that by this marriage it might be so wrought that the slate should rather be robbed and weakened (which is our aim) then strengthened, as the English vainly hope. Besides in a small time they should work so far into the body of the state by buying offices and the like, whether by sea or land, of justice civil or ecclesiastical in church or state (all being for money exposed to sale) that with the help of the Jesuits they would undermine them with mere wit (without gunpowder) and leave the king but a few subjects whose faiths he might rely upon, whilst they were of a faith adverse to his. For what Catholic body that is sound at the heart can abide a corrupt and heretical head?"

With that the Duke Medina del Rio Seco, President of the Council of War, and one of the Council of State rose up and said his predecessors had felt the force and wit of the English in 1588.<sup>15</sup> And he had cause to doubt the Catholics themselves that were English and not fully Jesuited upon any foreign invasion would rather take part with their own King (though a heretic) then with his Catholic Majesty, a stranger.

The Ambassador desired him to be of another mind since first for the persons generally their bodies by long disuse of arms were disabled and their minds,

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<sup>15</sup> i.e. the Spanish Armada.

effeminated by peace and luxury, far from that they were in '88, when they were daily fleshed in our blood and made hearty by customary conquests. "And for the affection of those whom they call recusants," quoth he, "I know the bitterness of their inveterate malice, and have seen how far into their natures as I dare say they will be for Spain against all the world. Yet," quoth he "I assure your honors I could not imagine so basely of their king and state as I have heard them speak. Nay their rage hath so perverted their judgements that what I myself have seen and heard proceed from their king beyond admiration, even to astonishment, they have slighted, misreported, scorned, and perverted to his disgrace and my rejoicing, magnifying in the meantime our defects for graces."

Here the Duke Pastrana, President of the Council for Italy, steps up and said, he had lately read a book of one Camden's called his *Annals*,<sup>16</sup> where writing of a treaty of marriage long since betwixt the English Elizabeth and the French Duke of Andiou,<sup>17</sup> he there observes that the marriage was not seriously intended on either side, but politicly pretended by both states, counterchangeably that each might effect their own ends.

"There," quoth he, "the English had the better, and I have some cause to doubt, since they can dissemble as well as we, that they have their aims underhand, as we have, and intend the match as little as we do. And this," quoth he, "I believe the rather because their king as he is wise to consult and consider, so he is constant master of his word, and hath written and given strong reasons against matches made with persons of contrary religions, which reasons no other man can answer, and therefore doubtless he will not go from or counsel his son to forsake those rules laid down so deliberately."

"Your Excellency mistakes," quoth the Ambassador, "the advantage was then on the side of the English, because the French sought the match. Now it must be on ours, because the English seek it, who will grant anything rather than break off, and besides have no patience to temporize and dissemble in this or any other design as the French have long since well observed. For their necessities will give them neither time, nor rest, nor hope elsewhere to be supplied. As for their king, I cannot search into his heart. I must believe others that presume to know his mind, hear his words, and read his writings, and these relate what I have delivered. But for the rest of the people, as the number of those that are truly religious are ever the least and for the most part of least accompt, so is it there, where if an equal opposition be made betwixt their truly religious and ours, the remainder which will be the greatest number will stand indifferent and fall to the stronger side where there is most hope of gain and glory, for those two are the gods of the magnitude and the multitude. Now these see apparently no certain supplies of their wants but from us."

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<sup>16</sup> William Camden, *Annales rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum regnante Elizabetha, ad annum salutis M.D. LXXXIX* (London, 1607).

<sup>17</sup> i.e. the Duke of Anjou, sometime suitor to Elizabeth I.

“Yes,” quoth the Duke, “for even now you said the general state loathing this match would redeem the fear thereof with half of their estates. It is therefore but calling a parliament and the business were soon effected.”

