

MONMOUTH'S REBELLION

Phineas Pett

to Henry Gascoigne, Secretary to the Duke of Ormonde (1665–1693)

Froom, Noon, 1 July 1685

My Lord Ossory¹ thanks you for your letter of 29 June, and is very glad to hear my Lord Duke is well. He presents his most humble duty to His Grace and has given me command to be sure to send such accounts of what passes with us as His Grace has been pleased to require.

Since mine of Sunday, nothing remarkable has happened. We marched on Monday to Westbury, where yesterday morning came to us five companies of my Lord Dumbarton's regiment, with 16 cannon and a good train of artillery and baggage. Yesterday two Dorsetshire regiments, who have been with us from the first, were dismissed and sent to their own county with thanks for their good service. They seemed unwilling to leave us, and promised to be ready whenever the King should think fit to command them again.

We marched hither yesterday, and it is believed we shall remove in the afternoon towards Wells, whither the enemy got last night. We had some baggage with money and some arms of Colonel Kirke's there, but I hope the guard of dragoons which was left with it have taken care the rebels be not the better for it. We are informed they have plundered the town but my lord Grey has saved the altar and organs.

We are assured by people who have been in Phillips Norton, where we had the skirmish on Saturday, that their loss was more than ours. They left twenty more wounded in one house beside what they brought away, among which some of our men whom we found at this place, who also inform us that Captain Matthews is not killed, but three other officers. Mr. May, whom we thought killed, is a prisoner.

Weston Zoyland, 7 AM, 6 July 1685

We having since my last from Froom followed the rebels at the heels, they at last betook themselves to Bridgwater where, as we were informed, they were entrenching themselves, so we encamped last night on Sedgemore, near this village and two miles from thence, where about two this morning the enemy attacked us in our camp.

The fight was very sharp for about an hour. At last two guns, which my Lord Churchill ordered to be brought on the right of our line, made them begin to run, which proved a total rout. Captain Littleton's troop took two pieces of cannon, besides which there was one more taken, with many colours, and one fellow killed who had the Duke of Monmouth's coat with the star on.

Our loss is so inconsiderable that it will hardly be believed. Captain Hastings is killed and Chevalier my Lord Dunblane² shot through the shoulder and Sarsfield³ wounded, with an ensign or two of the King's battalion.

The time is so short that I cannot compute the number of their slain, but by what I can guess about a thousand have paid for being rebels and abundance of prisoners are taken. At more leisure I shall send you the particulars as soon as I am able to know the truth. I suppose we shall follow them to Bridgwater, which makes me in such haste. Thanks be to God my Lord is well, and all the people with him. He presents his humble duty to my Lord Duke, and if you please to do the same for me you will confer a great honour on Your most humble servant.

Our men are still killing them in the corn and hedges and ditches whither they are crept.

¹ James Butler (1665–1745), Earl of Ossory and grandson of the Duke of Ormonde

² Peregrine Osborne (1659–1729), Viscount Osborne of Dunblane

³ Patrick Sarsfield (c. 1660–1693)

Wells, 7 July 1685

I hope you had my letter by Colonel Oglethorpe giving you an account of the battle yesterday. What I have further to say about it is that the rebels are utterly defeated. In the afternoon yesterday the general⁴ went to Bridgwater with a detachment from the army to view the town, believing a part of the enemy might have retreated thither, and upon sending a trumpet to demand the town, the officers came out and assured us of a welcome and that the enemy was quite gone.

The general did my Lord of Ossory the honour to send his Lordship in the head of a troop of gentlemen first into the town, who afterwards marched five miles farther towards Minehead. On the way we picked up a good many stragglers, but they are nowhere in any body. We are informed that the Duke of Monmouth and my Lord Grey and one more with them have changed clothes with some country fellows and are fled over Mendip.

The business being quite at an end, my Lord designs tomorrow to wait on the Duke of Beaufort at Bristol, and from thence to go to Bath for three or four days, which he is advised to by Dr. Lawrence, his Lordship being troubled with heat break out on his hands and body, very like the itch. He has been already let blood for it and been purged. The doctor says the Bath will perfect the cure.

His Lordship desires you would present his most humble duty to my Lord Duke, and to desire that His Grace's commands may be sent to Bath about his coming to London or staying with the army.

We marched hither this day and left Colonel Kirke with his regiment at Bridgwater.

The gentlemen who I wrote you word were killed are not yet dead, but desperately wounded, and I do not hear of above one or two gentlemen more that are hurt.

We are sending presents to all the Whiggish towns of rogues to be hanged there, and four are ordered to be hanged in chains on the place where we fought.

G. Davies, "Three Letters on Monmouth's Rebellion, 1685," *English Historical Review* 35 (January 1920):114–116.

⁴Lewis de Duras (1641–1709), Earl of Feversham