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Frances Harris. *The General in Winter: The Marlborough-Godolphin Friendship and the Reign of Queen Anne.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. 432 pp. $45.50, cloth, ISBN 978-0-19-880244-0.

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John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, and Sidney, 1st Earl of Godolphin, dominated the reign of Queen Anne like two colossi, and they exert a merited fascination for posterity that rests on an abundance of surviving archival material. There is, accordingly, no shortage of studies of the duke even if discrete studies of Godolphin have been strangely missing until quite recently. What more can there possibly be to say about them? If anyone is in a position to do so it is Frances Harris, whose knowledge of the Blenheim manuscripts and other, related materials in the British Library is unparallaled. She is deservedly recognized for her work on the life of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, *A Passion for Government: The Life of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough* (1991), and, more recently, *Transformations of Love: The Friendship of John Evelyn and Margaret Godolphin* (2003). This latest title returns to that theme of enduring amity, an ingenious study in male bonding certainly, but more in reality a threesome than a twosome for, wife to one and friend to the other, stands the indispensable figure of the Duchess of Marlborough. One can see why, as her previous biographer, Harris opted not to make this joint biography a study in triplicate, but Sarah Marlborough is present just the same. And, through examining the interaction of the triumvirate over time, Harris illuminates occluded aspects of their careers though there are no startlingly novel discoveries or revisionist high political reconfigurations.

Harris wants us to see this friendship as based on more than political association, patronage, or kinship, but operative as a kind of rare ideal mutuality forged and maintained by standing "shoulder to shoulder in political, sectarian, or armed conflict" (p. 3). And there was, quite often, fanned by Sarah, a self-consciousness about it that was inspired by the contemporary stage. Neither she nor the duke had anything like Godolphin's moral authority that was recognized in his time and emphasized by Harris in her *Transformations of Love.* It was, she plausibly insists, this quality, "as well as his vision that guided the partnership" (p. 7). The first two chapters, covering the period down to the accession of Anne in 1702, suggest that Godolphin, still recovering from the trauma of his wife's death in 1686 (he never remarried), was inspired by her example not to deviate from a path of rectitude and public service that never degenerated into priggishness. As with the Churchills (whose own fiery marital harmony was also based on mutual devotion), Godolphin belonged to the last generation that considered the surest way to rise to government was by service at court. Both men received baronies in the 1680s, both were recognized as extremely proficient army commander and Treasury minister respectively, and both deserted

James II at the revolution. The king—somewhat unjustly—never ceased to blame Churchill for depriving him of the use of his army whereas Godolphin was trusted by both sides until the eleventh hour. Both were not going to throw away their public careers pointlessly, or, as Harris puts it: "When James refused to save himself they would not let him take them with him" (p. 49).

Godolphin's career as a Treasury minister flourished in the 1690s (it helped that he was close to Lady Betty Villiers, the king's mistress), and he was First Lord between 1690 and 1699 and again from 1700 to 1710, an exceptional example of Williamite governmental continuity and "the most seasoned minister" of his generation (p. 89). Harris goes some way toward moving him, at the expense of Charles Montagu, toward the center of the "financial revolution" in that decade, though more could have been said. By contrast, Marlborough's (Churchill was given an earldom in 1689) career quickly foundered. His wife's close bond with Princess Anne and her household did not help him any more than the king's suspicions of his contacts with the exiled court at Saint-Germain. In this regard, Harris convincingly absolves him from accusations that had any part in betraying details to the French about the expedition to Brest in 1694 and the death of its military commander, Thomas Talmash. The latter's demise did nothing to induce the king to give Marlborough any command. Harris's estimate of William's kingship is by no means flattering, so much so that she is ready to accuse him of being "often wilfully obtuse in his dealings with the English" (p. 66). It is a rare, perhaps excusable example of partiality in a book characterized by judicious judgments.