“A parliament,” quoth the Ambassador, “nay therein lies one of the principal devices I have done in working such a dislike betwixt the king and the lower house by the endeavor of that honorable earl and admirable engine (a sure servant to us and the Catholic cause while he lived) as the king will never endure parliament again, but rather suffer absolute want than receive conditional relief from his subjects. Besides the matter was so cunningly carried the last parliament, that as in the powder plot,<sup>18</sup> the fact effected should have been imputed to the Puritans, the greatest zealots of the Calvinian sect, so the proposition which dammed up the proceedings of this parliament, howsoever they were invented by Romane Catholics and by them intended to disturb that session, yet were propounded in favor of the Puritans, as if they had been hammered in their forge. Which very name and shadow the king hates, it being a sufficient aspersion to disgrace any person, to say he is such, and a sufficient bar to stop any suit and utterly to cross it to say it smells of or inclines to that party. Moreover, there are so many about him who blow this coal fearing their own stakes, if a parliament should inquire into their actions, that they use all their art and industry to withstand such a council, persuading the king he may rule by his absolute prerogative without a parliament, and thus furnish himself by waring<sup>19</sup> with us, and by other domestic projects, without subsidies, when, levying of subsidies and tasks have been the only use princes have made of such assemblies. And whereas some free minds amongst them resembling our nobility, who preserve the privilege of subjects against sovereign invasion, call for the course of the common law (a law proper to their nation) these other time servers cry the laws down and cry up the prerogative, whereby they prey upon the subject by suits and exactions, milk the estate and keep it poor, procure themselves much suspicion amongst the better and more judicious sort, and hate amongst the oppressed commons. And yet if there should be a parliament, such a course is taken as they shall never choose their shire knights and burgesses freely, who make the greater half of the body thereof, for these being to be elected by most voices of freeholders in the country where such elections are to be made, are carried which way the great persons who have lands in those countries please, who by their letters command their tenants, followers and friends to nominate such as adhere to them, and for the most part are of our faction, and respect their own benefit or grace rather than their country’s good. Yea, the country people themselves will every one stand for the great man their lord or neighbor, or master, without regard of his honesty, wisdom, or religion. That which they aim at (as I am assured of by faithful intelligence) is to please their landlords and to renew their lease, in which regard they will betray their country and religion, too,

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<sup>18</sup> The Gunpowder Plot of 1605, an attempt against Parliament and the King.

<sup>19</sup> That is, making wares, commerce.

and elect any man that may most profit their particular. Therefore, it is unlikely there should ever be a parliament and impossible the king's debts should be paid, his wants sufficiently repaired, and himself left full handed by such a course, and indeed (as it is generally thought) by any other course but by a marriage with us. For which cause whatsoever project we list to accept enters safely at that door, whilst their policy lies asleep and will not see the danger. I have made trial of these particulars and found few exceptions in this general rule.

"Thereby, I and their own wants together have kept them from furnishing their navy, which being the wall of their island and once the strongest in Christendom lies now at road unarmed and fit for ruin. If ever we doubted their strength by sea, now we need not; there are but few ships or men able to look abroad or to live in a storm, much less in a sea fight. This I effected by bearing them in hand the furnishing a navy bred suspicion in my master and so would avert his mind from this match, the hope of which rather than they would lose, they would lose almost their hope of heaven.

"Secondly, all their voyages to the East Indies I permit rather with a colorable resistance than a serious. Because I see them not helpful but hurtful to the state in general, carrying out gold and silver, bringing home spice, silks, feathers, and the like toys, and insensible wasting the common and stock of coin and bullion, whilst it fills the Custom House and some private purses, who thereby are unable to keep in this discommodity on foot by bribes, especially so many great persons (even statesmen) being venturers and sharers in the gain. Besides this wasteth their mariners, not one of ten returning, which I am glad to hear, for they are the men we stand in fear of.

"3. As for their West Indian voyages, I withstand them in earnest because they begin to inhabit there and to fortify themselves, and may in time there perhaps raise another England to withstand our New Spain in America, as this old England opposeth our present state and clouds the glorious extent thereof in Europe. Besides there they trade for commodities without waste of their treasure and often return gold for knives, glasses, or the like trifles, and that without such loss of their mariners as in other places. Therefore, I crossed whatsoever intendments were projected for Virginia or the Bermudas, because I see they may be hereafter really helpful unto them, as now they serve for drains to unload their populous state, which else would overflow its own banks by continuance of peace and turn head upon itself or make a body fit for any rebellion.

