

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth
Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

BOOK VI.

GOVERNMENT IN ENGLAND WITHOUT THE PAR-
LIAMENT. TROUBLES IN SCOTLAND.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I.

PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.

IF we consider the embarrassment in which Charles I had been involved by his conduct of the war, we are tempted to assume that, in order to extricate himself from it, he must have opened negotiations with the two great powers with which he was at war whilst they were still at variance with one another. This however was not the case.

Negotiations with France were opened at the instigation of the powers combined to resist Spain, between which an agreement had first been set on foot by James I, and had been renewed by Buckingham. Those powers regarded the breach between England and France as a misfortune, which they must endeavour to obviate if they would carry on the war against Austria and Spain with full vigour. The Republic of Venice, which felt itself most seriously threatened by these powers, made a great point of promoting a reconciliation between France and England by the agency of its ambassadors.

A few days before his unhappy end, Buckingham withdrew with the Venetian ambassador, Aluise Contarini, into a retired chamber in one of his country-houses, and there concerted with him a letter of pacific import to his brother envoy in France, for him to communicate to the French court¹. While Buckingham was preparing to strike a blow, he still hoped to procure

¹ Aluise Contarini, 20 Agosto 1628: 'Essendo trattenuto ben quatro hore a disputar, resolver et adomesticar il negotio: sempre coll' assistenza di Carleton che in questo fatto si è portato egregiamente.'

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

4

PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.

VI. I.

A.D. 1629.

from France tolerable conditions for the besieged town of Rochelle. All other difficulties he thought might then be removed in a couple of hours.

But Buckingham was assassinated. When the Venetians after this event brought their negotiations before the King, who as yet knew nothing about them, he even refused to hear them. He quite recognised the necessity of finding some arrangement: 'I acknowledge all that,' he said one day to the ambassador; 'but,' he added, 'I have arms in my hands, not to negotiate, but to save the town. My honour is at stake¹.'

Though Rochelle, as we have seen, failed to hold out, the result cannot be ascribed to King Charles. After Lindsay's attempt to break through the mole had proved unsuccessful—we do not quite know whether on account of the superiority of the French, or from the above-mentioned deficiencies on the side of the English—Charles I gave orders to renew the attempt again, without any regard to the danger to his ships, and not to retire from the town whatever might be the cost². On this the council of war had in fact resolved to lead the ships against the palisades by a way hitherto untried, when the town, despairing of help and overpowered by unendurable hardships, capitulated.

After the fall of Rochelle the Venetians resumed their attempts at mediation with redoubled ardour. King Charles was brought into a more favourable frame of mind by the tolerable conditions granted to the town in regard to the profession of religion, and by the evident impossibility of doing anything effectual in France: and Contarini now found him inclined to listen. But the ambassador was considerate enough not to urge the King, after he had been beaten in the strife, now to make overtures for its adjustment³: the negotiations were left more than ever in the hands of the Venetian ambassador in France, Zorzo Zorzi.

¹ 'Tutto è vero, ma il mio honor importa più.'

² 'That they should hazard for the relief of the town all his ships, that he purposed not to have it left re infecta, whatever it might cost.' Mead to Stuteville, in Ellis iii. 269.

³ Contarini, Nov. 18. 'Non può con doppio dishonore et parlare et perdere.'

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

VI. 1. *PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.* 5
A.D. 1629.

They were principally concerned with two points. The French demanded above all the execution of the provisions laid down in the marriage contract for the constitution of the Queen's household. Charles I not only refused to revert to these, he even rejected the conditions which he had consented to when Bassompierre was in England, and which the French at that time did not accept. He insisted that her court should continue as it was. He had made other arrangements for filling the offices in the household;—how could he take away their places again from the English lords and ladies who were in possession of them? He would not have any misunderstandings at his court, in his house, and as he said plainly, in his marriage bed. The Venetian ambassador in England remarked that it would be disadvantageous to the Queen if these demands were persisted in. And she herself also had already begged that they should be dropped, on the ground that she was satisfied with the present arrangements of her court: she did not even think fit to write about them to her mother¹. However disagreeable it might be for the Queen-mother herself, and for the zealous advocates of the Church about her, her son and Cardinal Richelieu sympathised with the point of view of Charles I, or else they saw that he would not give it up: at all events they contented themselves with stipulating that, if an alteration in the court were necessary, they should come to an amicable arrangement on the subject, to suit the requirements of the Queen's service². Even these words were merely accepted by the English in the avowed expectation that they would never be used to disturb the repose of the kingdom, or the mode of life of the King³. In brief, the execution of the former stipulations was given up by the French. In this matter, which most nearly concerned King Charles, he carried the day.

