

ENGLISH POLITICS AND THE PEACE

Sarah, Duchess Of Marlborough (1660–1744) to de Bonneval

Antwerp, 21 May 1714

I was very agreeably surpris'd with a letter from you in English, and I will give the person that wrote it the trouble of reading my sincere thanks to you in a very ill hand, because I have nobody, that I can rely upon to do it in French. I can't find any words that can satisfy me to express the sense I have of the Prince's great goodness in giving so obliging an answer to my request, but I hope you will make my acknowledgements in the manner, that they ought to be. The Duke of Marlborough has written upon the same subject to the Prince two days ago, by the Prince of Ligne, and I hope what is desired in favour of General Murray may the more easily be obtained, because I believe him so honest and so reasonable a man as not to wish to be continued longer in the post he is now in than till the Dutch can provide for him. For my own part, I am very much touch'd with the number of Spaniards you mention, which are so unfortunate as to want a provision; I could solicit for them very heartily myself; it is cruel to think men should suffer for having oppos'd those that had no right to govern their country, and that have shown by their injustice and tyranny that they did not deserve to be trusted with power, if one could persuade oneself to believe that the will of a weak Prince could be a sufficient title to dispose of his country. As to my own ridiculous countrymen, besides what you know already of them, I believe you have seen their address upon the 16th of April, in which they thank Her Majesty for a safe, honourable, and advantageous peace with France and Spain, and at the same time that this address was procur'd, the Ministers heard themselves, (hours together) arraign'd and vilified in both houses, without anybody's saying a word in their defence: never were facts so plainly proved without any contradiction, and most of the Tories that have estates are join'd with the honest party, and have declared in both Houses of Parliament that they have been too long delud'd with the false promises of the Ministers. I am sure it is natural upon this account for you to ask (this being so) how they came to make such an address, which the Tories would excuse to their new friends by saying that they had so long commended this peace, both in public and private, that they could not condemn it in the lump, that this address was only a compliment to the Queen, and that they would take all occasions for the future to secure the true interest of the nation; in the mean time they have given some credit to the men that they design to pull to pieces, that is with such as don't know them, and live at a great distance; and to save their dear honour they have voted what every body knows (that has sense enough to feed themselves) what they believe, and know to be every word false. But as ill a look as this has at present for the public, there are very understanding men that believe these betrayers of their country can't stand long; the number of the House of Lords upon some questions is come to be equal, and in the Commons they have divid'd 208 of the most weighty men against the Court; and because you are a soldier, I will tell you a saying which we have in England, that such a number of volunteers will soon beat a much greater of press'd men than the Ministers have by all the power of the Crown and the corruption of the times; Her Majesty has been oblig'd to give herself the trouble to send for bishops, and several people, and has given them the most solemn assurances that you can imagine that she will never depart from what she has so much at her heart, the Protestant succession in the House of Hanover, professing that she never had any thoughts of any thing else, and that she will do all that is possible to secure it; and to show how far the goodness of Her Majesty extends, and the desire she has to make all people easy, I have very good reason to believe that she has given all the assurances that can be desired of her kind intentions for her friends at Barleduc, and that they are entirely satisfi'd with her; which I fear you will not be with me for writing so much upon this foolish proceeding: though when you were at Frankford, you did not seem to be so much in love with the pope but that you could bear to pass a little time with us poor heretics in England; where I wish I could see you, that I might express in all the ways I am capable of, how much you have oblig'd your most faithful and most humble servant,

The Duke of Marlborough presents his humble service to you, and I beg you would join mine with his, to those that have done us the honour to remember us in your letter; not knowing anything of the merits or pretensions of the Irish gentleman, Mr. Hobbs, I fear it would be impertinent in me to write to the Court Merçi, to whom I have not the honour to be known, but I will take care to let Mr. Cadogan know your goodness to him in that matter, that he may take what measures he thinks proper. The Duke of Argyle said lately in a speech in the house of Lords, (which was all very severe) these following words, that it was a satire upon mankind in general, and upon England in particular, to suffer such a set of ignorant and knavish ministers to govern them so long. Others said, upon occasion of the debate for the address, that a Parliament of Paris had yet more notions of honour and liberty left than to have such gross absurdities and contradictions impos'd upon them as that address would be; and this is the language that the Ministers are treated with every day. However it has not yet made them slacken their measures, and many brave men have been turn'd out of the army after having fought so long in the glorious cause of liberty, some for talking, some

for thinking, and wretches put into their places that never served. I had a letter lately from General Stanhope, who is still in good heart, notwithstanding this melancholy account.

John M. Kemble, ed. *State Papers and Correspondence Illustrative of the Social and Political State of Europe from the Revolution to the Accession of the House of Hanover* (London, 1857): 498–501.