"And so far I prevailed herein, as I caused most of the recusants who were sharers to withdraw their ventures and discourage the work, so that besides private persons unable to effect much, nothing was done by the public purse. And we know by experience such voyages and plantations are not effected without great means to sustain great difficulties and with an unwearied resolution and power to meet all hazards and disasters with strong helps and continual supplies, or else the undertaking proves idle.

“4. Fourthly. By this means likewise I kept the voluntary forces from Venice till it was almost too late to set out. And had a hope that work of secrecy should have broken forth to action before these could have arrived to succor them.

“5. Fifthly, I put hard for the cautionary towns (which our late King Philip of happy memory so aimed at, accounting them the keys of the Low Countries) that they might be delivered to his Catholic Majesty as the proper owner. And had perhaps prevailed, but that the professed enemy to our State and Church, who died shortly after, gave counsel to restore them to the rebellious states, as one that knew popular commonwealths to be better neighbors, surer friends, and less dangerous enemies than monarchies, and so by his practice rescued them from my hands and furnished the exchequer from thence for that time. Neither was I much grieved at this because the dependency they had before of the English seemed now to be cut off, and the interest the English had in them and their cause to be taken away, which must be fully and finally effected before we can hope either to conquer them or England, who holding together are too strong for the world at sea, and therefore must be disunited before they can be overcome. This point of state is acknowledged by our most experienced petitioner and sure friend Monsieur Barneveld,<sup>20</sup> whose succeeding plots to this end shall bear witness for the depth of his judgement.

“6. But the last service I did for the state was not the least, when I underwrought that admirable engine Raleigh,<sup>21</sup> and so was the cause his voyage (threatening so much danger and damage to us) was overthrown, and himself returning in disgrace, I pursued almost to death, neither (I hope) need I say almost, if all things hit right, and all strings hold. But the determination of my commission would not permit me longer to stay to follow him to execution, which I desired the rather that by concession I might have wrung from the inconsiderate English an acknowledgement of my master’s right in those places, punishing him for attempting there, though they might prescribe for the first foot. And this I did to stop their mouths hereafter, and because I would quench the heat and valor of that nation that none should dare hereafter to undertake the like or be so hardy as to look at our sea or breathe upon our coasts. And lastly because I would bring to an ignominious death that old pirate, who is one of the last now living, bred under that deceased English Virago,<sup>22</sup> and by her fleshed in our blood and ruin. To do this I had many agents: first, diverse courtiers who were hungry and gaped wide for Spanish gold;

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<sup>20</sup> Johan van Oldenbarneveld (1547-1619), Dutch statesman who was a major figure in the resistance against the Spanish. See “Johan van Oldenbarneveld,” *The British Museum*, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG149631>.

<sup>21</sup> In 1617-18, Sir Walter Raleigh, noted privateer and Spanish antagonist, set sail for the West Indies in what would become his last voyage. He failed to locate the mines of riches he sought, and his attacks on Spanish towns and garrisons imperiled the ongoing marriage negotiations, incurring James’ wrath. He was tried, convicted, and executed in 1618 for treason and perjury relating to his attacks on Spanish interests and his disobedience of the king. See Mark Nicholls and Penry Williams. “Raleigh [Raleigh], Sir Walter (1554–1618), courtier, explorer, and author,” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<sup>22</sup> i.e. Elizabeth I.



secondly, some that bare him at the heart for inveterate quarrels; thirdly, some foreigners, who having in vain sought the elixir hitherto, hope to find it in his head; fourthly, all men of the Romish faith who are of the Spanish faction and would have been my bloodhounds to hunt him or any such to death willingly, as persons hating the prosperity of their country, and the valor, worth, and wit of their own nation in respect of us and our Catholic cause; lastly, I left behind me such an instrument composed artificially of a secular understanding and a religious profession, as he is every way addicted to serve himself into the closet of the heart and to work upon feminine lenity, who in that county have masculine spirits to command and pursue their plots unto death. This therefore I accompt as done and rejoice in it, knowing it will be very profitable to us, grateful to our faction there; and for the rest, what though it be cross to the people, or the clergy? We that only negotiate for our own gain and treat about this marriage for our own ends can conclude or break off when we see our time, without respect of such as can neither profit us nor hurt us. For I have certain knowledge that the commons generally are so effeminate and cowardly, as that they at their musters (which are seldom and slight, only for the benefit of their muster-master) of a thousand soldiers, scarce one hundred dare discharge a musket, and of that hundred, scarce one can use it like a soldier. And for their arms, they are so ill provided that one corselet serveth many men when such as show their arms upon one day in one place lend them to their friends in other places shew when they have use. And this if it be spied, is only punished by a mullet in the purse, which is the officer's aim, who for his advantage winks at the rest and is glad to find and cherish by connivence profitable faults in which to increase his revenue. Thus stands the state of that poor miserable country, which had never more people and fewer men. So that if my master should resolve upon an invasion, the time never fits as this present, security of this marriage and the disuse of arms having cast them into a dead sleep, a strong and wakening faction being ever amongst them ready to assist us, and they being unprovided of ships and arms, or hearts to fight, an universal discontentment filling all men. This I have from their muster-masters and captains, who are many of them of our religion, or of none, and so ours, ready to be bought and sold, and desirous to be my master's servants in fee.