¹ Contarini to Zorzi: 'Mi manda a dire in molta confidenza che non vorrebbe disgustar il re interessandosi troppo in questo affare.'

² 'S'il y a quelque chose à ajouter ou à diminuer, se fera de part et d'autre de gré à gré.' *Traité de paix fait à Suze, 24 Avril 1629, Art. iv. Dumont v. ii. 580.*

³ Zorzi to Contarini, Jan. 20, 1629: 'Che la Francia non vorrebbe servirsene, che da sola apparenza senza sturbar il riposo del re et il gusto degli Inglesi.'

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

6 *PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.* VI. I.
A.D. 1629.

The second point affected the old connexion between the English and the Huguenots. The former had hitherto claimed to regulate through their intervention, and to fix by compact, the relations between the French government and the Reformed Churches. Buckingham had already been disposed to drop this claim: and after the last turn which affairs had taken, there could be no more thought of maintaining it. The English plenipotentiaries were satisfied with a general pardon bestowed on the Huguenots by the King of France, reserving to them their Protestant worship. But the English had wished that it should be indicated, if even by the slightest expressions, that this concession was the effect of the peace¹. Not that it should be a condition of the agreement, nor even that any interest in the result should be ascribed to England, but something was to be said about regard for peace as the foremost public good, and about the joint action between the two nations which was in immediate prospect. They thought that this was demanded by their honour, and they would not at once renounce all common feeling with the Calvinists. But the French returned a decided refusal. True as it was that the concessions that were vouchsafed to the Huguenots were based on the necessity of a closer connexion with England and Holland, which but for these could not have been agreed on, yet the French would not allow any hint of this to be dropped. They would have feared that occasion might thus be given for interference at some future time: in any case the authority of the government would have been damaged. The Venetian ambassador in London makes a merit of inducing Charles I finally to desist from this request. The principal reason alleged by him in support of his advice was that not only a question of religion, but an actual rebellion was here concerned, inasmuch as the Huguenots had leagued with Spain².

Thus was this peace concluded at Susa, April 1, 1629. In

¹ Contarini to Zorzi, Nov. 21: 'Questo parte (l'Inglese) piu non insiste d'esseme direttrice—punto grande guadagnatosi—ma vederebbe volentieri che Ugonotti non si dolessero da lei che li avesse abbandonati et il re vi ha riflesso.'

² A. Contarini designates this view as 'la massima con la quale credo d' haver portato questo negocio.' (8 Giugno 1629).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)VI. 1. *PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.* 7
A.D. 1629.

estimating the historical relations of the two kingdoms in general, great importance must be assigned to it. What had been brought about in the times of the Normans and Plantagenets, and once more during the great wars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—I mean a most intimate connexion of French and English interest—had, as it were, repeated itself, although on a far smaller scale, during the religious wars. In the times of Queen Elizabeth and James I the French Reformed ranged themselves under the influence of England: even in the time of Charles I this had not ceased. On the other hand the French had sought to establish a counter-acting influence on their side, especially by the late marriage contract. Neither of the two governments profited by this. In the peace of Susa they agreed to desist from this mutual action on one another. The French resigned the literal fulfilment of the marriage contract: the English renounced the connexion with the Huguenots which had hitherto been acknowledged. Relations into which religion entered could not be avoided, but the political sting, so to speak, was taken out of them. In France from that date the ascendancy of Catholicism could more decidedly be erected into a principle of the state: in England the court once more asserted its Protestant character.

For the moment the result of the peace was to untie the hands of France for the conflict with Spain. Every one knows what vast dimensions this assumed: it set fresh enmity between the parts of the world of that day which it rent asunder, and laid the foundation of the state of affairs which prevailed in the following epoch.

