

### Nv13 Our Prince whom we soe dearely lov'd

*Notes. This rare verse stands out both for its well-informed scepticism about the health of Spanish royal finances—and thus about the low probability of a massive dowry payment as part of a marriage alliance—and for its political critique of the Jacobean regime. This critique, couched in “patriot” anti-popish rhetoric, engages not only with James’s foreign policy, but also with his domestic religious and financial policies, and then concludes by comparing James unfavourably with his predecessor.*

“An Epithalamion<sup>1</sup> on the Princes Mariage writt by a truer Catholique then he that styles himselfe the most Catholique Kinge”<sup>2</sup>

Our Prince<sup>3</sup> whom we soe dearely lov'd

And of whose lyfe we soe approved

Our hopes did strangely mocke

By Saylinge through the Westerne deepe

To marry with a Scabbed Sheepe<sup>4</sup>

Of ThantiChristian<sup>5</sup> flocke.

5

Whose father<sup>6</sup> but a beggar was

And brother<sup>7</sup> now doth likewise pass

For such a one or worse

As best the Genowayes<sup>8</sup> can tell

That to the fearefull pit of hell

him & his projects curse.

10

Tis true his Indies<sup>9</sup> doe abound

With Jemms above, Gold underground

In wished manner yet,

But those the states<sup>10</sup> do still surprise

Knoweing which way their passage lyes

Before they home can gett.

15

Whereat intraged he<sup>11</sup> doth vowe  
Hee'le make them to his Scepter bowe 20  
Or battle with them joyne  
Which plotte his treasure hath so spent<sup>12</sup>  
that he must pay in Complement  
What we desire in Coyne.

Loe here is all the hopes we have 25  
Howere the Papists doe outbrave<sup>13</sup>  
Of Portion<sup>14</sup> with our Prince  
Although the braggeinge Spaniard sweares  
Hee meanes to frustrate all our feares  
And us of Spite Convince. 30

Her wealth yow heare, her tawny face  
Doth herrald like proclaime her race  
And shewes shee is a Moore:<sup>15</sup>  
Her faith it is Heriticall  
To guess what then should him intrall 35  
My judgement is too poore

Except their Silver alters, and  
the golden gods that on them stand<sup>16</sup>  
His heart did so bewitche,  
That thence he did conclude there Kinge 40  
As much out of his chests could bringe  
As Scottelande<sup>17</sup> would inriche.

Which of all Countryes is the worst  
And when the fruitfull earth was curst  
Was made the barrenest 45  
As by our Kinges Revenues there<sup>18</sup>

It might full easily appeare

If that where here exprest.

But if those babyes won his<sup>19</sup> love

And made him Neptunes<sup>20</sup> kindenes prove

50

And yet he bee beguiled:

Of Heyres, no matter, he did neede

A wyfe I know, but not for breede

For he doth want no chyld.

Nor other riches for the Land<sup>21</sup>

55

Where now he keepes & shall Command

Much skornes the least increase

Of wealth or honour, as it seemes,

But rich enough in both esteemes

Her selfe because at peace.

60

And soe her prudent ruler<sup>22</sup> sayes

That money at his will may rayse<sup>23</sup>

As hee himselfe beleives

And soe he hath done hitherto

Not careinge whom it doth undoe

So he his ends acheives.

65

But he his taxes must foregoe,

Or, sure our weale<sup>24</sup> is chang'd to woe

Wee'l change our love to hate:

And more condemne his crueltye

Than we commend her<sup>25</sup> clemencye

That in his throane last sate.

70

Dureing whose raigne, though none drunke wyne

Under the shaddowe of his vyne

Because no vines we hadd, 75  
Yet Milke & honey Canaans food<sup>26</sup>  
By runninge in a several flood  
    Therewith our hearts did gladde

But ah! these days of happynes  
For others of as much distress 80  
    Long since exchanged were  
Our Ease to toyle our Joy to greife  
And he of whom we crave releife  
    Our cryes doth onely heare.