"Thus, much for the state particularly, wherein I have bent myself to weaken them and strengthen us and in all these have advanced the Catholic cause, but especially in procuring favors for all such as favor that side, and crossing the other by all means. And this I practice myself and give out to be generally practiced by others, that whatsoever success I find, I still boast of the victory, which I do to dishearten the heretics, to make them suspicious one of another, especially of their prince and their best statesmen, and to keep our own in courage, who by this means increase, otherwise would be in danger to decay.

"Now for religion, and for such designs as fetch their pretense from thence, I beheld the policy of that late bishop of theirs (Bancroft) who stirred up and maintained a

dangerous schism between our secular priests and Jesuits, by which he discoursed much weakness to the dishonor of our clergy and prejudice of our cause. This taught me (as it did Barneveldt in the Low countries) to work secretly and insensibly between their conformists and non-conformists, and to cast an eye as far as the Orcade, knowing that business might be stirred up there that might hinder proceedings in England, as the French ever used Scotland to call home the forces of England and so to prevent their conquests. The effect you have partly seen in the Earl of Argyll, who sometimes was captain for the king and church against the great Marquis Huntley and now fights under our banner at Brussels, leaving the crests of Saint George and Saint Andrew for the staff of Saint James. Neither do our hopes end here, but we daily expect more revolters, at least such a disunion as will never admit solid reconciliation, but will send some to us and some to Amsterdam. For the king (a wise and vigilant prince) laboring for a perfect union betwixt both the kingdoms, which he sees cannot be effected, where the least ceremony in religion is continued, diverse sharp and bitter brawls from thence arising, whilst some striving for honor more than for truth prefer their own way and will (before the general peace of the church and the edification of souls) he, I say, seeks to work both churches to uniformity and to this end made a journey into Scotland, but with no such success as he expected, for diverse of ours attended the train, who stirred up humors and factions and cast in scruples and doubts to hinder and cross the proceedings. Yea, those that seem most adverse to us and adverse from our opinions by their disobedience and example help forward our plots, and these are encouraged by a factious and heady multitude, by a faint and irresolute clergy (many false brethren being amongst their bishops) and by the prodigal nobility who maintain these stirs in the church, that thereby they may safely keep their church-livings in their hands, which they have most sacrilegiously seized upon in the time of the first deformation, and which the fear would be recovered by the clergy if they could be brought to brotherly peace and agreement. For they have seen the king very bountiful in this kind, having lately increased their pensions and settled the clergy a competent maintenance, and besides out of his own means which in the kingdom is none of the greatest, having brought in and restored whole bishoprics to the church which were before in laymen's hands, a great part of the nobility's estates consisting of spiritual lands, which makes them cherish the puritanical faction who will be content to be trencher-fed with scraps and crumbs and contributions and arbitrary benevolences from their lords and lairds and ladies, and their adherents and followers."

"But," quoth the Inquisitor General, "how if this act of the king's, wherein he is the most earnest and constant should so far thrive as it should effect a perfect union both in the church and commonwealth? I tell you it would in my conceit be a great blow to us, if by a general meeting a general peace should be concluded and all their forces bent against Rome; and we see their politic king aims at this."