While France carried her arms into Italy, in order to force back the Spanish influence there, the King of England was to direct his forces to North Germany, in order to check the spreading power of the Emperor and the League. Maritime affairs at that time principally attracted the general attention. Wallenstein advanced a claim to sovereignty over the Baltic, but at the same time he intended to hold the ports of the German Ocean and the mouth of the Elbe in behalf of the Empire: and a combination between the Hanseatic shipping and the Spanish naval power was contemplated.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

8

PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.

VI. I.

A.D. 1629.

Roused by this unexpected danger, the Kings of Sweden and Denmark held a conference in February 1629 on the confines of the province of Halland, and united to defend the 'Regalia of the northern crowns on the Baltic sea'.¹ The Danish ambassador exerted himself most zealously to kindle the sympathies of the Dutch and English also. And in fact the King of England, in transmitting the official notification of the peace with France, announced to the States-General that he had sent a squadron under Pennington and Colonel Mackay to the Elbe in order to encourage the King of Denmark², and he invited the Dutch likewise to support him. A short time before, Colonel Morgan with another considerable body of troops, among whom were newly enlisted French and Scots, had started from the islands of Sylt and Föhr and made an attack upon the troops of the Empire and of Gottorp at Nordstrand. But at this moment, when a new coalition embracing the South, West, and North of Europe, was again just about to be formed to check the advance of the house of Austria, Denmark, which was to have been supported in the first instance, came to an agreement with that power. In the beginning of June, at Lübeck, King Christian IV renounced his operations against the German empire; but in return he received back without loss of a foot of land his possessions in Holstein and Jutland, the greater part of which was in the hands of the enemy. If we ask what induced the Imperialists to make so extensive a concession, it was no doubt anxiety about that maritime coalition, for which great exertions were being made at Copenhagen. Even without this aid the Danish fleet was able to defend itself with much more success than the army: the Imperial and German navies, with all their combined force, were still far from being a match for it. The generals were afraid of reverses, and of a mischievous action

¹ Cp. Slange ii. 1. 378. Schlegel's doubts are done away by the news which Anstruther gave to England about the 'abboccamento seguito tra il re di Danimarca e Suecia, et i buoni concerti stabiliti tra loro per difesa del mar Baltico.' *Dispaccio Veneto* 1 Mayo, 1629.

² Aitzema: *Saken van staet en orloogh* i. 243. Contarini avers that the squadron, consisting of five ships, had gone in the direction of the Elbe.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

VI. I. *PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.* 9
A.D. 1629.

of the Danish fleet upon the coast towns of which they had taken possession, and upon the German empire in general¹. Charles I had just sent one of his ablest and most zealous diplomatists, Thomas Roe, a particular friend of his sister the Electress Palatine, to Hamburg, in order to bring about a northern alliance between the two kings, the Republic, and the Hanse towns². He hoped still to delay the ratification of the treaty between Denmark and Austria, and to make it abortive. But all was in vain; the peace was far too advantageous to Denmark for the Danish councillors to give it up again.

Upon this most of the adversaries of Austria and Spain, even those in Italy, directed their gaze to the King of Sweden. The forces of the Emperor, which were no longer engaged with Denmark, were now twice as dangerous to him, and he appeared quite ready to take up arms if he should be supported by France and England. Cardinal Richelieu showed an inclination, if England would send a fleet to sea against Spain, to furnish a third of the vessels, and to make common cause in general with that power: he only wished that the undertaking should be carried out in the name of England. But the withdrawal of Denmark had quite a different effect upon the King of England, to whom the preservation of his uncle had supplied a motive for taking arms: he inclined on the contrary to follow the example set him by that prince. The Lord Treasurer Weston, who had to provide the money, looked upon the Danish peace as a relief: he breathed more freely when it had been concluded; for after the unhappy results of the last Parliament the want of money was so sorely felt by the government, that no one reckoned upon their fulfilling their engagements, and they themselves would undertake none. And such great injury had been inflicted on trade by the war, that the whole people

¹ 'Istis locis nullam esse classem, deesse navigia, quibus bellum mari possit sustineri,—Danis in promptu esse classem quam indies Sueci, Angli, Batavi novis augeant subsidiis.' Extract from the report of the Generals in Adlzreiter, Ann. Boici iii. 1821.