In Purse and Spirrit equally 85  
We feele so great a poverty  
    As mars our wonted sport,  
Yet who can choose but faint & fall  
To see Religion like a ball  
    Quite bandied out of Court.<sup>27</sup> 90

And to consider how our Kinge  
Whose Fame through Christendome doth ringe  
    For store of guifts divine,  
Doth with the prodigal<sup>28</sup> rejecte  
The meate his Soule should most effecte 95  
    To Feed on Huskes with swyne.

**Source.** Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c.50, fols. 15v-16r

Nv13

<sup>1</sup> *Epithalamion*: a wedding poem.

<sup>2</sup> *truer Catholique...Kinge*: Protestants often affirmed that they, not the Church of Rome, were the true

“catholic”, universal Church. The kings of Spain assumed the title of “most Catholic king”.

<sup>3</sup> *Prince*: Prince Charles, who travelled to Spain in February 1623.

<sup>4</sup> *Scabbed Sheepe*: diseased sheep; here standing for the Infanta Maria of Spain. In September 1622, Joseph Mead learned that a Paul’s Cross preacher, one Clayton from Fulham, had been punished for telling a “tale of a great murrain of sheep in Edward the Sixth’s days (I think); the reason whereof was, as he said, the coming of scabbed sheep, our of Spain” (Birch, *James I* 2.329-330).

<sup>5</sup> *ThantiChristian*: Protestant polemicists believed the Pope was the Antichrist.

<sup>6</sup> *father*: the Infanta Maria was the daughter of Philip III of Spain.

<sup>7</sup> *brother*: Maria’s brother had become Philip IV of Spain in March 1621.

<sup>8</sup> *Genowayes*: Genoese. Genoese bankers served the cash-strapped Spanish crown.

<sup>9</sup> *his Indies*: Spain’s American possessions.

<sup>10</sup> *the states*: the Dutch, whose navy worked to capture Spanish treasure ships sailing from the Americas.

<sup>11</sup> *he*: i.e. the King of Spain.

<sup>12</sup> *Which plotte...so spent*: the Spanish had been fighting the Dutch for six decades, putting a huge strain on Spanish finances.

<sup>13</sup> *outbrave*: boast.

<sup>14</sup> *Portion*: the dowry the Spanish will offer with the Infanta.

<sup>15</sup> *Moore*: a Spanish Muslim.

<sup>16</sup> *Silver alters...stand*: the silver altars and golden statuary upon them are symbols not only of Spain’s apparent wealth, but also of the Spaniards’ Catholicism (and hence, from a Protestant perspective, “idolatry”).

<sup>17</sup> *Scottelande*: to the English, Scotland was notoriously impoverished (see Section E).

<sup>18</sup> *our Kinges Revenues there*: i.e. James I’s revenues from his Scottish kingdom.

<sup>19</sup> *his*: though the sense of the poem becomes a little convoluted, the best reading is to assume that the poem here is referring again to Charles.

<sup>20</sup> *Neptunes*: god of the sea.

<sup>21</sup> *Land*: England.

<sup>22</sup> *prudent ruler*: James I.

<sup>23</sup> *money...may rayse*: referring to James I's raising of taxation without parliamentary consent, including customs duties (impositions) and benevolences (voluntary taxes). In May 1622, Lord Saye and Sele was reported to have spoken out against a benevolence as an illegal tax (Birch, *James I* 2.312).

<sup>24</sup> *weale*: good, well-being.

<sup>25</sup> *her*: Elizabeth I.

<sup>26</sup> *Milke & honey Canaans food*: "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites" (Exodus 3.7-8).

<sup>27</sup> *Religion...bandied out of Court*: court here has a double meaning, being both a tennis court, from which a ball can be struck out of bounds, and the royal court, where, in 1622-23, a number of high profile conversions to Catholicism and promotions of known Catholics seemed to imply a grave threat to Protestant political hegemony.

<sup>28</sup> *the prodigal*: the last three lines of the stanza allude to Christ's parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15.11-32).

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