“True,” quoth Gondomar, “but he takes his mark amiss, howsoever he understand[s] the people and their inclination better than any man and better knows how to temper their passions and affections. For (besides that he is hindered there in Scotland underhand by some for the reasons before recited, and by other great ones of ours who are in great place and authority amongst them) he is likewise deluded in this point even by his own clergy at home in England, who pretend to be most forward in the cause. For they are considering if a general uniformity were wrought, what an inundation would follow, whilst all or most of theirs, as they fear, would flock thither for preferment (as men pressing towards the sun for light and heat) and so their own should be unprovided. These therefore, I say, howsoever they bear the king fairly in hand, are underhand against it, and stand stiff for all ceremonies to be obtruded with a kind of absolute necessity upon them when the other will not be almost drawn to receive any. When if an abatement were made, doubtless they might be drawn to meet in the midst; but there is no hope of this with them, where neither party deals seriously, but only for the present to satisfy the king; and so there is no fear on our side that affections and opinions so diverse will ever be reconciled and made one. Their Bishop of Saint Andrews stands almost alone in the cause and pulls upon himself the labor, the loss and envy of all, with little proficiency, whilst the adverse faction have as sure friends and as good intelligence about the king as he hath, and the same post perhaps that brings a packet from the king to him brings another from their abettors to them, acquainting them with the whole proceedings and counsels and preparing them aforehand for opposition. This I know for truth, and this I rejoice in, as conducing much to the Catholic good.”

“But,” quoth the Nuncio, “are there none of the heretical preachers busy about this match? Methinks their fingers should itch to be writing and their tongues burn to be prating of this business, especially the puritanical sort, howsoever the most temperate and indifferent carry themselves.”

“The truth is, my lord,” quoth the Ambassador, “that privately what they can, and publicly what they dare, both in England and Scotland, all for the most part (except such as are of our faith) oppose this match to their utmost, by prayers, counsels, speeches, wishes. But if any be found longer tongued than his fellows, we have still means to charm their sauciness, to silence them, and expel them the court, to disgrace them and crosse their preferments with the imputation pragmatic puritanism. For instance, I will relate this particular: a doctor of theirs and a chaplain in ordinary to the king gave many reasons in a letter against this marriage, and propounded a way how to supply the king’s wants otherwise, which I understanding, so wrought underhand that the doctor was committed and hardly escaped the danger of his presumptuous admonition, though the state knew his intent was honest and his reasons good. Wherein we on the other side, both here and with the archduke, have had books penned and pictures printed directly against their king and state, for which their ambassadors have sought satisfaction of us in vain, not being able to stay the print or so much as to touch the hem

of the author's garment. But we have an evasion, which heretics miss, our clergy being freed from the temporal sword and so not included in our treaties and conditions of peace, but at liberty to give any heretical prince the mate when they list, whereas theirs are liable to accompt and hazard and are muzzled for barking, when ours may both bark and bite too. The Council Table and the Star Chamber do so terrify them, as they dare not riot, but run at the stirrup in excellent command, and come in at the least rebuke. They call their preaching in many places standing up, but they crouch and dare not stand up nor quest, behave themselves like setters, silent and creeping upon their bellies, lick the dust which our priests shake from their beautiful feet."

"Now," quoth the Duke of Lerma, "satisfy me about our own clergy how they fare. For there were here petitions made to the king in the name of the distressed, afflicted, persecuted, and imprisoned priests that his Majesty would intercede for them to free them from the intolerable burdens they groaned under and to procure their liberties; and letters were directed from us to that end, that you should negotiate this demand with all speed and diligence."

"Most excellent Prince," replied Gondomar, "I did your command with a kind of command myself. Not thinking it fit to make it a suit in your name or my master's, I obtained them liberty to walk freely up or down, to face and outface their accusers, judges, magistrates, bishops, and to exercise their functions almost as freely altogether as safely as at Rome."

Here the Nuncio objected, that he did not well to his judgement in procuring their liberty, since they might do more good in prison then abroad. Because in prison they seemed to be under persecution, and so were pitied of others, and pity of the person prepares the affection further. Besides, then they were careful over their own lives to give no offence, but abroad they might be scandalous in their lives, as they use to be in Rome and Spain and other Catholic countries; and so the opinion of their holiness which upholds their credit and cause (against the married clergy) would soon decay.