² Contarini, 29 Giugno: 'Per unir seco con qualche buon concerto tutto questo settentrione.'

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

10 *PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.* VI. 1.
A.D. 1629.

cried out not only for peace with France, but also, just as loudly, for peace with Spain¹.

Under these circumstances Peter Paul Rubens, the painter, arrived in London bearing proposals from the court of Spain. The painter was also a clever diplomatist; his art served to cloak his missions. Two years before he had had an interview with Balthasar Gerbier, a skilful miniature painter, also a native of Antwerp, who had been employed by Buckingham on secret business: they had conferred at Delft in July 1627 on the establishment of peace between England and Spain. Rubens belonged to the court of the Infanta Isabella, and had made communications to her on the subject, but was reluctant to send his papers to Spain²; and besides, no one, he said, would have been able to extract information from them. He was therefore summoned to Spain in person, and was sent to England charged with overtures of peace on the basis of the plans sketched out. Extremely remarkable were the overtures which Rubens made. Although the estrangement between England and Spain had grown out of the affair of the Palatinate, Rubens made no attempt to settle this: he declared, on the contrary, that it was not in the power of Philip IV to restore the Palatinate to its former owner; that he would gladly set about it, but that it was dependent mainly on the Emperor and the Elector of Bavaria. Rubens however saw in this disagreement no absolute hindrance to the renewal of friendly relations, especially in regard to commerce, nor to the return of the ambassador of either power to the court of the other: he thought that the two governments must only abstain from framing new articles, and revert to the peace which King James had concluded with Spain at the very beginning of his reign, and which left several important controversies unsettled; that in the same way at this time the affair of the Elector Palatine, and even of the Dutch, might remain untouched;

¹ Contarini, 2 Giugno 1628: 'La pace gridata a piena bocca dei popoli o con Francia o con Spagna o con tutti, rispetto al commercio.'

² 'Je ne doute pas, que Rubens n'ait déclaré nettement ce que Gerbier lui a proposé.' Lettre de l'Infante 1628, 31 Mai (Gachet, Lettres de Rubens); so that it seems as if people in Spain had doubts about it.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-02210-1 - A History of England: Principally in the Seventeenth Century, Volume 2

Leopold von Ranke

Excerpt

[More information](#)

VI. 1. *PEACE WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN.* 11
A.D. 1629.

that Charles I need not give up either the one or the other, and yet might maintain peace with the Spaniards¹. From our knowledge of this prince, these proposals, especially after the conclusion of the Danish peace, must have been most welcome to him. He also had now a freer prospect. Almost at the first moment when the arrival of the French ambassador was talked of in the Queen's presence, he had said to her that in the course of the year she might see the arrival of another from Spain. She answered, for she was not yet of his opinion, that he must only take care that no one deceived him afresh.

The world was already prepared for negotiations with Spain. The Venetians had so zealously promoted the arrangement with France, principally in order to anticipate them. People saw those persons again appear at court who were thought to favour Spain, and had been obliged to retire when Buckingham's ascendancy was established. To men's astonishment, Lord Bristol, once the great antagonist of Buckingham, now on the contrary himself acquired influence over the King. The Earl of Arundel, of the house of Howard, resumed his former place in the Privy Council. Closely allied with these men was the Lord Treasurer Weston, who principally exerted himself to save money with the object of relieving the King from the necessity of reassembling Parliament: it was owing to him that dissensions at home furnished a real motive for peace abroad. Weston himself, and Cottington, who was regarded as a staunch adherent of Spain, and who professed Catholicism with hardly any disguise, were selected to confer with Rubens; and that to the exclusion of the other members of the Privy Council, even of the Secretaries of State. Before the end of July they had made such progress that the matter could be laid before the Privy Council². The King loved to sit in council: but on important questions he expressed his

¹ 'Che si confermi semplicemente l'ultima pace fatta col re Giacomo, lasciando il negozio del palatinato vergine senza parlarne, admettendosi nel resto in quel trattato l'assistenza a stati et altri amici di questa corona.' Contarini (here our principal authority), 20 Luglio 1629.

² According to Contarini (Aug. 3) we must date the decisive meeting of the Privy Council on July 19/29, 1629.