If the Marlboroughs were out of favor in William's reign, that was immediately corrected on Anne's accession when Churchill returned to star on the public stage "with all the glamour of a hero in a masque" (p. 96). There was never any doubt that he and Godolphin, both at the height of their powers, would enjoy Anne's entire confidence, though it was not until May 8, 1702, that Godolphin received the Lord Treasurer's white staff to complement his friend's status as captain-general of the allied forces in the War of the Spanish Succession. Both men were thoroughly professional and proficient in the discharge of their duties so long as they held office, though Godolphin's style and his striking lack of interest in rewards for public service, had nothing of the duke's delight in frequent, crowded levees where he and Sarah commanded attention. Harris also deservedly draws attention to the able public servants who assisted them, William Lowndes and Henry Boyle at the Treasury, and Adam Cardonnel and Henry Watkins, key members of the duke's secretariat.

Thus we enter the golden years of this partnership, approximately 1702-7, which brought international renown to Marlborough and recognition of Godolphin as his indispensable coeval in managing Treasury and parliamentary business as well as, in his own right, to quote Harris, the "presiding genius" of the successful union negotiations with Scotland in 1706-7 (p. 189). As the duke kept the Grand Alliance functioning, to Godolphin fell the constant strain of maintaining government majorities in both houses: "we live the life of galley slaves," he complained to Robert Harley in 1705 (p. 176), and that strain did not reduce when the priority of continuing the war on Marlborough's terms led the "triumvirs" to become "duumvirs" with the sacking of Harley and the growing dependence on the Junto Whigs, an arrangement that was just about tolerable for Godolphin. The book's originality in covering this well-trodden terrain is to highlight the private and the personal. If Godolphin's loss of his wife had been a fearful blow, the death of the duke's heir, Lord Blandford, in February 1703, was no less devastating for the Marlboroughs. It was only partly compensated for by the earlier marriage of Godolphin's only son, Francis, to the duke's eldest daughter, Henrietta. On Blandford's decease, Francis was named heir to both families so long as he took the name of Churchill.

Friendship and family connection thus turned into a common inheritance.

And so we reach the endgame for Marlborough and Godolphin after the Tory triumph of 1710, following on from the ill-judged decision to prosecute Henry Sacheverell and the continuation of the war after the collapse of peace negotiations with France in 1709 rather than accept what the Dutch called "peace upon the drumhead." Marlborough's genuine standing as a "great man" gradually became a liability as he appeared to turn into an overmighty subject, a second Cromwell with his request of the captain-generalship for life and his status as governor designate of the Spanish Netherlands after the war was won. Godolphin does not seem to have tried to persuade his friend that this thirst for personal aggrandizement was damaging them both and endangering the survival of the ministry. Perhaps he always accepted that anything he said would count for less than the exhortations of the duchess to her husband; that all three of their interests were coterminal and that, as their enemies accumulated, they would sink or swim together; and that he overestimated the limits of capacity for keeping all parties happy. Most likely, with increased age and the burdens of office taking their toll, neither Godolphin (sixty-five in 1710) nor Marlborough (sixty) recognized that they, even they, were dispensable. The Grand Alliance may have broken apart after 1710; the alliance between "the brothers-in-law" (as Harley called them) did not, for Godolphin refused to separate himself from the Marlboroughs and the Whigs. Only his death in 1712, just two years after losing the Lord Treasureship, could accomplish that.

There can be no doubt that the durability of this great amity, the personal loyalties that underpinned it, have acted as the motor of Harris's commitment to writing its story. And she does so sympathetically without sacrificing an iota of her judgment as a historian or her regard for the paramountcy of the surviving records (which she knows as well as anyone). It would have been easy to make the public performances the Marlboroughs both loved the center of the book, but at no point is Godolphin anything other than equally in the foreground. Though they habitually coxed and boxed for each other, Marlborough and Godolphin had quite different characters and strengths: the duke the brilliant general and internationalist, the archetypal courtier, "the most formidable negotiator in Europe" (p. 328); Godolphin the professional finance minister taking infinite pains over public administration, shunning the limelight. Harris does not seek to dislodge this estimate in a book that bustles along according to a structure that is essentially narrational and chronological, securely fastened to a vast archival base. Therefore, it functions satisfactorily despite layers of detail that rightly require plenty of attention from the reader. If it is everywhere perceptive, it is, at times, short on sustained analysis. But, above all, it is a deeply humane work that reflects the proximity of the author to her cast of characters over several decades.

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