But the Ambassador replied, he considered those inconveniences, but besides a superior command, he saw the profit of their liberty more than of their restraint. For now they might freely confer, and were ever practicing and would doubtless produce some work of wonder. And besides by reason of their authority and means to change places, did apply [them]selves to many persons, whereas in prison they only [coalesced] with such as came to be taught, or were their own before.<sup>23</sup> "And this," quoth he, "I add as a secret, that as before they were maintained by private contributions of devout Catholics even to excess, so much more now shall they be able to gather great sums to weaken the state and furnish them for some high attempt, by the example of Cardinal Wolsey<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> The words in brackets are our best estimates of "apply de-ls selves" and "covalehem" as they appear in C4r. Although we cannot determine the exact words, the meaning remains somewhat intact.

<sup>24</sup> Cardinal Thomas Wolsey (d. 1530) was a leading minister of Henry VIII's government reputed to have accrued magnificent wealth while in office. See Sybil M. Jack, "Wolsey, Thomas (1470/71–1530), royal minister, archbishop of York, and cardinal," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

barreling up gold for Rome. And this they may easily do, since all Catholics rob the heretical priests and withhold tithes from them by fraud or force to give to those of their own to whom it is properly due. And if this be spied, it is an easy matter to lay all upon the Hollander, and say, 'he carries the coin out of the land' (who are forward enough indeed, in such practices) and so ours shall not only be excused, but a flaw made betwixt them to weaken their amities and beget suspicion betwixt them of each other's love."

"But amongst all these priests," quoth the Inquisitor General, "did you remember that old, reverend Father Baldwin, who had a finger in that admirable attempt made on our behalf against the Parliament house? Such as he, deserving so highly adventuring their lives so resolutely for the Catholic cause, must not be neglected, but extraordinarily regarded, thereby to encourage others to the like holy undertakings."

"Holy father," quoth Gondomar, "my principal care was of him, whose life and liberty when I had with much difficulty obtained of the king, I solemnly went in person, attended with all my train and diverse other well willers to fetch him out of the Tower where he was in durance. As soon as I came in his sight I behaved myself after so lowly and humble a manner that our adversaries stood amazed to behold the reverence we give to our ghostly fathers. And this I did to confound them and their contemptuous clergy and to beget an extraordinary opinion of holiness in the person and piety in us, and also to provoke the English Catholics to the like devout obedience and thereby at any time these Jesuits (whose authority was somewhat weakened since the schism betwixt them and the seculars and the succeeding powder-plot) may work them to our ends, as masters their servants, tutors their scholars, fathers their children, kings their subjects. And that they may do this the more boldly and securely, I have somewhat dashed the authority of their High Commission, upon which whereas there are diverse pursevands<sup>25</sup> (men of the worst kind and condition, resembling our flies and familiars, attending upon the inquisition) whose office and employment it is to disturb the Catholics, search their houses for priests, holy vestments, books, beads, crucifixes, and the like religious appurtenances, I have caused the execution of their office to be slackened that so an open way may be given to our spiritual instruments for the free exercise of their faculties. And yet when these pursevands had greatest authority, a small bribe in the country would bind their eyes, or a little greater at court or in the exchequer frustrate and cross all their actions, so that their malice went off like squibs, made a great crack to fright children and newborn babes but hurt no old men of the Catholic spirits. And this is the effect of all other their courses of proceeding in this kind, in all their judicial courts, whither known Catholics (convicted, as they style them) are often summoned and cited, threatened and bound over, but the danger is past as soon as the officer hath his fee paid to him, then the execution goeth no further. Nay upon my

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<sup>25</sup> "A royal or state messenger, esp. one with the power to execute warrants; a warrant officer" (*OED* "pursevand" / "pursuivant" n. 2.a).

conscience they are glad when there are offenders in that kind, because they are bountiful, and the officers do their best to favor them, that they may increase and so their revenue and gain come in freely.

“And if they should be sent to prison, even that place (for the most part) is made as a sanctuary to them. As the old Romans were wont to shut up such by way of restraint, as they meant to preserve from the people’s fury, so they live safe in prison till we have time to work them liberty and assure their lives. And in the meantime their place of restraint is as a study unto them, where they have opportunity to confer together as in a college and to arm themselves in unity against the single adversary abroad.”

“But,” quoth the Inquisitor General, “how do they for books when they have occasion either to write or dispute?”

“My lord,” replies Gondomar, “all the libraries belonging to the Roman Catholics through the land are at their command, from whence they have all such collections as they can require gathered to their hand, as well from thence as from all the libraries of both universities, and even the books themselves if that be requisite.

“Besides I have made it a principal part of my employment to buy all the manuscripts and other ancient and rare authors out of the hands of the heretics, so that there is no great scholar dies in the land but my agents are dealing with his books. Insomuch as even their learned Isaac Casaubon’s library was in election without question to be ours had not their vigilant king, who foresees all dangers and hath his eye busy in every place, prevented my plot. For after the death of that great scholar, I sent to request a view and catalog of his books with their price, intending not to be outvied by any man, if money would fetch them; because (besides the damage that side should have received by their loss, prosecuting the same story against Cardinal Baronius) we might have made good advantage of his notes, collections, castigations, censures, and criticisms for our own party, and framed and put out other under his name at our pleasure. But this was foreseen by their Prometheus, who sent that torturer of ours, the Bishop of Winchester, to search and sort the papers and to seal up the study, giving a large and princely allowance for them to the relics of Casaubon, together with a bountiful pension and provision for her and her’s. But this plot failing at that time, hath not ever done so. Nor had the University of Oxford so triumphed in their many manuscripts given by that famous knight Sir Thomas Bodley, if either I had been then employed or this course of mine then thought upon. For I would labor what I might this way or any other way to disarm them, and either to translate their best authors hither, or at least to leave none in the hand of any but Roman Catholics who are assuredly ours. And to this end an especial eye would be had upon the library of one Sir Robert Cotton, an engrosser<sup>26</sup> of antiquities, that whensoever it come to be broken up, either before his

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<sup>26</sup> “One who buys in large quantities, esp. with the view of being able to secure a monopoly” (*OED* “engrosser” n. 1.a).

death or after, the most choice and singular pieces might be gleaned and gathered up by a Catholic hand. Neither let any man think that defending thus low to petty particulars is unworthy an ambassador, or of small avail for the ends we aim at, since we see every mountain consists of several sands. And there is no more profitable conversing for statesmen than amongst scholars and their books, especially where the king for whom we watch is the King of Scholars and loves to live almost altogether in their element. Besides if by any means we can continue differences in their Church, or make them wider, or beget distaste betwixt their clergy and common lawyer, who are men of greatest power in the land, the benefit will be ours, the consequence great, opening a way for us to come in between; for personal quarrels produce real questions.”

As he was further prosecuting this discourse, one of the secretaries who waited without the chamber desired entrance, and being admitted, delivered letters which he had newly received from a post directed to the president and the rest of the council from his Catholic master, the contents whereof were to this effect.

*Right trusty and well-beloved cousins and counselors, we greet you well:*

*Whereas we had hope by our agents in England and Germany, to effect that great work of the Western Empire; and likewise on the other side to surprise Venice, and so encircling Europe at one instant, and enfolding it in our arms, make the easier road upon the Turk in Asia, and at length reduce all the world to our catholic command.<sup>27</sup> And whereas to these holy ends we had secret and sure plots and projects on foot in all those places, and good intelligence in all courts,*

*know now that we have received late and sad news of the apprehension of our most trusty and able pensioner Barnevelt, and of the discovery of other our intendments; so that our hopes are for the present adjourned till some other more convenient and auspicious time. We there will presently upon sight hereof to break off our consultation and repair straight to our presence, there to take further directions, and proceed as the necessity of time and cause should require.*

With that his excellency and the whole house struck with amazement crossed their foreheads, rose up in sad silence, and broke off this treaty abruptly, and without tarriance took horse and posted to court. From whence expect news the next fair wind.

*In the meantime, let not those be secure, whom it concerns to be roused up, knowing that this aspiring Nebuchadnezzar will not lose the glory of his greatness (who*

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<sup>27</sup> Pun on catholic as universal.

*continueth still to magnify himself in his great Babel) until it be spoken, they kingdom is departed from thee.*

*Daniel 4<sup>28</sup>*

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<sup>28</sup> Daniel 4:31, *King James Version*